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Policy implications of social protection initiatives in reducing household vulnerability to poverty in Uganda

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Abstract

The existence of disconnected and overlapping research findings on who is vulnerable poor continue to mingle in minds of researchers, policy, and decision-makers as well as households in various communities. As a result of the misconception of who the vulnerable poor are, government and international development agencies, have initiated and are implementing varied social protection policies and programmes to help the poor and vulnerable households. Most of these vulnerable poor have had specific research studies conducted on them by independent researchers both in public and private research institutions with mixt results. Findings from such research seemed to be all skewed toward policy design aimed to address the causes of household vulnerability to poverty and not a strategic prescription that dives to the root cause of household vulnerability to poverty. This article established the attempts given by the government to understand the concept of cash transfer programmes and its policy implications towards addressing households' vulnerabilities to poverty. We established and further, examined the causes of household vulnerability to poverty and, we try to propose strategies within the social protection broader realm to address and prevent future causes of household vulnerability to poverty.

Keywords: Social protection, cash transfers, poverty, poverty line, vulnerability, households and Uganda

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Introduction

The admiration of the term social protection cash transfers is evidenced in the recent plethora of texts and policy discussions. This has variously focused on analyzing the conceptual underpinnings of cash transfers within wider social protection initiatives and interventions, the main issues that the concept pitches up for public policymaking process, the variety of measures included under the concept and its implications all this has for state involvement in the delivery of social protection cash transfers (Okello 2016a). This paper, however, does not provide a complete review of various available texts but rather; offers alternative methodologies to policy and decision-makers, readers of social protection including national and international development partners. This comes at a time Uganda pledged to reduce poverty using various dimensions by focusing on household income poverty, hunger, disease, suitable shelter, and exclusion while stimulating gender equality agenda in education and health (UNHS 2013). However, there are concerns by the elites and research scholars about the countries preparedness to meet these targets before the 2021 national vision of middle-income status. Even for those targets on which progress has been made, the advances have been uneven and sometimes there have been setbacks. Line any other Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, Uganda still faces the challenge of sustaining growth and development geared to meetings its national development plans (NDPs) targets especially in post-conflict sub-regions (UNDP 2015).

Over the past two and half decades, Uganda has witnessed a notable drop in household income poverty say from 56.4% of the national total population between 1992 and 1993 to 31.1% by 2005 and 2006, nevertheless, several challenges still persist (UNDP 2015). Over the same period (1992–2006), the poverty levels, growth and inequality outcomes of the country national development efforts can be divided into four different incidences namely; the 1992–1997 period was marked by a substantial decline in poverty levels and major progress in household income distribution (Okello 2015a). The consumption growth led to the reduction of household poverty and inequality (ADB, 2001; MFPED, 2014). The annualized consumption growth rate within the same period stood at 3% a year (MFPED 2014), while the average growth domestic product (GDP) rate was 7.3% (MFPED 2014). Since then, national poverty levels continued to decline say for example, from 1997 and 2000, but the country (Uganda) witnessed a significant increase in household income inequality especially among the post-conflict regions of Uganda (Okello 2016b).

The growth effect continued to be felt in central and western Uganda as poverty and inequality continues to decline from the same sub-region (central and western), but poverty and inequality is the opposite in northern and eastern Uganda (RoU 2015). The consumption growth rate was robust at 8.2% in a year, higher than the GDP growth rate that stood at 5.8% (GoU 2011). Between the same period 2000 and 2003, the country witnessed yet again a setback in the decline of household poverty with a substantial increase in household income inequality (MFPED, 2014; UNHS, 2013). The continued rising household inequality offset the increases in growth and caused a reversal in poverty trends. However, the lowest consumption growth rate was 0.7% a year, which was recorded in the same period (UNHS 2013). Lastly, between 2003 and 2006, the country also witnessed a reversal in poverty trends as observed in the preceding period (Lwanga-ntale and Mcclean 2014). The poverty headcount though declined by 7.8 percentage points between 2000 and 2003 period and later increased by nearly 4 percentage points in the latter period 2003 and 2006. During the period of poverty reduction, the growth in consumption rate also stood at 3.6% a year (GoU 2011). Between 1992/93–2005/06, household income inequality increased by 11.8% which was considered ostensibly higher levels of household income inequality treated (Okello 2015b) by state and non-state actors (NSAs) as a major "great" concern for policy and decision-makers (Okello, 2015b; MFPED, 2014).

