



End of Year Note 2017

Anglophone Community of Practice (CoP) of Cash Transfers in Africa

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The Community of Practice (CoP) of Cash Transfers in Africa remains a relevant and a unique learning platform where countries meet, share experiences and learn from each other around topics related to social cash transfer programmes and social protection more broadly. The group, which continues to grow, is divided into an Anglophone and a Francophone group. This Note provides the highlights as well as captures key policy reflections from the Anglophone CoP group during 2017.

I. Members of the CoP

To date, the CoP has 36 member countries grouped into Anglophone and Francophone groups. The member countries of the Anglophone group are: Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The members of the Francophone group are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo Brazzaville, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Tchad and Togo.

II. Introduction

As cash transfer programmes and social protection systems continue to expand across Africa, there is a continued need for a platform for exchange of experiences between countries. Since the start of the CoP in 2011, the social protection landscape has developed at scale, and focus has shifted from social



cash transfer programmes to the building of integrated social protection systems. Social protection systems across Africa take many forms, with portfolios of programmes tailored to the demands of different country contexts. There is no "one size fits all" approach. Instead policies, programmes and administrative systems are adapted to countries' different institutional contexts and to the demands of particular regions and groups within countries. This provides excellent opportunities to learn how similar programmes can work in different contexts. Several countries now reach 1 million beneficiaries with social transfers.

To ensure that the CoP continues to function as a community that adds value and attracts and engages its members, in the beginning of 2017, the Steering Committee of the CoP met to reflect on the future and sustainability of the CoP. Some of the reflections on how to enhance the contribution of the CoP dealt with issues such as:

- Knowing what other countries are doing and their experiences can provide an opportunity to lobby and enhance in-country social protection work;
- How to sustain and increase knowledge, capacity development and provide opportunities for career development;
- Expanding provision and sharing of existing literature and material related to social protection;
- Involving more policy makers in the face-to-face meetings as these have served as eye-openers for them;
- Enhancing opportunities to learn the nuts and bolts of implementation of the cash transfer programs from professionals and practitioners.

After five years of existence, the Steering Committee members recognized the need to revitalize the CoP and agreed that there was a need for a relaunch of the CoP. Towards that end, an updated vision and objectives to reflect the current landscape in social protection on the continent was developed which was subsequently endorsed by the members through a mail poll. The objective of this note is to provide the key achievements and lessons learned on our CoP of 2017.

The Steering Committee and the Facilitation Team would like to thank all the members of the CoP for the past year and look forward to 2018. We greatly value your active participation in our CoP to make sure we improve the value of learning and exchanges. We are hoping that the CoP will continue to generate excitement to attract members and to encourage active learning as well as sharing of experiences in 2018. For this we are counting on our members to actively contribute to the CoP.

"We can only achieve this through stock taking of where we are as a CoP and where we want to go, identifying what is working as not working well. We also need to find answers or develop strategies for addressing the low participation in our virtual meetings".

~ Mawutor Ablo, Chair Steering Committee, CoP Anglophone Group



Key results from the start of the CoP

- **Increased awareness and knowledge sharing among CoP members and South-South learning** on (i) specific operational topics around cash transfer programs in Africa, including, among others, “how to”: consolidate cash transfer programs, expand and/or scale-up cash transfer programs, ensure timely payments, better target intended beneficiaries; (ii) how to set up social protection systems including “how to”: create better linkages with cash transfer programs and productive and financial inclusion and social services; and use cash transfer programs in humanitarian and emergency contexts.
- **Increased coverage and funding for safety nets and social protection** in Africa. Participation in the CoP and learning about scale ups from pilot to national program from other countries (such as Zambia and Malawi) provided the Uganda team with knowledge for advocacy and lobby. The SAGE program subsequently moved from a pilot to nationwide expansion;
- **Increased exchange around innovations in CT programs across Africa.** The CoP supported knowledge exchange of a large number of innovative approaches tailored to the African context, including around payment systems, massive expansion, targeting, complaints & grievance mechanisms and institutional coordination;
- **Sharing of results from the impact of CT programs on social and economic outcomes in the region,** including through CoP representation in a Transfer Project Research Workshop in Dakar in June, 2017;
- **Improved access to relevant knowledge material** for the CoP participating countries, including through the creation of a [CoP website](#).
- **Improved ownership of the CoP,** with the Steering Committee taking a stronger leadership in the CoP activities and in shaping the discussions and events and with increased government financing of CoP participants in the face-to-face events.
- **Development of national social protection policies,** participation in the CoP provided the lessons and experiences from other countries to develop a national social protection policy which was approved by cabinet in 2015 in Uganda. Liberia also validated its social protection strategy and policy in 2012, through the CoP, with Tanzania as discussant. The SP strategy led to the development of the social protection sector in Liberia’s National Development Plan (2013-2017) and the finalization of the policy adopted by Cabinet in August 2013.
- **Wider understanding of social protection among different stakeholders** and initiation of national CoPs, both Uganda and Kenya are embarking on establishments of national CoPs on cash transfers, to be financed both by the governments and development partners.



III. Future and Sustainability of the CoP

The past year has been a year of reflection on how the CoP can attract its members and be a sustainable platform for information exchange. In February 2017, the Steering Committee members held a 3-day meeting in Accra-Ghana. This was as an opportunity to take stock of the previous five years of the community and to discuss the way forward for a vibrant and forward and far looking CoP with a focused vision.

