

# SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TARGETING IN UGANDA

Implications for Social Cohesion in Communities



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# ACRONYMS

<b>ASPIRE</b>	Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity
<b>CBT</b>	Community-based targeting
<b>CBHI</b>	Community-Based Health Insurance
<b>CCT</b>	Conditional cash transfer
<b>CDO</b>	Community Development Officer
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DRDIP</b>	Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project
<b>DV</b>	Domestic violence
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>ESP</b>	Expanding Social Protection (Programme)
<b>EVI/EVH</b>	Extremely Vulnerable Individuals/Extremely Vulnerable Households
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal year
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEG</b>	Girls Empowering Girls
<b>GFA</b>	General Food Assistance
<b>GRM</b>	Grievance and redress mechanisms
<b>GoU</b>	Government of Uganda
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
<b>HRSI</b>	High Resolution Satellite Imagery
<b>HSNP</b>	Hunger Safety Net Programme
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association
<b>IDB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>IG</b>	Inspectorate of Government
<b>IHISP</b>	Improved Household Investment Support Program
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>LC</b>	Local Council
<b>LIPW</b>	Labour-Intensive Public Works
<b>LMICs</b>	Low- and middle-income countries
<b>LSG</b>	Local Government Special Grant
<b>KCCA</b>	Kampala Capital City Authority
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview
<b>MGLSD</b>	Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>MP</b>	Member of the Parliament
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>NIRA</b>	National Identification and Registration Authority
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan



<b>NSG</b>	National Level Special Grant
<b>NSSF</b>	National Social Security Fund
<b>NSPP</b>	National Social Protection Policy
<b>NSPS</b>	National Social Protection Strategy
<b>NUSAF</b>	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
<b>OOS</b>	Out-of-school
<b>OPM</b>	Office of the Prime Minister
<b>OVC</b>	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
<b>PDM</b>	Parish Development Model
<b>PKH</b>	Program Keluarga Harapan
<b>PMT</b>	Proxy-means testing
<b>PPP</b>	Purchasing power parity
<b>PSPS</b>	Public Service Pension Scheme
<b>PWD</b>	Persons with disabilities
<b>PWDG</b>	Persons with Disability Groups
<b>SAGE</b>	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
<b>SACCO</b>	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations
<b>SCG</b>	Senior Citizens Grant
<b>SLP</b>	Sustainable Livelihood Pilot
<b>SP</b>	Social protection
<b>SPRI</b>	Social Policy Research Institute
<b>TAAC</b>	Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption
<b>TMF</b>	Trailblazers Mentoring Framework
<b>UBI</b>	Universal basic income
<b>UBOS</b>	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
<b>UCT</b>	Unconditional cash transfer
<b>UCWP</b>	Urban Cash for Work Programme
<b>UGX</b>	Ugandan shilling
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UPFSP</b>	Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection
<b>USPP</b>	Uganda Social Protection Policy
<b>UWEP</b>	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
<b>UYDL</b>	Uganda Youth Development Link
<b>UYVCF</b>	Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund
<b>VFG</b>	Vulnerable Family Grant
<b>VSLA</b>	Village Saving and Loan Associations
<b>VUP</b>	Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme
<b>WEF</b>	Women Enterprise Fund
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>YLP</b>	Youth Livelihood Programme

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

This study aims to provide a better understanding of social assistance targeting, with the intention of providing evidence for policy makers and practitioners to enhance their targeting effectiveness for optimal impact of interventions regarding social cohesion outcomes. The case of Uganda is highly relevant in the context of this research because of the wide array of targeting approaches across the country's various social protection programmes as well as a social and macro-economic context defined by shocks and limited resources. This context has implications for the choice of social protection targeting mechanisms and social cohesion outcomes.

The report is guided and structured according to three key objectives, namely:

- i) Mapping the major social assistance targeting mechanisms in Uganda;
- ii) Evaluating the implications of each targeting mechanism for social cohesion in Uganda; and
- iii) Sharing key learnings from each targeting approach and key policy recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and social cohesion outcomes of social protection programmes.

## Conceptual framework

According to the stakeholder interviews held during the project inception phase, social cohesion is very much rooted within the Ugandan society, as communities tend to be responsible for the wellbeing of all its members. Traditional communities, where certain solidarity organic forms prevail (e.g., reciprocal ties, village solidarity, religious structures or traditional solidarity), require that we look at social cohesion in relation to the ties that structure these groups. Indeed, while it is acknowledged that traditional communities are governed by ties of a different nature, based on territorial proximity, upheavals such as the implementation of development programmes can disrupt the dynamics of the structures in place.

Social cohesion and social protection are tightly related concepts, since both aim to enhance equality and well-being within a society. According to Babajanian (2012), literature shows that social protection can affect social cohesion by accomplishing various outcomes including:

- Establishing citizenship rights and a state-society contract;
- Ameliorating material poverty;
- Reducing economic and social inequalities;
- Tackling social exclusion and promoting social inclusion; and
- Strengthening social capital and interpersonal relations

In this sense, programme design is crucial to ensure that social protection follows the “do no harm” approach, and it is effectively designed so that it can enhance social inclusion.

## Methodology

This study is based on literature review and mixed-method research predominated by qualitative research to address the main research questions. Desk review of existing studies and technical reports, policy and legal documents was used to 1) map out the social assistance programmes in Uganda and their targeting mechanisms, and 2) to provide an overview of implications of different targeting approaches – universal and poverty-targeted - on social cohesion as a background to the discussion of the findings. Secondary data analysis and qualitative research were used to assess the effectiveness of different targeting approaches of social assistance programmes in Uganda and their implications for social cohesion in the communities.

Fieldwork data collection took place for a period of two weeks during May 2023 in Kampala and Arua, Koboko and Yumbe districts. To ensure that different targeting approaches are covered in the analysis, qualitative research covered five programmes: GEG, UCWP, DRDIP, NutriCash, and Senior Citizens Grant. Thirteen semi-structured key informant interviews



were conducted in person with governmental institutions at the central, district, and community level, as well as with development agencies, non-governmental organisations, and other local institutions such as community targeting groups, each engaged in design, implementation/delivery, and/or monitoring of the five social assistance programmes. Fourteen focus group discussions with a total of 196 participants were held with communities in target areas where programmes are implemented, including programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, host and refugee communities, mentors, and community targeting groups.

### Mapping social assistance targeting in Uganda

The 2015 Ugandan NSSP identifies six types of social protection in the country: (i) Public Service Pension Scheme; (ii) National Social Security Fund, Workers Compensation; (iii) Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE); (iv) Public Works Programmes; (v) Social Care and Support Services and (vi) Savings initiatives (Formal and Informal). There also exist several livelihoods programmes which aim at supporting the use of a skill or an asset, while creating opportunities to vulnerable people. The five aforementioned programmes assessed in this study cover several targeting mechanisms. Namely, Girls Empowering Girls (GEG) uses proxy-means testing, geographical and categorical targeting to target both in-school and out-of-school vulnerable adolescent girls in Kampala; Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP) uses geographical targeting and proxy-means testing to identify the 'poorest-of-the-poor' in Arua; The Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) uses similar targeting methods to identify participants, but focuses only on refugee hosting districts, and NutriCash is a subcomponent of it targeted at pregnant women within households under DRDIP; Finally, the Senior Citizens Grant is the only universal programme that targets older persons over the age of 80 years old.

### Social cohesion in communities: livelihoods, challenges and community organisation

Social cohesion in the study site communities can be described as being fairly strong, especially in certain areas in the West Nile, with pronounced mutual trust, solidarity, and support between community members. However, experience of social issues and exclusion are also prevalent, especially in urban areas.

The communities were found to engage predominantly in agricultural jobs in the rural areas and informal, petty trade in the urban areas. The main challenges included poverty, hunger and food insecurity, (lack of) access to

basic services, a lack of role models for children and youth, criminality, behavioural issues including drug and substance abuse, child labour, child marriage and the reinforcing issue of traditional norms and beliefs. Within these communities, some of the most vulnerable groups include women and girls, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, and refugees, a large share of whom are hosted in the West Nile.

Various formal and informal stakeholders including local councils, religious institutions, community leaders, and savings groups represent the key decision-makers in these communities. Some of these, along with community groups, NGOs, and donor agencies also represent various forms of support to the communities.



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## Perceptions of programmes and targeting mechanisms

### Outreach and knowledge of the programmes

Outreach of the programmes has been found to be done through various channels. Community leaders, local authorities, social workers, community facilitators, and Community Development Officers (CDOs) were the most frequently cited source for outreach on programmes. In general, outreach was done through door-to-door campaigns or scheduled community meetings.

The data does not point to important differences in perceptions of effectiveness of different outreach techniques employed. However, mentioned bottlenecks are 1) lack of outreach efforts to reach the most vulnerable (e.g. lack of tailored outreach to the elderly for SAGE; illiteracy, disabilities, etc.); and 2) lack of transparency in community-based targeting, leading to situations of favouritism. Nonetheless, in general participants of the study had a comprehensive knowledge of the various programmes.

### Perceptions of programme design

The public works programmes, namely UCWP and DRDIP, were particularly praised by the beneficiaries, as they appreciated the spirit of team work as well as the impact that their efforts had on the rest of the community. Overall, beyond the monetary support, the projects comprising additional components aimed at enhancing the well-being and the know-how of the beneficiaries were perceived as the most adequate. Yet, one common concern raised by beneficiaries from different programmes and informants was that the cash transfers received had lost their values due to the recent inflation and that the amount which used to be adequate is now insufficient to afford basic items. Moreover, the questions raised during the discussions illustrated the lack of clarity with regards to the duration of the studied interventions.

Regarding the payments, many SCG beneficiaries complained about the payment modalities, especially since the service provision switched from Post Bank to Centenary Bank. Moreover, many Senior citizens who did not receive the grant although they should have been eligible for were unable to appeal due to complex, costly and often unsuccessful procedures.

### Perceptions of targeting mechanisms: Effectiveness and fairness

Perceptions around effectiveness and fairness of programmes' targeting mechanisms were more favourable towards universal and categorical approach. Universal and categorical targeting were considered to

be effective, especially the selection of in-school girls for the GEG programme and the selection of the elderly for the SCG. Nevertheless, modalities for proving eligibility, design features (regularity of registration), and effectiveness of grievance and redress mechanisms are highly crucial. Exclusion from the SCG was reported to be high due to incorrect ages/records in the NIRA-delivered IDs, high barriers and costs associated with correcting age in these documents, and not possessing the document at all.

Community-based targeting (CBT) was reported to be effective and perceived as fair when based on clear governmental guidelines and carried out transparently, as with the UCWP in Arua City. In case of selection of out-of-school girls for the GEG programmes, stakeholders perceived that the local leaders' widespread knowledge of the communities and their vulnerabilities largely facilitated the effectiveness of the CBT mechanism. However, NutriCash, DRDIP, and UCWP research participants reported high inclusion and exclusion errors associated with CBT stemming from the use of discretionary power of local leaders favouring selection of their families and relatives, the difficulty in distinguishing between levels of vulnerability in communities where poverty and vulnerability are drastically high (e.g. DRDIP target communities), and in the case of NutriCash, unclear/lack of procedures for re-enrolment in the programme in case of changes in the eligibility status. Additionally, SAGE provides an interesting example in the comparison of targeting mechanisms as the VFG was dropped from the programme due to the CBT approach not being endorsed, well understood nor accepted in communities, unlike the universal and categorical SCG.

Overall, irrespective of the targeting mechanism, all of the programmes were considered to be very narrowly targeted by participants and to unfairly exclude a very large proportion of the population.

## Perceived impacts of targeting mechanisms on social cohesion

### Impact of the programmes on beneficiary wellbeing

Research participants reported that the programmes had direct impacts on the wellbeing of beneficiaries including through increased consumption, improved nutritional and human capital outcomes. The increase in consumption, nutrition and food security was found to be universal across all programmes but nutrition outcomes and food security were most emphasized among NutriCash beneficiaries given the nature of the programme design. The SCG, GEG, NutriCash and

UCWP beneficiaries reported improved access to health services and medicine, with an observed improvement in some health outcomes for beneficiaries. This finding might imply that the categorical targeting of health-sensitive populations, namely children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly may have a higher effect on their health outcomes than those outside of these life-stages. The use of cash benefits for child and grandchild school fees and materials was discussed by beneficiaries of GEG, DRDIP, UCWP and the SCG. However, only GEG was associated with improved educational outcomes suggesting that complementary services such as referrals and mentoring have a pivotal role in social inclusion.

Research participants also reported that the programmes had positive direct impacts on mental health, and increased investments in livelihoods. All programmes with the exception of GEG were found to have incentivized the beneficiaries to invest in their livelihoods and businesses. Such investments were enabled by the reported improvements in saving practices and reduced borrowing among DRDIP and UCWP beneficiaries. The categorical targeting of adolescents and productive populations as well as associated training and capacity-building components were observed to increase levels of employability skills. An improved mental state, self-esteem, dignity, and agency was reported for and by recipients of all the five programmes.

### Impacts of targeting on intra-household relations

Participants reported that the targeting mechanisms of the different programmes implemented in Uganda have had an impact on the social cohesion *within* households. Discussions with key informants and beneficiaries of several programmes have highlighted an increased social capital, notably related to the change in self-perception of the elderly benefiting from the SCG. Similarly, female beneficiaries of other programmes such as NutriCash, GEG, DRDIP, and UCWP reported similar empowering effects at the household level. In particular, respondents reported that cash benefits had allowed them to contribute to enhancing for the wellbeing of their families and provided them with a feeling of emancipation. Overall, it seems that targeting women and older persons within a household was increasing the sense of agency these people had within their family.

Yet, some frictions did arise, as some participants related increased divide within the household, such as offences to the elders' and women's agency on their grant. Additionally, key informants at central level voiced their concerns about the fact that the SCG could negatively affected intra-household cohesion as the

younger generations are less likely to provide support to their families because they receive cash support from the government. Perceptions about this shift in traditional family roles were also common among women FGD participants, who reported that the programmes created some tensions and changes in expectations from women.

### Impact of programmes on social cohesion in the community

Overall, the programmes had a positive impact on social cohesion in the community including beneficiaries' engagement and participation, support and solidarity, and development of social capital, primarily attributed to programme design rather than targeting mechanisms. In West Nile, the design of UCWFP, DRDIP (and NutriCash as a sub-programme) that set quotas for selection of host and refugee communities, was reported to have had a positive impact on strengthening social cohesion. This was enabled by fostering a sense of belonging among the refugees who were provided with an opportunity to productively engage in the community, and by including host communities in programmes that primarily covered only refugees. Similar effects were also reported about the GEG programme which provides a platform for interaction between adolescent girls of the two communities through its mentoring and other activities, contributing to their social capital development.

Programme design components of DRDIP, UCWP, and NutriCash which include establishment of savings groups have had a positive impact on social cohesion as they are accessible to wider communities and serve as knowledge transfer platforms between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Knowledge transfer and social capital development are also at the core of the GEG implementation structure comprised of active involvement of community leaders, mentors, adolescent girls and their caregivers on a regular basis. Positive effects of the SCG on social cohesion were reported to be manifested in the active engagement of the elderly in the communities with gains in self-esteem, dignity, and agency from the programme.

The negative effects of the CBT programmes on social cohesion were primarily linked to the social contract, stemming from perceived unfairness in inclusion or exclusion. In inter-community relations, they were mainly manifested through negative feelings such as unhappiness, anger, jealousy and envy among persons excluded from the programmes (NutriCash, DRDIP, UCWP), and in rare cases also in verbal harassment towards beneficiaries (DRDIP, UCWP). Negative perceptions of the targeting mechanism were some-

what reduced by the expectation that one might benefit from the programme in the near future, even if they are not benefiting from it now.

Overall, existing social cohesion in communities, as within households, is a key mediator of the impact of social assistance targeting mechanisms. Urban areas are at a disadvantage in this regard due to widespread perceptions of inequality and lack of trust between community members, especially in the light of rapid urbanization.

### Impacts on social contract

The different programmes and their targeting techniques have had a mixed impact on the populations covered by this study. On the one hand, CBT approaches have been found to having enhanced trust on local leaders as key actors within the community for their mobilization role. On the other hand, according to some participants, the CBT has also had negative implications. Participants pointed out that certain local leaders took advantage of that decision power, and that they would discretionally choose who should be part of the CBT programmes based on personal preferences.

In general terms, and regardless of the targeting mechanism, participants felt thankful and appreciative of the Government and its related institutions due to these programmes. They also got to know better the institutions that are actually providing the help. Moreover, these programmes have helped to build up optimism towards the state's willingness to provide them with support. According to a few participants, this has also had an impact on perception of regional and local governmental structure, increasing a sense of representativeness by these structures. These programmes have also had an impact on the overall expectations of what the Government can or should provide in social protection, empowering them to make more demands.

As for the Government side, there is a better understanding of the challenges that citizens face in terms of vulnerability, poverty and inequality; as well as about the necessary programme design changes in programmes. Moreover, these targeting techniques have also contributed to develop higher accountability standards through, for instance, having to verify registration accuracy or responding to complaints from the community.

## Policy recommendations

1. Determine an appropriate, clear, transparent, and inclusive outreach process that explains the nature of the programme, eligibility criteria and selection process, programme duration, delivery mechanisms, and grievance and redress mechanisms, across all programmes.
2. Enhance the effectiveness of the targeting mechanisms by resolving registration issues as a matter of urgency, particularly in the case of national ID corrections and dissemination.
3. Improve the design of the programmes' other components to support the social cohesion impacts of the targeting mechanism.
4. Prioritise the use of categorical targeting with a universal, non-poverty targeted approach to maximise social cohesion outcomes.
5. If poverty-target mechanisms such as CBT are chosen, implementors should effectively follow the outreach approach described in point 1.
6. Sensitize household members of beneficiaries of programmes that use categorical targeting to avoid tensions and conflicts at the household level.
7. Widen the targeting of other programme components that can be delivered in a more cost-effective manner than the cash component to increase inclusion to the programme in the community.
8. If programmes are scaled-up, avoid changing the eligibility criteria associated with the targeting mechanism.



# INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1. Background of the study

Social protection is critical for promoting inclusive, sustainable and equitable development in countries like Uganda experiencing rapid economic growth. In addition to its primary intended impact in reducing poverty and inequality, social protection has effects on human capital development, empowerment, strengthening communities, improving employment outcomes and increasing productivity, and supporting individuals and families to cope with crises and shocks. Well-designed social protection systems have the power to end the cycle of intergenerational cycles of poverty, build resilience, and transform societies.

Most of the assessments and impact studies focus on social protection programmes or systems as a whole rather than specific components of their design. There is a critical evidence gap in studies attempting to understand the role of the targeting mechanisms in mediating social cohesion outcomes. Targeting mechanisms differ across social protection programmes and represent an important component of their overall design. The literature highlights both the significance of social protection and the need for effective targeting to foster social cohesion, but does not isolate the impact of the

targeting method on social cohesion and how outcomes change across different targeting mechanisms. Nor does the literature promote one particular targeting method as a proven ideal approach to enhanced social cohesion. In the interest of improving the effectiveness of social protection in realising social cohesion, and consequently improving the political acceptability of social protection within a given context, it is important to generate such evidence to inform the future design of such targeting mechanisms.

Studies focusing on the relationship between social protection and social cohesion across Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa have shown different outcomes across different programmes. For example, a study of the *Juntos* conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme introduced in 2015 in Peru by Camacho (2014), found that while the programme had improved trust towards the government institutions involved in programme implementation, there was a decline in trust among non-beneficiaries in Peru's Ombudsman's Office where grievances were registered but could not influence enrolment decisions.<sup>1</sup> Further, Babajanian documented feelings of envy, resentment and sadness among those who considered themselves poor and deserving of government assistance but were excluded such as

<sup>1</sup> Camacho 2014.

CCT *Progresa* in Mexico and *Red de Protección Social* in Nicaragua.<sup>2</sup> A study by King et al (2010), which looked at programmes in Benin, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi and Zambia, found that the interventions did not often have an impact on social cohesion.<sup>3</sup>

Choosing the most appropriate targeting method for a social assistance programme is important because if targeting criteria are reasonable and transparent, and if citizens have reason to believe that the process is rule-based and fair in practice, the programme can have a strong positive impact on vertical and horizontal trust. In contrast, if the targeting of a social benefit causes high inclusion and exclusion errors, or if there is a lack of transparency, it can have negative effects on citizens' trust in the government, and create feelings of unfairness and resentment as well, thereby worsening horizontal trust. Specifically, this can create conflicts between direct programme beneficiaries and those excluded but perceived to be in similar conditions. This is also a major risk in programmes that target the very poorest households, but exclude those who are only marginally less poor.<sup>4</sup> For example, studies on the aforementioned *Progresa* in Mexico and Nicaragua's *Red de Protección Social* have shown that existing social ties have weakened, because beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries see themselves as having less in common, and non-beneficiaries refuse to take part in community activities.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, when targeting in fragile states is carried out on the basis of ethnic or other group identity, or when targeting is weak because of corruption and/or mismanagement, this can fuel resentment and exacerbate tensions between different groups. As an example, for Brazil's Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, it was argued that there was a 'risk that benefitting Indigenous populations with cash transfers as opposed to poor non-Indigenous populations could create conflict and social tensions'.<sup>6</sup> In general, poverty-targeted programmes may also be more acceptable to large parts of the population if the targeting criteria are just, transparent and easy to understand.<sup>7</sup>

This study attempts to generate evidence on the association between social assistance targeting mechanisms and social cohesion in Uganda. While it recognises that there are other design features and outcomes that may be of interest to policy makers and practitioners, the analysis is intentionally limited in its scope. The targeting mechanism only represents one of the many compo-

nents associated with a social protection programme's design. Other design features include but are not limited to the forms of outreach modalities of registration, transfer modality (cash or in-kind), the benefit level, means by which a programme is monitored, grievance and redress mechanisms, and the information systems. Likewise, social cohesion represents only one of the many abovementioned outcomes associated with social protection. Although other design features and outcomes are discussed in this report, the focus is on how different targeting mechanisms are linked to social cohesion outcomes.

Uganda is an interesting case in researching the relationship between social protection targeting mechanisms and social cohesion because of the wide array of targeting approaches across the country's various programmes. This report maps out the social protection programmes present in Uganda and describes their respective targeting mechanisms. It assesses various forms of targeting mechanisms including geographic targeting, categorical targeting, universal targeting and forms of poverty targeting such as proxy-means testing (PMT) and community-based targeting (CBT). By selecting programmes that represent a wide array of targeting mechanisms, comparisons can be made on the outcomes associated with these mechanisms to draw conclusions of the role of the mechanism on social cohesion outcomes.

The case of Uganda is of further importance to the topic because of its national context characterized by macro-economic shocks, high rates of poverty, low and inconsistent incomes, and a large refugee population, which all have implications for the choice of social protection targeting mechanisms and social cohesion outcomes.

## 1.2. The case of Uganda

Macro-economic shocks have dominated the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Uganda. Despite high levels of growth in the 2000s, when Uganda was one of the fastest growing economies with annual growth above the average for Sub-Saharan Africa, the country has showed a relatively moderate economic growth in the last decade, while it faced a high level of volatility.<sup>8</sup> The economic volatility, the Covid-19 global pandemic and global recession reversed socio-economic gains in the country, with a

<sup>2</sup> Babajanian 2012

<sup>3</sup> King, Elisabeth, Samii, Cyrus, and Snilstveit, Birte 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Francesco Burchi et al. 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Iffat Idris 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Francesco Burchi et al. 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Government of Uganda. 2020a.



disproportionate impact on vulnerable and marginalized groups including women, children, people with disabilities, among others.<sup>9</sup> In 2021 and 2022, Uganda experienced some economic recovery, which is expected to continue into 2023. Nevertheless, risks such as domestic borrowing, climate change shocks, and external risks such as those emerging from the Russia-Ukraine conflict or the trade uncertainties between the US and China, have led to inflationary pressures due to higher food and oil prices, continued supply chain disruptions, as well as general economic vulnerability in the country.<sup>10</sup>

Poverty and vulnerability remain high in Uganda but are disproportionately experienced. In 2020, more than a third of the population lived on less than \$1.90 a day. Thus, many households in Uganda are still vulnerable, mostly due to income fluctuations, food insecurity, climate-related shocks, high levels of informality, and limited social protection coverage.<sup>11</sup> Vulnerability remains high at all stages of the life cycle, including children and young people, but also for those of working age, especially women, and for older people.<sup>12</sup> At the geographic level, vulnerability is highly concentrated in rural areas of the Northern and Eastern regions, largely due to environmental factors.<sup>13</sup>

Household incomes and consumption in Uganda are highly dynamic. A study by Kidd and Athias (2016) demonstrated how across a relatively short period of two years between 2011 and 2013, a large proportion of households had moved from one welfare quintile to another.<sup>14</sup> Notably, the study highlights how only 46 percent of those in the poorest quintile in 2013 had been in the poorest quintile in 2011 and that there were examples of households moving from the richest quintile to the poorest quintile across the period. The study shows how the idea of ‘the poor’ as a fixed group over time is inconsistent. Targeting social assistance by poverty would therefore lead to high exclusion errors over time as a direct result of the changing economic status of the household.<sup>15</sup>

Further, the income distribution in Uganda can be understood as relatively ‘flat’. The income distribution among the bottom 80 per cent of households was found to be relatively similar at no more than a daily per capita consumption expenditure 4,000 UGX in 2016-17 (approximately US \$3.15 in 2017 PPP<sup>16</sup>). A slight change in the welfare of the household is therefore likely to have a disproportionate impact on its position within the income distribution. Given that little difference in welfare exists for the bottom 80 percent of the population, the idea of ‘the poor’ as a fixed and distinct group is further undermined.<sup>17</sup>

On top of that, Uganda is the largest refugee hosting country in Africa, counting more than 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers registered in the Office of the Prime Minister’s (OPM) Biometric Identity Management System. The main refugee countries of origin are South Sudan (65 per cent), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (31 per cent), Somalia (3 per cent) and Burundi (3 per cent). Ninety-two per cent of refugees live in settlements within twelve rural districts alongside their host communities, and these areas are some of the poorest and most underdeveloped in the country.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3. Aim and objectives of the study

This study aims to provide a better understanding of social assistance targeting, with the intention of providing evidence for policy makers and practitioners to enhance their targeting effectiveness for optimal impact of interventions regarding social cohesion outcomes. This is to be achieved through three key objectives, namely:

- i) Mapping the major social assistance targeting mechanisms in Uganda;
- ii) Evaluating the implications of each targeting mechanism for social cohesion in Uganda; and
- iii) Sharing key learnings from each targeting approach and key policy recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and social cohesion outcomes of social protection programmes.

9 UNICEF Uganda 2021.

10 African Development Bank Group 2022.

11 World Bank 2020.

12 Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Government of Uganda. 2020b.

13 Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Government of Uganda. 2020a.

14 Kidd and Athias 2016.

15 Ibid.; Kidd and Athias 2020.

16 World Bank n.d.

17 Kidd and Athias 2020.

18 UNHCR 2023.

## 1.4. Structure of the report

This report is structured as follows: **Section 2** describes the methodology used for this study. **Section 3** provides a conceptual framework for the study by first unpacking what is meant by social cohesion, secondly describing types of social assistance targeting mechanisms and then, thirdly, conceptualising the link between social assistance targeting and social cohesion outcomes. Based on this conceptual framework, **Section 4** maps out the social protection environment by describing the institutional, policy and legal frameworks, the

social assistance programmes and their targeting mechanisms. **Section 5** describes the study locations including the livelihoods, main challenges, and formal and informal structures of organization and support within these communities. **Section 6** discusses the findings on perceptions around the programmes generally and their targeting mechanisms specifically. **Section 7** discusses the findings on the perceived impact of different targeting mechanisms on social cohesion. Finally, **Section 8** concludes the study and provides key policy recommendations.