Government and development partners are committed to reducing and preventing household's poverty through the CT program, and especially to promote pro-poor growth and development (UNDP 2015). Despite the efforts made, however, a segment of the population more so in post-conflict areas does not seem to benefit from CT interventions and initiatives (Okello, 2015a; Lwanga-ntale et al, 2014; RoU, 2015). Whereas targeting poor and vulnerable households is necessary for reducing poverty, it must be acknowledged that this clutch is not homogenous (Okello, 2016b; Lwanga-ntale et al, 2014; GoU, 2011; UNHS, 2013). Pro-poor spending through the effective provision and implementation of social protection programmes backed by actionable political rhetoric support on transparency and accountability will protect the available resources from misuse and abuse, thus enabling poor and vulnerable household to reduce poverty and transit out of the poverty line as defined in (NDP-2, 2016).

Uganda among the most SSA seems to be the best in terms of having better designed anti-poverty interventions, but policy and decision-makers are shy to effectively implement and support such interventions. The miss conceptualisation of cash transfers in Uganda has, for example, led to poor delivery of comprehensive social protection services such as health and education to the poor and vulnerable households. The gap between the rich and poor households in post-conflict and non-conflict affected sub-regions continues to widen due to poor targeting and execution of social protection services. The services provided, however, seems not to reach the targeted poorest of the poor as the less disadvantaged household groups in rural areas have no social and economic support due to mismanagement of cash transfer programmes (NDP-2, 2016).

The introduction of social protection interventions such as northern Uganda social action funds (NUSAF) and peace recovery and development plan (PRDP) for instance, has to some extent led to a decline in poverty and income inequalities among recipients. These two interventions have seen household receiving cash transfer interventions transit out of poverty through marginal, can mitigate their vulnerability levels (WB, 2018; Lwanga-ntale, et al, 2014; IDA, 2015). However, the high unemployment rate amongst the youths in post-conflict regions of eastern Uganda is high as most of the, would be working-class never went to school due to insecurities. About 98% of the population then lived in displaced person camps created by the government in which, access to education services was not guaranteed.

While the intentions of the two interventions are justifiable, the selection criteria and delivery of the cash transfers have failed to meet the purpose of poverty and income inequality. Thus, to effectively deliver social protection services to the poor and vulnerable households, there is a need to conceptualize cash transfers into two that includes both the poor and vulnerable irrespective of the criteria of selection (GoU 2011). Thus, the poor and vulnerable households especially, the children who are orphans with no family help, women divorced and widows are always, less privileged individuals who should be, supported through cash transfer interventions. Most often, this category of individual household heads is incapable to take benefit of the prospects associated with cash transfer support on economic empowerment (Fiona, 2009). Although there exist market opportunities for individual households to invest their cash transfer earnings, they are incapable of selling their extra units of output, as markets alone cannot be, relied upon to deliver satisfactory transition movement out of poverty traps and income inequality. Nevertheless, there is a need for a strong conceptualisation of social cash transfers that covers all the poor and vulnerable households. If for instance, uncertainties occur the poor and vulnerable individual household heads who are not recipients of cash transfers will continue to be living below the poverty line (Okello 2016b).

Understanding vulnerable households

Vulnerable households are those persons who always face different limitations in accessing social protection services like education and health facilities due to distance and often live in depilated mud houses (Duvendack, et al., 2011). Thus, households facing limitations require social protection cash transfers because, cash transfer interventions have been considered as a realistic tool that can be used to eliminate poverty and vulnerability (Philip, et al, 2004). This paper, therefore, identifies the potential role of cash transfer in reducing poverty and income inequality through the conceptualisation of cash transfers within the wider social protection initiatives aimed at empowering households to transit out of poverty. Cash transfer schemes have always existed in most communities where this study was undertaken. This is, evidently seen where group members (burial) or associations (farmers) pool together their resources to support those in need or facing difficulties (MGLSD 2010).

