

## Community Participation In Formal Social Security Programmes In Zimbabwe: A Case Of Harmonised Social Cash Transfers (Hsct) In Epworth District.

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### ABSTRACT

*Community participation in development projects in Zimbabwe is not new but its linkage with cash transfer schemes is rather latest. Cash transfer schemes emerged quite recently as an effective social protection interventions that can tackle poverty and other forms of deprivations. It is a valuable tool for promoting sustainability in development programmes. The study sought to analyse the importance of community participation in cash transfer schemes and sustainability of development projects within a peri-urban environment. The unit of analysis for the study was Epworth District, with special focus on the Zimbabwe Harmonised Social Cash Transfer Scheme that is currently being implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe through Ministry of Labour and Social Services. Data gathered from participants (n=231) through questionnaires and focus group discussions revealed considerable evidence of improved social cohesion and trends towards sustainability achieved through community participation in cash transfer schemes. The study also revealed that the benefits of community participation in cash transfers schemes are not limited to beneficiaries only but extend to other community members. This translates into changes in livelihoods which eventually lead to improvements in their lifestyles and well-being. Recommendations were made for further inquiry into the effect of community participation in cash transfer schemes on other socio-economic phenomena such as*

*economic development. Based on the findings, it was concluded that sustainability in cash transfers is enhanced by community participation and it also goes beyond the scope of the programme to address other issues of social and human development.*

Key Words: community participation, cash transfers, Zimbabwe

### INTRODUCTION

The right to social security is a human right (von Hauff, 2003) and one of the most fundamental human needs (Ghasemi, 2014). As global politics continue to change, social cash transfer (SCTs) has become a leading social protection scheme to address poverty and vulnerabilities. However, there is no consensus as to what gave birth to these schemes. The move towards Social Cash Transfers implies a paradigm shift in development policy which indicates the socialisation of development policy oriented towards moral universalism (Bhatasara, 2016). In 1995, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen emphasised the establishment and expansion of a social security system as an indispensable component of widespread social development and the fight against poverty. The major political declaration of the summit contains the responsibility 'to develop and implement policies which ensure that all persons enjoy adequate economic and social protection in the event of unemployment, sickness, during motherhood and child-rearing, in the event

of widowhood, disability and in old age (Bhatasara, 2016; Justino, 2003)'. More so, every person in life is likely to be confronted with social problems and risks, whether he or she lives in a highly developed or an economically less developed country (Justino, 2003; Gormally, 2013). The common typical problems and risks are sickness, accidents, unemployment, need for nursing care in old age, poverty and other forms of social plight. The issue of community participation in Zimbabwe like in many other African countries has been a major apprehension in the development arena from the late 1990s to date. At global stage, social security is enshrined in article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that:

*“Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organisation and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality”*

Therefore, the signatories of Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed that society in which each person lives should help them to develop and make the most of all the advantages (culture, work, social welfare) which are offered to them in the country. The ultimate goal of all development projects is to ensure improvement in the people's well-being (Ghasemi et al, 2014; Justino, 2003). For this reason; sustainability becomes a requisite to human development as it ensures that positive impacts from development project continue when external support for project ends. The social capital of poor people has been

under scrutiny within the development arena as it was perceived to be an essential ingredient to social cohesion and sustainability in development programmes (Von Haauff, 1997). In some African countries, the relationship between community participation and sustainability in cash transfers is contemporary since these transfer schemes are new social protection interventions that are coming in; focusing on moving away from welfaristic predisposition to rights based approaches to development so as to promote sustainability through strategies that enhance social cohesion (Baird, De Hoop, and Ozler, 2013; Blatman, Fiala, and Martinez, 2014). The focus of this study was, therefore, to analyse the importance of community participation in social cash transfers since it is a principal to these relatively latest schemes and all other rights-based programmes.