## METHODOLOGY

The research in this study was carried out following a mixed-methods approach including literature review, quantitative analysis of secondary data, and qualitative data analysis. Each method is described in detail in the following sections.

### 2.1. Literature Review

The literature review analysed relevant literature and studies to : i) a map the social assistance environment of Uganda with regards to the legal and policy frameworks, programmes and associated targeting methodologies; ii) develop a conceptual framework on social cohesion and the relationship between social assistance targeting and social cohesion; iii) analyse international evidence and best practices on social assistance targeting with regards to accuracy, efficiency, (cost) effectiveness, political acceptability, and social cohesion, and benchmark Uganda's programmes against this; iv) inform the qualitative research design; and v) discuss the qualitative research findings and draft policy recommendations.

### 2.2. Quantitative research

Quantitative analysis of secondary data was conducted with the purpose of providing greater contextualisation of the social protection environment in Uganda and complementing the discussion of qualitative research findings on the perceptions about effectiveness and fairness of social assistance targeting mechanisms, and their impact on social cohesion.

The analysis involved an exhaustive assessment of all the available international and Uganda-specific data sources related to social protection including databases, reports, microdata from household surveys, and

administrative data from programmes' management information systems (MIS). The purpose of this was to identify and then use all relevant data for the study. Of the many sources assessed for their quality, representativeness and relevance, only a few were found to make a relevant contribution to the analysis. Considerations were made to use the National Panel Survey 2019-20, but the number of observations for those in receipt of the SCG was too small to generate any statistically significant results and was therefore not used for the analysis. A full list of the sources considered can be found in Annex 1.<sup>19</sup> Data were collected and then presented and analysed through graphic visualisations, tables and in-text discussion. The quantitative analysis can broadly be summarised according to the following sub-components:

- **Descriptive analysis** using statistics to assess national and (where possible) programme-specific rates of coverage, cash transfer adequacy and public expenditure.
- **Targeting performance analysis** of the SCG based on administrative data on the proportion of persons over the age of 80 in receipt of the SCG compared to UBOS population projections of the total number of persons over the age of 80 for year 2020.
- **Comparative impact evaluation** using the SAGE Endline Evaluation 2012-2014 data to determine the impact of the Vulnerable Family Grant (VFG) and SCG on social cohesion. The respective programmes will be compared to one another to provide evidence on the impact that can be associated with each programmes' targeting methodology.

<sup>19</sup> The following sources were determined to be relevant to the study and therefore used for the analysis:

- World Bank Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE) – This multi-country-survey provides data on social protection indicators including coverage, public expenditure and adequacy.
- ILO World Social Protection Data Dashboards – This multi-country-survey provides data on social protection indicators including intervention availability, coverage and public expenditure.
- Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment Endline Survey Report 2014 – This report provides findings on the impacts of the Senior Citizens Grant (SCG) and the Vulnerable Family Grant (VFG) after two years of implementation. Specifically, the findings on social capital and social contract have been used for this analysis.
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) Population and Census data This data source provides population estimates for 5-year age groups in Uganda for the period 2018-2020.
- SP programme MIS databases – These are administrative data sources specific to the social assistance programmes in Uganda that provide data on numbers of beneficiaries and their characteristics.

The primary aims of the quantitative analysis were to provide a description of the social assistance environment in Uganda, an analysis of the accuracy and efficiency of targeting, and an analysis of the impact of social assistance on social cohesion. The descriptive analysis provides an analysis of coverage, adequacy and expenditures. The targeting performance analysis contributes to an analysis of the accuracy and efficiency of targeting by calculating the inclusion and exclusion errors of the SCG. Lastly, the comparative evaluation analysis is intended to contribute to the analysis of the relationship between social assistance and social cohesion through a comparative analysis of the social capital and social contract impacts of the SCG and VFG. As discussed in Section 4, these two programmes have different targeting mechanisms and therefore the data provide crucial insights into the study.

## 2.3. Qualitative Research Design

### Research objectives

This research component intended to obtain qualitative, in-depth information on perceptions about effectiveness and fairness of social assistance targeting approaches and their impact on social cohesion of the target communities. The research covered 1) institutions administering, financing, and monitoring social assistance programme implementation through key informant interviews (KIIs) and 2) beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of social assistance programmes through focus group discussions (FGDs). Five programmes were selected for the analysis – Girls Empowering Girls (GEG), Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP), Senior Citizens Grant (SCG), Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP), and Nutri-Cash – to capture and compare between the effects of different targeting approaches by also covering different population groups and geographical areas. The fieldwork data collection was carried out during 8-19<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in Kampala and three districts of West Nile sub-region: Arua, Koboko and Yumbe.

### Research themes

The following themes and questions guided the discussions with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the programmes and the key informants:

- Perceptions about the wellbeing and main challenges in the community
- Perceptions about adequacy, effectiveness, and fairness of the targeting approaches of social assistance programmes
- Perceptions about the impact of the targeting approaches on social cohesion including intra-household relations, relations in the community,

and the social contract

- Perceptions about the impact of the programmes' targeting approaches on the vertical (national) social cohesion
- Perceptions about the impact of the social assistance programmes in the wellbeing of beneficiaries and the community.

### Study sites

Using purposive sampling, Kampala and West Nile sub-region were selected as study sites as they i) ensured coverage of multiple social assistance programmes with different targeting mechanisms, and ii) they represent diverse characteristics with respect to vulnerability, level of urbanisation (i.e. urban and rural areas), accessibility of public services, topography, proneness to external shocks (conflict and climatic), and size of the refugee population. The exact geographical areas were selected through convenience sampling considering feasibility of fieldwork given the short time-frame allocated to data collection and the distance between localities.

### Research instruments

Semi-structured **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** were conducted in person with governmental institutions at the central, district, and community level, as well as with development agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other local institutions such as community targeting groups, each engaged in design, implementation/delivery, and/or monitoring of the five social assistance programmes. The key informants were identified through the literature review as well as the virtual consultations (via Zoom/Teamworks/Skype) with key stakeholders in the social protection sector in Uganda during the project inception phase. The KIIs were between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours, were carried out in the premises of the respective institutions or district offices (in case of community-level staff), and at times involved more than one interviewee from the same institution. The interviews were carried out by one or two researchers and recorded after consent of the interviewee(s).

In addition to the main themes of the research, KIIs also included discussions about i) programme design and administration, ii) bottlenecks with programme administration/service delivery including all phases: outreach, selection of beneficiaries, verification, benefit delivery, and grievance and redress mechanisms (GRM); and iii) proposed changes to programme design. These questions were intended to fill out the information gaps in the section mapping the social protection system and targeting mechanisms of each programme.

**TABLE 1:** Key Informants at National and District Levels

Key informant agencies/organizations at the national level	Key informants at the district level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD)</li> <li>Ministry of Public Service</li> <li>Office of the Prime Minister Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (OPM DRDIP)</li> <li>Expanding Social Protection Programme (ESP)</li> <li>Enabel (Belgian Development Agency)</li> <li>National Older Persons Council</li> <li>World Food Programme (WFP) – development partner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)</li> <li>Koboko Community Development Officer (CDO) – SCG, DRDIP and NutriCash programmes</li> <li>Yumbe Community Development Officer (CDO) – SCG programme</li> <li>Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP) Community Targeting Group – Arua town</li> <li>Trailblazers Monitoring Foundation (TMF) – NGO in Kampala</li> <li>Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDL) – NGO in Kampala</li> </ul>

**Focus group discussions (FGDs)** were conducted with community members in target areas in Kampala and West Nile sub-region where the five select social assistance programmes are delivered. Selection criteria of FGD participants intended to ensure equal representation of programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, refugees and host communities (in West Nile region), and gender of respondents (where applicable).<sup>20</sup> A wide age range (lifecycle stages) representation was ensured automatically by the diversity of programme design and target categories; NutriCash (mothers and children <2 years), GEG (adolescent girls), UCWP and DRDIP (mainly working age population), and SCG (senior citizens). The FGDs with beneficiaries of the GEG programme as well as the SCG FGDs in Yumbe and rural and urban areas in Koboko district also included persons with disabilities. Annex 3 shows details about the number of FGDs, their size, composition, and locality for each programme. The FGDs were between 1.5 and 2 hours and were carried out in schools in the target communities or premises of the district administration. The discussions were moderated by one or two researchers and an interpreter and recorded after obtaining consent from all participants.

In addition to the main themes of the research, FGDs also included discussions about i) the main challenges in the communities and forms of support available for vulnerable households, ii) organisation of the community in terms of decision-making processes, key stakeholders, and active community organizations and associations, iii) social assistance programme design and

adequacy, and iv) proposed changes to programme design. These questions were intended to provide context for analysis of the main themes of the research, to indirectly obtain information on the perceptions of the community about the social assistance programme(s), as well as to gain an insight into the broader challenges with programme design and delivery.

### Sampling of research participants

Selection of FGD participants followed multi-layered sampling. Purposive sampling techniques were employed at the district level for selection of communities where the FGDs would take place. With the support of the Ugandan research team in liaison with implementing and monitoring institutions (government and non-governmental), social workers and County Development Officers (CDOs), the primary selection criterion were the communities where the social assistance programmes are delivered. This allowed for random selection of social assistance programme beneficiaries. The same communities and the neighbouring ones were also used for selection of non-beneficiaries. The criterion for selection of this latter group was that they have similar characteristics to beneficiaries in terms of vulnerability and eligibility criteria for the respective programmes, but they do not receive the benefit. Once the selection of study sites was determined, the research team worked very closely with the Ugandan research team to ensure that all the predetermined respondent categories are included in the research to enable learning comprehensively about the topics of the study.

20 For GEG and NutriCash, the FGD participants included only girls and women given that these programmes are targeted to these two groups.

**TABLE 2:** Study Site and Programme Characteristics

Social assistance programmes	Type of programme	Kampala	West Nile	Targeting approach
Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)	Labour-intensive employment		Koboko district host and refugee communities	Combination of <b>geographical-categorical targeting</b> : 15 refugee districts in West Nile region and <b>community-based targeting</b> for selection of beneficiaries using a wealth ranking criterion and selection of 'poorest of the poor'
Girls Empowering Girls (GEG)	Mentoring, referral to public services, and cash transfer			Combination of <b>geographical-categorical targeting</b> of parishes and schools in Kampala using a vulnerability index, <b>categorical targeting</b> : in-school girls, P6, and <b>community-based targeting</b> : the most vulnerable out-of-school girls
NutriCash	Cash transfer, savings component, education on nutrition of children and mothers		Koboko district: host and refugee communities	Same as DRDIP, but only the beneficiaries of the Labour-Intensive Public Works component, select districts of DRDIP, and an additional layer of <b>categorical targeting</b> of DRDIP beneficiary households: pregnant and breastfeeding mothers of children <2 years
Senior Citizens Grant (SCG)	Cash transfer		Koboko district Yumbe district	<b>Universal approach; categorical targeting</b> : age 80+ years nationally; previously (before the national scale-up) age 65+ years and 60+ years in the 15 districts where the programme was piloted
Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP)	Public works programme		Arua City	Combination of <b>geographical targeting</b> : urban and flood-prone areas in West Nile; <b>community-based targeting</b> : selection of the most vulnerable households; and <b>categorical targeting</b> : set quota for the # of women and refugees

## Sample size

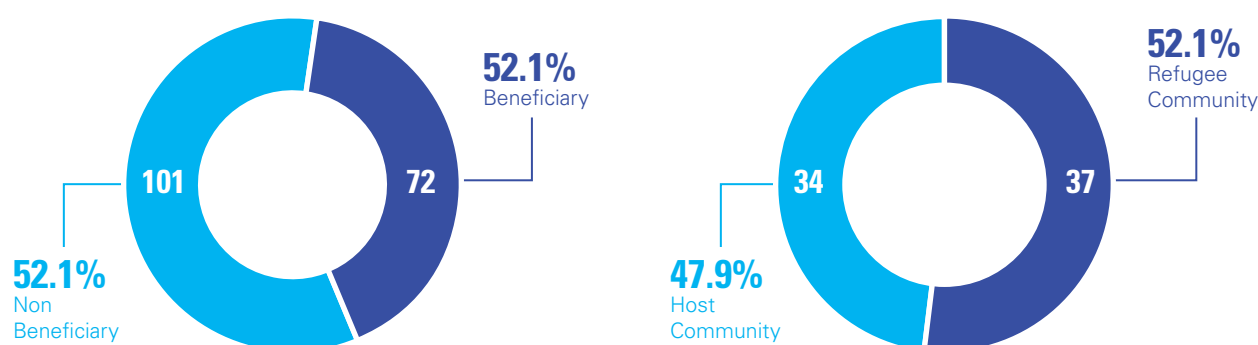
Fourteen FGDs were carried for the purpose of this study. The number of FGD respondents in the study was larger than intended in research design, 196 in total, of whom 122 were girls/women and 74 were boys/men. Additionally, a total of 13 key informant interviews were carried out. Even though the initial research design aimed at ensuring equal representation of women and men in FGDs, this was not possible given that GEG and NutriCash programmes target girls and women exclusively and that GEG mentors were all women. The number of beneficiary respondents was also slightly higher than that of non-beneficiaries, 102 and 71,<sup>21</sup> respectively, and 12 of the FGD participants were female mentors of the GEG programme. Despite

the specific sampling criteria and strict following of guidelines during fieldwork preparation, the number of participants per FGD was higher than the initially intended, 8-12 participants. Especially for the SCG in Koboko and Yumbe districts, many more elderly joined the discussions as the word had spread in the communities about the meeting. Among two programmes targeted to host and refugee communities in West Nile sub-region – DRDIP and NutriCash – refugee and host communities were almost equally represented, 34 and 37, respectively. Annex 3 provides details about each FGD, including the total number of respondents, their age range, gender, programme beneficiary status, and other characteristics.

<sup>21</sup> For 11 FGD participants, the beneficiary status in the programme could not be recorded because they arrived very late.



**FIGURE 1:** Characteristics of FGD participants (Absolute Numbers)



### Data collection

Fieldwork data collection took place between May 8<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in Kampala and West Nile sub-region. The qualitative research team comprised of four team members from SPRI Global, a national consultant responsible for fieldwork planning and implementation, CDOs, social workers, and interpreters in both study sites. The research background materials, research instruments, guidance notes for moderators and interviewers, consent forms, and FGD rosters were compiled into research protocols. This document was reviewed by UNICEF Uganda and the national consultant and revised accordingly before fieldwork implementation.

The research team spent one week in each study site and sometimes split into teams of two to carry out FGDs and KIIs concurrently to adapt to changing circumstances and the schedule. The FGDs were moderated jointly by one or two research team members and an interpreter. One of the moderators was responsible for filling out the roster of participants at the onset of each FGD while the participants introduced themselves. Each FGD began with an introduction of the research team members, of the research objectives, rights of participants, and request for permission to record. Due to time limitations, consent was obtained verbally and with show of hands in the beginning of each FGD.

### Ethical principles

This research study was designed to ensure that the generated evidence is used to improve wellbeing of the population in Uganda through improved design and effectiveness of social protection programmes. The qualitative research protocols were designed to comply with ethical research principles by Graham, Powell, Anderson, and Fitzgerald (2013),<sup>22</sup> including benefits and protection from harm, informed consent, privacy and

confidentiality, and compensation.

The study was designed to maximize benefits and minimize risks or harm to participants. Since the FGDs included adolescents aged 18-24 years and members of some of the most vulnerable communities including refugees, any terms or references that would lead to distress or their stigmatization among community members were avoided during the discussions. In the beginning of each FGD, the participants were informed about i) the research objectives of the study, ii) their rights to participate in the discussions, including to express their views, to not express their views, and to leave the discussion at any time, iii) privacy and confidentiality protection, and iv) details about how the findings of the study would be used. Afterwards, they were asked for their verbal consent to permit the research team to record the discussion and take notes, and were assured that the data would be used only for the purposes of the study by the research team and not shared with any other parties. No monetary compensation was provided to respondents for their participation in the study. However, in FGDs the participants were provided with refreshments and where appropriate or necessary, also with compensation of their transportation costs.

### Challenges and limitations

**Site selection:** To avoid potential sources of bias and create a safe and trusting environment for the FGD respondents to share their views on social assistance programmes, the research methodology envisaged organizing the FGDs in 'neutral' venues such as schools or community centres. However, during fieldwork implementation, the team had to resort to other options for feasibility and convenience purposes, especially to accommodate to travel distances and safety

<sup>22</sup> Graham, A. et al. 2013.

of FGD participants. For instance, the FGD with GEG non-beneficiaries was held in UYDL premises, the FGD with SCG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Yumbe district was carried out in local government premises, as were the FGDs with UCWP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Arua city.

**Participant identification and sampling:** In absence of social assistance programme registries and/or difficulties in accessing them, except for SCG FGDs, programme beneficiaries were selected by social workers, NGOs (TMF and UYDL for GEG), and CDOs at district level. These focal persons also helped with access to communities and selection of non-beneficiaries following the predetermined criteria of vulnerability and demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Even though these individuals were not present during FGDs, their involvement in the selection process and logistical arrangements may have influenced some of the responses related to challenges and bottlenecks with programme delivery. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the participants of all the FGDs were open and did not hesitate to discuss about any of the topics in the research protocols.

**FGD moderation and research protocols:** The research protocols were fairly standardized across different social assistance programmes. However, adjustments needed to be made during fieldwork implementation to accommodate for the i) time needed for translation, ii) attention span of the respondents, and iii) other unforeseen circumstances – such as presence of babies and young children during administration of NutriCash FGDs.

## Data analysis

The qualitative research material collected during fieldwork in May was transcribed by research team members and interpreters. During this phase and the first round of reading of the transcribed material, each researcher wrote notes and memos to develop ideas

about the themes and coding system of the analysis, as well as on the relationships between categories/themes of the analysis. This was followed by development of the coding system based on the conceptual framework presented in Section 3 and the main research objectives and themes of the study. All the transcripts were coded for analysis using this system in MAXQDA software. Additional categories and sub-categories of coding were added based on new ideas or elements introduced by research participants (open coding). The qualitative data analysis, *content analysis*, involved analysis of coded segments, researchers' memos and summaries, and observational notes taken during fieldwork implementation.

## Validation

The data analysis process used several strategies proposed by Maxwell (2013)<sup>23</sup> for validation and to avoid bias in drawing generalizations and conclusions from content analysis. To begin with, the qualitative research covered a wide range of respondents – key informants responsible for administering, monitoring, and financing social assistance programmes; central and local level institutions, NGOs and development partners; beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of five different programmes; and urban and rural localities from two different areas, Kampala and Wes Nile sub-region. This enabled collection of ample/rich evidence for the analysis as well as triangulation of findings from two sets of instruments, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, which permitted a second layer of data triangulation. The data analysis process also attempted to quantify the more common patterns and trends by counting and presenting the frequencies of certain statements, beliefs, and perceptions, as well as by comparing them across different groups – localities, characteristics of respondents, and types of programmes. Discrepant evidence from the conceptual framework and negative cases are also presented for a comprehensive examination of the key themes.

23 Maxwell, Joseph A. 2013, vol. 41.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TARGETING AND SOCIAL COHESION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND INTERLINKAGES

This section first describes the links between social protection and social cohesion, and then dives deeper into social assistance targeting approaches, by providing a description of the different targeting methods, as well as an international review of their respective relations with social cohesion.

### 3.1. Social cohesion and social protection

Social cohesion has emerged as a central goal of development policy and UNDP (2016) points out that social cohesion leads to the deterring of anti-social behaviour, economic growth, higher quality of life, support for democracy, inclusivity and better health outcomes.<sup>24</sup>

Following UNDP's definition, social cohesion has two main dimensions<sup>25</sup>:

1. Reducing disparities, inequalities, and social exclusion
2. Strengthening social relations, interactions, and ties.

Moreover, it also involves tolerance of, and respect for diversity -in terms of religion, ethnicity, economic situation, political preferences, sexuality, gender and age) both institutionally and individually.<sup>26</sup> Pham and Vick (2017) indicate that the five main domains to assess within social cohesion are trust; community engagement; social distance and relations; support and solidarity; and identity, belonging and inclusion. They also highlight the relevance of "leadership, good governance and inclusive politics", which includes the perceived legitimacy and inclusiveness of the state and its institutions, including the ability of citizens to participate in political activity and electoral processes, how leaders conduct and implement decisions about public affairs, and how they manage public resources.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Idris (2017) points out that social cohesion has two aspects: relations and solidarity among citizens, and

relations between citizens and the state – also known as the "social contract".<sup>28</sup> Thus, social cohesion is also relevant for building trust not only within the community, but also improving the confidence of citizens in state systems, which can lead to greater support for government policies, reforms and programme implementation.<sup>29</sup>

According to the stakeholder interviews held during the project inception phase, social cohesion is very much rooted within the Ugandan society, as communities tend to be responsible for the wellbeing of all its members. Traditional communities, where certain solidarity organic forms prevail (e.g., reciprocal ties,



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<sup>24</sup> UNDP 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Phuong Pham and Patrick Vinck 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Fazley Elahi Mahmud and Joanne Sharpe 2022.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

village solidarity, religious structures or traditional solidarity), require that we look at social cohesion in relation to the ties that structure these groups. Indeed, while it is acknowledged that traditional communities are governed by ties of a different nature, based on territorial proximity, upheavals such as the implementation of development programmes can disrupt the dynamics of the structures in place.<sup>30</sup> The example of social assistance programmes illustrates the potential of such disruptions. By removing traditional mutual aid ties (religion, ethnicity, extended family), they can be considered as important breaks that fragilize traditional forms of solidarity, potentially creating new tensions. Thus, it is essential to analyse existing social dynamics and structures in order to understand the social ties that predated social assistance programmes (and their targeting mechanisms) and that may have been impacted by these selection processes.

## 3.2. Linking social protection and social

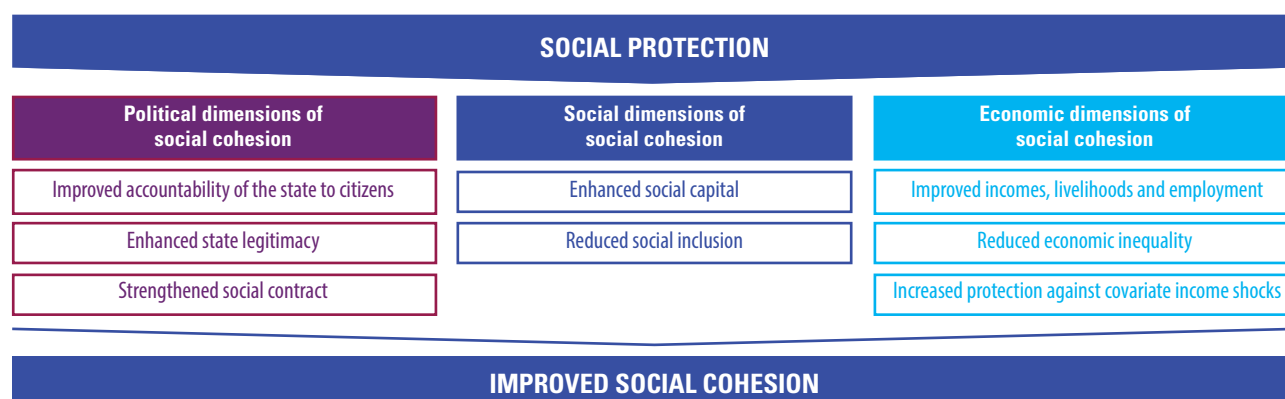
## cohesion

Social cohesion and social protection are tightly related concepts, since both aim to enhance equality and well-being within a society. According to Babajanian (2012), literature shows that social protection can affect social cohesion by accomplishing various outcomes including:<sup>31</sup>

- Establishing citizenship rights and a state-society contract;
- Ameliorating material poverty;
- Reducing economic and social inequalities;
- Tackling social exclusion and promoting social inclusion; and
- Strengthening social capital and interpersonal relations

These dimensions are also recognized by Schjødt et al. (2021) in Figure 2 below.

**FIGURE 2:** Theoretical Impact of Social Protection on Political, Social and Economic Dimensions of Social Cohesion



Source: Schjødt et al. (2021), p. 13.

Social cohesion is difficult to measure given its multidimensional nature. Literature shows that some efforts have been made to design indicators that can capture social cohesion. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB, 2006) constructed a Social Cohesion Index, which includes socio-economic, political and social capital indicators.<sup>32</sup> The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2007) gener-

ated three types of measurements with their respective indicators for measuring social cohesion, namely existing 'gaps', 'institutions', and 'belonging'.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, literature shows numerous international experiences of using social protection as a tool for enhancing social cohesion and national reconciliation, as shown in Box 1.

30 BALANDIER, M. G. (2016). p8

31 Babajanian 2012.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

## Box 1: International experiences

In **Latin America**, Argentina's 'Jefes y Jefas', an unemployment benefit programme, was introduced as a response to rapidly rising unemployment and the threat of unrest, as a result of rising poverty levels following the 2001 economic crisis. In Brazil, rights to social protection formed a key part of the new social contract developed after the end of military dictatorship, as reflected in the 1988 constitution. In Mexico, the conditional cash transfer programme "Progreso", was originally introduced in part to address the disaffection with the state among the indigenous people in Chiapas due to high levels of inequality. In Colombia, the conditional cash transfer programme "Familias en Accion", was first introduced as one component of a strategy for ending the war on narcotics trafficking and guerrilla groups, resulting effective for increasing school enrolment and eradicating child labour.

In **Sub-Saharan Africa**, Kenya also used social protection transfers as a tool for promoting stability in the face of civil unrest. In South Africa, social protection transfers have been a key part of crafting a new and more inclusive social contract after the end of Apartheid. In Rwanda, expansion of social protection through the 'Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme' (VUP) has been a key part of the development strategy that aims to promote social stability and the legitimacy of the ruling coalition, following the 1994 genocide.