Therefore, all activities related to social protection is considered to be an important tool for reducing poverty and income inequality (Philip et al, 2004). Therefore, conceptualizing and measuring the impact of and establishing the number of households trapped and transiting out of poverty and income inequality remains elusive (Ssewanyana, et al, 2014). Using the Friedman model, we base our inquiry on household income hypothesis as developed and advanced by (Lachaud, 2006:18) in which, we seek to conceptualize and measure the impacts of cash transfer in reducing poverty and preventing households from falling back into future poverty and establishing those ones transiting from the current poverty line (Upreti et al. 2012). Rationally, our thinking and intention of scrawling this paper are to provide a conceptual analysis of ‘cash transfer’ as a good lens that should be built on and used to support the existing frameworks that effectively reduces and prevents households from falling back into poverty (Okello 2015a).

Data Sources and Model Specification

We used the Uganda National Household Survey results of 2005/06 (UNHS III) conducted in May 2005 and April 2006 (UNHS 2013). The survey covered the entire country, including post-conflict internally displaced peoples (IDPs) camps in which, 39,289 individuals in 7,426 households (UBOS 2014) were covered. Additional data for analysis was, drawn from the earlier survey results conducted by UBOS nationally since 1992/93. The survey sample weights from UBOS were, applied to derive the impact and contribution of CTP in reducing and preventing poverty, strategies used by households to reduce poverty levels, income inequalities and to transit out of poverty. One of the main tools used in determining the extent of poverty levels is by specifying the poverty line that separates the poor from the non-poor and vulnerable from the non-vulnerable. We use two basic methods for determining the poor facing poverty and strategies used to transit out of poverty. The use of various household coping strategies and description of household characteristics concerning cash transfers support is given. Combining these two techniques, we use household expenditures on cash transfer pay-out to devour the hypothetical basket of goods and services considered by the household head as being essential for meeting and sustaining his/her household needs, but all aimed at improving wellbeing.

The Model Specification

Household heads have various sources of incomes (HSYs) used to meet the needs of the family over a given time. To quantify items purchased by household heads using cash transfer pay-out, we extract household income (Ys) used by that household to measure and garner his/her consumption data to form a linear expenditure system method to aid our analysis. In this way, household demand function and the poverty line is, obtained using the estimated parameters within the context of households facing poverty and failing to transit out of poverty. Hence, we use the following model to represent the phenomenon being investigated with the view of conceptualizing and enabling us to attribute numerical values into concrete concepts within the social protection cash transfers agenda. To aid our analysis, poverty data proxies on the absolute number of the poor household living below the poverty line is used as dependent variable depicted in the model below;

$$Y = f\left(x_i, x_{ii}, x_{iii}, x_{iv}, x_v, \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots x_n\right)\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(a)$$

We are assuming that a household is faced with several situations of long-lasting deprivation for the case of none-beneficiaries of CTP only when his or her incomes fall below the official poverty line defined here as \$1 per day (Holmes et al. 2010). We also assume however that, household incomes or welfare can change positively if a household is a beneficiary of the state-sponsored CTP and negatively if the household head does not receive any CTP support (MFPED 2010). If households x is faced with unfavourable risk or adverse shock-like illness, droughts, climate change, low productivity, limited access to markets opportunities, then they are likely to remain facing long-lasting deprivations and other associated risks that make them more trapped in poverty with no options to transit out of poverty. By reformatting and deriving the above mathematical model, we form the following econometric model presented in b and c;

$$Y_s = \beta + \beta_0 X_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \beta_n x_n \ldots\ldots\ldots (b)$$

$$Y_s = \beta + \beta_0 x_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \beta_n x_n + \mu_i \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (c)$$

Where we define Y_s = poverty (POVT) is proxy by the absolute amount of vulnerable poor households living below the poverty line.