## **BACKGROUND OF EPWORTH COMMUNITY**

An examination of the background of Epworth District can shade light on some demographic characteristics peculiar to it as the basis for understanding the environment in which cash transfers are being implemented. Epworth is a peri-urban district that is situated in the outskirts of Harare Metropolitan city. The 2012 population census (ZimStat Preliminary Report, 2012) lists the total population of Epworth as 161 840 with 44 603 households. The district has 7 administrative wards and continues to expand with 65% of the population being informally settled ([www.tarisiro.org/epworth-project](http://www.tarisiro.org/epworth-project)). A substantial proportion of households and families in Epworth rely on subsistence peri-urban agriculture and intensified informal employment as the core sources of livelihoods. Households within the district are considered appallingly

vulnerable (Manjengwa et al, 2012). ZimVac Urban Food Security Assessment Report (2016) further revealed that, lacking of basic social services such as decent shelter, sanitation and water were major problems facing humanity in Epworth. Deleterious social phenomenon such as crime and prostitution are proliferating in the district, thereby exposing households to perverse social risks which in turn entrap many into the cycle of poverty ([www.tarisiro.org/epworth-project](http://www.tarisiro.org/epworth-project)). For these reasons, social protection programmes implemented by both Government and NGOs often target susceptible individuals, children and households within Epworth district. To date, Epworth District has seen a number of development interventions that target it as the poorest of all the urban districts in the country.

In Epworth unconditional cash transfer beneficiaries were selected after a household census that identified labour-constrained and food poor-households. Epworth district is one of the two urban districts from a total of ten in the country that are currently participating in the cash transfer programme. Reports indicate that, 354 beneficiary households have been receiving cash between February 2012 and February 2013 on a bi-monthly basis (MLSS, 2012). The community in Epworth participates at various levels, as beneficiary of cash, as community representatives called Child Protection Committees and as key stakeholders in program implementation. Information regarding the programme is disseminated through community structures that have been created specifically for this purpose. The lack of predictability in the transfers due to limited financial resources has often resulted in the programs failing to achieve intended outcomes. A number of NGOs

like Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, and Action Aid have been implementing cash transfer programmes through food vouchers to support the coping capacity of vulnerable groups in Zimbabwe.

### **NEXUS BETWEEN CASH TRANSFERS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Zimbabwe has a fragmented social security system with social insurance and social assistance as its mainstream schemes (Dumba, 2011). Mhiribidi (2010) has noted that the public assistance scheme in Zimbabwe has remained essentially remedial, with only limited attempts made towards initiatives that facilitate a developmental thrust. The relationship between cash transfers and community participation is multifarious, and at its best, it is mutually reinforcing. However, it also presents some challenges due to the subjective nature of the term. Community participation in social security can positively enhance social cohesion and ensure sustainability and programme effectiveness (Ahmad, 2011, Zororo, 2013). Empirical studies on many aspects of community participation in cash transfers schemes have revealed that conditional cash transfer schemes sometimes interfere with social cohesion, notably, when the community is not actively involved (Bhatasara, 2014; Mkandawire, 2006). Through the use of analytical tools like the Sustainable Livelihood Analysis (SLA), the social networks of the poor can be examined to comprehend how vulnerable groups interact in environments where cash transfer schemes are being implemented (Devereux, 2005).

The debate on the links between social cohesion and sustainability in community

participation has resulted in many studies at international, regional and local levels (Bhatasara, 2014; Haushofer and Shapiro, 2016). In Zimbabwe, the emergence of cash transfer schemes has also given rise to the involvement of communities as beneficiaries and community representatives. At international level, the concern for sustainability in development programmes has given rise to participatory development approaches such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (Bhatasara, 2014; Haushofer and Shapiro, 2016). Various scholars believe that, people's participation is an indispensable factor in providing sustainable security (Ghasemi et al, 2014; Khwaja, 2009). In Southern Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, the concern for sustainable development has been strengthened by acknowledged failures in previous development interventions, such as the Structural Adjustments Programmes (SAPS), that were implemented in the late 1980s when the thrust for economic growth-centred development initiatives was at its peak (Devereux, 2006; Bhatasara, 2016). The participation of most vulnerable groups in development programmes gained momentum in Zimbabwe in the last decade as government and other development agencies sought to engage communities so as to deal with emerging issues related to the effects and impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic that has been rocking the country since the early 1990s.