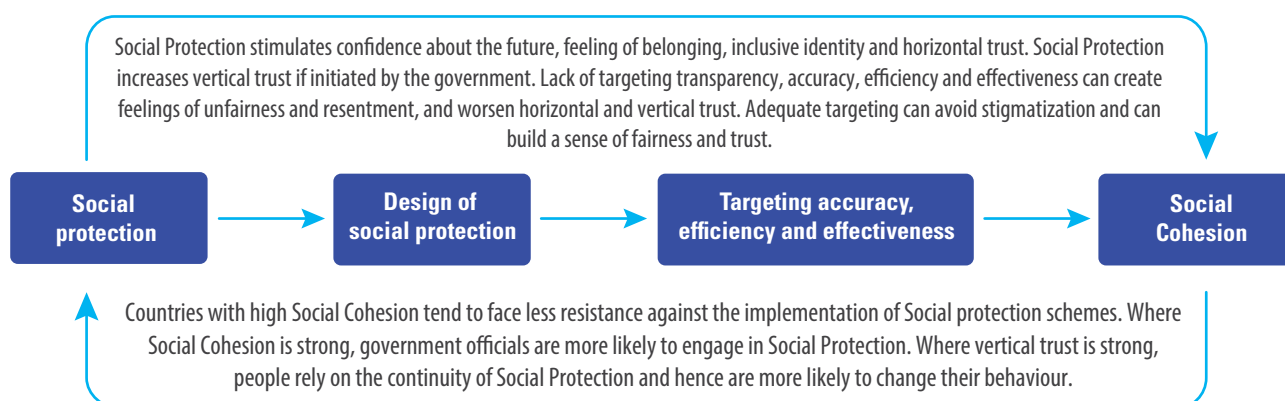
In **Asia**, Indonesia and India have used expansion of social protection (the conditional cash transfer programme 'Program Keluarga Harapan' (PKH) and the 'NREGA' public works programme respectively) as a key element in building and strengthening the social contract. The rapid expansion of China's 'Minimum Living Standards Scheme' has also been a key strategy for countering rising unemployment and inequality between population groups and regions, thereby mitigating the risk of spreading social unrest. In the Philippines, the 'Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program' (4P) conditional cash transfer programme is partly targeted at conflict-affected areas, and there is experimental evidence showing that the programme has caused a substantial decrease in conflict-related incidents and reduced insurgent influence in the villages where it is present. In Sri Lanka, the state's long-term commitment to social welfare is a key part of the social contract between the state and citizens. Following the civil war between 1983 and 2009, social protection has been an important tool for re-creating linkages between citizens and the state and rebuild trust after the war. In Timor-Leste, the government put in place an asset of cash transfers aiming to alleviate poverty and thereby mitigate the risk of future unrest and instability due to widespread poverty.

Source: Schjødt et al. (2021), p. 14.

Conceptually, there are several arguments that support the assumption that social protection and social cohesion are interlinked. According to Burchi et al. (2022), households that are well protected against the most serious of their individual risks tend to have more confidence in themselves, feel better included in society because they have opportunities and hence do not feel alienated from society.<sup>34</sup> However, there are a few challenges in establishing a direct relationship between social protection and social cohesion. In this sense, programme design is crucial to ensure that social protection follows the "do no harm" approach, and it is effectively designed so that it can enhance social inclusion. Schjødt et al. (2021), point out several elements

of programme design that can have a direct impact on social cohesion, such as the conditionalities of a benefit, adequacy, the existence of grievance redress mechanisms (GRM) and other social accountability tools, the payment methods or the targeting methods.<sup>35</sup> For instance, a well-designed targeting method can have a strong impact on how beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of a programme feel about each other. The main mechanisms linking social protection and social cohesion are summarised in Figure 3, which illustrates that the impact of social protection on social cohesion also depends on the specific design of the programme as well as on the accuracy, efficiency and effectiveness of the selection of beneficiaries.

**FIGURE 3:** Main Mechanisms of Linkage Between Social Protection and Social Cohesion



Source: Authors' elaboration based on Burchi et al. 2022

<sup>34</sup> Francesco Burchi et al. 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Rasmus Jensen Schjødt et al. 2021.



## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TARGETING AND SOCIAL COHESION



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As seen in Figure 3, the impact of social protection on social cohesion largely depends on the chosen targeting mechanism. Social protection programmes use different types of targeting methodologies and approaches. Generally speaking, targeting can either follow a **universal approach**, or a **poverty-based approach**. The universal approach states that every individual within an intended category is eligible for the programme in place, regardless of their vulnerability, status, or occupation. On the other hand, poverty-based targeting aims to identify and select the people who need social benefits the most. For both universal and poverty-based approaches, a **categorical selection** can be applied. This method implies selecting eligible individuals or households based on clear categorical criteria, which are observable and/or verifiable characteristics that do not require the collection of a large amount of data<sup>36</sup>. The categories used are often linked to objective indicators such as demographics (age, sex, status, etc). For example, a universal child benefit scheme would target every single household with at least one child.

For poverty-targeted schemes, categorical targeting can be used as a second-layer selection in combination of any other poverty-based targeting design, including **means testing**, **proxy-means testing (PMT)**, **community-based targeting (CBT)**, **self-targeting**, **benefit testing** and **geographical targeting**.

The subsections below describe all the targeting approaches and methodologies, with their respective implications for social cohesion.

### 4.1. The universal approach

The universal approach includes all people within one specific clear-cut category. To this day, universal basic income (UBI) schemes are the broadest type of universal programme, as they provide cash to all adults without any further consideration. Although some worry that UBI may cause disincentives to work (despite available evidence showing limited or no impact of UBI-type schemes on aggregate measures of participation in

<sup>36</sup> Cirillo, C., Györi, M., Veras Soares, F. 2017.



paid work<sup>37</sup>), other universal schemes usually engender broader public support than those that are narrowly targeted<sup>38</sup>. In particular, universal programmes targeted to children (e.g., universal child benefits) and the elderly (e.g., social pensions) are typically well accepted<sup>39</sup>. In practice, out of the sixty-nine countries globally that have some form of child benefit, twenty-three offer them on a universal basis<sup>40</sup>, and many African countries besides Uganda have developed some sort of universal old-age pension, including Botswana, Cabo Verde, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa<sup>41</sup>.

Overall, universal schemes seem to have a more positive impact on enhancing cohesion within communities compared to poverty-targeted programmes because the latter can be stigmatising<sup>42</sup> with adverse effects on social cohesion within communities<sup>43</sup>. Institutional stigmatization may even deter people from taking up their rights<sup>44</sup>. For example, there is evidence that the CCT programmes in Peru (*Juntos*), Bolivia (*Bono Juana Azurduy*) and Ecuador (*Bono de Desarrollo Humano*) have had unintended consequences on beneficiaries, such as language discrimination and stigma from the service providers<sup>45</sup>. These programmes used, respectively, (i) geographical and proxy-means testing; (ii) categorical targeting; and (iii) PMT, categorical, geographical and community-based targeting methods. Next, it has been argued that narrow and complex targeting may foster tensions between recipients and non-recipients, while punitive and paternalistic conditionalities may increase social divisions<sup>46</sup>.

## 4.2. Poverty-based targeting

In contexts where public resources are scarce, both political and technical obstacles can be discouraging in providing meaningful universal benefits<sup>47</sup>; targeting thus allows focusing on the people who most need social benefits. Recent empirical work demonstrated

that targeted programmes are more cost-effective than universal ones, particularly when facing strict budget constraints<sup>48</sup>. However, targeting methodologies come with some risks, such as high administrative costs and significant exclusion and inclusion errors<sup>49</sup> as well as potential implications for social cohesion.

### Means testing

Means-tested programmes provide poverty-targeted benefits to all individuals or households whose income or wealth falls below a fixed eligibility threshold. While this system is very common in high-income countries, it can be difficult to implement and administratively costly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) where informal economies are dominant and income is difficult to verify. Means-testing is in fact described as ‘the most data-demanding targeting mechanism’<sup>50</sup> and is likely to lead to both inclusion and exclusion errors when data are scarce or not fully reliable. Individuals could even wrongfully declare lower incomes in order to receive the benefits. Additionally, since means-testing solely relies on a monetary threshold, it can create work disincentives<sup>51</sup>, or at least a reluctance to work additional hours and to increase earnings. Means-tested benefits at old age could also dissuade people from saving for pensions, creating a moral hazard<sup>52</sup>.

Additionally, means testing can be detrimental to social cohesion because of the stigma associated with beneficiaries of social assistance<sup>53</sup>, as they are often viewed as lacking the will to get ahead without public assistance or are thought to engage in legally or morally questionable strategies to qualify for programmes<sup>54</sup>. Stigmatised individuals may be excluded from social interactions but may also refrain from engaging with others due to low self-esteem. Stigmatisation can contribute to severing existing social ties and to hindering the development of new ones.<sup>55</sup> Such stigma, together with invasive

37 Gentilini et al. 2020.

38 Bastagli et al. 2020.

39 Ibid.

40 Kidd, Athias, and Tran 2021.

41 ILO and World Bank Group 2016.

42 Kidd 2014.

43 Miller et al. 2008.

44 Walker 2014.

45 Fazley Elahi Mahmud and Joanne Sharpe 2022.

46 Bastagli et al. 2020.

47 Social protection: Universal or poverty targeting approaches? 2016.

48 Grosh and Leite 2014.

49 Kidd and Athias 2020.

50 Devereux et al. 2017.

51 Bradshaw 2012.

52 Gugushvili and Hirsch 2014.

53 Stuber and Schlesinger 2006.

54 Iffat Idris 2017.

55 Ibid.

application procedures can even prevent eligible people from applying<sup>56</sup>. For example, a review from the European Commission highlighted that in Germany, Austria and Ireland, the take-up rates of means-tested benefits are below 50 percent, due to fear of stigma, high application costs, lack of information about the eligibility and administrative errors<sup>57</sup>. Moreover, many people in rural China affirmed they were too ashamed to claim benefits to which they were entitled under the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee System or *Dibao* scheme<sup>58</sup>, which is a means-tested welfare programme targeting households living in extreme poverty. Moreover, the means-testing process can be prejudicial to people living in poverty, as it insists that applicants admit to their poverty and prove they are deserving of benefits<sup>59</sup>. Finally, establishing groups who are eligible to receive benefits versus those who are not is divisive and can create envy and claims of unfairness<sup>60</sup>, hence deterring social cohesion within a community.

### Proxy means testing

Proxy means-testing (PMT) was developed to address the difficult implementation of means testing in countries with high rates of informal employment. The PMT methodology tries to predict a household's level of welfare with an algorithm that uses proxies for income<sup>61</sup>. These proxy indicators are usually determined through an analysis of national household survey datasets, and should be observable, measurable, and correlated with consumption or income. One caveat is that the reliability of the equation on which the PMT is based depends on the reliability of the underlying survey<sup>62</sup>. The proxies can be based on: demographics; human capital; type of housing; durable goods; and, productive assets such as livestock or land<sup>63</sup>. Based on an analysis of these indicators, scores are allocated to households, ranking them from the poorest to the richest, and households with a qualifying score are selected to receive the benefit. The PMT method is used throughout the globe, mainly in LMICs such as Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Indonesia,

the Philippines, Burkina Faso, Ecuador and Jamaica<sup>64</sup>.

Although the method overcomes some of the challenges of the means-testing method, it can still undermine social cohesion, as there is evidence that PMT causes social conflict within communities, largely because people perceive them as lotteries, and community members cannot understand why some people living in poverty are selected while others who are equally deserving are excluded<sup>65</sup>. In Lesotho, for example, PMT has caused a lot of tensions between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of a social assistance programme because of a poor understanding of the targeting criteria and perceived exclusion of many households living in poverty<sup>66</sup>. In fact, studies have found that PMT often causes high exclusion errors, ranging from around 50 to 93 per cent<sup>67</sup>. For example, in Northern Kenya, the targeting of the *Hunger Safety Net Programme* (HSNP) only included 38 per cent of the intended poorest 26 per cent of households<sup>68</sup>. In Indonesia, the *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) CCT scheme excluded 93 per cent of the poorest 5 per cent of households<sup>69</sup>. In Cambodia, around 56 per cent of households living in poverty were excluded by the ID-Poor PMT targeting mechanism<sup>70</sup>. And in Mexico, the *Oportunidades* programme excluded around 70 per cent of the poorest 20 per cent of the population<sup>71</sup>. Additionally, when people living in extreme poverty are excluded by PMTs, they sometimes accuse programme staff or village chiefs of stealing their money, since they cannot understand the reasons for their exclusion<sup>72</sup>, which deters vertical social cohesion.

### Community-based targeting

Community-based targeting (CBT) uses the judgement of community members to identify the poorest households in a community. Decisions can be made among community leaders or elites, the entire community, or facilitators working with communities in a more intensive process to develop local criteria that will be applied

56 Sen 1995

57 Matsagani, Paulus, and Sutherland 2008.

58 Li and Walker 2017.

59 Yang and Walker 2019.

60 Devereux et al. 2017.

61 Kidd and Athias 2020.

62 Budlender 2014."language":"en",publisher:"UN Women – Multi-Country Office – Caribbean",title:"Considerations In Using Proxy Means Tests In Eastern Caribbean States (Full Paper

63 Kidd and Athias 2020.

64 Fiszbein and Schady 2009.

65 Stephen Kidd, Bjorn Gelders, and Diloá Bailey-Athias 2017.

66 Kardan and Sindou 2014.

67 Stephen Kidd, Bjorn Gelders, and Diloá Bailey-Athias 2017.

68 Silva-Leander and Merttens 2016.

69 Alatas et al. 2016.

70 Stephen Kidd, Bjorn Gelders, and Diloá Bailey-Athias 2017.

71 Soares, Ribas, and Osorio 2008.

72 Stephen Kidd, Bjorn Gelders, and Diloá Bailey-Athias 2017.

to rank households from ‘poorest’ to ‘richest.’<sup>73</sup> The method is seen as more cost effective than statistical targeting<sup>74</sup>, but does shift some costs from governments to community members, as they have to attend community meetings, thus foregoing the revenue they would have earned during that time<sup>75</sup>.

When implemented properly, CBT can be beneficial to the social cohesion of a particular community, as it stimulates community ownership over the programme, and ensures that targeting results are socially acceptable and widely understood<sup>76</sup>. Nonetheless, there’s a risk that those who are already socially excluded are not taken into account in the decision, and thus further left out of the society<sup>77</sup>. Exclusion of some people in need could also happen, voluntarily or not, if only elite groups are involved in the decision process<sup>78</sup>. Moreover, in communities where serious conflict exists between different ethnic, religious or social groups, CBT should be avoided as it is likely to exacerbate such conflicts<sup>79</sup>. A study focusing on Burkina Faso - where a 50-percent discount on the premium of the community-based health insurance was offered to the poorest quintile of households in each village and urban neighbourhood- found that community-based targeting is much less accurate than statistical targeting in villages, although it is as accurate as the much more costly statistical methods in semi-urban areas<sup>80</sup>. Overall, it has been found that CBT can be effective in sub-Saharan Africa if it combined with other targeting methods, and if community perception of fairness, clarity in communication, frequency of retargeting and effective appeals procedures are considered<sup>81</sup>.

## Geographical targeting

Geographical-targeted programmes focus on districts, villages or regions where poverty is known to be chronic, or where vulnerability levels are high due to factors such as conflicts, proneness to natural disasters, presence of internally displaced people, etc. Geographical

targeting is very common in LMICs and is often used in combination with at least another targeting method<sup>82</sup>. The method typically involves clear criteria for identifying target groups, and can help allocate social welfare benefits as well as regional-development resources<sup>83</sup>. In most countries, censuses are the only data source that provide information for all small geographical units. However, their weakness is that they collect only few variables linked to poverty<sup>84</sup>. Because many governments in LMICs lack recent, reliable data on where poverty is concentrated, a geographically targeted programme must either rely on potentially inaccurate and outdated poverty maps or accept the efficiency losses of targeting larger administrative units<sup>85</sup>. Yet, innovations in the field include image recognition and machine learning methods to reduce the data gaps and move towards more efficient anti-poverty policies. Researchers have used night-time light data and daytime images to estimate village poverty rates in Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi, and Rwanda<sup>86</sup>; others have used High Resolution Satellite Imagery poverty maps to estimate poverty incidence and programme eligibility in São Tomé and Príncipe<sup>87</sup>. Creating poverty maps using big data and machine learning is a notable opportunity to enhance the geographical targeting of social protection<sup>88</sup>.

In terms of social impact, geographical targeting can both enhance and threaten social cohesion. On one hand, when budgets are insufficient to cover all people living in poverty, reducing the geographic scope of social safety nets to ensure that all inhabitants within a community have access to the benefits can enhance the positive effects of cash transfer programs.<sup>89</sup> A recent study conducted in Niger found that the isolated performance of geographical targeting was better than the one of the universal approach, as the share of inclusion errors was 54 percent with geographical targeting, compared to 70 per cent with the universal approach<sup>90</sup>. On the other hand, the method could go against the

73 Kidd and Athias 2020.

74 Hillebrecht et al. 2020.

75 McCord 2017.

76 *Community-Based Targeting Guide* 2015.

77 Ulanowski 2023.

78 Ibid.

79 *Community-Based Targeting Guide* 2015.

80 Hillebrecht et al. 2020.

81 Davis et al. 2012.

82 Coady, Grosh, and Hoddinott 2004.

83 Bigman and Fofack 2000.

84 Coady, Grosh, and Hoddinott 2004.

85 Smythe and Blumenstock 2022.

86 Jean et al. 2016.

87 Fisker et al. 2022.

88 Grosh et al. 2022.

89 Della Guardia, Lake, and Schnitzer 2022.

90 Schnitzer 2018.

principle of horizontal equity because concentrating resources in the poorest areas will tend to exclude some who are equally deprived but just happen to live in a less poor region<sup>91</sup>. Moreover, the areas that are not covered by the public programmes could feel that the system is unfair<sup>92</sup>, and non-beneficiary departments could bring in political pressure, as was the case with the Bolivian Social Investment Fund<sup>93</sup>. It has to be noted that the efficiency of geographical targeting largely depends on the concentration of poor households within the geographic areas; for example, in Ecuador and Peru, estimated poverty levels were not significantly different from one region to another, thus geographical targeting was not adequate<sup>94</sup>.

### Self-targeting

Self-targeting programmes let people make their own decision on whether or not they should participate in the scheme. The methodology is often used in food subsidies programmes<sup>95</sup>, or workfare schemes, such as the rural employment guarantee schemes implemented in India and in Ethiopia<sup>96</sup>. Typically, a low benefit is set for those participating in the scheme on the assumption that only the poorest will be willing to receive it. In theory, the programme is universal, but its design is meant to discourage those who are better-off from participating.<sup>97</sup>

To some extent, this approach seems to promote social cohesion as it reduces exclusion and inclusion errors; indeed, a randomized experiment on the above-mentioned PKH programme in Indonesia compared self-targeting and proxy-means testing, and demonstrated that in villages where self-selection was required, the poor were more likely to apply than the rich, even conditional on whether they would pass the asset test. Additionally, the villages where applications were required had a much poorer group of beneficiaries than the ones where enumerators were in charge of enrolling beneficiary households<sup>98</sup>. Although this approach may appear as a lesser threat to social cohesion, it does not tackle economic inequalities, since the typically low transfer

often means that only the poorest of the poor are willing to earn it, and the amount received will likely not be effective in lifting them out of poverty.

### Benefit testing

Benefit testing can be regarded as a simple form of means testing: it is used by some governments to offer universal coverage to those who do not receive sufficient benefits, usually because they have not contributed (sufficiently) to social insurance. For example, a tax-financed social pension could be offered to all those not receiving state pension, with the aim of offering universal pension coverage at a reduced cost to the state<sup>99</sup>.

Using the same argument as with means testing, one potential risk would be that benefit-testing could cause moral hazard and deter people from saving for their pension or from signing up for social insurance. Moreover, although pension-tested benefits should provide universal coverage for the elderly, evidence from Mexico and Vietnam show exclusion errors above 40 percent<sup>100</sup>.

## 4.3. Summary

Overall, all targeting methods come with risks and opportunities. In contexts where poverty is dominant, targeting can cause new fissures within a community, due to both jealousy and scepticism with regard to the perceived deservingness of recipients vis-à-vis other village inhabitants<sup>101</sup>. Therefore, social protection programmes need to be carefully designed, screened and monitored in order to strengthen trust and social cohesion, and the criteria for inclusion in a programme need to be clear, reasonable and transparent<sup>102</sup>. It is important to note that there is no single preferred targeting method that would be equally effective across regional and country differences; methods must be adjusted to the purpose of the program, availability of data, capacity of institutions, and also depend on factors such as economic recessions, health emergencies or natural disasters<sup>103</sup>.

91 Coady, Grosh, and Hoddinott 2004.

92 Lavalley et al. 2010.

93 Grosh 1994.

94 Lavalley et al. 2010.

95 Alderman and Lindert 1998.

96 Malaza 2022.

97 Kidd and Athias 2020.

98 Alatas et al. 2016.

99 Kidd and Athias 2020.

100 Ibid.

101 Della Guardia, Lake, and Schnitzer 2022.

102 Koehler 2021.

103 Rutkoski and Grosh 2022.



## MAPPING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TARGETING IN UGANDA

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### 5.1. Institutional, policy and legal framework for social protection

According to the 2015 Uganda National Social Protection Policy (NSPP), the country aspires for a high standard of living for citizens by 2040, and the provision of social protection services to the different categories of the population is one of the strategic actions to achieve this vision.<sup>104</sup> The vision of the NSPP is to have a society where all individuals are secure and resilient to socio-economic risks and shocks. The objectives are 1) to increase access to social security; 2) to enhance care, protection and support for vulnerable people; and 3) to strengthen the institutional framework for social protection service delivery.<sup>105</sup> According to the NSPP, the social protection system in Uganda is comprised of two pillars, namely: **social security** and **social care and support** services. Social security covers protective and preventive interventions to mitigate factors leading to income shocks that affect consumption, while social care and support services are a set of services that provide care, support, protection and empowerment to

vulnerable individuals. Social security is further divided into two components, namely **direct income support** and **social insurance**. According to the NSSP, 'Direct Income Support includes non-contributory regular, predictable cash and in-kind transfers that provide relief from deprivation to the most vulnerable individuals and households in society, while Social Insurance are contributory arrangements to mitigate livelihood risks and shocks such as retirement, loss of employment, work-related disability and ill health'.

Despite government's efforts to provide social assistance programmes, funding for the social sector remained below the anticipated levels throughout 2022, hindering the ability to recover from recent shocks and crises. Allocations for education and healthcare in the 2021/22 period accounted for 8.6% and 7.54% of the overall national budget, respectively<sup>106</sup>, whereas the financing for social protection continued to suffer from underfunding, with fewer than 3% of Ugandans benefiting from any form of social protection before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic – a figure significantly lower

<sup>104</sup> Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Government of Uganda. 2015.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> UNICEF Uganda 2022.

than the African average of 17.8%<sup>107</sup>. Social assistance spending in Uganda is very low both in absolute terms and compared to regional neighbours. The approved budget for the FY 2022/23 for the main social protection programmes<sup>108</sup> accounted for only 175.8 billion shillings<sup>109</sup>, which represents 0.47 percent of government spending for that year. This is well below the spending on social assistance in Rwanda and Kenya, which spend as much as 5.3<sup>110</sup> and 1.17<sup>111</sup> percent respectively.

The Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MoGLSD) had to reduce its own funding allocation by 33% for the 2023/24 fiscal year, lowering the budget from Ugx 249 billion in 2022/23 to Ugx 167 billion, due to an 80% across-the-board reduction in subventions imposed by the Ministry of Finance during the preparation of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for various programmes. As a result, funding for the Gender and Social Protection sub-program has experienced a one-third decrease, going from Ugx 198 billion to Ugx 138 billion. This reduction is expected to negatively affect the execution of social protection initiatives<sup>112</sup>. The MGLSD recognises that most investments in social care and support have been funded by donors.<sup>113</sup> The World Bank Group recently cautioned the government of Uganda about dependence on donor funding for its social protection programmes.

In terms of coverage, according to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), in 2020 7.5 per cent of population had access to social insurance, 7.5 per cent had access to health insurance, 0.7 per cent had direct income support, and 5 per cent had access to social care. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2019 only 2.8 per cent of the Ugandan population was covered by at least one social protection benefit.<sup>114</sup>

The right to social protection in Uganda is foreseen in the Constitution, some existing legislation and national planning documents. In terms of policies, since 2015, the NSPP has the mission of establishing comprehensive social protection services to address risks and vulnerabilities.<sup>115</sup>

Regarding the institutional framework for policy implementation, the NSPP recognizes a multi-sectoral approach using Central and Local Government service delivery structures. The main responsible stakeholder for social protection is the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and its directorates and departments (Directorate of Social Protection; Directorate of Labour; Directorate of Development; Directorate of Health and Safety; Directorate of Gender and Community), responsible for leading policy, law, planning and the other functions allocated to a lead agency.<sup>116</sup> According to the MGLSD, the structure of the ministry was determined prior to the development of the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), leading to a lack of organization to best deliver the policy. Moreover, NSPS is not structured along the lines of the two pillars and three components of social protection in the NSPP framework. There are a number of structural anomalies, including the existence of social protection responsibility outside the social protection directorate; a fragmented and duplicated structure of departments within MGLSD's four directorates; and the absence of a State Minister with responsibility for social protection despite it being one of the ministry's most significant mandates and that with the largest budget.<sup>117</sup> Other ministries also have a role in social protection policy design and/or implementation, such as the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; the Ministry of Public Service, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Sports; the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries; the Ministry of Local Government; as well as the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. Other institutions that also engage in promoting, implementing and/or monitoring implementation of social protection policies are the National Youth Council, National Council for Children, National Disability Council, National Council for Older Persons, and National Women's Council. In the legislative government branch, the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection (UPFSP) has the mission to advocate and promote the rights and the empowerment of vulnerable persons in Uganda through effective

107 Ibid.

108 SAGE, Enterprise fund for older persons; Special Grant for People with Disabilities; Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Programme; Youth Livelihood Programme.

109 *ISER's Position on the 2023-24 Social Protection Budget – Initiative for Social and Economic Rights 2023*.

110 Social protection budget briefs | UNICEF Rwanda 2023.

111 Human Rights-Based Analysis of Kenya's Budget, 2022/2023 2022.

112 *ISER's Position on the 2023-24 Social Protection Budget – Initiative for Social and Economic Rights 2023*.

113 Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Government of Uganda. 2020b.

114 International Labour Organization 2023.

115 Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Government of Uganda. 2020b.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.



tive stakeholder engagement and legislation.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, the expected roles of different actors in social protection still remain unclear, with a somewhat problematic coordination of social protection in the country.<sup>119</sup>

Regarding the policy and legal framework of sector, a wide range of policies, plans, laws, and regulations have been developed by the Government of Uganda with the objective to define and strengthen social protection in the country. The most relevant ones are listed in Annex 2.

Regarding the main policy initiatives, the **Expanding Social Protection (ESP) Programme**, both phase I (2010-2015) and phase II (2016-2022), have been the foundation of the national social protection system in line with the NSPP. The ESP programme was piloted between 2010-2015 by the Government of Uganda, with support from DFID/UKAID, Irish Aid and UNICEF. The ESP I had two objectives; (i) to develop the NSPP and, (ii) to pilot the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) under which the SCG was implemented.<sup>120</sup> The

following sub-section provides more details on SAGE.

## 5.2. Social assistance programmes and their targeting mechanisms

The 2015 NSPP identifies six types of social protection in the country: (i) Public Service Pension Scheme; (ii) National Social Security Fund, Workers Compensation; (iii) Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE); (iv) Public Works Programmes; (v) Social Care and Support Services and (vi) Savings initiatives (Formal and Informal).

There also exist several livelihoods programmes which aim at supporting the use of a skill or an asset, while creating opportunities to vulnerable people. All these programmes are classified in Table 3, which is adapted from UNICEF's Social Protection Investment Case for Uganda (2017) and updated with inputs from consultations with UNICEF, the MGLSD, the OPM, World Food Programme (WFP) and the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection (UPFSP).