Here;

Y_s is the incomes of the households either, received in form of remittance or, other sources of household incomes. X_1 is the cash transfers to the household recipient, X_2 is the household vulnerability to poverty (HVP), X_3 is state social grant transfers (SGTs), X_4 is household other sources of earnings/incomes (HSY), X_5 is the household access to market opportunities (HAMO), X_6 is the household consumption levels (HCL), X_7 is the price stability on household sales (Px). β_0 is the intercept of the model, $\beta_1 - \beta_8$ is the parameters of the regression coefficients and μ_i is the stochastic error term. The F-test in the model is applied to check the overall significance level of the impact of model variables and measures used to curb poverty. The F-statistic instrument was, used in verifying the overall significance of an estimated hypothesis of the significance level or, fit of social protection cash and in-kind remittances are given: H_0: The model has no (*weak*) significance or, fit. H_1: The model has a (*strong*) significance of fit, discard if H_0; or if f_{cal} is greater than f_α [$f_{cal} > f_\alpha$], (k-1; n-k); α = 5%, decide or otherwise.

Where:

V_1 / V_2 that is if the degree of freedom (*df*) V_1 = n-k and V_2 = k – 1; n (observed interactions between variables and measures); k (number of variables and measures); and k-1 = 9-1= 8, Thus, n-k = 35-9 = 26. At this point, we present a detailed analysis of child-headed household poverty status by age group and other household head type. The frequency of poverty is greater among children heads of household Table 2 reveals an age measurement. Generally, children between six and nine (6-9) years of age suffer far greater poverty than children who are none heads of households in other age categories. The predictability is given because; it comprises a relatively greater share of the national population size. Those aged between 15 and 17 suffer the least poverty levels. Therefore, $F_{0.05\,(8.26)}$ = 1.94; and F-statistic = 385.6301 (from regression result)…. F-calculated. A high percentage of households in a post-conflict setting move into Poverty due to risks and shocks that can be overturned over a given time especially if the household head is faced with illness or lost employment. Similarly, various households who transit out of or escape poverty and or who are not vulnerable only thrive for a given time not more than one or two years before a reverse in their circumstances pushes them back under official national and global poverty line which makes them more susceptible.

Results and discussion

The econometric method employed in the analysis and interpretation of the data is the ordinary least square (OLS) model and E-views version 10 software was used to carry out regression and t-statistics analysis (see table 1). The information gained from the review of the existing data, we examined the impact of social protection transfers (SPTs) on reducing poverty (HVP). We formulate and use the growth model to measure the impact of SPTs mainly on access and quality of health and education on households. We also use the same model to establish household other sources of earnings or incomes (HSYs), household access to market opportunities (AMO), household consumption (C), and expenditures (E) levels, and price stability on the household extra unit of outputs ready for sale at a given market price (P_x) as explanatory variables. Uganda is, credited for reducing the share of households trapped under the national poverty line that dropped to 19.7% from 31.1% in 2006/07 the financial year 2013/14, the proportion of households surviving on $1.90 per day has also reduced to 34.6% from 53.2% to in the same financial year (FY 2006/2007).

Results from the analysis reveal a regression line that has an undesirable intercept showed by a constant (c) = -40.92588. The implication of having undesirable or negative (-ve) intercept means altogether the variables are kept at constant or fixed at zero (0) with the poverty line devalued at -40.92588. Our expectation during the analysis of the variables was to find the intercept to be positive or negative so that it answers the theoretical opportunities of implementing cash transfers within the wider social protection interventions for the targeted populations. Direct cash transfers to households enable and empowers the recipients to reduce their poverty levels which eventually enables the household to transit out of poverty through engaging in productive activities like agriculture.

We further observed that there exist some variances in how households receiving cash transfers spend their money. Most beneficiaries stated that they spend their money on household needs mainly food and less on other basic social services like medical cost and educational requirements. We also note that household invests their earnings into productive ventures like small scale business enterprises and farming activities. This finding is significant, correlated to the household behaviours on how they spending their disposable incomes mainly on health and education services. Thus, the recipients of cash transfers are less susceptible to household poverty and community poverty because of their ability to spend the additional income earned from business enterprises and farming activities (MGLSD 2015a). From the regression analysis, we also observed that all the variables conform to our theoretical expectation of analyzing the influence of cash transfers on reducing levels of household vulnerability to poverty (MGLSD 2015b). Thus, we decompose and summarize the table 1 findings into a priori test of our analysis. We, employ R-squared (R^2) adjusted and the S.E with the f–test to determine statistical reliability of the estimated impact of cash transfer (CT) on reducing poverty at household and community levels.