Moving forward, some of the suggestions from the Steering Committee for a more sustainable CoP included:

- a. Ensuring financial sustainability including: ensuring that member countries continue to include (and increase) a yearly budget for CoP participation (including face-to-face events) and identifying financial support from potential new development partners;
- b. Exploring future partnerships that make sense for the CoP, both technically and financially, ensuring that the facilitation of the CoP and partners remain manageable;
- c. Finding solutions to enable long-term technical and facilitation support, recognizing the long-term need for such support to the CoP; and
- d. Identifying champions for the CoP who can continue to lead the efforts towards making the CoP increasingly self-sustained.

Validation and endorsement of members for a relaunch was undertaken through a videoconference which provided an opportunity for the members to share their views and provide inputs to revitalize and shape the CoP for a sustainable thrust. There was overwhelming consensus and agreement that the CoP remains an invaluable platform for information exchange that should be sustained. Some suggestions highlighted in the videoconference were:

- Organize bilateral meetings from different countries mapped out in advance to discuss and share experiences on particular topics for smaller groups;
- Ensure active CoP members at the country level;
- Establish country level CoP to increase the momentum of the broader CoP group; and
- Encourage CoP members to identify focal points who can act as champions for the Anglophone CoP, as well as the country level CoPs in respective countries.

In another effort to understand where the different countries are in terms of building their social protection systems and their need for more and better knowledge, the Steering Committee, together with the Facilitation Team, embarked on an exercise to update the country profiles of the CoP member countries, as well as sending out questionnaires to gather information to help improve the knowledge of social protection in member countries and capture their expectations of the CoP.



IV. Lessons learned from the CoP

In the perpetuation of the CoP, it will be important to take lessons learned into consideration. The main lessons from the start of the CoP are summarized below and have been drawn from the operations of the CoP, including from the evaluation of the Tanzania event in 2016. These have also been spelled out in the output report for the CoP, summarizing activities supported, key results achieved and lessons learned.

- Sustainability of the CoP is a long-term goal and there will be continued need for technical assistance to enrich discussions and facilitate the learning exchange;
- Further exploration of future partnership for the CoP will be crucial for its sustainability;
- Ensuring active participation in VC discussions can sometimes be challenging and it will be important for the CoP to be flexible in the use of different avenues for learning exchange to meet the demand of the member countries;
- Participation in virtual discussions has also been hampered by lack of country level focal persons and it will be important to ensure strong focal points and follow up by the Steering Committee with the focal points to enhance communication flow and sustain participation and engagement;
- Bilateral discussions and tailored made learning events should be encouraged to address specific country needs;
- Learning should be demand-driven and voluntary and are sometimes better in smaller groups to enhance the learning experience;
- CoP participants appreciate learning forums which are interactive, including panel and group sessions, during which CoP participants can better participate and contribute;
- Higher-level strategic discussions and learning exchange between policy-makers is important to achieve certain outcomes and should be facilitated by the CoP;
- Field visits are important to enrich discussions and share real experiences on the ground. The face-to-face events enables field visits to be undertaken and this is generally seen as very valuable, both for the hosting country (who can learn from reflections from the CoP members), and for the CoP members (who can learn from direct interaction with field officers and beneficiaries);
- National ownership and strong involvement of government officials (especially from the Ministry of Finance to ensure sustainable financing) in the CoP and the social protection sector is important for continued successful implementation of the CoP and relevant programs. The creation of national CoPs will hopefully also contribute to overall CoP sustainability;
- There is a need to further facilitate discussions around how to link CT programs with productive/livelihood activities and foster financial inclusion and to ensure a multi-sectorial approach to address the needs of poor and vulnerable;
- It will be important for the CoP to further discuss the role of safety nets in responding to emergencies, as well as how to bridge humanitarian responses with longer term development approaches;



- The lack of a dedicated platform to share lessons and learn has also been expressed as a challenge for the CoP. There is currently an existing website hosting the CoP learning exchange (hosted by socialprotection.org), but usage of the same is low and there is need to think creatively about how to improve it.

V. Steering Committee Update

Following the Steering Committee meeting in Accra with the Facilitation Team in February 2017, a work plan for relaunch of the CoP was developed as well as a funding proposal for increased sustainability. With support from the Facilitation Team, efforts are still ongoing to update country profiles. This is a critical exercise and it is our hope that in 2018 we will be able to complete this important outcome that will enhance our relevance as a CoP. Also, an update of the CoP contact list is ongoing, equally important to ensuring that we keep all our members updated with the latest information, learning opportunities and events.

Currently, the CoP Steering Committee members are: Mr. Mawutor Ablo (Ghana), Chair, Ms. Winnie Mwasiaji (Kenya), Deputy Chair, Ms. Ruth Radibe (Botswana), Mr. Amadeus Kamagenge (Tanzania), Mr. Gabi Fernandez (Liberia), and Mr. Titus Ouma (Uganda).

VI. What 2018 will bring

In 2018, we are eagerly looking forward to bringing together our CoP members in a meaningful and value added face-to-face meeting. The Steering Committee aims to organize this meeting during the first half of 2018 and is in the process of identifying the host country and key topic for the event. More information on date, venue and main theme will follow shortly.

Over the next year, we are also looking forward to the continuation of videoconferences and sharing of knowledge and experiences between countries. Towards that objectives, we already have Malawi who has requested a bilateral meeting with Kenya to learn from their payment mechanism. All our CoP members will be invited to attend these discussions, so please stay tuned for confirmation of a date for this videoconference.

We are counting on all members to keep being engaged in the virtual, as well as face-to-face discussions to make sure the CoP stays relevant and add value to all of us. For 2018, please let us all commit that we will have completed the update of Country Profile and contact list.

We look forward to an exciting 2018 with successful active engagement of all our members!