**TABLE 3: Uganda's Social Protection System**

Social Security	
Direct Income Support	Social Insurance
<b>Unconditional (Cash) Transfers (UCT)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) (including Senior Citizens Grant – SCG)</li><li>• NutriCash</li><li>• Girls Empowering Girls (GEG)</li><li>• Cash Relief for COVID-19</li><li>• WFP School Feeding Program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retirement Benefit Scheme</li><li>• Public Service Pension Scheme (PSPS)</li><li>• Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) Schemes (Kisizi Community Health Insurance Scheme, Kitovu Community Health Insurance Scheme, Ishaka Health Plan, Nyamwegabira Community Based Health Insurance Scheme)</li><li>• Private Health Insurance Arrangements</li><li>• National Social Security Fund</li><li>• Voluntary Retirement Benefit Schemes such as<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Parliamentary pension scheme</li><li>– Bank of Uganda Retirement Benefit Schemes</li></ul></li><li>• Workers Compensation</li></ul>
<b>Public Work Programmes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF)</li><li>• Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP)</li></ul>	
<b>Livelihood programmes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)</li><li>• Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP)</li><li>• Women Empowerment Programme</li><li>• The Youth Venture Capital Fund</li><li>• Special Grant for Persons with Disability</li><li>• (Parish Development Model)</li></ul>	
Social Care and Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traditional Social Networks</li><li>• Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)</li></ul>	

Source: Own elaboration based on NSPP 2015.

118 Parliament of the Republic of Uganda Official Website n/d.

119 Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Government of Uganda. 2020b.

120 Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Government of Uganda. n/d.

For this study, 'social assistance' is defined under what is defined as 'Direct Income Support'. All social assistance programmes are discussed in turn below. Greater emphasis is put on the programme covered in the study, namely SAGE, DRDIP, NutriCash, GEG and the UCWP.

### *Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE)*

The most important UCT in Uganda is the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE). SAGE was first piloted with two types of direct income support grants: the Senior Citizens Grants (SCG) and the Vulnerable Family Grants (VFG).

The *Senior Citizens Grant* is an individual grant to older persons to enable them to access basic services. This universal programme was first piloted in 15 districts where UGX 25,000 per month were given to qualifying senior citizens. Under this pilot phase, a total of 123,000 senior citizens benefited in the districts of Kyenjojo, Kiboga, Kaberamaido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Nebbi, Apac, Katakwi, Kileleshya, Kyegegwa, Napak, Zombo, Kyenkwanzi, Yumbe and Amudatand. The grant was given to all seniors above the age of 65 years old, but in more vulnerable Karamoja region, the grant was given to elderly from the age of 60 years old and above. Following the successful implementation of the pilot, in August 2015, the Government announced a phased national rollout of the Senior Citizens Grant, to cover older persons aged 80 years and above in an additional 40 districts over the next 5 years. The 20 subsequent districts to benefit from the grants were: Kaabong, Abim, Kotido, Koboko, Gulu, Pader, Agago, Lamwo, Amolatar, Pallisa, Amuria, Kween, Namayingo, Mayuge, Kamuli, Kayunga, Nakasongola, Kibaale, Kisoro and Bundibugyo. During this phase, the selection of beneficiaries relied on **community-based targeting**; the community local leadership was responsible for verification of the age and only 100 oldest persons in the community would be eligible to receive the cash benefit. In the financial year 2018/2019, the Cabinet announced a national rollout (scale-up) of the programme to cover all older persons above the age of 80, transforming the programme to a **universally targeted** one across the entire country. The only eligibility condition is that recipients have a national ID that proves that they fulfil the age criterion, i.e., fall into the right age bracket.

The **Vulnerable Family Grant**, on the other hand, was a household-level grant paid to poor and vulnerable households that lacked labour capacity. However, in June 2015, the MGLSD decided to terminate the programme because the pilot phase evaluation demonstrated that unlike the SCG, the Vulnerable Family Grant was contentious and not well accepted by the community. In some districts, community leaders even requested the Ministry to remove the grant and replace it with the SCG<sup>121</sup>. The targeting method employed for the VFG particularly led to complaints from the community<sup>122</sup>. It was a **proxy-means test (PMT)** based a composite index using demographic indicators of vulnerability such as disability, old or young age, orphanhood and widowhood to determine eligibility. If present in a beneficiary household, adult women were selected by the programme to be the actual recipient of transfers. However, according to consultations with key stakeholders, the criteria of selection were not categorical enough, leading scepticism from non-recipients as well as targeting errors. Moreover, the fact that the VFG was a household grant made its administration problematic and not well appreciated by the communities<sup>123</sup>.

### *Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)*

The Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) is a World Bank funded multi-regional project which covers four countries in the East African Region, namely Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia. In Uganda, DRDIP is a five-year project implemented under the Office of the Prime Minister. For over five decades, Uganda has provided asylum to people fleeing war and persecution from many countries, including its neighbours. In order to address the social economic, and environmental impacts of protracted refugee presence in the host communities and refugee settlements, the project offers interlinked investment components. DRDIP provides both development and direct income support to the poor and vulnerable within refugee hosting districts in Uganda. DRDIP Uganda is funded by a USD 150 million grant and a USD 50 million IDA loan, approved by the World Bank in 2017 and became effective on June 17<sup>th</sup> 2017<sup>124</sup>. DRDIP aims to expand access to basic social services (health, education, water and sanitation), develop economic oppor

<sup>121</sup> Community Based Services | Sheema District n.d.

<sup>122</sup> Uganda Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) programme 2018.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) – Office of the Prime Minister – A Coordinated, Responsive and Accountable Government for Socio-Economic Transformation n.d.

tunities and improve environmental management for refugee host district communities and settlements. The project is currently being implemented in 15 refugee hosting districts of Arua, Koboko, Yumbe, Moyo, Adjumani, Obongi, Madi-Okollo and Terego (in the West Nile sub-region), Lamwo (in Acholi sub-region); Hoima, Kikuube, and Kiryandongo (in the Bunyoro sub-region); and Isingiro, Kyegegwa and Kamwenge (in the South-Western sub-region).

DRDIP consists of the following components: (i) Supporting investments in social services and economic infrastructure and building of the capacity of local government units; (ii) Environmental management activities; (iii) Investment in traditional and non-traditional livelihoods; and (iv) Support of the national and local level project coordination activities. DRDIP includes a component of compulsory savings that will later on help recipients to start their own enterprise.

In terms of targeting, the first criterion of selection for DRDIP is **geographical targeting**, as the project is implemented in fifteen refugee hosting districts. It is expected to benefit a total of 1,510,7593 host and 1,250,0004 refugee population and supports an area-based planning approach which will enable the communities to identify and prioritize investments with specific focus on women and youth, who are disproportionately affected by the displacement<sup>125</sup>. According to one of the key informants interviewed during fieldwork, DRDIP also applies a **community-based targeting** method, using a wealth ranking criterion. This method involves the community facilitators and the community development officers, and it aims to categorize the population into three groups: “active poor”, “poorest of the poor” and “the unable bodied”.

According to an informant from the OPM, vulnerable people are grouped into the following categories:

1. **Abled-body poor (active poor):** This group includes those who are poor but are not disabled, pregnant women, elderly, children, nor critically sick. They are usually covered by cash-for-work and livelihoods programme, which provides a small capital to enhance their enterprises.
2. **The poorest of the poor:** These are the poorest identified in the population. They are usually provided a cash benefit and are trained to make better savings; they can then transition to the active group.

3. **The unable bodied:** The group includes the very critically ill, disabled, children, etc. who are unable to work. They receive a cash transfer through the Labour-Intensive Public Works (LIPW) component, and are also trained, mentored, incorporated in activities they can manage so that they may eventually also transition in the programme.

## NutriCash

NutriCash is a pilot project that provides UGX 48,000 monthly to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers with children under the age of two across eight districts of West Nile region, in north-western Uganda<sup>126</sup>. Its purpose is to provide immediate support to help meet nutrition needs of infants and mothers, and particularly to reduce stunting and anaemia, while also including a mandatory savings component. NutriCash is part of the Child Sensitive Social Protection Programme funded by Sweden. The programme is targeted to women living in households that are already benefitting under the LIPW component of the DRDIP programme. The WFP and UNICEF administer the programme in collaboration with the Government of Sweden, the OPM, MGLSD, Save the Children, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Local Government. The project builds on previous COVID-19 emergency cash support provided by Sweden to more than 120,000 vulnerable households in West Nile. NutriCash aims to further strengthen government’s social protection and integrate nutrition into national health systems. The Government is already reviewing social protection policies to make sure that they comprise nutrition as a key component.

A consultation with a key informant from WFP shows that the targeting methods used for NutriCash are **geographical, community-based and categorical targeting**. The targeting steps are as follows:

1. Refugee hosting districts in the following sub-regions: West Nile, Acholi, Bunyoro, and South West (*geographical targeting*).
2. NutriCash only considers households where a member is benefiting from the LIPW component of DRDIP (*categorical targeting*).
3. It then only considers the poorest 10 percent, identified through the wealth-ranking criteria (*community-based targeting*).
4. Lastly, it considers only those households with pregnant women (*categorical targeting*).

<sup>125</sup> DRDIP n.d.

<sup>126</sup> UNICEF n.d.

## Girls Empowering Girls

Girls Empowering Girls (GEG) is a programme aimed at supporting girls' safe transition to adulthood, ensuring the greater inclusion and protection of adolescent girls through strengthened socio-economic outcomes and prospects.<sup>127</sup> It does so by supporting adolescent girls living in Kampala, providing avenues to empower girls through a network of peer mentors, engaging them through education, training and referrals to support services, and enabling them to pursue better opportunities for their future through a small cash transfer of UGX 40,000 or (UGX 60,000 after transitioning to secondary school) on a quarterly basis. This programme is the first social protection programme in Uganda directly targeting children.<sup>128</sup> It focuses on prioritized schools based on high dropout rates and parishes through an analysis of multidimensional child and household poverty, as well as household vulnerabilities.

The GEG programme targets two different categories of vulnerable adolescent girls in the district of Kampala:

1. **In-school girls:** Girls in upper primary (P6), attending public primary schools with high drop-out rates, who are at risk of not transitioning to secondary school;
2. **Out-of-school girls:** Adolescent girls who have dropped out of school, who are vulnerable and living in the corresponding school catchment areas.

The programme identifies participants by targeting the communities they live in and the schools they attend (in-school girls), through an analysis of the levels of multidimensional child and household poverty, school drop-out rates, and household-level vulnerabilities. This is called a **geographical-categorical targeting mechanism**. In particular, an informant from the KCCA mentioned that the most vulnerable parishes and schools are identified through the data from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), whereas out-of-school girls are identified through the local leaders, together with the probation officers. The peer mentors have also indicated that the target group must be girls aged between 11 and 15 years, who are amongst the most vulnerable, and that some beneficiaries even refer their peers in similar situation to be part of the programme. The vulnerability is assessed through **proxy-means testing**.

The first cohort of the Girls Empowering Girls programme includes 1,500 girls across all five divisions of Kampala, half of which are in-school and the other half are out-of-school (OOS). They receive mentoring through a network of 300 peer mentors, overseen by 30 lead mentors.



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<sup>127</sup> UNICEF Uganda 2021.

<sup>128</sup> Kampala Capital City Authority 2021.



## Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP)

The Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP) is a social protection programme initially implemented to ease economic hardship affecting vulnerable, poor and needy communities that were strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and floodings. In urban areas, the programme sought to help those most affected by the lockdown and in rural areas, the programme seeks to help the ones affected by the flooding. The refugee-hosting district of Arua is also included in the programme. The pandemic has revealed the vulnerability of the labour surplus, unemployed families and the labour constrained families in urban areas. Additionally, in rural areas, many families have been displaced because of the floods, in particular the ones living along mountain slopes. This caused a non-fulfilment of basic needs such as food, water and health care. The UCWP, which is supported by PROSPECTS, offer beneficiaries with an opportunity to transition into longer-term recovery support by increasing their resilience through capacity-building and strengthening local institutions, skills development, working standards and policies and quality assurance of assets created. In other words, the UCWP provides community projects designed to provide short-term labour-intensive employment to poor and vulnerable individuals<sup>129</sup>.

The UCWP programme uses **geographical targeting** to select urban and flood-prone areas to benefit from the programme. Next, the programme uses **community-based targeting** through a targeting group of leaders elected by the community. According to key informant interviews with one of the targeting groups in Arua City, the members went from house to house in the communities to assess the vulnerability of the households based on the guidelines received by the MGLSD. Finally, **categorical targeting** is used to select refugees and other demographic groups in the programme in correspondence with its design. Considering that Uganda's Refugee Act of 2006 allows for refugees to participate in economic activities, the UCWP envisages that 20 per cent of the beneficiaries are refugees, identified with support of UNHCR<sup>130</sup>, and that there is equal representation of women and men. Overall, the programme aims at enrolling at least one member of every eligible household to earn income by participating in a community project designed to provide short-term labour-intensive employment to poor and vulnerable individuals.

UCWP initially planned to enrol 529,500 beneficiaries in 14 urban centres and 16 flood-affected districts. The pilot programme in Arua aimed at registering 200,000 beneficiaries. However, to date only 4431 beneficiaries have been enrolled in Arua, around 80 in each of the 50 cells receiving the programmes. Among these, only 231 were refugees, and only 30 percent were women<sup>131</sup>.

## Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF3)

The third Northern Uganda Social Action Fund programme (NUSAF3) is five-year Social Protection and Affirmative Programme implemented under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). This public work programme, currently in its third phase, builds on the lessons of the first two phases (NUSAF1 and NUSAF2). It is financed by an IDA loan from the World Bank, which amounts US \$130 million and became effective in March 2016. The objective of this project is to “to provide effective income support to and build the resilience of poor and vulnerable households in Northern Uganda”. According to the Office of the Prime Minister<sup>132</sup>, the project has four components:

1. **Labor Intensive Public Works and Disaster Risk Financing.** Through this component, temporary/seasonal employment opportunities are provided for poor and vulnerable households. These opportunities can also be scaled up in response to disasters in selected pilot areas.
2. **Livelihood Investment Support,** including Improved Household Investment Support Program (IHISP) and Sustainable Livelihood Pilot (SLP). It provides livelihood support to poor and vulnerable households to enable them to increase their productive assets and incomes.
3. **Strengthened Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption (TAAC),** which includes activities implemented by the Inspectorate of Government (IG) to improve transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption efforts in northern Uganda both for NUSAF3 and other services.
4. **Safety Net Mechanisms and Project Management,** which gives institutional support for implementation of the project and to help develop the operational tools for social protection that are envisioned in the draft Uganda Social Protection Policy (USPP).

<sup>129</sup> ILO 2020.

<sup>130</sup> ILO, Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> PROSPECTS in Uganda - at a glance 2022.

<sup>132</sup> Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) 3 – Office of the Prime Minister – A Coordinated, Responsive and Accountable Government for Socio-Economic Transformation n.d.



For NUSAF, a three-layer targeting mechanism ensures that the programme reaches poor and vulnerable households. The first two layers rely on **geographical targeting** while the third one relies on **community-based targeting**<sup>133</sup>. First, the entire programme focuses on Northern Uganda, as the region lags behind the rest of the country in terms of poverty and other socio-economic indicators. Second, a more precise geographic selection is made to further pinpoint the poorest sub-counties of the Northern region. Third, community-based targeting is also used to identify the poorest and most vulnerable households within those communities' households. Under this mechanism, the community collectively selects those households that were deemed most in-need according to clear characteristics reflecting poverty and vulnerability. In each village, the community determined the selection index, called the *wealth ranking criteria*, based on the prevailing local circumstances, such as the mode of transport, number of acres of land per household, number of heads of cattle, goats, and/or sheep per household, quality of shelter, items owned by the household (e.g. radio, bicycle, etc). The wealth ranking criteria are then used as in a wealth ranking exercise during a village meeting using *Participatory Identification of Poor* cards in order to categorize households into "poorest of the poor", "poor", and "non-poor". The households' classification into each category is verified by the local community leaders and displayed publicly for at least two days to ensure transparency and the adequate handling of potential community grievances. The utilization of this innovative and transparent mechanism for the selection of beneficiaries reportedly helped empower beneficiaries and officials from local levels of governments, which was beneficial to the project's strong inception at the community level<sup>134</sup>.

### Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP)

The main objective of the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) is to empower the youth to harness their socio-economic potential and increase self-employment opportunities and income levels. The YLP has three components: (i) Livelihood Support: it provides productive assets for viable income generating enterprises selected by the youth, such as dairy production, agriculture, trade, etc.; (ii) Skills Development: it provides training in marketable skills such as masonry, metal fabrication, tailoring, agro-processing, video-audio editing, ICT, among others; and (iii) Institutional Support.

The YLP is mainstreamed into Government structures at both national and local government levels. The local

governments are responsible for mobilization and sensitization, beneficiary selection, facilitating projects preparation, appraisal and approval of projects, monitoring and supervision. Beneficiary selection is conducted through community participatory mechanisms. The programme targets beneficiaries among the unemployed youth aged between 18 to 30 years, specifically, the ones who have dropped out of school and training institutions, those living in slums, city streets, high risk and impoverished communities, single parent youth, youth with disability or with HIV/AIDS and graduates of tertiary institutions. The programme design aims that female youths constitute at least 30 percent of the participants.

The targeting methodology involves a combination of the following approaches; (i) **geographical targeting** by the MGLSD based on existing sub-county level data including poverty, youth population, unemployment etc.; (ii) **community-based targeting** based on the socio-economic status of the individual youth e.g. present income source, period out of employment, number of children, etc., and (iii) **categorical targeting**; as the programme focuses on the categories of youngsters stated above. The process of beneficiary selection is facilitated by the Selection Committee comprised of the Sub-county Chief, Sub-county (assistant) CDO, Sub-county Youth Chairperson and Local Council I (LC1) Chairperson of the area. The selection takes place in a community meeting in a transparent and participatory manner.<sup>135</sup>

### Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP)

The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) intends to tackle the challenges women face in undertaking economically viable enterprises, including the limited access to affordable credit, limited technical knowledge and skills for business development, limited access to markets as well as information regarding business opportunities. The programme aims to increase participation of women in business development, increase their incomes, livelihood security and overall quality of life. Similarly to the YLP, the UWEP is composed of three comparable components, namely a fund, capacity and skills development, and institutional support. The *Women Enterprise Fund (WEF)* provides access to interest-free credit for enterprise development on a revolving fund basis. The women are required to be in groups of 10-15 members to ensure successful implementation of their priority enterprise and full repayment of the Revolving Fund. The *Capacity*

<sup>133</sup> World Bank 2022.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> YLP – Ministry of Gender Labour & Social Development n.d.

and *Skills Development* focuses on upgrading needs-based skills development for women to enable them initiate and manage enterprises. Finally, the *Institutional Support* ensures effective and efficient programme management and coordination at all levels. Under this component, beneficiary groups receive basic training in bookkeeping, teambuilding, enterprise planning and implementation, entrepreneurship/ business skills and group dynamics. In addition, business counselling is provided to the women to enable them to realize their potential.

For the UWEP, the primary target beneficiaries are women from 18 to 65 years old. The programme strongly emphasizes the integration of the following categories of women into beneficiary groups: unemployed women; vulnerable groups, such as single young mothers, widows and gender-based violence (GBV) survivors; women with disabilities or HIV/AIDS; women heading households; women living in slum or in hard-to-reach areas; and ethnic minorities.

The beneficiary women groups are selected through **community-based targeting** that involves LC 1 and Women Council leaders as trusted members of the community. The selection of the women to benefit under the UWEP is undertaken by the Beneficiary Selection Committee chaired by the Sub-County and the CDO. The respective LC 1 Chairpersons confirm that the selected women groups are bona fide Ugandans who reside within their respective communities (the catchment area for the group membership may be a village, parish and must not go beyond a Sub County/ Town Council/City Division). The selection process takes into account the primary target beneficiaries, Enterprise Funds Access Guidelines, local knowledge on the socio-economic status of individual women e.g., present income sources, and any other support that the women may have received under other existing programmes<sup>136</sup>. Additionally, the programme is also **benefit-tested**, since the young women aged 18 – 30 years who are already part of the Youth Livelihood Programme are not considered as beneficiaries for UWEP.

### Special Grant for Persons with Disability

The Special Grant for Persons with Disability was introduced in 2009 to provide relief to people with disabilities by financing and supporting one of their projects. The main objective of the Special Grant is to support welfare of persons with disabilities through livelihoods and income generation for national development. In the Financial Year 2019/2020, the government received

additional funding for these special grants, although the source and amount are not yet known. There are two levels of implementation of the special grant: the National Level Special Grant (NSG) and, the Local Government Special Grant (LSG). The NSG consists of a budget-specified resource envelope that is managed by the MGLSD, while the LSG is managed by the Districts, Municipalities and Cities. The government instituted these grants following lessons learnt over the ten years and the need to pilot workable social protection and livelihood interventions for persons with disabilities<sup>137</sup>. The main component of the Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities is the funds covering the cost of inputs for enterprises as well as project specific trainings for the Persons with Disability Groups. The other component is institutional support intended to improve the technical, administrative and managerial capacity of the key implementers of the programme at national and local government level. Projects to be implemented by Persons with Disability Groups are chosen by them based on their capacity to manage and maintain the respective projects.

The grant virtually targets all persons considered to have disabilities – in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2019 – and/or their known caretakers. Eligible persons with disabilities should be citizens of Uganda of employable age (15 years and above) while the caretakers in such groups are required to show evidence of taking care of a person with disability who is a minor (below 18 years old), a person with multiple disabilities and unable to directly partake of the project implementation or a person recommended by a person with disability to represent him or her. Persons with disabilities only access funds through Persons with Disability Groups (PWDGs), which should have a minimum of five members drawn from the same Sub-county under which the project is being approved. The selection of beneficiaries is done through **community-based targeting** facilitated by the Sub-county CDO, with a selection committee composed of the Sub-county Chief as the Chairperson, the Chairperson of the Sub-County Disability Council, Community Development Officer and Sub-county Councillor for Persons with Disabilities. Persons with Disabilities selected through the community process constitute the Persons with Disability Group (PWDG) that are facilitated further by the CDO and relevant sector experts to identify potential projects, undertake viability assessments and generate the most suitable Project Proposal for funding<sup>138</sup>.

<sup>136</sup> UWEP – Ministry of Gender Labour & Social Development n.d.

<sup>137</sup> Guidelines On The Special Grant For Persons With Disabilities | Kamuli District n.d.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

## WFP School Feeding Program

The World Food Programme (WFP) School Feeding Programme in Uganda is a project aimed at improving access to education and reducing hunger among school-age children in the Karamoja sub-region. The School Feeding Programme covers approximately 315 schools (200,000 primary-age children) and is universally targeted to all children within these schools. The program provides nutritious meals to children in primary schools in order to improve their attendance and academic performance, and to increase the enrolment and retention of students, especially girls. The program also aims to stimulate local economies by purchasing food from smallholder farmers and local markets. The school feeding program is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports, local governments and schools, and other stakeholders such as Irish Aid.

The programme targets schools in areas that have high levels of poverty and malnutrition<sup>139</sup>, as well as low rates of enrolment and retention, particularly for girls. A consultation with an informant from WFP indicated that the School Feeding Programme currently covers approximately 315 schools (200,000 primary-age children) exclusively in the Karamoja sub-region. The targeting mechanism is thus **geographical**, as it focuses only on one sub-region, and **universal** at the school level as it is available to all the children attending the select schools.

## Cash Relief for COVID-19 Vulnerable Persons

On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2021, following the start of the total lockdown due to Covid-19, the Ugandan Prime Minister announced the Government decision to support the most vulnerable people who would be hit hardest by the lockdown through a cash transfer. A lump-sum transfer of UGX 100,000 was made to households in urban and peri-urban towns. The rationale for targeting these areas was that their residents were in the epicentre of Uganda's informal, day- to-day, hand-to mouth petty economy and therefore it seemed that their livelihoods were/would be disrupted the most<sup>140</sup>.

According to an informant from MGLSD, targeting for the cash-relief Covid-19 vulnerable persons was challenging in absence of an existing database depicting/capturing vulnerabilities. According to Development Initiatives<sup>141</sup>, the government had claimed that it would examine mobile money transaction history data of those seeking the relief, to determine whether they

indeed were needy, and also use local elected leaders on the ground and prior social protection registries. The total number of beneficiaries targeted was 501,107. The number of actual beneficiaries recorded to have received the benefit as of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 was 448,134 (89.4 percent of the intended coverage). 34 out of 42 cities and municipalities targeted had submitted 100 percent of their beneficiary data. Disaggregation of data on beneficiaries by sex show that 52.7 percent were men and 47.3 percent women<sup>142</sup>. Overall, it seems that the targeting method for this programme was not clear and transparent enough, leading to a lot of confusion on the side of the population. The programme has been terminated.

## Parish Development Model

The Parish Development Model (PDM) is not per se part of social protection system but it is a government initiative that delivers a package of services aiming at creating wealth, employment and improving citizens' income. The model proposes building infrastructure and systems that support processing and marketing of Uganda's agricultural products. It also aims to generate data on households country-wide to inform Government interventions. Under the programme, farmers at the parish level will be coordinated through area-based commodity clusters in order to increase production and productivity to enhance sustainable agricultural production. Agricultural extension services and finance business management training will also be provided to farmers. Finally, the programme aims to strengthen participatory planning by local communities to collectively identify and address systemic bottlenecks that affect local economic development as well as addressing vulnerability among youth, women, persons with disabilities (PWDs) at the grassroots by developing and implementing action plans for inclusion of disadvantaged interest groups<sup>143</sup>.

## The Youth Venture Capital Fund (UYVCF)

The Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund (UYVCF) is a programme which was introduced in 2011 to promote self-employment through the establishment of National Youth Funds. In September 2013, government significantly boosted youth schemes by allocating UGX 265 billion (about US\$ 100 million) to the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) over a five-year period. The major pillars of these initiatives are: enterprise development, job creation and business skills training and development. The main stakeholders of this programme are

139 WFP Uganda | World Food Programme n.d.

140 Development Initiatives n.d.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid.

143 Parish Development Model - Ministry of Local Government 2019.

the MGLSD and the OPM via the Youth Livelihood Programme. However, this programme was described as inactive currently by an informant from the UPFSP during an online consultation.

### Other Interventions

Another programme that has been implemented in Uganda are the cash-based transfers for food assistance led by the World Food Programme. As part of its General Food Assistance (GFA) to refugees in Uganda, WFP is currently providing unrestricted monthly cash transfers to almost 400,000 refugees across nine settlements (as of November 2019), representing about one-third of the total assisted refugee population.<sup>144</sup> Refugees enrolled for the transfers currently receive UGX 31,000 (US\$ 8.46) per person per month, to meet the minimum caloric requirements of 2,100 kcal per person per day. This amount is based on how much it costs refugees to buy WFP's in-kind food basket on the local market.<sup>145</sup> The WFP has revised its targeting criteria on many occasions. To start with, WFP used eligibility criteria following a time-based approach where the level of food assistance was based on the number of years that a refugee remained in Uganda, with assistance decreasing over time and stopping after five years in country. However, a later study found out that the time refugees have spent resettled in Uganda is not closely correlated with levels of vulnerability, regardless of the

geographic location or country of origin.<sup>146</sup> Next, WFP implemented the Extremely Vulnerable Individuals/Households (EVI/EVH) framework for all in-kind food and cash transfer assistance activities in 2017. Upon classification as an EVI/EVH, recipients were entitled to a 100 percent ration and were protected from ration cuts. Although it proved useful to target vulnerable households to ensure their food security does not deteriorate further, WFP identified the need to review and redesign the framework to ensure clarity and consistency in its application. The country office's Gender and Protection Advisor undertook various assessments and participated in joint missions to refugee settlements that revealed inclusion and exclusion errors related to the breadth and vagueness of classification eligibility of EVI/EVHs.<sup>147</sup> Currently, expansion of cash transfers to refugees by WFP is being implemented on a gradual basis, based on voluntary enrolments, ensuring market functionality, accountability to affected populations and adhering to the overall policy environment of the Government.<sup>148</sup> Another initiative is the Social Protection and Decent Work initiative from Enabel which, according to an informant is not yet fully operational and mainly focuses on decent work.