If the household has access to market opportunities that enables them sale their extra unit of output, the outcome will lead to an increase in their income levels as well as consumption levels since they can fetch additional incomes from the sale of their extra unit of output when prices of their products are assumed to be stable (favourable). On other hand, if prices of their products are not stable (unfavourable), their consumption levels are likely to be negative, meaning that, they are not able to fetch enough incomes to improve on their consumption. 99% of the households are not able to transit out of poverty because they are not selected as beneficiaries of the state cash transfers. The policy implication of this is that the remittances received by households selected as beneficiaries have a positive impact relationship in empowering and reducing their vulnerability levels to poverty, while those household not receiving remittances are negatively facing the impact of poverty and 1% indicates the disparity in other poverty mitigation measures not used in the analysis.

Therefore, the concept and impact of cash transfers on household vulnerability to poverty is dynamic and is broadly an *ex-ante* or frontward looking measure of a household's wellbeing or (lack thereof). The term has been, used in a variety of related text but with different interpretation attached to it. For instance, Julius Okello (2016) explains household vulnerability as exposure to contingencies and stress which is defenceless populations lack of social protection income support to help them cope (Okello, 2016a: 126-127). Philip et al., (2004) provide distinct vulnerability as a probability that results in a shocking decline in household well-being (Philip et al., 2004:1). With no acceptable definition or measurement methodology for household vulnerability to poverty, vulnerability scholars have an agreed position on how they have conceptualised vulnerability concerning the social protection concept (Okello, 2016a:126). For instance, Armando Barrientos (2010), describe vulnerability as the probability of a household or individual falling into poverty now or in the near future. This is a danger that is socially not an unacceptable level of the household wellbeing which may materialize in future (Barrientos, 2010:2-3). The results suggest that inclusive cash transfers of social protection to the poor and vulnerable households do not necessarily benefit a large proportion of the poor and vulnerable household to escape poverty (Lwanga-ntale, et al., 2014). Regardless of the budgetary scenario, direct cash transfer would have a greater impact on the depth and severity of poverty if effectively and transparently targets the intended beneficiaries living in extreme poverty (Upreti et al. 2012).

Analysis and understanding of poverty amongst poor and vulnerable households

Understanding of and being vulnerable to poverty among conflict and disaster-affected communities have drawn different views that we attempt to analyze based on the Ugandan context (MGLSD 2015a). Poverty though relative is referred to as a situation where the household head is incapable to provide basic social needs to support his/her household members. These needs are decent housing, food, clothing, school requirements, education cost and medical cost (Rebecca, 2013). In other words, family members are deprived of such social support because the head of the family/household lacks alternative means to earn income either, due to illness and or old age. Cognizant of household state of being vulnerable to poverty, state and non-state actors (NSA) involved in providing social protection support through cash transfer to the targeted households, need to identify the needs of the households in broader terms. Effective and transparent implementation of cash transfer will empower beneficiaries to manage current poverty levels and prevent future causes of poverty. This is evidenced within a household that receives regular cash transfers ability to diversify their means of production which has improved on their social wellbeing due to available household sources of incomes (HSY).

If Y_s is the incomes of the households either received information of state remittance or other sources exposed to households resulting from the sale of an extra unit of output, then the household *x* is assumed to be capable of meeting the basic needs of the family members. Meaning that, such household, can use the incomes (*Ys*) earned to diversify and improve on their social wellbeing, thus they are, capable to manage future poverty. A household can only be vulnerable to poverty if he/she cannot provide basic social needs like food, clothing, housing, medical and educational cost if the household head is ill and very old with no alternatives to salvage the family. From the analysis, 79% of the household receiving state cash transfers (*CR*) support have the potential to transit out of poverty compared to 82% of households who are none-beneficiaries. This, therefore, satisfies the assumption that the H_0 model is no *weak*, meaning that, the significance of fit and H_1 model has a *strong* significance relationship of fit in which we discard H_0; or if f_{cal} is greater than f_α [$f_{cal} > f_\alpha$], (k-1; n-k); α = 5%, and decide or otherwise.