Social protection programmes in Southern Africa have been redesigned and refined to address growing poverty while incorporating strategies that enhance community participation (Mtetwa and Muchacha, 2013). These were perceived to be critical in achieving development that could improve vulnerable people's well-being. Effort was mainly directed on

addressing poverty and deprivations within rural communities where rural development was advocated as a tool to achieve desired development outcomes (Mkandawire, 2006; Ressler, 2008). Increasingly, evidence from studies and research on vulnerability has shown that the urban poor in Zimbabwe are also vulnerable and leaving this group from development planning processes could undermine their well-being. However, Zimbabwe Vulnerability Urban Food Security Assessment (ZimVac, 2009) discovered that vulnerability in urban areas increased from 24% in 2006 to 33% in 2009. As the concern over participatory approaches increased at the international arena, the issue of social cohesion also became critical as it was perceived to be an important aspect that promotes sustainability in development programs.

## CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Social security may also refer to the action programmes of government intended to promote the welfare of the population through assistance measures guaranteeing access to sufficient resources for food and shelter and to promote health and well-being for the population at large and potentially vulnerable segments such as children, the elderly, the sick and the unemployed

(<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/socialsecurity>). Cash transfers fall within the broader social protection spectrum and are considered a type of social protection mechanisms employed to address chronic and transitory poverty (Ressler, 2008). An examination of these social protection mechanisms is essential in understanding cash transfers and community participation. Brunori, et al (2010) provide a definition by the African Union (2008) that defines social protection as a set of

public actions taken to address vulnerability and poverty in people's lives through social insurance. The emergence of social protection mechanisms is quite recent and is tied to the concept of participation on three bases. Firstly, like the concept of participation, social protection is a human right (Ghasemi, et al, 2014; Gormally, 2013) and all social protection programming take a rights-based approach to development. Secondly, the emergence of social protection mechanisms in recent years followed realisation that poverty and inequality were increasing despite huge financial flows from international development institutions. Therefore, social protection goes beyond focusing on income and consumption to address poverty and livelihoods threats.

Barrientos (2007) argues that social protection aims at addressing cultural, social and economic factors underlying poverty and deprivations, and generally social protection mechanisms are redistributive in nature. It is concerned with equity, transformation and social inclusion without discrimination. Lastly, like participation, the emergence of social protection mechanism is intersected to critiques of the modernisation theories where top-down approaches were encouraged to promote economic growth treating beneficiaries as passive recipients of programmes (Vincent, et al. 2009, Devereux, 2005). As such, social protection programmes recognise the capacity within vulnerable people and frame them as actors in the development process not passive recipients. This view is supported by Sen's Capability Approach that calls for a shift from economic growth towards social interactions and capabilities within vulnerable groups. Social protection mechanisms are also conceptualised as safety nets, social welfare assistance or

social security programmes (Brunori et al, 2008)

Cash transfers are a powerful form of social protection (Brunori et al, 2010). By definition, cash transfers are non-contributory financial transfers to targeted beneficiaries. They are rights-based initiatives that promote human development through recognition of capabilities. Cash transfers can address chronic poverty for the elderly, sick and transitory poor, disabled, widowed and child headed (Muchacha and Mtetwa, 2013; Vincent et al, 2009; Zororo, 2013). Mkandawire (2009) defines cash transfers as an empowerment mechanism that gives choice to the most vulnerable. Cash transfers are useful participatory tools that came about to fight aid fatigue produced by development aid that was failing to get to vulnerable groups. Authors like (Dumba, 2011; Samson, 2009; Zororo, 2013) note that, cash transfers can be conditional or unconditional, universal or targeted, national or pilots. Conditional cash transfers are linked to change in behaviour and are conditioned to certain activities such as education, health and nutrition to protect subsistence food consumption and facilitate sustainable exists from programmes (Ressler, 2009).

Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs) are given to vulnerable groups without any obligation for change in behaviour (Mkandawire, 2009). Unconditional cash transfers recognise capacity in recipients and benefits are not tied to behaviour change; often benefits will end with graduation. Compared to in-kind transfers, UCTs are attractive because cash is fungible and thus cannot be extra-marginal and distortionary; households with heterogeneous needs may be better able to turn cash into long-run welfare improvements than transfers of livestock

or skills (Haushofer and Shapiro, 2016). In Latin America, cash transfer programmes are generally implemented on a national scale and programmes are conditional. Samson (2009) argues that universal cash transfer schemes are common in Latin America and selected Southern African countries like the Basic Income Grant (BIG) in Namibia. Cash transfers are considered a double-dividend approach that promotes economic development while reducing poverty. It is an agenda for livelihood development (Brunori et al, 2010). In most cash transfer schemes, graduation from the programme is conditioned on age, time or it is benchmarked against economic indicators such as the poverty datum line.

Most cash transfer schemes employ targeting mechanisms to select beneficiaries. Vincent et al (2009) assert that targeting is cost-effective and it is a useful mechanism to separate the poor from the non-poor and limit resources that targets the poor in environment of budgetary constraints. Targeting can be categorical (basing on age and disability), geographical, means-tested, community-based or through individual selection. Some cash transfer programs use more than one targeting method like the Zimbabwe Harmonized Social Protection Scheme where categorical targeting was combined with geographical and means-testing (MLSS, 2011).

### **CASH TRANSFERS IN ZIMBABWE**

Until recently, social protection by government in Zimbabwe was limited to the provisions of grants for destitute families through the Public Assistance Programme, educational transfers through the Basic Assistance Educational Module (BEAM) and food for work through the Public Works Programme (Bhatasara, 2014; Mtetwa and Muchacha, 2013). The

Harmonised Social Cash Transfer Programme is Government's recent social cash transfer scheme for impoverished households which support a number of vulnerable groups, the elderly, the disabled, child-headed households and orphans. The programme is an initiative under the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC) 2011-2015 as well as the broader Department of Social Services social protection programming. The programme targets food-poor households and labour-constrained households. The cash transfer programme has three key objectives which are at output level, impact level and outcome level. At output level, the programme aims to strengthen the parity purchasing power in the form of unconditional cash transfers to 55,000 ultra poor households which are at the same time labour-constrained (Schubert, 2011). At the outcome level, the cash transfer programme is meant to empower the benefiting households by increasing their consumption to a level which exceeds the food poverty datum-line (Schubert, 2011). At the impact level, the increase in consumption of goods and services is meant to improve nutritional status, health and education and reduce child mortality (Schubert, 2011). It is imperative to note that the programme is embarked to reach out at 89 101 households by the third year of implementation.

The benefits of cash transfers are linked to the promotion of participation of communities as well as the promise to deliver sustainability in these programmes. Cecchini (2007) argues that, cash transfers stimulate the participation of communities. In Mexico, reports were submitted that with the cash transfer programme, created opportunities increased community awareness on gender roles and promoted the participation of the girl child in

education (Bailey, 2007; World Bank, n.d). Following studies which have been done in Zimbabwe (Skovdal et al, 2011), the report indicates that, cash transfers were quite transformative as they allowed communities to accept other development programmes. The benefits of cash transfers can be identified at individual, households, community and national level (Vincent et al, 2009). At individual level, benefits involve improvements in self-esteem and individual status. At household level, benefits include investments and planning in productive livelihoods, taking risks in productive economic activities, increased food consumption, food security and reduction in begging (Dolberg, 2014). Todaro and Smith (2015) consider self-esteem as one of the key products of socio-economic transformation. At the community level, cash transfers promote investments, accumulation and maintenance of assets, community group formations, and savings clubs (Cecchini, 2007). It also stimulates the production of goods and services by and for communities (Ressler, 2008; Brunori et al, 2010). Lastly, at national level, it narrows the gap between the poor and non-poor and promotes human capital development through investment in education, health and nutrition.