Table 4 summarizes the targeting method used for each social assistance programme. The first five programmes are the focus of analysis in this report.

**TABLE 4:** Social Assistance Programmes in Uganda and Their Targeting Methods

Programme	Targeting methodologies assessed							
	Geographic targeting	Categorical targeting	Universal approach	Poverty targeting				
				Means testing	Proxy-means testing	Community-based targeting	Self-targeting	Benefit testing
DRDIP	✓					✓		
Girls Empowering Girls	✓	✓				✓		
Senior Citizens Grant <sup>149</sup>		✓	✓					(✓)
NutriCash	✓	✓				✓		
Urban Cash for Work	✓					✓		
School Feeding Programme	✓	✓	✓					
Youth Livelihoods Programme	✓	✓				✓		
NUSAF	✓					✓		
Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities		✓				✓		
Women's Entrepreneurship Programme		✓				✓		✓

<sup>144</sup> World Food Programme 2019.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> World Food Programme 2017.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> World Food Programme 2019.

<sup>149</sup> Beneficiaries of the Pension Scheme for Civil Servants are not eligible to receive the SCG.



## SOCIAL COHESION IN COMMUNITIES: LIVELIHOODS, CHALLENGES AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATION



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As discussed in Section 2.3, the study sites included Kampala City, Arua City, Koboko District and Yumbe District, the former located in the Central Region and the latter three located in the West Nile Sub-Region in the Northern Region. The purpose of this section is to describe the communities interviewed within each of these districts to provide a baseline before discussing and explaining the implications associated with the programmes and the respective targeting mechanisms in sections 6 and 7. Specifically, this section characterises the communities and households by describing the main livelihoods, challenges, vulnerabilities, inequalities, social structures and (formal and informal) institutions.

### 6.1. Main sources of livelihoods in the community

Livelihoods across the study sites were broad in number but in general reflected a rural/urban divide with predominantly characterised by subsistence agriculture jobs in rural areas and informal, petty trade in urban areas. In Kampala, many persons were reported to be informally working on small jobs such as charcoal selling, market vending of foods such as cassava, particularly among women, clothes washing, and jewellery making and selling. Many child or single mother-headed households were considered to be involved in sex work to earn a living. Drug dealing and other criminal activities were considered a typical livelihood in Kampala.

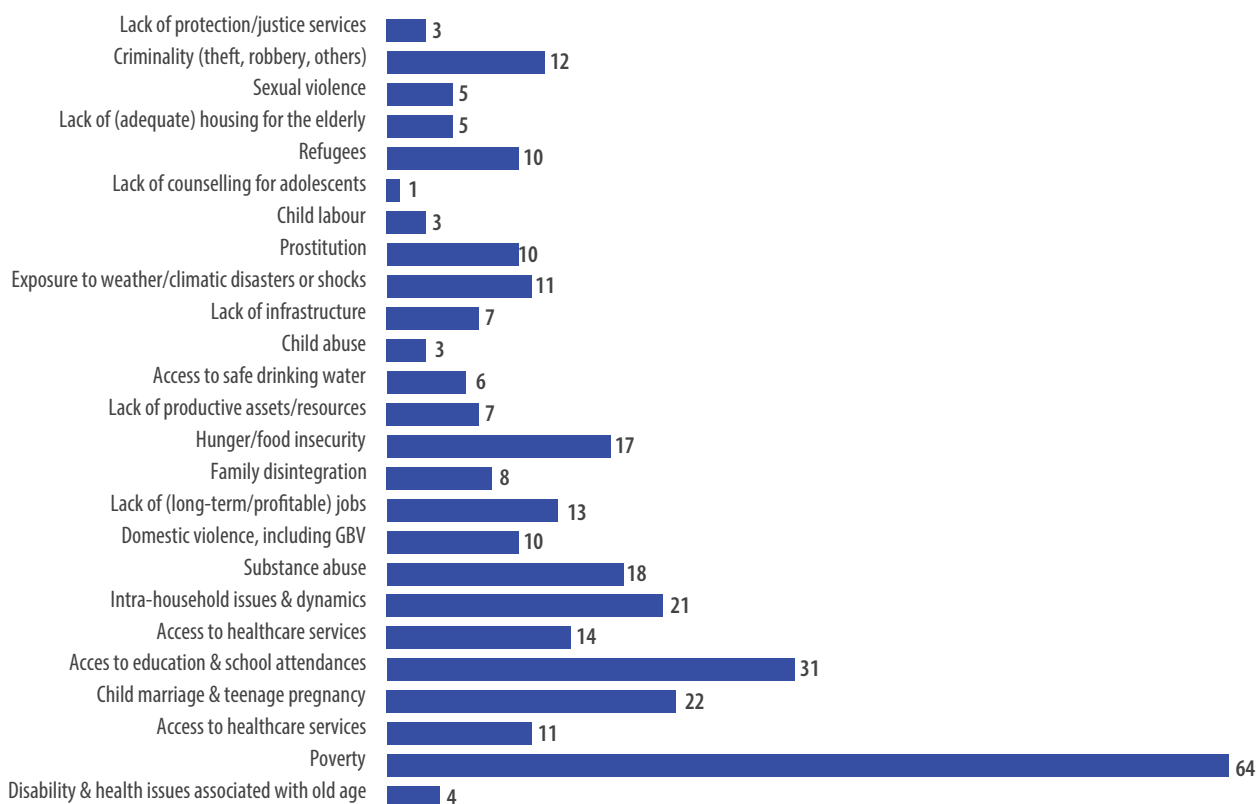


Unemployment was also considered to be very high. Participants in **Arua** referenced how the community engaged in petty trade such as selling food items at the roadside, boda boda riding (motorbike taxis), gambling, fish mongering, transportation, urban farming and horticulture, brick making, games and sports, housekeeping, loading and unloading, blacksmithing, metal wielding and fabrication, art and graphics, sand mining and quarry work, brokering, car washing, mobile business and social work. Most of the jobs in Arua are predominantly casual work for cash. Some of these jobs are

gendered such as the fetching of water and the collection and selling of firewood, which are predominantly performed by women. In Koboko, participants shared how typical livelihoods included subsistence farming as well as planting crops or fruits that are sold for cash to meet other non-food related needs such as school fees. Others also keep livestock and poultry such as chickens and sell the produce to earn an income. Subsistence farming was considered to be the most common livelihood in **Lubule Sub-county**.

## 6.2. Perceptions of the main challenges, vulnerabilities and inequalities in the community

**FIGURE 4:** Frequency of Challenges in the Communities, as Reported by KIIs and FGD Participants



Poverty was the most referenced problem in all of the localities. In Kampala, slum environments were prevalent, and participants referenced how many persons were living on one dollar a day and that this leading to deprivation of education, child labour, and resorting to practices such as sex work for survival. Many children were said to engage in activities such as the collection of bottles and metallic substances for selling. Participants in Arua and Kampala saw poverty as a root cause of other challenges and vulnerabilities such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV), perceived to be suffered disproportionately by girls and, specific to Kampala, school dropouts, criminal behaviour, and substance abuse. In Koboko, participants also shared the view how high

levels of poverty make it difficult for them to meet their personal needs.

“

One thing I forgot, when we were moving around, I saw this in around 3-4 homes, you would think maybe this one is the most poorest, but when the other is also the most, people will say “maybe instead of you to write for me, you write my neighbour. My neighbour is the most worst”.  
– UCWP Key Informant in Arua City

Participants from all the study locations reported that access to food, both in quantity and quality, was a serious challenge and malnourishment is common in their communities. Older persons, pregnant and

lactating mothers and babies are particularly vulnerable in this respect. In Koboko, one participant referred to this as the 'first challenge'. In Arua City, it was explained how the refugee population is dependent upon food items from the UN as they are not able to conduct their own business, although participants in Koboko expressed how there were examples of cases where UN food rations in refugee camps had been recently discontinued. In Kampala, it was commonly expressed that parents often struggled to afford food items.

Access to health facilities and medication was also a challenge in Kampala and Koboko but was not raised in Arua. The government-run health facilities in Kampala were reported to be accessible but allegedly underutilised because of a lack of awareness of their existence and their provision of free healthcare. Poor housing in Kampala leads to regular flooding and consequently, the spread of disease and an increased demand for health care. In Koboko, it was expressed how health facilities, although existing, are often slow to respond, face delays, face shortages in the availability of medical consumables, and fail to prioritise the needs of the most in need, such as the elderly. This was coupled with large distances to health care services, a poor road network and a lack of emergency vehicles. Persons in Lubule sub-county also struggle to afford medical care.

In Kampala and Koboko, participants raised issues of inadequate housing, and how it reinforced to health issues. Rent is considered highly unaffordable in Kampala, leading to many living in very poor slum areas. When it rains, these slums often flood and cause both damage to belongings but also cause many health issues as sewage systems overflow into the streets and homes. In Koboko, houses were reported as sub-standard and in need of improvement.



**One of the challenges the older persons are facing is poor shelter or accommodation facilities for them. I have observed with concern the poor housing conditions we sleep in as the older persons, some of us do not have blankets, mosquito nets, other houses are do not have doors or windows, light, some lack mats, others lack basic household items like cups, plates, basins, etc. in their houses.”**  
– SCG beneficiary in Koboko Town, Koboko

Schooling and access to education were major challenges in all of the localities, with affordability of school fees and materials a particular issue. Research participants in Koboko, Arua and Kampala emphasized how school fees were unaffordable, largely due to the limited

availability of cash, which was cited more frequently by the refugees. Refugees also raised the common issue of teenage pregnancy and how this was leading to high levels of school dropouts in their communities. Girls in Kampala were reported to have domestic and work responsibilities which challenged their ability to participate in school and often lead to them dropping out. COVID-19 was also cited as a key reason for the high levels of recent school drop-outs. In Koboko, schools face the issue of a lack of light infrastructure, making evening homework a challenge for students.

Drug use and theft among youth were commonly cited and linked to poverty, unemployment and a lack of role models. Drug use, particularly among youth was considered a key problem in Lubule and Kampala. Participants in Koboko considered it to be a result of poverty, unemployment and a lack of skills among the youth. In Kampala, participants also referenced theft as an issue, which was often perceived to be related to the issue of high school dropouts and poverty. A lack of role models for girls was seen as a problem in Kampala. Respondents expressed how girls in particular did not recognise that they could grow up to be in jobs such as accountancy. This was perceived to lead to drink and drug issues and a lack of motivation.

Inequality was considered to be prevalent in urban communities, and children, single-mothers, refugees and persons with disabilities characterized as the most vulnerable groups. Participants in Koboko perceived there to be no equality in the community, with participants referencing causes including different mindsets, God, access and closeness to community leaders and persons of authority. In Kampala, participants described how there were child (orphan)-headed households in the community as well as single mother-headed households. Examples were also shared of parents abandoning their children to grandparents and leaving the grandparent(s) with the responsibility childcare, including financing their education. Negative traditional and cultural beliefs and practices, including child and forced marriage were mentioned by participants in Arua and Kampala. Participants in Kampala also listed sexual abuse of children within households and parental neglect as major issues in their communities. Certain types of disability such as autism are not well-understood and carry misunderstandings and cultural taboo in the community in Kampala leading to their exclusion. In Kampala, refugees were seen to be some of the most vulnerable in the community. Many were said not to speak English, which acts as a large barrier in them engaging in any form of livelihood.

“

I think it's true that those close to the community leaders or people in places of authority have more opportunities to better their lives in the community than those that do not have any opportunity with people at places of authority. In most cases when these opportunities come, they first consider themselves up there.” – **NutriCash non-beneficiary from Koboko**

### 6.3. Organisation of the community, forms of support and perceptions of social cohesion

#### Organisation of the community

The organisation of communities revolved around a set of formal and informal institutions that act as decision makers. In Arua, community decision making is led by elders, religious leaders, the Local Council (LCs), the city authorities, and opinion leaders. Within the households in Arua, the household heads are considered to be the decision makers. Participants in Arua explained how social structures have been changing and that decision-making is decentralized from the elders and leaders to smaller community groups that deal with particular population groups or topics as the communities had distrust in LC1 chairperson and leaders to represent their interests. In Koboko participants mentioned various village-level institutions such as the Council for Elderly, the Councillor for Women's Affairs, the Youth Structure headed by the Youth Counsellor or representative, the structure for persons with disabilities, and the LCs. Participants in Koboko explained how small teams of elected members of a community or group make community decisions. This could involve forming a project management committee if a new project is started within the community. This committee would then be responsible for making decisions that pertain to that project. These decisions are often made with the inclusion of women, youth, PWD and elderly structures within the community. In Koboko Town a participant discussed how the community cooperates well with leaders as when a community meeting is called by the leaders, everyone joins, which implies a sign of unity and togetherness. In Kampala, references were also made to the LC1 chairperson who has the authority to make decision in the community. The local MP was also referenced as a person of authority although a participant explained that the LC1 acts as a liaison in the relation with the MP. Other mentioned decision makers in Kampala included pastors, parents and teachers. In the context of child-headed households, even children were said to even be considered as decision makers within the community.

“

We used to listen and take orders from the elders or leaders in the community, but so much has changed about that system. Our communities have adopted a system where people jointly come together as community or as groups make the critical decisions that affects them. We came to realize that those that we have entrusted to be in authority do not make decisions that represents the views of the people, we therefore come together understand ourselves and think about those decisions together. The person that we have entrusted to lead us in the decision making processes is the LC1 chairperson of the village.” – **UCWP non-beneficiary in Arua City**

#### Forms of support

Support within the communities was found to take many forms including group support and community-based initiatives. Participants in Koboko expressed a shared view of strong unity and social cohesion within the community, referencing the various groups that exist and the interest in teamwork. These groups have various functions including joint enterprises, saving schemes, and communal work and initiatives, such as cleaning common areas. These groups were seen to support both group members and non-members within the community at times of trouble. Individuals in Koboko were also seen to help those who needed it, which was also perceived as a reflection of unity, although it was expressed by others that this could involve working for it. Elderly participants in Lubule Sub-county illustrated how unity and togetherness is reflected in the groups that they have formed to support one another within during times of financial difficulty such as sickness or death in the form of food items and money, for items such as school fees and funeral support. This support during death, sickness or events was also referenced in Koboko Town as a marker of unity and cooperation. In Kampala, crafts and sports groups were said to exist, including for football and netball, whereby every weekend youths gather to play and even organise tournaments. Centres of education and skills were also said to exist, which parents bring their children to and were said to promote social cohesion and unity. In Lubule sub-county, a participant referenced how the giving of support, for example for a funeral, is often limited but this is not a reflection of a lack of unity and togetherness but rather a manifestation of poverty.

“

I have also noticed that, in occasions such as funerals, our community is hand-capped and offer limited support compared to what she has seen from the neighbouring communities. This is not necessarily a result of lack of unity or togetherness but a manifestation of poverty in this community, she added.’ – **DRDIP beneficiary from a host community in Lubule Sub-County, Koboko District**

Formal savings groups were very frequently mentioned as an example of forms of support. Participants in Kampala, Lubule Sub-county in Koboko and Arua referenced savings schemes as a means of support. A national-level Key Informant explained how SACCOs at the community level reinforce trust among participants and therefore can contribute to social cohesion (although did not mention how this could undermine inclusion of the poorest persons who are not able to pay back). SACCOs also have a ‘social fund’ component that has the means to support members in other contingencies such as paying for a family members hospital visit, which further contributes to a sense of cohesion as these groups seek to support those involved. In the case of Kampala, the savings groups appeared to be predominantly women’s affair, primarily used for starting up businesses.

“

In our group, if a non-member is in trouble and officially appeals for assistance from the group, the members in most cases give them opportunity. This support depends on the situation upon which it is being requested.” – **NutriCash non-beneficiary in Lubule Sub-county, Koboko District**

NGOs, religious groups and the Parish Development Model (PDM) were also all cited as means of support in the communities. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were referenced as a form of support by participants in Arua. These NGOs provide financial literacy, Village Loan and Savings Schemes, and advocacy against sexual GBV. In Kampala, ‘groups’ and NGOs were said to come to the communities to empower persons with skills. In Arua, religious denominations were reported to have set up vocational skills institutions as well as offer their own vocational skills trainings for youth, women and others. In Kampala, churches offer co-curricular activities to keep girls and boys off the streets such as dancing classes and football. The Parish Development Model was referenced as a form of support by participants in Arua and Lubule Sub-county.

In Kampala, ‘most’ of the youth were said to be a part of the Parish Development Model.

### Perceptions of social cohesion

In all of the localities, social cohesion is perceived to occur through shared cultural values and participation in cultural events. In Arua, a participant expressed how their culture teaches the importance of loving and supporting each other beyond what divides them and that, as a result you rarely hear of tribal or religious fights, wars or segregation. Similarly, in Lobule Sub-County, a participant referenced the culture and lifestyle of the Kakwa people as one of helping one another when they are in need – this support may not be significant, but it was perceived to lead to unity and togetherness in the community. In Kampala, social cohesion was said to exist because of the common behaviours expected of one another. Community leaders uphold these behaviours and report and challenge children that are not following them. In Yumbe District, a Key Informant explained how social cohesion is manifested somewhat through participation in cultural events such as marriages and funerals in which persons such as the elderly perform particular rituals together and also contribute to the finances of the events. In Yumbe District, the Key Informant considered social cohesion to be undermined by the lack of resources for cultural events that their institution is responsible to support in the community.

“

Generally, based on our culture, we were taught the values of loving each other, supporting each other and being there for the other beyond any physical or meta-physical divides. As result of these values, you hardly here tribal wars or fights, segregation, religious fights, etc. By large, the relationship is okay about 70% in the community. This relationship was the basis of the preliminary success registered in the group formations, if there was no unity or togetherness the beneficiary selection, or group formation would be impossible.” – **UCWP non-beneficiary in Arua**

In Kampala levels of social cohesion were perceived to be undermined by some of the main issues in the community but supported by a shared sense of struggle and shared activities. In Kampala, many participants perceived there to be some level of social cohesion but with challenges and contradictions to this (associated with the problems discussed above). This was further reinforced by the perceived failure of judicial institutions to provide justice for the many victims of sexual violence and kidnapping. The police were reported to

not work without a bribe and yet this is unaffordable to many of the victims. Parent' low educational attainment, different beliefs, the prominent sex work in the community, the high levels of poverty and competing needs of the community were all said to be undermining social cohesion. Social cohesion is promoted in Kampala by the sense of being in the same parish, working, living and fetching water together. A participant shared how social cohesion and unity is there because of common issues and challenges such as a lack of food and not being able to afford to send children to school.

Refugee and host relationships represent one of the key points of tension in social cohesion, although there were many examples of harmony and partnership between the groups. Although social cohesion was perceived to generally exist, refugee participants in Lubule Sub-county in Koboko District expressed how they perceived this to exist particularly among the nationals and that disproportionate refugee receipt of services or support from agencies (70%:30% refugee to host beneficiaries) was somewhat undermining cohesion in their community. This further spills over into contention over basic service use in the communities such as harassment of refugees by nationals at community water points. Refugees in Lubule Sub-County considered the Ugandan government to have failed the host communities in meeting commitments to support them in response to hosting the refugees. They also referenced how host communities have increasingly encroached on the land offered to refugees. In Kampala, host communities have had mixed relationships with refugees, with South Sudanese and Congolese refugees sometimes experiencing discrimination or harassment but community leaders have been key in inclusion of refugee populations in the communities.

“

**Even the local leaders played a good role of convincing these parents, though you are from South Sudan and we are from Uganda, we are all Ugandans here.” – Key informant, Kampala**

Religious groups in Koboko and Yumbe were reported to work well together. In Koboko, participants expressed how social cohesion and unity is also reflected in the cooperation between religious denominations, who are seen to support one-another's community projects and programmes. Religious institutions in Koboko were also reported by participants to provide food and non-food items to both members of their congregation and the wider community. Similarly, in Yumbe, a Key Informant expressed how there is social cohesion between Chris-

tians and Muslims in that they support one another's cultural events.

Social cohesion divisions were expressed between persons at different stages of the lifecycle, namely towards youth, and between 'rich' and 'poor'. In Arua, social cohesion is considered to exist but 'not 100%'. Youth are often seen to oppose the other demographic groups in Arua. Key Informants in this site perceived that income generating activities bring people together, particularly any activity or programme aimed at youth, hence contributing to stronger social ties. In Kampala, the youth were considered to sometimes have vulgar language, attitudes and behaviour, impacting their relations with the others in the community. One participant in Arua even referenced the difference between rich and poor and how they felt there was no mutual relationships between these groups; *“the poor are considered to have good relationships, whereas the rich were considered to pass judgement upon the poor.”* Generally, social cohesion in Arua is perceived to be undermined by feelings of envy and jealousy between close friends and relatives. Women were considered to have stronger bonds and unity, reflected by their organization into groups and activities, for income-generating activities which they use to support their families. Social cohesion among men on the other hand was not to be as strong.

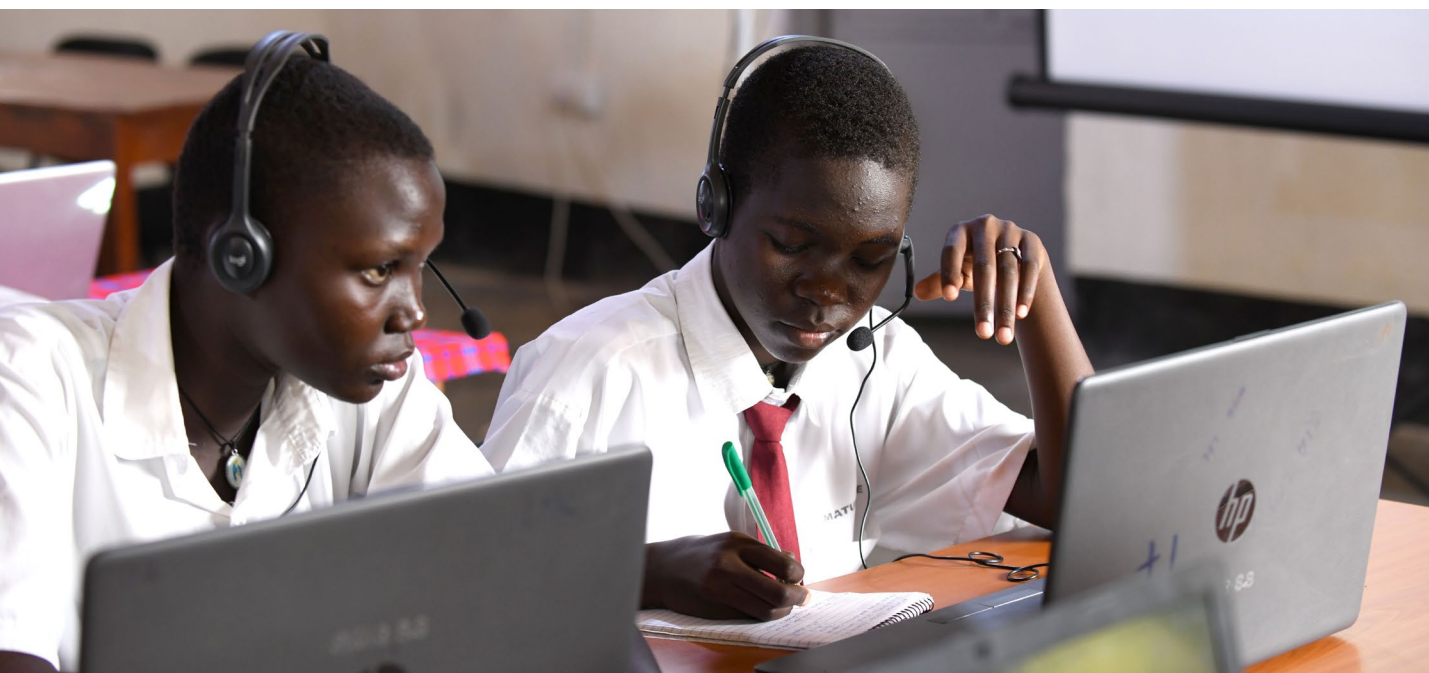
“

**As for me, from the communities I come from, our women are united but the men are not united. Sometimes as men we have problems among ourselves but our women love each other and live together. Our women have formed various groups and are into many programs and activities that give them some small opportunities to earn money for themselves, and they use that to support the family.’ – UCWP non-beneficiaries in Arua**

A national breakdown of social cohesion is shifting responsibility for care and social protection onto government. On a national scale, and therefore not specific to the study sites, social care initiatives used to be delivered informally through communities to vulnerable persons such as the elderly, disabled, and that there was little role for government. Now however, that social fabric has disintegrated leading to unattended vulnerable persons in rural areas. According to a Key Informant at the central level, this was part of the drive for the drafting of the NSPS, which aims to support the vulnerable, and which, takes a wider mandate of social inclusion and care rather than just about supporting 'the impoverished'.



## PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAMMES AND TARGETING MECHANISMS



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### 7.1. Outreach and knowledge of the programmes

Communities reported findings about social assistance programmes through various channels. Community leaders, local authorities, social workers, community facilitators, and Community Development Officers (CDOs) were the most frequently cited source for outreach on programmes. In general, outreach was done through door-to-door campaigns or scheduled community meetings, where the nature of the programme was usually explained in general terms. Other participants also mentioned that they found out about programmes from friends, family or other community members who were benefiting from the programme and passed the word. The data do not point to important differences in preferences or perceived effectiveness of different outreach techniques employed by different programmes. However, the participants of the GEG non-beneficiary FGD claimed that there are misconceptions about the programme, especially among parents, which could point to issues with lack of awareness. Non-beneficiaries of GEG learned about the programme through friends who were programme beneficiaries, while local leaders were the primary contact point for beneficiaries.

“

Maybe I would add on the awareness. Like people here could do something like a peer-led, and the social workers as they get the programme, should come and show and tell people about the GEG. Because some of the people they won't even know, they won't even know, some are not even aware.” – **Non-beneficiary from GEG, Kampala.**

Participants also shared their views on the bottlenecks related to outreach activities of the various programmes. A few participants complained that some members of the community struggle to find out about the available programme due to a lack of outreach efforts to reach the most vulnerable. For instance, a few SAGE Key Informants claimed that outreach techniques were not adapted for the elderly, and that they did not take into account the difficulties people over 80 years old may have in understanding the information not only due to possible technicalities, but also because of hearing and visual impairments as well as limited mobility. Other elements such as illiteracy or lack of knowledge of their rights were also pointed out by some participants when describing challenges that especially vulnerable people can face.

“

For me, because I had knowledge, because I am able to read, I am able to understand, and I am able to reach out, I know my rights. But for the person who is down there, who hardly has gone to a classroom or whatever, it becomes very hard, and even the institution is detached from the elderly person. [...] They expect the people to be knowing what they are doing. So many times, I think the community does not really understand some institutions and why they are doing certain things. So that is still a big challenge to be honest” - **Key informant, Koboko District**

Some participants also claimed that they felt people in charge of outreach such as community leaders were not always transparent. Thus, some participants indicated that they noticed situations of favouritism, where some members in their community were intentionally more or less informed than the others. On the contrary, other participants talked positively about outreach modalities, pointing out that the information provided on the programme was clear and transparent, which helped both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to fully understand and respect the programme and its selection process. In general, both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries had comprehensive knowledge on the various programmes was good among.