Conceptual impact of cash transfer on reducing poverty and vulnerability

Household (X_2) beneficiaries of cash transfers are less vulnerable to poverty (HVP) because they can smoothen their consumption compared to none-beneficiaries of cash transfer. Therefore, regular transfer of state (X_3) social grant transfers (SGTs) to poor and vulnerable households reduce their vulnerabilities to risks and shocks. There is a strong relationship fit between cash transferred and other household sources of incomes (HSY) earned because of the sale of the extra unit of output and household access to market opportunities (HAMO) where prices are stable and favourable with the coefficient of 0.033577 that is positive and the t-test statistics of 2.924481. Household consumption levels (HCL) is positive with 0.00356 because price stability on household sales (Px) is positive with 5.984841 as absolute poverty among beneficiaries declined as these findings collaborate with the UBOS national decline of poverty to 19.7% from 56.4% in 2012/13 and 1992/93[3] nationwide, though figures published by UBOS are questionable.

In comparison with data obtained and reviewed from UBOS indicates showed that there is a poverty reduction rate of nearly 2% per annum which has a reduction of about 4.8 percentage points over the three years from 2009/10 to 2012/13 (UBOS, 2014). Although the increase in population doubled from 17.4

[3]*MFPED (2014) Poverty Status Report 2014; Structural Change and Poverty Reduction in Uganda*

million between 1992 and 1993 to 34.1 million in 2012/13, there were significantly fewer people recorded as living in absolute poverty within the same period 2012/13 (6.7 million) than was the case in 2002/03 (9.8 million) (UBOS, 2014). Poverty often defined and referred to as the lack of insufficient money by an individual or household head to meet basic needs, including food, clothing and shelter (Carter 2006). Though poverty has always been perceived differently by various scholars across the globe, the uncertainties about the sustainability of cash transfer programmes for the future remains real as poor and vulnerable households in conflicts continue to languish in decades of poverty (ESP 2012). The available studies on household poverty aim at improving the well-being of households who are currently poor (Carter 2006). Through providing alternative policy options mainly on preventing people from becoming poor in the future, but rather, not the process of designing forward-looking view to inform the comprehensive implementation of cash transfers model that stakeholders should adopt and mainstream into social protection discourse (MGLSD 2015a).

Bearing this in mind, the incomes of households living below the poverty line declined as a result of state-supported cash transfers to some extent, help household beneficiaries to participate in various post-conflict recovery activities each year. Regular cash transfer of state (X_3) social grant transfers (SGTs) to poor and vulnerable households will reduce and enable poor and vulnerable households to cope, mitigate social risks and shocks linked to poverty. Results from the analysis reveal that household beneficiaries of cash transfers have a probability of 0.0002 or 0.05% chance of transiting out of poverty contrary to the none-beneficiaries who have the probability of 0.0139 percentage chance of succumbing to poverty now and in future. The F-statistic instrument was used to verify the overall significance of an estimated hypothesis of impacts tested on significance levels or fit of social protection cash and in-kind transfer's interventions and initiatives through remittances. Emphatically speaking, social protection cash transfers to many poor and vulnerable households will fetch more poor and vulnerable households trapped in poverty and empowers them to transit out of the poverty line-shaped than a decline in poverty headcount. But the impact on the severity of poverty to the poor and vulnerable households is higher than on the poverty line or gap. The "extremely" vulnerable poor households also benefit from such cash transfers programmes, they often fail to meet another basic necessitates.

