Outline

• Broad reflections
• Challenges especially in low income countries
• A research-policy story
Broad reflections

• There is a global movement for social protection, and especially state provided social assistance
• It helps the poor reduce vulnerability and manage risk (life cycle, health & co-variant shocks & stresses)
  – Addresses a central cause of chronic and inter-generational poverty
• It helps others manage risk too, and prevents the slide into poverty
It does this by...

- Enabling greater access to human development services
  - Especially for the hard to reach
- Contributing to economic growth, especially the participation of the poor. Modelling work in Cambodia suggests
  - Combine with infrastructure investment and support to production
  - Aid finance reduces negative effect of tax on growth
- More broadly, it can help build the state-citizen social contract, along with basic law and order, social services, and economic growth
  - Debate on its role in the make up of a ‘developmental state’
Challenges

• Middle income countries & less poor LICs progressively introducing social protection schemes

• Very different policy histories eg
  – Food distribution & public works (South Asia, but also Ethiopia)
  – Pensions, child and disability grants (Southern Africa, but also pensions in South Asia)
  – Conditional cash transfers (Latin America)
Delicate issues in poorer LICs

• Affordability: competition with other public expenditure claims. Advocates outside and within government may not be very strong
• Financing. Tax in the long term. Aid can help get started. Long term commitment difficult for both.
• Dependency worries – but research now indicating these are exaggerated
• Worries about a right to social protection – but the issue is perhaps how can it progressively be achieved
• …a very political issue; it is political movements which energise social protection
Targeting and administrative capacity

• It may be that targeted social assistance reduces poverty fastest, but is there the capacity to target?
  – Geographical and age based targeting is easiest, and politically targeting children or older persons may be legitimate
  – But targeting poorer households, children, older persons, may give much more impact
  – It can be done – see eg Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Nets Programme (communities and local government target)
A research-policy story

• Chronic Poverty Research Centre researched poverty dynamics in Uganda
• Showed that almost 1 in 5 Ugandans were chronically poor in 1990s
• Government recognised chronic poverty in 2006 revision of Poverty Eradication Action Plan, and opened door to considering policy responses
• Social protection priority 1 in 2005 Uganda Chronic Poverty Report
• CPRC requested to work with Social Protection Task Force on design of pilot…
The second international Chronic Poverty Report is in draft

• Maymana’s story (cont’d)…