“

So, we had to justify why the elderly were chosen. Once the community knows, everybody knew and were aware of the challenges the elderly goes through. They were worried about whether it was implemented transparently, but the acceptability was there because communication was clear.” - **Key informant, Kampala**

## 7.2. Perceptions of programme design

### Adequacy of the programmes

Many of the beneficiaries participating in the focus group discussions expressed their gratefulness about the different programmes in place. The public works programmes, namely UCWP and DRDIP, were particularly praised by the beneficiaries, as they appreciated the spirit of team work as well as the impact that their efforts had on the rest of the community. They also emphasized valuing the competences they acquired throughout the programmes. Additionally, participants from GEG reported being more empowered by the skills they developed through the trainings, the support obtained during the numerous mentoring sessions and the referral to different services. Moreover, the fact that savings was such an *important* component of programmes such as NutriCash, DRDIP, or UCWP has

been highlighted as truly beneficial to the beneficiaries, as it changed their attitudes and encouraged them to engage in economic activities that could be sustained after the programme. Overall, it seems that, beyond the monetary support, the projects comprising additional components aimed at enhancing the well-being and the know-how of the beneficiaries were perceived as the most adequate.

“

The DRDIP program has greatly built our capacity through trainings for instance on savings and VSLA. The beneficiaries were able to adopt the best practices of savings.” - **DRDIP beneficiary, Koboko district**

Yet, some issues have been raised during the interviews with informants and the discussions with participants. For example, it seems that during the selection of UCWP beneficiaries, elders and people with disabilities were enrolled in the programme. Their enrolment was symbolic, as they were physically unable to work, and showed social cohesion and altruism in the community. Nonetheless, the inclusion of people with physical impairments in a programme based on manual labour is counterintuitive, especially as many non-disabled community members vainly wanted to join these public work initiatives. This highlights a flaw in the design of the programme, which does not technically allow for the participation of those who are vulnerable but unable to work on physically-demanding jobs. Complaints also arose from UCWP participants regarding the fact some of them had more demanding tasks to complete while the pay was uniform across all beneficiaries.

“

I would like to make reference to my area at Oboloko-fuku, there we were opening a drainage line. My people complained that their work was too much and yet they received little pay. For us, we had heavy work like clearing the bush and opening the trenches, but those at garbage management, they only sweep. My team feels that we should have deserved much pay compared to the colleagues working at the garbage sites.” - **UCWP beneficiary, Arua City**

Additionally, a common issue raised by beneficiaries from different programmes and informants was that the cash transfers received had lost their values due the recent inflation and that the amount which used to be adequate is now insufficient to afford basic items. For example, the value of the SCG cash transfer has been fixed at UGX 25,000 a month ever since the programme was implemented in 2010, whereas according to the World Bank, the Ugandan Consumer Price Index has

doubled from 2010 to 2022<sup>150</sup>. That means that in terms of real value, the grant has halved in the span of 12 years.

“

Regarding the pay, we were given UGX 6,000, which is good. But I would suggest that there should be an increase of the money given to the beneficiaries. The cost of living has generally gone high. For example, the price of beans have risen [from 2,500] to about 5,500 shillings.” – **UCWP beneficiary, Arua City**

### Duration of the programme

Another common issue across the different programmes pertains to the duration of the benefits. Many beneficiaries even asked the interviewers to prolong the programmes, and the questions raised during the discussions illustrated the lack of clarity with regards to the duration of the studied interventions. For example, although it was clear and unopposed that the NutriCash benefits would last for 2 years, the concerns of the mothers revolved around the recurrence of the programme in the months to come. Next, informants and beneficiaries from the UCWP stated that the 2-month length of the programme was too short, especially considering that so many non-beneficiaries also wanted to participate in the programme. Regarding Girls Empowering Girls, informants from KCCA, TMF, as well as the GEG mentors emphasized that the current duration was not very adequate as the girls would not earn any school certificate by the end of the 4 years of the programme, and they feared that they would drop out of school in the remaining two senior years.

“

I wish [GEG] could be extended to 6 years instead of 4, reaching Senior 4 certificate. These 4 years doesn't allow the girl to get a school certificate; it leaves them in the middle of the course, with 2 more years remaining. So it would be as good as just leaving someone at primary school. If it was 6 years, at least it would pick you off the primary level but also the lowest secondary school level.” – **Key Informant, Kampala City**

### Payment delivery

Overall, adequacy of payment procedures seemed to have not caused a substantial issue, except regarding the Senior Citizen Grants and NutriCash programme. First, many SCG beneficiaries complained about the payment modalities, especially since the service provision switched from Post Bank to Centenary Bank. Not only did all the beneficiaries have to re-register

at Centenary Bank, despite their old age and reduced mobility, but alternate recipients' details have also been lost in the process. Additionally, related SCG key informants at the central level raised issues related to the service providers in charge of the payment of the grant. According to them, often times, elders have difficulties reaching the pay centres, especially those living in remote areas, because it is also relatively costly and time consuming. Key Informants from Yumbe district also highlighted this issue, suggesting that mobile money transfer modalities should be used to deliver the SCG. On the other hand, according to Key Informants at central level, the fact that many elders are illiterate would prevent them from using mobile phones. They believe that payment modalities should have been specifically designed by the bank to better fit the needs of the elderly. Additionally, the bank only organizes pay days quarterly, and several SCG beneficiaries had complained about the fact that the three-month period in between payments was too long.

“

I tend to think that if this money was going to the youth, the bank would have come up with certain specific products for youth, to attract them. [...] Even if it was for women. They would have designed products to make sure they maximize what they can get out of this money. But now, given that it's for older persons, the bank seems not to care. They just want to come and deliver the cash and don't care how they do it. They don't even remember they are dealing with older persons.” – **Key informant, central level**

With regards to NutriCash, several mothers also raised issues concerning the payments of their transfers. It seemed that some mothers had been excluded from the programme although they were first registered and fulfilled the criteria. Even after complaining to the leaders, they were not provided with a satisfactory response.

“

There were irregularities in receiving this monies. If your name disappeared from your community, they would tell you to check your name in the neighbouring sub-county, which is extremely far. When you reach there, they will tell you that your name was eaten up by some virus in the computer. Sometimes, after missing receiving the support for some one or two months, you would all of sudden be called that your name is back on the system, yet you would not be given chance to recover your passed support”. – **Female FGD participant, NutriCash non-beneficiaries, Koboko district**

<sup>150</sup> World Bank Open Data 2022.

Some issues have been reported at the very beginning of the UCWP, as some funds had not been released timely. Yet, the issue seems to have been quickly resolved and the beneficiaries were able to receive their payments. Other programmes, however, did not seem to raise complaints about the payment methods. In fact, a beneficiary from DRDIP agreed that the process was transparent.

“

For me, transparency was manifested in various ways especially during the program implementation. First of all, it began by the selection of the community-based project management committees, who supervised the monies or inputs received by the groups, and as such, we were able to receive the group monies and other supplies as they were required by the program guidelines; more so, for the cash for work component whereby the beneficiaries were paid on daily basis, the beneficiaries were paid in time and the stipulated amount.” – **Male FGD participant, DRDIP refugee from DRC beneficiaries, Koboko district**

### Grievance and redress mechanisms (GRM)

Most of the complaints raised during the fieldwork about programmes’ selection criteria pertained to the national ID cards issued by NIRA. Several non-beneficiaries above 80 years old complained about their exclusion from the programme which was due to errors on their IDs or lack of official documents. For example, in Yumbe district, 14 out of the 24 elders interviewed had IDs reporting a lower age than their actual age. Due to the strict verification criteria of age in the SCG, i.e., through the national ID issued by NIRA, the local leaders and CDOs cannot address the complaints of the excluded elderly even if they can affirm their age by observation. In the pilot stages of the SCG, eligibility was determined through community meetings, aimed at approximating the age of the elders. However, some beneficiaries who had been previously selected were removed from the beneficiary lists with the introduction of the national ID during the national rollout/scale-up. Many of these elderlies did not understand why they had been excluded from the programmes, and most of the ones who complained did not find their way back into the programme. Appealing for changes in the ID could only be done at the National Identification & Registration Authority (NIRA) offices, but the procedures were reported to be time-consuming, unclear and costly, and ineffective, especially for older persons.

“

The complaints have been so enormous since the beginning of the programme. [...] There are those who are 50 something [on their IDs] and yet, if you look at them, physically you know that they are in that age bracket (80 years and above). You are left helpless, you cannot do much about that.” – **Key informant, Koboko District**

I was among the first people to receive this support (SCG), however, due to the transfer of the payment system from Post Bank to Centenary, my names disappeared in the system. I tried following up this issue and it turned to be that the problem is with my National Identification card.” – **Older person, Yumbe District**

The other programmes covered by the study have internal grievance and redress mechanisms, which seems to cause less issues than NIRA, which acts as an independent entity. For example, according to the administrators of the programme, GEG has a grievance mechanism as well as Monitoring and Evaluation specialists. On top of that, according to informants from the programme implementors, when some beneficiary girls move from Kampala to rural areas, they are replaced with other girls who previously complained of being excluded. Informants have affirmed DRDIP and NutriCash share the same grievance and redress tool, however, as mentioned above, many mothers were excluded from NutriCash without being able to fully understand the reason, nor to appeal for it.

### 7.3. Perceptions of targeting mechanisms: Effectiveness and fairness

#### *Knowledge about targeting mechanisms*

Discussions about the design of the social assistance programmes revealed that except for the elderly in SCG pilot districts, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries from both host and refugee communities are well-informed about programmes’ eligibility criteria and selection processes. As the findings in this section will show, this might have affected their perceptions about the effectiveness and fairness of the targeting mechanisms. The findings also demonstrate that the outreach activities of the programmes have been intensive and effective, as discussed in Section 6.1.

NutriCash beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries mentioned that to be eligible for the programme, one needs to be a member of the DRDIP beneficiary households; that she must be pregnant, have a new-born or



children <2 years; and that she must provide an immunization or antenatal card to prove her eligibility. Both DRDIP and UCWP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries explained that the programmes are targeted to specific geographical areas and that within each locality (or cell in UCWP technical terms) a specific/pre-set number of individuals can benefit from the programme, and that the selection of the actual beneficiaries involves wealth ranking. FGD participants of both programmes emphasized that only “*the poorest of the poor*” are enrolled in the programme based on these design features. Similarly, adolescents in Kampala also mentioned that only girls from the most vulnerable households – referring to their housing conditions, issues with child protection, domestic violence (DV), and others, and lacking means of livelihood – who are OOS are enrolled in the programme.



**The lactating mothers and pregnant mothers were selected. Those selected were confirmed only when they produce relevant documents like the Antenatal Cards for pregnant mothers and the immunization card for the mothers with babies.” – NutriCash beneficiary from the refugee community, Koboko district**

**The program had strict guidelines on the beneficiary selection, we have a fixed number of 84 people in which refugees have a percentage, the PWDs and the rest of the community members. We convened several meetings to identify the beneficiaries, especially looking at those who can do the work, also considering vulnerability levels.” – UCWP targeting group member, Arua City**

On the other hand, discussions with the elderly from rural and urban areas in Koboko and from Yumbe district demonstrated that they are uncertain/unsure about the eligibility criteria, possibly as these changed between the pilot and the national rollout/scale-up phase. Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike expressed their confusion as to why certain members in the community in the past were enrolled in the programme as soon as they turned 65 years, while the others needed to wait until they turned 80. Their limited knowledge of the changes in the selection process were also demonstrated with their questions to the FGD moderators about the eligibility age of the programme and complaints that the deceased beneficiaries in the lists were not ‘replaced’ by the next eldest beneficiaries in the community.<sup>151</sup>



**Mine is a question: What age limit is eligible to benefit from the programme?” – Male FGD participant, SCG non-beneficiary, Koboko district – rural area**

**With the increase in the age limits from 60 to 65, almost five years ago, there has not been registration of new members into the program. I have also noticed that, most of the first or pioneer beneficiaries died (almost 3 ¼ have died), there has never been any replacement, so why is that? We are directing this to government.” – Male FGD participant, SCG non-beneficiary, Yumbe district**

### ***Effectiveness of targeting mechanisms: Exclusion and inclusion errors***

Data on perceptions about effectiveness of targeting mechanisms were gathered through discussions about main challenges and bottlenecks with programme implementation with key informants, as well as about factors affecting inclusion and exclusion from the programmes with KIs and FGD participants. Since both SAGE components – the SCG and VFG – were initially piloted in several districts of the West Nile sub-region – their targeting mechanisms were also discussed with research participants. Programme design, including eligibility criteria and verification documents and processes, operational/administration issues, and self-exclusion were reported as the main issues with effectiveness of both universal and community-based targeting mechanisms. Universal/categorical targeting mechanisms were perceived to be effective from the perspective of both programme administrators and beneficiaries. This was the case especially for selection of in-school GEG beneficiaries which covers all the girls in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school (P6) through Senior 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> grade secondary school) in schools with the highest school dropout rates within select parishes of Kampala.<sup>152</sup>

The switch to universal/categorical targeting for the SCG was also characterized as more effective compared to the former community-based targeting, particularly by key informants responsible for its administration at the district level. Nevertheless, exclusion from the programme was reported to be a major issue because of the formal requirement of the national ID for verification of age. Many elderlies from urban and rural communities in Koboko and Yumbe districts reported that their age in the national IDs is incorrect and usually

<sup>151</sup> This process was common in the targeting mechanism of the pilot phase where the beneficiary lists in each community included 100 of the oldest members of the community whose age was verified through community-based mechanisms.

<sup>152</sup> As described in Section 4.2 Social assistance programmes and their targeting mechanisms, the first layer of targeting for the Girls Empowering Girls programme includes geographical targeting of parishes and schools within them through statistical data, i.e., vulnerability index.



lower than in the reality; in extreme cases extending to a 24-year difference, which disqualifies them from receiving the SCG. The district- and central-level administrators of the programme and other related stakeholders confirmed these claims and that the incorrect age in the national IDs is one of the most common complaints they have received since the national scale-up/rollout of the programme. Administrative data from the SCG MIS indicate that issues with incorrect age in national IDs have also resulted in inclusion errors. As of June 2023, the number of SCG beneficiaries age 80 years and above was 238,906<sup>153</sup>, while UBOS 2020 estimates of the population aged 80 years and above yielded a figure of 197,000.<sup>154</sup> These numbers imply that the inclusion error in SCG is at least 21.3 percent.

Even though this issue appears straightforward and easy to resolve, a lot of the elderly were reported to remain excluded from the programme because of the difficulty to correct their age in the national IDs. Some of the most commonly reported reasons included: i) distance to NIRA offices as only one is available per district, ii) associated costs with making changes to the national ID including travel expenses and fees (UGX 50,000), iii) inability to provide compelling (official) evidence as proof of the correct age, iv) lack of clarity about the formal requirements and requested documents, and v) heavy reliance on family members or relatives to provide support throughout the process. Changing the district of residence in the national ID was reported to be equally cumbersome. Three FGD participants aged 80 years and above from Yumbe and Koboko reported that they do not receive the SCG despite their correct age in the national ID because they had registered in districts other than the ones where they currently reside.

Additionally, not possessing a national ID was also reported to be a common exclusion factor from the SCG by CDOs in Koboko and Yumbe districts. Even though NIRA conducted registration at communities a few years ago, many elderly were reported to have missed out on the opportunity due to lack of awareness as they live isolated from both other family members and the rest of the community. In other instances, due to limited physical mobility and/or physical disabilities, many elderly decided to not register as they did not understand the gains from possessing a national ID.

“

So the complaints have been so enormous since the beginning of the programme... And you find there is still somebody who's 76, wants to get into the programme because the ID says so, but if you look at this person, you know this is 80+. Even there are those who are 50 something [in their ID] and yet if you look them physically you know that they are in that age bracket [of eligibility age]. You are left helpless, you cannot do much about that, so the complaints are still enormous... The exclusion is high” – **Key informant, Koboko district**

We have a challenge of acquiring the National Identification Card, we noticed that our initials were not accurately captured. Some people had their ages reduced or others their names wrong spelt, however, with hopes of the National Identification verification plan, I hope that these can be corrected” – **Male non-beneficiary, SCG FGD, Yumbe district**

Other programme design features or issues with their implementation were also reported to hinder the effectiveness of targeting mechanisms. Irregular registration of beneficiaries in the SCG programme - once per year or less often - was reported to exclude many eligible beneficiaries from the SCG programme in both Koboko and Yumbe districts. This is especially problematic if the GRM and programme design features do not allow for retroactive compensation of benefits for the senior citizens upon registration. A related issue with updating beneficiary lists associated with limited reporting of deaths, especially when alternates are appointed by the elderly, result in inclusion errors. Design issues were also reported to affect targeting effectiveness of the NutriCash programme. Non-beneficiary communities stated that the programme does not have clearly defined procedures for re-enrolment of beneficiaries, resulting in exclusion in case of eventual changes to women's pregnancy status. Further, the initial verification procedures for NutriCash were reported to affect the erroneous inclusion. A key informant at the central level reported that they needed to engage community health workers in the programme to tackle inclusion errors stemming from false pregnancy reports. A third design feature of NutriCash reported to result in exclusion is its targeting of DRDIP beneficiary households. Key informants at the central level also reported issues with functionality of management information systems (MIS) which may result in exclusion of beneficiaries.

153 MGLSD 2023.

154 Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2023.

“

I would like to know if a pregnant woman was selected into the programme, then all of sudden had a miscarriage, and also in shortest time conceived again, would such a woman be reinstated into the program?” – **Non-beneficiary refugee woman, FGD NutriCash, Koboko district**

Perceptions about effectiveness of community-based targeting mechanisms were more nuanced. Central- and district-level administrators reported several bottlenecks and issues with implementing targeting mechanisms, i.e., community-based targeting, of VFG, DRDIP, and NutriCash. Challenges with inclusion and exclusion errors which led to increasing discontent and unacceptability of the programme by the communities was reported to have led to discontinuation of the VFG after two years. Discretionary power in community-based targeting for DRDIP, NutriCash, and UCWP was reported to result in inclusion errors as the community leaders tend to include families they are related to or affiliated with in the programme. Similarly, classification of families based on welfare ranking in DRDIP proved to be highly problematic because of community's incentive to benefit from the programme given the high incidence of vulnerability in the target communities.

In contrast, one of the targeting groups of the UCWP in Arua City reported that the guidelines they received from central level institutions regarding selection criteria and verification procedures were very clear, easy to implement, and effective in identifying the target households and individuals. Acceptability of the targeting mechanism – despite the programme's very narrow targeting – was facilitated by the transparency of every procedural step of beneficiary selection. Key informants at the central level also emphasized that the community-based targeting mechanism for selection of OOS girls for the GEG programme is effective because the local leaders are very knowledgeable about their community members and know details about their vulnerability, health and disability status, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, domestic violence, etc. GEG administrators also mentioned that the CBT allows for more flexibility in redefining or redesigning procedures on the ground to tackle challenges and bottlenecks with selection of beneficiaries encountered during rollout. For instance, to circumvent inclusion and exclusion errors, the administrators responsible for selecting OOS girls shuffled teams between divisions during the verification process.

“

I think it's true that those close to the community leaders or people in places of authority have more opportunities to improve their lives in the community than those that do not have any opportunity with people at places of authority. In most cases when these opportunities come, they first consider themselves up there”. – **Non-beneficiary woman, FGD NutriCash, Koboko district**

I can assure you, between DRDIP, SAGE, and NutriCash, probably I would say SAGE it is better... for DRDIP, we had to go to other methods of ensuring that, we had to divide families into 3 sections; we termed them as 1) “poorest of the poor”, 2) “poor” and 3) “non-poor”. And based on community-agreed criteria of seeing who is non-poor, who is poor, and who is poorest of the poor, I could tell you that even when we were doing that exercise, there was a lot of disagreement on who should be qualified where, even when you gave them the chance to do it because everybody felt “I need somehow to belong where I am able to access this programme”” – **Key informant, Koboko district**

Self-exclusion was also reported to be an issue in implementation of two select programmes. Adolescents in Kampala reported that some of the girls in their communities are not enrolled in the programme because of their parents' hesitation to permit them to do so as they have misconceptions about the programme or do not fully understand its purpose. Exclusion of some of the elderly on the other hand stems from their hesitation to appoint alternates in case of limited mobility and/or disability due to distrust that they will provide them the cash benefit upon receipt.

“

They are saying that the parents are already fed up by the programmes that come on board to support their children because most of the donors lie, not even donors, people who are willing to support they lie, they have their hidden interests instead of supporting their children. So that is why most of the parents are beat-up” – **Adolescent girl, FGD GEG non-beneficiaries, Kampala**

## Perceptions about fairness of targeting mechanisms

Perceptions about fairness of beneficiary selection were more negative about programmes relying on community-based targeting mechanisms, either entirely - DRDIP, NutriCash, UCWP, SCG (during pilot phase), or partially - GEG OOS girls. Discontent and criticism were especially pronounced among non-beneficiary respondents in target communities.

Many of the FGD participants claimed that the local leaders use discretionary power to select beneficiaries based on familial ties, kinship or personal affiliations rather than official guidelines and criteria. A few FGD adolescents in Kampala characterized the selection process of OOS girls – which involves community-based targeting – as corrupt and based on nepotism, claiming that local leaders ask for bribes to enrol children in the GEG and similar programmes where they have the authority to decide. KIs responsible for administering the component of OOS girls in GEG also mentioned during the interviews that they received complaints by community members about selection of parishes and schools. Elderly and key informants alike shared similar perceptions about the fairness of the targeting mechanism of the SCG during the pilot phase and stated that the beneficiary selection was entirely dependent on the discretionary power of the local leadership. It must also be noted that the changes in eligibility age for the SCG between the pilot phase and the national rollout phase – from 65 years to 80 years – appeared to have incited negative perceptions about fairness of the programme in both Yumbe and Koboko districts.

“

Because you see, when it was community-based, initially, there were a lot of failures. If you look at the surveys of then, there were lots of complaints of people saying “it’s discretionary, I mean the chief doesn’t like me, so I’m excluded because of that” – **Key informant, central level**

“...some local leaders ask for money, ask money from the households, from the parents for girls to join the programmes, so if you don’t give out that money to the local leaders, they will not select you” – **Adolescent girl, FGD GEG non-beneficiaries, Kampala**

It must be noted that there was almost unanimous agreement among research participants that the five programmes are very narrowly targeted and unfairly exclude a lot of poor, vulnerable and deprived individuals and households in need of support and protection. With regards to the SCG, the eligibility age of 80 years and above was considered as too strict and high given the short life expectancy in Uganda and that the elderly policy classifies a person as senior upon reaching age 60 years. Likewise, stakeholders engaged in the GEG programme as mentors, administrators, or in monitoring its implementation stated that the programme should be extended to secondary school completion/S4 age to ensure sustainable social inclusion of the girls and enhance the programme’s effectiveness. Beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, and key informants of DRDIP, NutriCash, and UCWP highlighted that the programmes cover too few households and individuals while most of their communities live in poverty. NutriCash beneficiaries suggested that the programme should be targeted universally and cover all pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and mothers of young children. Communities in study sites where DRDIP is delivered also suggested that additional population groups - women, elderly, orphans, and youths - should be prioritized in selection of beneficiaries.

“

The non-beneficiaries are not happy because they were not selected. They feel unfair because they believe they are all vulnerable like anyone else but how come few were selected to participate and receive support from the program.” – **UCWP beneficiary, Arua town**

There is need for the program to enhance or increase the number of the beneficiaries so as for many people to benefit from the program. Many people have been left out because of the limited numbers targeted.” – **Male DRDIP beneficiary, Koboko District**

## PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF THE TARGETING MECHANISMS ON SOCIAL COHESION

### 8.1. Impact of the programmes on beneficiary wellbeing

The beneficiary-specific impacts were broad across the programmes included in this study but there are limitations in isolating the role of the targeting mechanism in these outcomes. The participants reported an overall increase in wellbeing associated with each of the programmes. However, the extent to which this was the result of the programme's targeting mechanism is somewhat difficult to determine. This sub-section discusses these beneficiary-specific impacts before the wider benefits related to social cohesion are discussed. The challenge of measuring the extent to which the outcome was the result of a chosen targeting methodology is somewhat overcome by the comparison of the programmes, which, as discussed in the methodology, were purposefully selected to allow for a comparison of different targeting methodologies. It is therefore important to highlight which impacts are associated with certain programmes and not associated with others, and give an explanation as to why this could be. As can be read below, in the context of discussing direct impacts to programme beneficiaries, conclusions pertaining to the categorical targeting approach are easier to make here than conclusions regarding the use of universal or poverty-targeted approaches.

All of the programmes, and therefore all of the targeting mechanisms, were found to have allowed recipients to increase their overall consumption and thus reduce the depth of their poverty. DRDIP, NutriCash and the SCG were reported to have provided recipients (both nationals and refugees) with the financial means to meet the needs of themselves, their dependents and sometimes the wider household, which were previously unaffordable. This has allowed them to purchase items such as food stuffs, health care and medicines, school fees and materials, clothes, and household items, among other things. DRDIP was reported to have provided beneficiaries with a means of mobility. Beneficiaries from the SCG and DRDIP reported using the funds for improvements of housing conditions, i.e., renovations such as upgrading the roof from a thatched

house to a mabaati house (iron sheet roofed house).

“

For me, I am taking care of an abandoned baby. I had several challenges raising this child before the Nutri-cash program. My challenges were food related, feeding and medical bills. But when this project came, it supported me with money that I used to purchase milk, medicine, clothes for the baby. The baby is looking healthy and stronger. I want to thank the Nutri-cash program for the support.”

– **NutriCash refugee beneficiary in Lubule Sub-county, Koboko District**

Now that you have answered me very well, for me I manage to buy a small radio and named it DRDIP. Sometimes after a whole day's work I becomes exhausted, my radio becomes the only companion that helps me awake, listen to news and some music that refreshes my mind.” – **DRDIP refugee beneficiary in Lubule Sub-county, Koboko District**

The reported improvements in nutritional outcomes were not specific to any of the programmes but in the case of NutriCash they were discussed more extensively, owing to the targeting mechanism and programme design and objectives. Beneficiaries of DRDIP, NutriCash, the SCG and the UCWP all reported improved nutritional outcomes as a result of their inclusion the respective programmes, showing these are not specific to a given targeting mechanism. This is a reflection of the programme's objectives and the categorical targeting of pregnant and lactating women, and of mothers of young children, for whom nutrition is a priority because of its central importance in the early child development. As NutriCash has allowed mothers to consume more foods, they shared being able to have more breastmilk and feeling healthier, which also had spillover effects in their baby's health, nutrition, and growth. One mother discussed how with previous children, antenatal services had complained about the mother's and the children's health but this has not been the case in the last pregnancy when she started benefiting from NutriCash.