The implications of CT should not be viewed as a mean of reducing the household poverty headcounts (GoU 2016), but as a means of improving households incomes supported by other household income-generating activities (MGLSD 2015b) especially of those facing thrilling poverty and in turn, falling their vulnerability to poverty traps (RoU 2010). If the social protection CT program is designed with the view of targeting all child-headed households (MGLSD 2015a), this will lead to a greater decline in poverty levels which results will impact the national poverty headcount than targeting only elderly persons (MGLSD 2015a). Transfer of social protection CTP to all vulnerable children will reduce their poverty levels to a similar extent as targeting only orphans or school-going children aged between six and seven (6–17) years (RoU 2010). Contracting the targeting processes of social protection transfers to specific clusters does not necessarily appear to be leading to a bigger aggregate reduction in household poverty levels. Such targeting will entail distributing benefits to non-poor children (MFPED 2014). Given the fact that about 67% of children are living in non-poor households (MFPED 2014). Distributing the benefits to all children would include the two-thirds who are living above the absolute poverty line (transited out of poverty) (MFPED 2014). Understanding the impact of cash transfers in addressing poverty and vulnerability in any human development strategy in conjunction with other post-conflict recovery interventions, requires sober mindsets (MGLSD 2015a). Poverty is crucial, first, because household vulnerability is an intrinsic aspect of household well-being.

In calculating household's well-being social protection actors and stakeholders must not be limited to the household's actual welfare status but, rather must also account for the household's forecasts for being well now, and in the near future as well as being well today does not necessarily imply that being well tomorrow because they could easily fall back into conflict (RoU 2010). The relative improvement of the household welfare especially of the rural household's defines a basket of goods and services that household heads could purchase now using the state-supported cash transfers than before (Rebecca 2013). This outcome is not in any way means that household receiving state-supported cash transfers are moving or transiting out of poverty by improvement in purchase of consumer goods and services is a sufficient condition that post-conflict communities are transiting out of poverty (RoU 2010). The calls for sober intellect minds need to be sourced, fetched in, empowered and equipped with the necessary skills to understand and champion the implementation of social protection cash transfers policies and programmes (MGLSD 2015a). in this regard, social protection interventions should, however, be all-inclusive, comprehensive, appropriate and forward-looking with clear anti-poverty interventions that aim to address, reduce, and prevent prospective households from falling back into poverty rather than lessen existing poverty among the poor and vulnerable households.

Furthermore, understanding vulnerability is also significant from a contributory perspective. This is because of the many risks and shocks households face during and after conflict, they often experience shocks leading to wide variability in their endowment and incomes. According to Holzmann and Jorgensen (2001), a high percentage of households move into poverty due to temporary shocks (such as illness or loss of employment) that are reversed just one or two years later (Holzmann and Jorgensen 2001). Similarly, many of the people who escape poverty or who are not vulnerable now succeed in doing so for years before a reverse in their circumstances can push them back below the poverty line. The concept of vulnerability, therefore, is dynamic and is broadly an *ex-ante* or forward-looking measure of a household's wellbeing or lack thereof (Holmes, et al., 2009).

Poverty amongst the poor and vulnerable households

The analysis endeavours to offer policy and decision-makers various options for reducing poverty using cash transfer program, the poverty distribution status especially by household types. Focusing on reducing poverty status amongst poor and vulnerable households in post-conflicts setting needs effective and comprehensive implementation of cash transfer interventions. Precisely, the analysis forms a context for the choice of the target household types and groups selected to benefit from cash transfer schemes. Table 2 demonstrates the degree of poverty by individual poor and vulnerable household type. In respect of individuals poverty levels, poverty among child-headed households aged 6–17 is significantly higher than the national average poverty levels. This is the case for all the poverty measures. In contrast, therefore, there is no similar statistical significance between the elderly headed household's population and the national average for the entire population. The incidence of poverty among children is significantly higher than among the elderly. The only exception is the severity of poverty, which is almost the same for younger child-headed households and for elderly persons. These results seem to suggest that children aged 6–17 are in much worse situations than the entire population, and especially the elderly (see table 2 for details in annexe 1).

