Impact of cash transfers on children – the role of social relations and intra-household dynamics

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Introduction

1. Role of intra-household dynamics
2. Impact on household composition and care
3. Impact on social networks and community dynamics

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• Ongoing research

• Based on
  - Literature
  - Lessons from Save the Children’s Programming
  - Kenya and Malawi evaluations - ‘Transfer Project’
  - Young Lives data

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Social Protection Programmes

• Southern Niger – SC cash transfer pilot
  - targeted to 1,500 very poor households (based on HEA), one-third population; priority to mothers and carers of children under 5

• South Sudan – SC pilot
  - 1,400 vulnerable households (8%) – cash for work and unconditional.

• Kenya Cash Transfers for OVCs (CT-OVC)
  - Government of Kenya with assistance from UNICEF, 122,000 households 2010; OPM Evaluation

• Malawi Social Cash Transfer
  - Government of Malawi, targeted to ultra poor and labour constrained; 28,000 households 2010; Boston University, Centre for social research, University of Malawi
Intra-household dynamics - Literature

- Influences distribution of resources and decision-making within the household
  - Depends on individual and household preferences, social and cultural norms,
  - gender equality and decision-making power of mother/main carer, level of education of family decision-makers and women,
  - individual status (birth order, gender, age)

- Discrimination against OVCs in foster households

- Polygamous households – position in relation to other wives.

- May be a rational investment strategy – importance of context
Cash transfers and intra-household dynamics

- Targeted at the household – assumed ‘trickle-down’
- Look at distribution of impacts between groups within household
- For improved food security throughout the household – requires some equity in distribution of benefits; how are CTs labelled?
- Evidence of impact on children’s well-being (health, nutrition, education)
- Evidence of differential impact on girls vs. Boys
- Kenya CT-OVC – majority of households - all members benefit from the payment
- Malawi – improved food security throughout the household – suggests as result of transfer food purchased for all the family
- Niger – improved diet diversity – impacts on young children
Importance of programme design - gender

• Most cash transfers channel resources directly to women – based on evidence of improved child health and positive impact on intra-household resource allocation
• Equalising impact on bargaining power within HH and empowerment
• Kenya and Malawi – women weren’t designated as preferred recipients – FHH tended to be enrolled at higher rates
• Kenya – main caregiver decides how to use the transfer; Malawi majority of household heads made spending decisions
• South Africa pension – improves nutritional status of children, especially if transfer to women
• Gender of beneficiary different impacts on girls and boys (Brazil pension)
Gender and intra-household dynamics – SCUK Programming

- South Sudan – by targeting women, programme contributed to female empowerment
- Zimbabwe – positive impact on household dynamics – improved spousal communication and joint decision-making, reported feelings of independence and increased influence on household expenditure
- Swaziland – concerns around gender-based violence from distributing to women unfounded – most men accept that women spend cash sensibly

“Our wives know what to buy”
Importance of programme design

- **Conditionality**
  - Use of conditions to impact on distribution of resources e.g. conditional on use of health facilities and on girls’ education
  - BUT depends on whether services required to use are available, accessible and affordable – additional impact result of the condition?

- **Cash vs. In-kind** – impact on distribution within the household (and also on food sharing within the community)

- **School-feeding**

- **Form of distribution**
Cash transfers and kinship care/migration

- Kinship care – prevalent in Africa and Asia (especially grandparents), enormous benefits for children.
- Carers struggle to cope without access to support
- Concern that support for kinship care may encourage relatives to care for children for material gain
- Pension programmes – impact on children and changing household structures
- Migration as a coping strategy – households send children to relatives or other households
- Cash transfer may enable children to return and adults may join household to benefit from transfer

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Household structures in Malawi and Kenya

- Kenya – OVCs almost entirely retained with extended family and community in programme and comparison areas (some difference in poorest households) impact on standard of living in these households.
  - Qualitative evidence not additional children but improved retention
- Malawi – some evidence of increased kinship care but not statistically significant – longer term impacts?; relatively limited inward and outward migration overall
- Childbearing in Kenya – no evidence of an impact.
Cash transfers and social networks

- Important impact on household well-being, crucial in situations of acute distress - weak for the most vulnerable households.
- Found to create status, contribute to social capital and access to resources, builds trust and community
- Cash transfers – positive or negative impact?
- Argued that formal social protection crowds out informal?
- Kenya – 10% decline in external assistance (households less needy?); Malawi – less external support
- Niger – the poorest weren’t benefiting from informal systems
- India – NREGS income alongside other risk pooling and cost sharing mechanisms – Example.
Experiences with targeting

• Malawi – reports of jealousy and conflict

• Niger – targeting easily accepted – reflected status of poorest. Problems that others did not receive transfer.

• South Sudan – reported that targeting process was fair and transparent - attributed to involvement of community leaders
Conclusion and next steps

• Analysis of social impacts to examine some of the concerns often raised around social protection (on childbearing and childrearing, crowding out informal networks)

• Importance of programme design - depending on objectives and context

• More impact evaluations including disaggregated analysis and qualitative research

Transfer Project

• Technical assistance to impact evaluations and shared learning, comparative analysis on thematic areas