“

The Nutri-cash project came in when she was pregnant, it got her when her and the husband were struggling to purchase Mama Kit and other commodities such as clothes, basins, etc., for the baby. She is saying: “When I received these monies, we were able to fix this challenge and got what was required for the baby.” – **NutriCash Ugandan national beneficiary in Lubule Sub-county, Koboko District**

In my experience as a mother, I have noticed that the Nutri-cash project has given me an experience that I never had before. I used to face great challenges of acquiring the basic commodities for the baby and above all I have a challenge of inadequate nutrition or food for myself. Due to the hardship at home, I could not afford sugar or good food for myself. But due to NutriCash project, I was able to acquire all that I needed for my baby, had good food, and as result I feel healthy and have much breast milk for my baby. I noticed something special about this baby of mine, she is healthy and resilient to sicknesses not like my first-born children. The NutriCash fulfils a dream of every pregnant woman and mothers, I want to thank the donor for the program.” – **NutriCash Ugandan national beneficiary in Lubule Sub-county, Koboko District**

For the previous births, I indeed never got enough food to eat. But when I got the opportunity to be a beneficiary of the NutriCash project, I saw everything changed about my life and health. I had an opportunity to eat balanced food, fruits, etc. This good feeding has enabled me to give birth to a baby that weighed 5 kilograms; it is for the first time for me to have a baby that weighed that much. All my other children weighed 1.5 kilograms after birth. I realized that this baby is special and is looking different from the rest of his brothers; he is more active and looking healthy. Thank you the NutriCash project for the opportunities that supported me during my pregnancy.” – **NutriCash Uganda national beneficiary in Lubule Sub-County, Koboko District**

The SCG, GEG, NutriCash and UCWP beneficiaries were all cited as having improved access to health services with an observed improvement in some health outcomes for beneficiaries. Greater access to health services was reported by both beneficiaries and the non-beneficiaries of NutriCash, and the programme was even claimed to have eliminated cases of fistula in the community. SCG and UCWP beneficiaries also claimed to have used their money to gain health treatment and purchase medicine for themselves. GEG beneficiaries, through both the increased affordability offered by receipt of the cash and the referral mecha-

nism of the programme, are now able to access more health care. Participation in the UCWP was claimed to have influenced positive health behaviour among beneficiaries some of whom stopped drinking alcohol, although this was said to occur upon peer pressure from other programme beneficiaries. **DRDIP was the only exception where no claims were made to suggest a change in access to medical care or health outcomes as a result of the programme.** These findings may imply that the categorical targeting of health-sensitive populations, namely children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly may be more likely to produce health outcomes than those targeted at working age.

“

Before the NutriCash project, my child was looking malnourished. In her description, the child was not looking healthy and it is a result of lack of food, lack of support. When the NutriCash project came in, I noticed drastic changes in the health of my child and he is now looking better and healthy.” – **NutriCash refugee beneficiary in Lubule Sub-county, Koboko District**

The use of cash benefits for child or grandchild school fees and materials was discussed by beneficiaries of GEG, DRDIP, UCWP and the SCG, but only GEG beneficiaries talked about the association of the programme with improved educational outcomes. DRDIP, UCWP and SCG beneficiaries reported to have used their cash benefit to pay for school fees of their family members. GEG beneficiaries reported that they used the cash benefit to pay for their school uniforms and books. With their school fees paid, these children did not miss exams. SCG beneficiaries expressed how they have not only paid school fees through the cash they receive, but in some cases have even paid it through the increased business/livelihood activities they have been able to realise as a result of the cash they receive. As the only targeting mechanism aimed at school-aged girls, GEG beneficiaries, both those that were previously out of school and those that were already in primary school, were reported to have completed primary school and have also in some cases transitioned to secondary school due to the GEG programme.

All programmes with the exception of GEG were found to have supported beneficiaries investing in their livelihoods. DRDIP, NutriCash, SCG and UCWP beneficiaries all reported using their cash to invest in their livelihoods and start businesses. For example, DRDIP beneficiaries reported being able to expand their businesses and farms (including the hiring and purchase of land) with the money they received, leading to greater economic productivity. Several examples of

using the money to purchase chickens for a ‘poultry project’ were given in the case of DRDIP, NutriCash and the SCG. The beneficiaries perceived this investment would provide sustained benefits long into the future including consuming and selling the eggs. Examples from DRDIP and NutriCash beneficiaries also included the procuring of items to rent out to others, including the case of (NutriCash) beneficiary mothers working together to start a small horticulture and vegetable project by procuring seeds with the money, influenced by the nutrition training they had received as beneficiaries of the programme. Investments in livelihoods by NutriCash beneficiaries were reported to have made financial returns. SCG beneficiaries were found to have invested in goats, chickens, land, businesses like petty trade, and labour to support them. UCWP beneficiaries reported to have saved their cash and then invested the money in business. Examples included a group of women who saved together to buy items such as tents and chairs that were then hired out for events such as weddings. UCWP beneficiaries in a specific case had managed to form an association, whereby they are eligible to bid for government contracts with institutions such as Arua Central Division or Arua City Council Authority.

“

In my village, the women have consolidated their monies and bought items for such as tents, chairs, source pans for hire; such that if there are public occasions such as weddings, people would hire services from them.” – **UCWP non-beneficiary in Arua City**

The abovementioned investments in livelihoods and businesses were supported by improved saving practices and reduced borrowing. DRDIP beneficiaries reported to have had engaged in increased levels of saving, which allowed them to invest more in their livelihoods. In the case of UCWP, non-beneficiaries observed how beneficiaries became less dependent on others to borrow cash and instead focused on the work offered by the programme to generate their own cash.

The categorical targeting of adolescents and productive populations as well as associated training components were observed to increase levels of employability skills. DRDIP and NutriCash beneficiaries had training in agriculture, financial literacy, savings and VSLA (Village Savings and Loans Associations), leading to reported improvements in the beneficiary’s ability to save effectively and loan others money. In the case of the UCWP in Arua City, beneficiaries received training and

gained skills, which they perceived to have empowered them and be a source of employment. GEG, although putting and keeping beneficiaries in school, also offers training in the form of vocational training and sexual and reproductive health training. Such trainings were not available for NutriCash beneficiaries and were in fact proposed by FGD participants when discussing proposed changes to programme design in the future.

Beneficiaries of all five programmes reported improvements in mental state, enhanced self-esteem and sense of dignity as a result of the programmes. According to a Key Informant, GEG beneficiaries (girls and caregivers) were found to have had an increased sense of hope, pride, happiness, confidence and self-esteem as a result of participating in the programme. SCG beneficiaries in Koboko district were said to be more confident in themselves and in their abilities to meet their needs and engage in the community. DRDIP beneficiaries described themselves as shy and of low self-esteem before benefitting from the programme but now consider themselves to be confident. UCWP beneficiaries claimed that they felt very proud to engage in the public works programmes and that they are receiving cash support deservedly, as they have offered a service for the community.

“

Many girls on the programme are actually proud to be on the programme. Not because they are vulnerable, but it gives them a sense of pride to be on the programme and happiness.” – **Key Informant at central level, Kampala**

I can affirm to you that especially those who are in the (SCG) programme, they feel much privileged, much better, and they actually feel they can now do things, because they are sure of that by the end of the month, at least I can make a decision, I can do this. So that level of confidence is there, that is visible. They actually sometimes open up to you and say, because of this money, I think I am able to do this, I am able to do that. They are more confident than really the others if I may say. You could, I don’t know, I wasn’t part of that, but I am sure you could be able to see that between the haves and have-nots there is always that difference of how they speak out, how they think about the programme and so forth.” – **Key informant, Koboko district**

## 8.2. Impacts of targeting on intra-household relations

The targeting mechanisms of the different programmes implemented in Uganda have had an impact on the social cohesion *within* households. Given the narrow

targeting criteria for most programmes examined in this study, only a few household members are covered by social assistance programme(s), and this can affect the existing intra-household social capital, both positively and negatively.

One notable example of increased social capital related to the change in self-perception of the elderly benefiting from the SCG. Since around one fifth of all households in Uganda include at least one person above the age of 60<sup>155</sup>, many older persons who were formerly dependent on their relatives have been empowered by the grant they are now receiving. Key Informants of related institutions at the central level highlighted that the cash the elders receive through the SCG has provided them with a sense of dignity and importance, as they are now able to make financial contributions to the family and can participate in household decision-making, which gives them a sense of agency.

“

These older persons who accept this money, according to what they say, they now have confidence. When they have this money, they are also able to stand up on their own. They talk with dignity, feel proud because they feel they have something in their pocket. [With their contribution] the family is able to buy the simple basics that they need [...], and now this grandparent is looked at as someone important in the family.” – **Key Informant at the central level**

The same Key Informant and FGD participants in Yumbe district further emphasized that many older persons are the main caretaker of orphans and abandoned children, which renders their economic situation very hard. This phenomenon has been accentuated by the rural exodus, that led several workers to move to the cities, leaving their children in the villages with their grandparents. Several beneficiaries have also talked about this issue, and the fact that SCG has enabled them to provide for the children they are responsible for.

“

The SAGE program has made significant contributions to me. I take care of orphaned children of my late brother. I used the monies to buy food, opened a field where I cultivated some crops to raise more food. It also helped me to contribute to the school fees of these children”. – **SCG beneficiary in Urban Koboko**

All discussions held in West Nile sub-region highlighted that the SCG enabled households to increase investment in human capital development, productive activities and savings. Even in the households that were not headed by older persons, many SCG beneficiaries from all the covered districts expressed that they were able to help their family with food, domestic items, hygiene products, and so on. Others were even able to save money and invest it in crops, poultry or other small businesses that would generate sustainable revenue for the family. Even a non-beneficiary older person living in Yumbe highlighted that the project had positive spill-overs on non-beneficiaries because SCG recipients share the money with their family members. Moreover, the beneficiaries interviewed made recurring mention of the fact that they were now able to pay for the school fees of their grandchildren, which shows a strong intergenerational intra-household impact. These findings suggest that the fact that the older persons were targeted for this programme has had positive impacts on the family dynamics.

“

The best that SAGE has done, it's not for the older persons but actually for those children. Many children living with those older persons have access to school, feed, bathe and do everything because of SAGE”. – **Key Informant at the central level**

Female beneficiaries of other programmes such as NutriCash, GEG, DRDIP, and UCWP reported similar empowering effects at the household level. In particular, respondents reported that cash benefits had allowed them to contribute to enhancing for the wellbeing of their families. Additionally, women reported that their selection for public works programmes provided them with a feeling of independence and emancipation. For example, a female beneficiary from DRDIP affirmed that since she has joined the programme, she feels “honoured, trusted and respected” in her family, and that the programme has empowered her within the household. A girl benefiting from the GEG programme said that the money she received helped her supporting her mother and encouraged both of them to start a business together. Another female beneficiary of DRDIP said she was now an empowered mother who could provide for her family. This empowering effect on women has even been perceived by their spouses.

“

I saw my wife engage in businesses and doing things independently without my help. [...] Ever since she joined UCWP, there is light in the household” – **Male respondent, Arua City**

155 THE UGANDA NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY 2019/20 2020.

Many respondents also shared stories of reduced tensions and violence in their household since they started benefitting from social assistance programmes. Even though these effects were not reported in direct association with programme design, they suggest that targeting poor and vulnerable households that face numerous intersecting challenges and deprivations, including higher incidence of violence, has had a positive impact also on alleviating intra-household tensions and violence. For example, a male beneficiary from DRDIP noted that the money he received from the programme brought peace and stability in his family, which was known in the village for their domestic fights. He explained that the fights came as a result of hunger, and his inability to provide for the family. Moreover, the UCWP targeting group also reported seeing a decline in domestic violence incidence in a span of only two months of programme implementation. A female refugee participating in DRDIP has also made a similar observation.

“

We used to have several misunderstandings or quarrels with my husband [...]. I largely used to depend on my husband when it comes to school fees payment. I started seeing money when the DRDIP program came in. I was able to make contributions to my family and support my husband in paying the school fees for our children; I noted that these have brought peace and harmony in my family.” – **DRDIP female beneficiary, DRC refugee, Koboko district**

Although some families reported increased levels of intra-household social cohesion as a result of one of the members' selection in social assistance programmes, others reported increased divide and friction within the household. For example, a few informants reported examples of negative consequences of the SCG on beneficiaries as their family members tried to exploit them since they started receiving the benefit. For instance, some families would want to bring their distanced old relatives into their household, for the sole purpose of also benefitting from their Senior Citizens Grant.

“

I remember I saw a man who carried his grandmother from very far where she had been abandoned, brought her near, to register her in the programme and make sure that the person in the meantime is alive”. – **Key Informant at the central level**

In some cases, there have also been offences to the elders' and women's agency on their grant, which had not been intended by the programme. For example, key informants at the central level and from Yumbe district mentioned cases of alternate recipients - those collecting the Senior Citizen Grant on behalf of their relatives who are unable to commute to the pay centre - who would either keep the money for themselves, or spend part of it without consulting the actual beneficiary. Key Informants at the central level also reported cases of exposure of the elderly to domestic violence to forcefully acquire their cash, of family members stealing the national ID of beneficiaries to stop them from receiving the benefits, and further isolating the seniors. Although none of these have been reported during discussions with older persons, SCG beneficiaries from Koboko affirmed that they had heard of such cases from other beneficiaries. Another example of unintended results of the grant pertains to NutriCash and DRDIP: administrators of DRDIP have stated that cash leads to challenges within households, as in some cases men would be violent towards women to steal the cash they had received through the programmes. To deal with that, grievance redress mechanisms were implemented as part of DRDIP and NutriCash, together with social risk management and awareness on such issues. Similarly, according to informants from the Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation (TMF), the GEG programme has perpetuated other family issues. Indeed, GEG targets girls but the cash transfer is handed to the caretakers, which led to different expectations on how to use the money. Many girls felt entitled to the money they received, while the family struggled with food, shelter, and medical care. To deal with such situation, TMF started encouraging parents to sit with their daughters to discuss, plan and prioritize how the money should be spent, based on the needs they have and the priorities they face. This approach led to better harmony in the family, and the girls themselves better understood the value of the transfer.

Next, there has been concerns about the actual impact of the Senior Citizens Grant on beneficiaries, considering that most of them spend the majority of their grant on the household, rather than on themselves.

“

I have noticed that these beneficiaries of the SAGE program [...] are left with the burden of providing for these children or the family needs. This to me has diverted the sole purpose of this funds. At the end of the day, the beneficiary doesn't use the funds to support his or her needs as required by the government.” – **Senior citizen, non-beneficiary of SCG, Koboko district**





This evidence emphasizes that the social assistance programmes have had an impact on intra-household dynamics overall including in redefinition of traditional roles. In the past, the norm was that younger generations would support their elders. Yet, some of the key informants at central level voiced their concerns that the SCG has negatively affected intra-household cohesion as the younger generations are less likely to provide support to their families because they receive cash support from the government. Thus, the family support system that used to be anchored in the Ugandan culture seems to be weakening. These key informants also noticed that more people would abandon their children to older persons, knowing that they will get money either way because of the Senior Citizen Grant. Perceptions about this shift in traditional family roles were also common among women FGD participants, who reported that the programmes created some tensions and changes in expectations from women. For example, a mother benefiting from NutriCash saw that her husband, who used to financially support her, has stopped putting in efforts and started expecting her to feed the entire family with the money she received for her newborn. Another mother also benefiting from NutriCash shared a similar experience, as her husband was pressuring her to use this money for his own interests, and she had to resort to reporting him to the police. It must be noted that some of these issues probably pertain to the overall complaints of NutriCash beneficiaries about the lack of engagement of men in the community.

“

[NutriCash] needs to register beneficiaries as couple instead of just the women alone. The program should be designed in a way that if the women receive support in form of cash, then the men can benefit from other trainings. This will bring unity and sustainably bond the family. Initially when this program came, some men were suspicious and were not cooperating with their women, therefore, the couple approach to the beneficiary registration will address these gaps.” – **NutriCash female beneficiary, Koboko district**

Finally, it seems that in families where social capital was already weak, the targeting mechanism of the programme only exacerbated the intra-household tensions. For example, the CDO of Koboko district mentioned cases of SAGE recipients who, because of existing family issues, would not share any of their cash benefit with the rest of the household, worsening tensions. In another example, the key informant discussed a case whereby exclusion errors from the programme due to incorrect data in the National ID led to intra-household tensions between elderly spouses. Key informants from TMF also gave the example of a young GEG beneficiary wanting to register her mother as the recipient of the cash transfer, whereas her dad wanted to register his new wife, the step-mother of the child. Other conflicts have arisen within families where fathers wanted to be the ones receiving the GEG transfer instead of their wives.

Overall, the effects of the targeting methods on the population were contrasted, based on the initial family situation and on the target group selected. Regarding SCG, the only universal programme in Uganda, elders have been strongly empowered within their family, got a sense of increased dignity and were able to make significant contributions to the household. However, exclusion errors exacerbated tensions in some families, whereas providing money to the elders affected the family support system. For NutriCash, which only targets women, positive impacts on the family have been noted but domestic issues and lack of support from men have also been reported by beneficiaries as a result of the programme. In that regard, it seems that girls participating in GEG did not face long-lasting issues thanks to the mentoring component of the programme which also includes regular meetings with parents and caregivers (where necessary), which led to enhanced communication within their families. As for UCWP and DRDIP, where both males and females were selected, the empowering effect on women was substantial. It has to be noted that in the case of the Urban Cash for Work Programme, no intra-household tensions were reported and participants stated that since the recipient of UCWP in each household was nominated by the other family members, everyone within the household was content. Additionally, FGD participants of this programme as well as the community targeting groups emphasized that the programme had a transformative role on women's socio-economic empowerment, both within and outside their households.

### 8.3. Impacts on social cohesion in the community

#### 7.3.1. Positive impacts

Most research participants perceived that the five social assistance programmes have had a very positive impact on social cohesion in the community regardless of the targeting mechanism used for selection of their beneficiaries. In addition to relations between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the target communities, the research investigated the impact on engagement of the programmes' beneficiaries in the community, support and solidarity, and social capital.

According to key informants and FGD participants, programmes such as DRDIP, UCWP, and NutriCash which included categorical criteria for selection of host and refugees within communities have fostered the relationship between the two groups. Indeed, DRDIP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries and UCWP targeting group stated during the discussions that the programmes have given refugees a sense of belonging

and inclusion in the host communities through engagement in public works programmes together with Ugandans. By providing them with income-generating opportunities, the programmes have also enabled the refugees to engage more actively in the communities rather than being isolated and "passive" cash transfer recipients. According to key informants at the central level, the relationship between host and refugee communities was also strengthened because DRDIP is one of the first programmes to date to cover host communities. Most donor and governmental interventions since 2013 were of humanitarian nature and primarily provided emergency cash assistance only to refugees. KIs and mentors of the GEG programme reported a similar, positive impact. By providing continuous mentoring and training to both Ugandan and refugee girls and their caretakers, the programme has provided them with a common platform to get acquainted with each other's commonalities and shared experiences, and to network, contributing to development of social capital of both groups.



**The DRDIP program cemented the relationship between the refugees and the Nationals in the community. This program has helped them to work as team to achieve the common good of the community both in refugee and host communities. The DRDIP program helped the refugees and the Host communities to look at each other as partners but not as competitors or rivals” – Female refugee beneficiary, NutriCash – Koboko district**

Another positive impact of DRDIP, UCWP, and NutriCash stemming from programme design rather than the targeting mechanisms used is that each included a component of establishment/creation of associations and savings groups. These institutions did not only help foster and maintain the relations between different groups of beneficiaries (UCWP) but are open to the wider community who can contribute to and borrow from them (DRDIP and NutriCash), leading to enhanced social cohesion in the community. Similarly, both NutriCash and GEG beneficiaries are encouraged by programme design to transfer knowledge from their training and mentoring to other community members on topics of i) self-care during pregnancy, feeding practices for young children, planting and growing of different crops to improve nutritional status of women and children, etc., in NutriCash, and ii) availability of counselling and referral services, as well as skills development in the communities in GEG. Mentorship and skills training programmes of GEG are open to everyone in the target communities, including girl and boy children and their parents and caretakers,

which was perceived to enhance social cohesion in the communities by fostering friendships and collaborative/professional networking.

“

In addition to the above point, we the beneficiaries are being consulted by the non-members on issues of child care and personal care especially for the pregnant mothers. We made sure if there is any mother or family struggling with a condition that we can guide or help them at the community level, we act so first to support them. We have been guiding our neighbours on how to prepare food and feed the young ones. It gives us joy that we are all having healthy children growing up in the community and erased all signs of malnutrition in the community.” – **Female refugee beneficiary, NutriCash – Koboko district**

Mentors and implementers of the GEG programme highlighted that the programme delivery which involves several social networks - peer mentors, parents and caretakers, and community leaders has had manifold positive aspects on social cohesion. Continuous mentoring of girls by the community leaders was reported to have had a positive impact on the leaders' active engagement in the community – e.g., in providing counselling and referrals of non-beneficiary girls to related service providers. Further, continuous engagement of parents and caretakers in mentoring sessions and skills development training has provided them with a platform to a) network with other parents and caregivers in the community, and b) increased their involvement in their daughters' lives and performance at school and/or other endeavours. Several GEG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries reported that the programme has impacted positively the self-esteem and social standing of girls in the community, and enabled them to be active members, influence others, and participate in decision-making.

“

About the social cohesion and the way the girls are selected. We work within the communities. In this communities, if you've been in a typical Kampala community, households are next to each other. The beauty of the programme is the mentorship. You get to find that there are girls that were selected and are on the programme, and others that were selected but are actually not in the programme. So when we have the group mentorship we call all girls in the community, not only the girls part of the programme. We involve other girls within the community. This brings social cohesion. We also have sessions with caretakers. For instance, if you have a session on financial literacy for caretakers, we call caretakers not only those that are in the programme but also those that are not and that have an interest on that particular topic” – **KII central level – GEG, Kampala.**

The SCG was also perceived to have positively affected beneficiaries' self-esteem, dignity, and agency, and resultantly their community engagement. The KIs and elderly communities in Yumbe and Koboko districts reported that the benefit has provided the beneficiaries with the opportunity to feel like active members of the society again by enabling them to participate in and contribute to important community gatherings and celebrations like weddings and funerals. The KIs at the central level also claimed that the SCG has had a positive impact on perceptions of the elderly by the rest of the community as the cash benefit has enabled them to become active members or even chair community institutions like the VSLAs.

“

One thing is, when we talk about social cohesion, you find one thing is we have some social events. When we look at the key social events that people take seriously, one of them is during funerals, they take that seriously, and one of them is also weddings, they take it seriously. So, you find that some of these elders, with the little money they're able to make contributions.” – **District-level KII, Yumbe**

### 7.3.2. Negative impacts

As will be discussed in the next section, most of the negative impacts of targeting mechanisms on social cohesion – particularly of community-based targeting – were reported to be “channelled” towards programme administrators and implementers, affecting the social contract. In terms of negative consequences in the communities, ineligibility/exclusion from the programmes was reported to be mainly manifested through negative feelings among non-beneficiaries such as anger, jealousy, envy, and unhappiness (NutriCash and DRDIP). Non-beneficiaries in UCWP target areas in Arua City were reported to have expressed unhappiness by claiming that the beneficiaries had been favoured by the local community leaders during selection. KIs at the central level reported that unhappiness of parents for their daughters' exclusion from the GEG programme was expressed subtly – through expression of interest about how they can benefit from the programme. Verbalization of these negative sentiments in the form of insults or verbal harassment has been reported by several DRDIP and UCWP host and refugee beneficiaries. A few DRDIP refugee beneficiaries and UCWP beneficiaries reported isolated cases of action against them in sign of “retaliation for exclusion from the programme,” such as damaging their crops or stealing their work tools.



“

For us our work was to rehabilitate roads, we have faced several challenges at the site; this happens when non-beneficiaries are crossing or passing the road being maintained, they would ride recklessly or aimlessly to just knock someone down simply because they were not selected” – **Female beneficiary, UCWP, Arua City**

As discussed in this sub-section, the negative impacts of targeting mechanisms of the five select programmes have been fairly limited. These findings might appear counterintuitive given the very narrow targeting of most of the programmes in a context of limited opportunities and resources for livelihoods and coping mechanisms, and high incidence of poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion. One possible explanation for these findings could be the “mediating” factors” such as other components of programmes’ design, pre-existing social networks and cohesion in the communities, and management of the targeting mechanisms by the local and other forms of leadership.

In terms of programme design features, as has been discussed, GEG mentoring and trainings are open to the wide communities – adolescent girls, boys, and caregivers - in the selected parishes, regardless of the beneficiary status. In addition to providing the members of the community with a platform to interact and network, they may ameliorate a sense of exclusion from the programmes. The design features of NutriCash and UCWP which request the beneficiaries to save a portion of the cash benefits and organise themselves in savings and loans groups<sup>156</sup> may have also contributed to social cohesion as some of these groups are also open to non-beneficiaries. Coupled with existing community groups, associations and organisations, these structures were reported to have become not only a financial support platform, but also one where the beneficiaries can transfer their knowledge from the programmes to non-beneficiaries. For example, NutriCash beneficiaries listed several examples of knowledge transfer to non-beneficiary mothers, including on feeding practices of young children, caretaking during pregnancy, farming of nutritional food, etc. GEG beneficiaries, mentors, and implementing organizations also spoke about spillover effects of the programme in the community in terms of accessibility of referral services by non-beneficiaries. Moreover, the way that CBT mechanisms are administered on the ground by the local community leadership is paramount in terms of perceptions about fairness of the programmes. In programmes where there was transparency about selection criteria and intense and continuous outreach activities, such as UCWP

and GEG, the negative impacts on social cohesion were more subtle. Lastly, optimism about programme continuation and expansion of coverage in the future – a shared belief by most beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of all programmes – has played a crucial role in shaping positive attitudes about programmes in the communities and not affecting social cohesion very strongly/negatively.

#### 8.4. Impacts on social contract

The different programmes and their targeting techniques have had a mixed impact on the populations covered by this study. On the one hand, CBT approaches have been found to having enhanced trust on local leaders as key actors within the community for their mobilization role. According to a few participants, CBT has made local leaders more accessible to the community members, and it has strengthened their relationship. Moreover, providing them with a role in CBT has also made local leaders feel more empowered, with a sense of purpose, and increased their accountability towards services their communities.

“

It has given a good picture to the people in the community that their local leaders are doing something, you know, to support them. And whenever we are conducting, let’s say, a parent meeting, we are looking for places to sit them. There are these local leaders that are coming out and parents are like: we really appreciate our leaders. And whenever they have challenges, they are now running to their local leaders asking them “what should we do on this?” because they’re seeing something has come out. – **Key informant, Kampala.**

On the other hand, according to some participants, the CBT has also had negative implications. Participants pointed out that certain local leaders took advantage of that decision power, and that they would discretionally choose who should be part of the CBT programmes based on personal preferences. Also, some participants - particularly non-beneficiaries in GEG target communities - reported that local leaders would take this chance to economically benefit from their decision power, asking community members for money to include them in the list of beneficiaries. This, according to the participants, contributed to break the sense of trust not only towards the local leaders, but also towards the government since they did not seem to tackle those cases. Similarly, a few participants pointed out that when CBT was used in pilot phases of SCG in both Yumbe and Koboko districts, local leaders were also discretionally

<sup>156</sup> With the aim of improving their financial literacy and promoting investments.



and that they were enrolling in the programme only the people they knew or that they were close to. In this sense, some community members did not trust local leaders since the targeting method was not robust enough and it did not offer enough transparency. This led to a high number of complaints and even discontinuation of the VFG component of SAGE.