In respect to a household category, numerous analytical observations ought to be made if cash transfer programmes can effectively and efficiently be used to reduce household poverty amongst the poor and vulnerable individuals (MFPED 2014). First, the poverty headcount for households with child-headed households but with no elderly members supporting them is similar to the national average (ESP 2012). This category of individuals needs direct cash transfer social support if they are to move out of the poverty line and escaping poverty traps (MGLSD 2015a). Nonetheless, households in-depth and facing severity of poverty is greater than the national average (MFPED, 2014). Secondly, households headed by an elderly person are not much worse off than those whose household head is of prime-age (GoU, 2016; RoU, 2010). This is because, this category of household have access to other productive and income-generating activities, thus requiring less cash transfer assistance (MGLSD 2015a). Thirdly, female-headed households especially single mothers and or divorced and widowed are generally much worse facing high poverty levels with less hope of transiting out of the poverty line than their male-headed households counterparts (MFPED 2014). Therefore, women require comprehensive social protection support especially direct cash transfers since they have less access to productivity and other sources of incomes (HSY) compared to their male counterparts (ESP, 2012).

In conclusion

The analysed results reveal that effective implementation of social protection cash transfers to the targeted poor and vulnerable households living in extreme poverty and below poverty lines has a significant policy impact that contributes to a substantial decline in the depth and severity of poverty among the recipients. The impact as a result of effective conceptual administration of social protection cash transfer is more specifically being felt by the recipients compared to none recipients who often are poor and vulnerable households. Although the government have other anti-poverty interventions and initiatives, social protection needs to be mainstreamed into those interventions if poverty is to be defeated. To address household vulnerability to poverty, there is, therefore, a need for transparent targeting of them would be potential beneficiaries which, comprehensively should precede with effective implementation of social protection policies and programmes. A more straightforward tool that provides households with a universal escape root of poverty needs to be jointly designed and mainstreamed and it should have a policy bearing.

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Annexe 1

Table 1: Results from regression analysis

Dependent Variable: POV

Methodology: OLS
Duration: 2014/15 – 2016/17

Observations: 35

Variable	Coef	Std. error	t-sta	prob
Constant [C]	-40.92588	8.939362	-4.578165	0.0001
Social Protection Transfers (SPT)	-0.048359	0.018337	-2.637170	0.0139
Household Vulnerability to Poverty (HVP)	-1.72E-05	1.47E-05	-1.167456	0.2536
State Grant Transfers (SGTs) to household beneficiaries	-0.005947	0.046957	-3.126658	0.0002
Household Other Sources of Earnings/Incomes (HSY)	-4.460176	0.871376	-5.118543	0.0000
Household Access to Market Opportunities (HAMO)	0.033577	0.036319	2.924481	0.0137
Household Consumption Levels (HCL)	0.003561	0.000595	5.984841	0.0000
Household Expenditure (HE)	-0.059858	0.005168	-11.58291	0.0000
Market Price (Px)	-0.600752	0.076824	-7.819838	0.0000
R-Squared	99.1643	F-Statistics		385.6301
Adjusted R-Squared	98.9071	Prob (F-Statistics)		0.0000000
S.E. of regression	3.902498	DW-Model		1.909548

Source: Own computation

Table 2: Shows Individual and Household Poverty Profile Categories

	Headcount	Depth of poverty	Severity of poverty
National	31.1	8.7	3.5
Less than five years [<=5 years]	33.6	9.4	3.8
6–17 years	33.5	9.6	3.9
Male 18–59 years	26.7	7.4	2.9
Female 18–59 years	28.2	7.8	3.1
Greater than sixty years [>= 60 years]	29.9	8.0	3.2
Household type 1			
With children no elderly	31.8	9.1	3.7
With elderly	32.8	8.8	3.5
Only with adults	7.0	1.3	0.4
Household type 2			
Less than twenty-five years [<25 years]	28.3	6.8	2.4
25–59 years	31.0	8.9	3.7
Greater than sixty years [>=60 years]	32.8	8.8	3.4
Household type 3			
Single female	32.2	9.5	4.0
Married female	36.9	11.9	5.2
Single male	23.7	7.0	3.1
Married male	30.6	8.3	3.3

Source: Own calculations using UNHS. **Note:** Single category includes single female and male; divorced, or separated and widow or widower.