

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TARGETING IN UGANDA

Implications for Social Cohesion in Communities



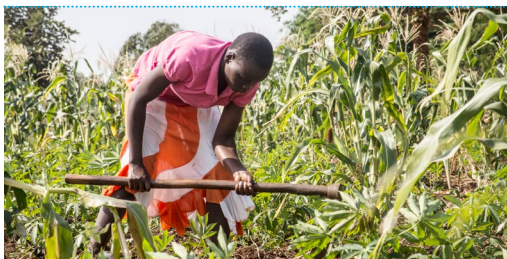
POLICY BRIEF

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Introduction

This policy brief presents the key findings of research that assessed the implications of social assistance targeting mechanisms on social cohesion in Uganda with the aim of providing evidence for policy makers and practitioners to enhance targeting effectiveness for optimal impact. The case of Uganda is a relevant one 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.

The study focusses on five of the social protection programmes currently or recently implemented in Uganda, which each have a unique targeting mechanism:



The Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) uses a combination of **geographical** and **categorical** and **community-based targeting (CBT)** that used wealth ranking criterion to select households on the basis of a 'poorest of the poor' status.

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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.

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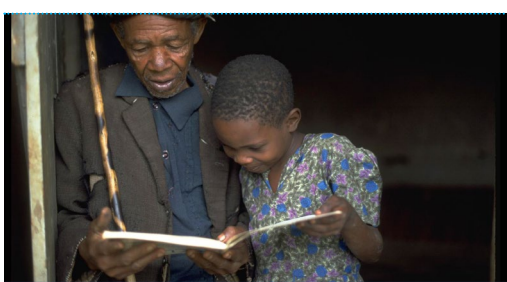
Girls Empowering Girls (GEG) uses a combination of **geographical targeting** of parishes and schools in Kampala, selected through a vulnerability index, followed by a **categorical targeting** of in-school girls in P6 and **community-based targeting** out-of-school girls that were considered the most vulnerable.

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The Urban Cash for Work Programme (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.

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SAGE uses a combined **universal approach** with **categorical targeting** of those age 80 years and above and, in the pilot phase but still included since the national roll-out, **geographical targeting** of 15 districts where the categorical targeting of those age 65 and above and those age 60 and above in the case of Karamoja. Beneficiaries' age was confirmed through CBT.

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These programmes were analysed across four study sites including Kampala, Arua, 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 study sites were found to predominantly 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, adults and children in contact with the law, behavioural issues including drug-use, child labour, child marriage and the reinforcing issue of negative tra-

ditional norms and beliefs. Within these communities, some of the most vulnerable groups include, women and girls, the elderly and disabled, and refugees, a large proportion of whom reside in West Nile. It can be said that various formal and informal decision makers exist including local councils, religious institutions, community leaders, and savings groups. Some of these, along with community groups and NGOs also represented various forms of support to the communities. Social cohesion can be described as partially fulfilled, with communities working communally but also experiencing social issues.

Key Findings

Design and implementation of the targeting mechanism

Within these communities, the outreach associated with the programmes can be summarized as 'good' in that beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike demonstrated a general knowledge of the programmes, but processes relating to communications, transparency, and accountability, particularly for the SCG and NutriCash, must be improved to promote social cohesion.

The perceptions around the programmes' design and implementation (not yet referencing the targeting mechanism) differ among the participants. The main issues mentioned are

- 1) **Inadequacy of cash benefits.** All programmes had seen a set-back in the real value of the transfer due to inflation. Programmes such as UCWP, with a 2-month lifetime, and GEG, with a 4-year beneficiary period, were considered much too short;
- 2) **Difficult access to payments.** In the case of the SCG, the frailty and remote-living of the recipients made the transfer hard to access; and
- 3) **Difficult access to grievance redress mechanisms (GRM).** In some instances, programmes did demonstrate a grievance and redress mechanism that did lead to successful appeals.

The perceptions around the programmes' targeting mechanisms on effectiveness and fairness differed somewhat between an apparently favourable universal and categorical approach on the one hand and a less favourable CBT approach on the other. Targeting of GEG and the SCG were considered to be effective but the targeting of the SCG is undermined by the national ID, which until resolved will remain a bottleneck to the programme's effective targeting. The CBT is less preferable because it is not endorsed as much by the community due to perceived inclusion and exclusion errors and unfairness. This was improved where there was greater community involvement and transparency among leaders.

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.

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 (GEG, SCG, NutriCash). Perceptions of fairness were more prevalent among targeting mechanisms that included both men and women (UCWP and DRDIP).

In some cases, categorical targeting mechanisms selecting only girls/women or elders were linked to increased dispute in the household. This has been mostly observed for programmes that are categorically targeted at individuals such as SCG, NutriCash and GEG.

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.

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 in many cases empowered leaders and strengthened their relationship with the community but, in other cases, it has also led to more discretionary decision making.



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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-targeted mechanisms such as CBT are chosen, implementors should effectively follow the outreach approach described in policy recommendation 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.

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