“

But of course, they come to the local leaders, so when they come to the local leaders, they also have sections of people or families that will call for support. Meaning the help could come, let's say Girls Empowering Girls comes, and when they go to the local leader, the local leader will choose which people to write or recommend. They may be the right people to fit as beneficiaries or sometimes not. So this leaves out to a certain point some people in the community because of corruption” – **Key informant, Kampala.**

She is saying that some local leaders ask for money, ask money from the households, from the parents for girls to join the programmes, so if you don't give out that money to the local leaders, they will not select you. And even I think that thinking about it, coming from that poor background, people who will not give us money, maybe we will go to the other house [referring to the behaviour of local leaders]”. – **Non-beneficiary of Girls Empowering Girls, Kampala**

Moreover, participants SCG participants pointed out that sometimes there still are some information bottlenecks causing certain disruption among areas where the pilot phase was applied – where the grant was given to people over 65 years old – and areas where it was not – where the grant was directly given to people over 80 years old. In this sense, participants indicated that it is crucial that information is provided by trusted people and that community members actually perceive that it is a transparent and fair process. Otherwise, it can lead to a lack of trust in the institutions or social assistance programmes.

“

True, actually there is a big challenge: the targeting that are done in between when in one district we have this group that's supposed to be 60,65, the other group is supposed to be 80... But I think information -if you build the trust between people and politicians- explanation and information is very crucial. [...] So, if it's a politician that they trust, you have to explain to the politician why is it that here you apply 80+ and then on this other side you apply 60+. [...] the district has to explain to you why you cannot be brought in the other, so the challenge is there but like I said you have got to know who you're going to give the information to”. - **Key informant, central level**

Other participants highlighted the importance of government transparency in terms of explaining role of each institution and its power when it comes to a specific programme in order to build a relationship based on mutual understanding. According to participants, this opportunity comes up when implementing a programme or through targeting, and making use of it would help to smoothen the processes.

“

Yeah, I think people do not really fully understand some of the entities of the government and because there's no, the relationship that is created between them and the citizens, has not been that smooth. [...] and even the institution is detached from the elderly person. So the only time NIRA is visible in the community is when there is a mass programme and when we are saying that “go, and register people for A, B C”, they will go and sit with their computers and they're busy doing their things. They expect the people to be knowing what they are doing. So many times, I think the community does not really understand some institutions and why they are doing certain things. So that is still a big challenge to be honest”. – **Key Informant, Koboko District**

In general terms, and regardless of the targeting mechanism, participants felt thankful and appreciative of the Government and its related institutions due to these programmes. In this sense, participants pointed out that they felt that the Government was actually taking into account the population's needs and they felt more valued by the institutions. They also got to know better the institutions that are actually providing the help. Moreover, these programmes have helped to build up optimism towards the state's willingness to provide them with support. For example, even participants who were not benefiting from the SCG programme were supporting the Government's initiative because they trusted that their chance would arrive in the future.

“

The Urban cash has face lifted many schools, the city center, etc., people have made comments that at they can now enjoy the city because it is clean and some leaders started bragging that I am the mayor or the chairman, etc.”, - **Non-beneficiary of UCWP.**

“

When we went for the orientation meetings with caretaker and try to talk them about the programme, some of the first questions we ask them is whether they know KCCA? What do you know about KCCA? You get to find that they are just vendors on the roads, or they are in charge of garbage so they normally don't talk about the positive part. But when we have these caretakers on to the programme and you talk to them about how is the programme, you ask how is that helping them, they answer that they are so thankful to KCCA. There is a great change from what do they knew and what they know now". – **Key informant, Kampala.**

According to a few participants, this has also had an impact on perception of regional and local governmental structures. For instance, participants pointed out that beneficiaries of SCG felt represented by both the local and national council for older persons, as well as the Parliament, since it gave them a voice to express their demands. Other participants also highlighted that community meetings are more valued since community members feel that there is something on stake for them in those meetings, so they engage and participate more actively.

Moreover, some participants raised the point that these programmes have also had an impact on the overall expectations of what the Government can or should provide in social protection, empowering them to make more demands.

“

And now, with the SCG being successful, 1) people have first of all believed that actually, there is something called social protection that they state must provide. So, the human rights thinking now is that social protection is a right perspective. It's now a right that is claimed from the constitution. 2) It has also given expectations on the government to put in place systems to ensure that all Ugandans are supported in their kind of needs. [...] people begin asking because previously, social security was basically for the civil servants, public pension, and NSSF. Now, with this, the State is now being challenged on how we expand and cover all Ugandans? How do we extend social security to the informal sector so that people are covered? We don't have only a few people that are covered. How do we onboard others systems such as the national health insurance? So, the conversation of "can we have now social protection system that is life-cycle-based" is now to the front". – **Key informant, central level, Kampala.**

On the other hand, implementing these programmes has also impacted the Government in all its different levels. There is a better understanding of the challenges that citizens face in terms of vulnerability, poverty and inequality; as well as about the necessary programme design changes in programmes such as GEG in order to improve the effectiveness of the programme. Moreover, these targeting techniques have also contributed to develop higher accountability standards through, for instance, having to verify registration accuracy or responding to complaints from the community.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 9.1. Conclusions

This report attempted to gain a better understanding of social assistance targeting, with the intention of providing evidence for policy makers and practitioners to enhance their targeting effectiveness for optimal impact of interventions on social cohesion. The case of Uganda is highly relevant in the context of this research because of the wide array of targeting approaches across the country's various social protection programmes as well as a social and macro-economic context defined by shocks and limited resources. This context has implications for the choice of social protection targeting mechanisms and social cohesion outcomes.

The study employs a literature review and mixed-method, although predominantly qualitative research methodology that, firstly, maps out the major social assistance targeting mechanisms in Uganda, secondly, evaluates the implications of each targeting mechanism for social cohesion in Uganda and, lastly, shares key learnings and policy recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and social cohesion outcomes of social protection programmes. This section of the paper elaborates on the last of these objectives to both summarise what has been reported and to offer an appropriate package of policy recommendations that should be considered in the light of what has been learnt.

The study focusses on five of the social protection programmes currently or recently implemented in Uganda including, DRDIP, NutriCash, GEG, UCWP and the SCG. The targeting methods of these programmes can be summarised as follows:

- DRDIP uses a combination of **geographical** and **categorical targeting** to select 15 Districts across Northern Uganda followed by community-based targeting that used wealth ranking criterion to select households on the basis of a 'poorest of the poor' status.
- NutriCash, as a sub-programme of DRDIP, uses the same targeting mechanism as DRDIP but with an added stage of **categorical targeting** of the DRDIP beneficiary households to identify those with a

pregnant or breastfeeding mother of a child under the age of 2 years.

- GEG uses a combination of **geographical targeting** of parishes and schools in Kampala, selected through a vulnerability index, followed by a **categorical targeting** of in-school girls in P6 and **community-based targeting** of out-of-school girls that were considered the most vulnerable.
- UCWP used a combination of **geographical targeting** to urban and flood-prone areas in West Nile, followed by **community-based targeting** for the selection of the most vulnerable households, and **categorical targeting** to set a quota for the number of women and refugees.
- SCG uses a combined **universal approach** with **categorical targeting** of those age 80 years and above since the national rollout. During the pilot phase it used geographical targeting of 15 districts where categorical targeting of those age 65 and above and those age 60 and above in the case of Karamoja was applied, with a community-based verification method of the age.

These programmes were analysed across four study sites including Kampala located in the Central Region, and Arua City, Koboko District, and Yumbe District located in the West Nile Sub-Region of the Northern Region. The communities in the study sites were found to engage predominantly in agricultural jobs in the rural areas and informal, petty trade in the urban areas. The main challenges included poverty, hunger and food insecurity, (lack of) access to basic services, a lack of role models for children and youth, criminality, behavioural issues including drug and substance abuse, child labour, child marriage and the reinforcing issue of traditional norms and beliefs. Within these communities, some of the most vulnerable groups include women and girls, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, and refugees, a large share of whom are hosted in the West Nile. Various formal and informal stakeholders including local councils, religious institutions, community leaders, and savings groups represent the key decision-makers in these communities. Some of these, along with community groups, NGOs, and donor agencies also represent various forms of support to the

communities. Social cohesion in the communities can be described as being fairly strong, especially in certain areas in the West Nile, with pronounced mutual trust, solidarity, and support between community members. However, experience of social issues and exclusion are also prevalent, especially in urban areas.

### Design and implementation of the programmes and targeting mechanisms

Within these communities, the outreach associated with the programmes can be summarised as ‘good’ in that beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike demonstrated a solid general knowledge of the programmes, with the exception of GEG. However, processes, particularly for the SCG and NutriCash, must be improved to promote social cohesion. Most participants had learnt about the programmes through institutional stakeholders such as community leaders, local authorities, social workers, community facilitators and Community Development Officers. Barriers and bottlenecks to outreach exist in the form of a lack of elderly- and disability-sensitive approaches and lack of transparency among some local leaders. Communication of the programme’s targeting approach was not always clear, reflected in confusion around whether women who had miscarried should remain in the NutriCash programme and the age at which persons are eligible to be enrolled on the SCG. Issues of programme awareness and outreach stem from a lack of diversity in the sources of dissemination. Despite availability of many cost-effective modalities that could also prevent misinformation, outreach is carried out predominantly by local community leaders. More awareness of the targeting eligibility criteria and selection process in the community is essential to promote social cohesion.

**Inadequate benefit amounts, short programme duration, difficulties with the delivery of cash benefit, and challenges with effectiveness of complaint mechanisms were perceived as the main issues with programmes’ design and implementation.** The adequacy of the cash transfers received is considered to be inadequate across all the five programmes. Due to the high inflation experienced in recent years and the lack of indexation, the real value of the cash transfers has diminished. However, the trainings and associated skills delivered by UCWP, GEG and DRDIP were associated with the promotion of teamwork and useful as a means of income generation. In terms of programme duration, GEG is currently considered to be much too short given that it covers the 4-years from P6 to S2, ensuring primary-secondary transition but not secondary completion. Similarly, the 2-month life of the UCWP was considered highly inappropriate and very exclusive to those who have not yet benefitted. In the

case of the SCG, elderly people have faced exclusion in accessing their cash due to difficulties in reaching the pay centres, owing to their frailty and remote residences. The quarterly nature of the payment was also considered problematic by these SCG beneficiaries. In terms of appeals, some women reported a sudden interruption in their NutriCash benefits despite their eligibility, and even after complaining to local leaders, they still failed to get a satisfactory response. SCG beneficiaries have faced similar issues of failing to appeal; the issue of the national ID and the many incorrect birth dates on these IDs presents a significant exclusionary issue to prospective-beneficiaries. Grievance and Redress Mechanisms (GRM) seem to be in place and working across most of the programmes but the issue of appealing to NIRA in the case of the SCG needs revision as the process is considered very costly, time consuming, and unclear.

**The perceptions around the programmes’ targeting mechanisms on effectiveness and fairness differed somewhat between favourable towards universal and categorical approach on the one hand and less favourable towards the CBT approach on the other.** Universal and categorical mechanisms were considered to be effective, especially the selection of in-school girls for the GEG programme and the selection of the elderly for the SCG. Nevertheless, exclusion from the SCG, despite its universal nature was high due to the formal verification method: the national ID. The NIRA-delivered IDs were reported to have incorrect birth dates, names or districts of residence and the costs and barriers associated with changing these details are high. Lacking a national ID was also listed as an exclusion factor by many. The case of the UCWP shows that CBT works most effectively and is perceived to be fair when there are clear guidelines from government about the selection of beneficiaries and when this is done in an inclusive and transparent manner. In the case of targeting out-of-school girls on behalf of GEG, CBT was found to be effective due to knowledge that local leaders hold concerning their community and associated details of the present vulnerable persons and groups. SAGE provides an interesting example in the comparison of targeting mechanisms as the VFG was dropped from the programme due to the CBT approach not being endorsed, well understood nor accepted in communities, unlike the universal and categorical SCG. Like the VFG, DRDIP, NutriCash and UCWP non-beneficiaries perceived that the targeting processes was unfair as a result of the discretionary power that local leaders had in selecting beneficiaries. This was perceived to manifest in inclusion of particular families and relations to the programme. In the case of DRDIP, the classification of families along the lines of ‘poor’, ‘non-poor’



and 'poorest of the poor' was considered very problematic as the overall depth and incidence of poverty was considered to be high and wide in the target communities. Overall, irrespective of the targeting mechanism, all of the programmes were considered to be very narrowly targeted by participants and to exclude a very large proportion of the population including those considered poor and vulnerable.

### Impact of targeting on social cohesion

Research participants reported that the programmes had direct impacts on the wellbeing of beneficiaries including through increased consumption, improved nutritional and human capital outcomes, improved mental state, and increased investments in livelihoods. Firstly, all of the programmes were found to have allowed recipients to increase their overall consumption. Secondly, improvements in nutrition outcomes and food security were widespread across all programmes, but largely emphasized among NutriCash beneficiaries given the nature of the programme design. Thirdly, the SCG, GEG, NutriCash and UCWP beneficiaries reported improved access to health services and medicine, with an observed improvement in some health outcomes for beneficiaries. This finding might imply that the categorical targeting of health-sensitive populations, namely children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly may have a higher effect on their health outcomes than those outside of these life-stages. Fourthly, the use of cash benefits for child and grandchild school fees and materials was discussed by beneficiaries of GEG, DRDIP, UCWP and the SCG. However, only GEG was associated with improved educational outcomes suggesting that complementary services such as referrals and mentoring have a pivotal role in social inclusion. Fifthly, all programmes with the exception of GEG were found to have incentivized the beneficiaries to invest in their livelihoods and businesses. Such investments were enabled by the reported improvements in saving practices and reduced borrowing among DRDIP and UCWP beneficiaries. Sixthly, the categorical targeting of adolescents and productive populations as well as associated training and capacity-building components were observed to increase levels of employability skills. Lastly, an improved mental state, self-esteem, dignity, and agency was reported for and by recipients of all the five programmes.

The nature of the targeting mechanisms led to some positive outcomes with regards to intra-household relations including greater agency and inclusion within the household among beneficiaries of categorically targeted programmes. Perceptions of fair-

ness were more prevalent among targeting mechanisms that included both men and women. The targeting mechanisms are such that only a few household members are ever covered by a given social protection programme. This has both positively and negatively impacted the already existing social dynamics within the household. In the case of the SCG, the programme has allowed the beneficiaries to contribute to family decision making due to the financial contributions that they can make to the household<sup>157</sup>, leading to a sense of agency, dignity and importance for the individual. Female beneficiaries of other programmes, namely NutriCash, GEG, DRDIP and UCWP, reported similar empowering effects within the household coupled with a sense of reduced tensions and violence. In the case of UCWP and DRDIP, there seems to have been positive social cohesion impacts at the intra-household level associated with the targeting of both men and women.

In some cases, categorical targeting mechanisms selecting only girls/women or elders were linked to increased dispute in the household. Evidence from the SCG, NutriCash and GEG shows that a life-cycle-based categorical targeting approach, which excludes other household members, can disrupt intra-household dynamics and ties in families with pre-existing tensions and distrust. For instance, GEG adolescents beneficiaries were reported to feel entitled to spending the grant, regardless of unmet needs in their families. The mentors tackled the issue by encouraging girls and their families to sit together to discuss, plan and prioritise how that money should be spent based on the household needs and priorities. Several issues were reported about the SCG including: i) their hesitation to appoint alternates to receive the cash benefits on their behalf, ii) the appointed alternates spending the SCG without consulting the elderly beneficiaries, and iii) discontinuation of financial and other support for the elderly by other household members. It must be noted that some of these dynamics may be linked/associated to the vulnerability status of and perception of the role of the elderly in the community. As for NutriCash, it has been perceived that the lack of involvement and understanding of men in the programme sometimes led to changes in expectations, as some of them reduced their financial contribution, assuming that the benefit was sufficient to cover the needs of the entire family.

<sup>157</sup> Including investments in human capital development, productive assets, and savings.

Overall, the programmes had a positive impact on social cohesion in the community including beneficiaries' engagement and participation, support, and social capital, primarily attributed to programme design rather than targeting mechanisms. There was pronounced acceptability of universal and categorical programmes, the SCG and in-school GEG beneficiaries, while the effect of community-based targeting approaches was more nuanced. In West Nile, programme design criteria – UCWFP, DRDIP (and NutriCash as a sub-programme) – that set quotas for selection of host and refugee communities were reported to have had a positive impact on strengthening social cohesion. This was enabled by fostering a sense of belonging among the refugees who were provided with an opportunity to productively engage in the community, and by including host communities in programmes in areas that typically covered only the refugee communities. Similar effects were also reported about the GEG programme which provides a platform for interaction between adolescent girls of the two communities through its mentoring and other activities, contributing to their social capital development. Programme design components of DRDIP, UCWP, and NutriCash which involve establishment of savings groups had a positive impact as they are accessible to wider communities and serve as knowledge transfer platforms between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Knowledge transfer and social capital development are also at the core of the GEG implementation structure comprised of active involvement of community leaders, mentors, adolescent girls and their caregivers on a regular basis. Positive effects of the SCG on social cohesion were reported to be manifested in their active engagement in the communities with gains in self-esteem, dignity, and agency from the programme. The negative effects of the CBT programmes on social cohesion were primarily linked to the social contract, stemming from perceived unfairness in inclusion or exclusion. In inter-community relations, they were mainly manifested through negative feelings such as unhappiness, anger, jealousy and envy among persons excluded from the programmes (NutriCash, DRDIP, UCWP), and in rare cases also in verbal harassment towards beneficiaries (DRDIP, UCWP). However, the study found that that involvement of the community and local leadership was associated with increased understanding and acceptability of the targeting mechanism. In the case of CBT programmes, negative perceptions of the targeting mechanism were somewhat reduced by the expectation that one might benefit from the programme in the near future, even if they are not benefiting from it now. Overall, existing

social cohesion in communities, as with households, is a key mediator of the social cohesion impacts associated with social protection across all targeting mechanisms. Urban areas may be at a disadvantage in the potential of social protection to deliver social cohesion outcomes as they are already affected by perceptions of high inequality and lack of trust due to higher incidence of criminality.

The programmes demonstrated a mixed impact with regard to the building of the social contract, including mixed results across programmes that employ similar targeting mechanisms. CBT has made local leaders more accessible but, in many cases, has empowered the leaders to the extent that they have taken advantage of their position through bribes and discretionary selection of beneficiaries. The lack of trust in local leaders and the lack of transparency they were seen to employ has had a negative impact on the social contract. Regardless of the targeting mechanism, beneficiaries were appreciative towards government and demonstrated knowledge of the (local, regional and national) government institutions involved in social protection delivery and both their role and importance. This has been coupled with higher expectations throughout society regarding the government's role in delivering social protection voiced by community members that have felt more empowered to speak up and demand higher protection as they have come to learn of these institutions. Local government have observed to better understand the vulnerability of the communities and have been forced to engage in processes such as verifying registration processes and complaints.

## 9.2. Policy Recommendations

1. Determine an appropriate, clear, transparent, and inclusive outreach process that explains the nature of the programme, eligibility criteria and selection process, programme duration, delivery mechanisms, and grievance and redress mechanisms, across all programmes. This should include: i) a diverse number of channels, such as radio advertisements, community gatherings, and leaflets, that allow the community to triangulate and confirm information provided by community leaders; ii) elderly- and disability-sensitive considerations such as the use of communication-techniques that are appropriate to the individual; and iii) involvement of the community within the targeting process; and iv) the involvement of government to communicate the role of each institution and increase government accountability.

Policy makers should consider the potential role of the incoming participatory planning mechanism of the Parish Development Model to identify whether and how these actions could be integrated into this mechanism.

2. **Enhance the effectiveness of the targeting mechanisms by resolving registration issues as a matter of urgency, particularly in the case of national ID corrections and dissemination.** Resources should be provided to mobilise NIRA to host mass registration events at community level, which should also function as a means of correcting IDs as necessary. For those in the community who are less mobile, NIRA should be resourced to go household by household to provide the same services offers at mass registration events. Investments in such processes could have spill-overs across multiple social protection programmes in the future.
3. **Improve the design of the programmes' other components to support the social cohesion impacts of the targeting mechanism.** This should include: i) an increase in the benefit level to at least equivalent to the purchasing power of the grant at the initial implementation of the programme; ii) introduce mechanisms for regular benefit indexation, iii) advocacy to and investment by government to sustain the implementation of the programmes; iv) consider alternative, accessible payment mechanisms, such as mobile money, which are more inclusive to those who face mobility challenges; v) allow beneficiaries to collect payment in districts other than the district they registered in, if they wish to do so by improving MIS and data exchange between different districts; and vi) improve the grievance and redress mechanisms to ensure that appeals are clear, quick, cost-efficient, and effective.
4. **Prioritise the use of categorical targeting with a universal, non-poverty targeted approach to maximise social cohesion outcomes.** Categorical targeting mechanisms based on lifecycle categories are easily understood and considered fair by the community. A universal approach avoids the social issues associated with exclusion from the programme and, in a country with a high incidence of poverty among the vast majority of the population, is a justified approach in meeting the needs of all that fall under the category rather than embracing concepts of 'poor', 'non-poor' and 'poorest of the poor'.
5. **If poverty-target mechanisms such as CBT are chosen, implementors should effectively follow the outreach approach described in point 1.** In the context of a low-resource setting like Uganda, the political acceptability and fiscal-capacity may not exist to justify a categorical-universal mechanism. If CBT is to be used in targeting, social cohesion outcomes can be maximised by ensuring these mechanisms are accompanied by clear guidelines from government and a transparent outreach process in the community. The household data generation associated with the Parish Development Model may provide a means of supporting these mechanisms too and should be investigated further by policy makers. Yet, rather than CBT, it may be preferable to use narrow geographic targeting if a categorical-universal targeting mechanism then becomes more politically acceptable and fiscally affordable.
6. **Sensitize household members of beneficiaries of programmes that use categorical targeting to avoid tensions and conflicts at the household level.** In cases of categorical targeting, the individual in the household that directly benefits from the programme can be protected from exclusion and violence if appropriate sensitization is prioritised for family members.
7. **Widen the targeting of other programme components that can be delivered in a more cost-effective manner than the cash component to increase inclusion to the programme in the community.** Programmes could offer or expand training components to provide skills related to income generation, health and nutrition, to increase the acceptability of the programme and reduce the levels of exclusion. Components could also be associated with those being introduced under the Parish Development Model at present. Where this is unaffordable to the programme, finding means of targeting or involving women would appear to be disproportionately likely to lead to knowledge transfer in the community, which would also improve the social acceptability of the programme.
8. **If programmes are scaled-up, avoid changing the eligibility criteria associated with the targeting mechanism.** Changes in eligibility criteria across time were found to have caused confusion, discontent, perceptions of unfairness, and an undermining of the social contract. Eligibility criteria established on legally defined definitions of categorical groups such as 'the elderly' would provide a strong case for a sustained targeting parameter in the long-run.

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# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Complete list of reviewed quantitative sources

**Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE)** – This multi-country-survey provides data on social protection indicators including coverage, public expenditure and adequacy.

**World Social Protection Data Dashboards** – This multi-country-survey provides data on social protection indicators including intervention availability, coverage and public expenditure.

**High-Frequency Phone Survey on COVID-19 2020-2023** – This household survey provides recent data on matters of behaviour and social distancing, access to health services, education and childcare, employment of all household members, shocks / coping, safety nets, and food insecurity.

**Interagency Rapid Gender Analysis Household Survey 2020** – This individual level provides recent data on matters of health, protection, community services, livelihoods, gender-based violence, child protection, reproductive health, information management, health care referral services, and domestic needs and household support.

**Afrobarometer Survey 2019, Round 8 and 2016, Round 7** – These household level surveys provide recent data on matters of conflict, security and peace, domestic political issues, government political systems and organisations, mass political behaviour, attitudes/opinions, political ideology, business/ industrial management and organisation, mass media,

social exclusion, cultural activities and participation, cultural and national identity, religion and values, social behaviour and attitudes, social change, and social conditions and indicators.

**National Panel Survey 2019-2020, 2018-2019 and 2015-2016** – These household level surveys provide recent data on matters of health, education, labour and employment, transport, housing conditions, WASH, energy, income and activities, shocks and coping strategies, welfare and food security, and agriculture

**Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment Programme Baseline 2012, Follow-Up 2013 and Endline 2014** – These household level surveys provide data for impact evaluation on matters of education, health, activities, migration, household conditions, empowerment, assets, land and livestock, subjective poverty, saving and borrowing, formal/informal transfers, hunger scale, consumption, operational and targeting, anthropometry, access to facilities, wages, goods and prices.

**Livelihoods, Basic Services, Social Protection and Perceptions of the State in Conflict-affected Situations Household Survey 2013, First Round** – This household level survey provides data on matters of livelihood sources and activities, food security, assets, shocks, crimes, security, health, education, WASH, social protection, livelihood assistance, civil participation and grievance mechanisms, and perceptions of government.

## Annex 2:

### List of regulatory frameworks and policies relevant to social protection

- National Social Security Fund Act – 1985 (amended in 2022)
- Pensions Act (Cap 286) and Armed Forces Pension Act (Cap 298)
- National Food and Nutrition Policy – 2003
- National Council for Disability Act – 2003
- Social Development Investment Plan - 2004
- National Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (OVC) Policy – 2004
- Employment Act - 2006
- National Policy on Disability - 2006
- National Child Labour Policy – 2007
- Uganda Gender Policy – 2007
- National Policy for Older Persons – 2009
- National Health Policy – 2010
- National Environment Policy - 2010
- National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management - 2010
- National HIV/AIDS Policy – 2011
- National Employment Policy – 2011
- Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority Act - 2011
- Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy – 2012
- Equity Promotion Strategy – 2012
- Children's Amendment Act - 2016
- National Development Plan (NDP) I (2010/2015), NDP II (2016-202), and NDP III (2015-2020)
- Uganda Vision 2040
- National Child Policy – 2020

This list might not be exhaustive.

## Annex 3:

### Focus group discussions

Programme	Participants	District and area
<b>Girls empowering girls (GEG)</b>	Beneficiaries and caregivers (18 years): 14 participants: 12 girls and 2 female caregivers	Kampala, urban area
	Non-beneficiaries (18-21 years): 12 participants: 9 girls/women and 3 boys/men	Kampala, urban area
	Mentors (24-39 years); 12 participants, all women	Kampala, urban area
<b>Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP)</b>	Beneficiaries (31-65 years); 9 participants: 4 women and 5 men	Arua, urban area
	Non-beneficiaries (24-64 years); 13 participants: 3 women and 10 men	Arua, urban area
<b>Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)</b>	Host community – beneficiaries (32-54 years); 11 participants: 5 women and 6 men	Koboko district, rural area
	Refugee community – beneficiaries (18-64 years); 12 participants: 6 women and 6 men	Koboko district, rural area
	Host and refugee communities – non-beneficiaries (18-71 years); 12 participants: 6 women and 6 men; 7 host community and 5 refugee community	Koboko district, rural area
<b>NutriCash</b>	Host community – beneficiaries (20-40 years); 12 participants, all women	Koboko district, rural area
	Refugee community – beneficiaries or their representatives (19-42 years); 12 participants, all women	Koboko district, rural area
	Host and refugee communities – non-beneficiaries (18-36 years); 12 participants, all women	Koboko district, rural area
<b>Senior Citizens Grant</b>	Beneficiaries or their representatives (78-90 years); 8 participants: 6 women and 2 men	Koboko district, urban area
	Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries or their representatives (65-90 years); 26 participants: 13 women and 13 men; 15 beneficiaries and 11 non-beneficiaries	Koboko district, rural area
	Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (68-88 years); 24 participants, 8 women and 16 men; 9 beneficiaries and 15 non-beneficiaries	Yumbe district, rural area



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