Skovdal et al (2011) reveals that, beneficiaries in both conditional and unconditional cash transfers invest in education, health and nutrition. Cash transfers have been credited with assisting families to deal with the burden of contemporary pandemic disease and epidemics and soaring effects of climate change among others (Bailey, 2007). They also promoted the realisation of MDG1, on food and hunger MDG 2, on education, MDG 3 on gender participation and empowerment, MDG 4 on maternal health and nutrition, MDG 5 on mortality and

MDG goal 6 on HIV and AIDS (Samson, 2009). Same themes are also engrossed in Sustainable Development Goals (ADGs) as enshrined by the world nations at United General Assembly in 2015; goal 1 to end poverty in all its forms, goal 2 to end hunger, food insecurity and improve nutrition; and goal 5 to achieve gender equality (United Nations, 2015:14). In this essence, socio-economic development is also crested upon successful social security programmes. Cash transfers promote social cohesion by promoting a sense of citizenship and reduce tensions and conflicts due to extreme poverty. Ressler (2008) endorses the benefits of cash transfers by arguing that, cash transfers rebuild livelihoods thereby promoting social networks which determine the capacity of households to participate in community activities.

Generally, social networks are important during periods of distress yet for those vulnerable groups are weak making it difficult to engage in social activities that increase their capacity to cope with deprivations. Social networks are really about being exposed to different flows of information based on the networks you are in (Kittson, 2013). Cash transfers are considered good for promoting economic growth through the stimulation of local markets; the mere act of being a beneficiary implies not just being a passive recipient of charity but a proactive participant in socio-economic transformation of one's locality. They also assist families to adjust to the burden associated with pandemic diseases and epidemics and they are credited as effective tools for reaching out to the most vulnerable through targeting (Skovdal et al, 2011). The same argument holds that, robust social security promotes good moral vision and instils positive attitudes among community members which in turn

engineer sustainable development. Targeting as a process is redistributive by nature and can reach out to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Cash transfers, thus, have the capacity to enhance community participation and achieve sustainability in development programmes.

However, Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) are criticised for undermining the capacity of vulnerable groups to participate, suppressing their right to freedom and choice and for being too paternalistic (Mkandawire, 2009; Samson, 2009; Skovda et al, 2011). In some instances, CCTs often impose the burden on women to meet the desired behaviour such as taking children for immunizations (Zororo, 2013). However, unconditional cash transfers have potential disadvantages from a policy perspective: they might be spent on temptation goods and thereby decrease welfare in the long run; they could lower labour supply due to their income effect (Cesarini et al. 2015); or they could lead to conflict within the family or community (Bobonis, Gonzalez-Brenes, and Castro 2013; Hidrobo, Peterman, and Heise 2016). Relative to conditional cash transfers, they may be unsatisfactory in improving the outcomes associated with conditions, but superior in improving other outcomes (Baird, McIntosh, and Özler 2011). Samson (2009) claims that the design of cash transfer schemes often undermines participation particularly through targeting. Targeting process may undermine the fabric of community participation if not properly managed. Nonetheless, unconditional transfers remain a valuable participatory social protection tool that promise sustainability in programmes through empowerment of the most vulnerable. Participation is an instrument for increasing the opportunity

of public participation in the decision-making process so that they can benefit from their activities (Rafieian et al, 2008). This cooperation enhances project credibility and in the process, promotes quality of implementation, continuity, and stability of projects (Scheye, 2009).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

The research design for the study followed a combination of interpretative phenomenological approach and positivist research paradigms by focusing on the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was deemed important for the study so as to gain adequate knowledge, insights and experiences of the subjects in the study. Data on community's participation in cash transfer schemes was collected through questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGDs). The research design adopted enabled the researcher to gather people's perceptions, views, attitudes and aspirations about community participation in cash transfer schemes. Issues of social cohesion and social networks are not easily quantifiable and these were best captured through FGDs. Participation as a concept is quite complex and is best defined contextually. Thus, the phenomenological approach enabled the researcher to collect information that was based on the respondents' own understanding of the term and how they apply it within the cash transfer programme. A positivist approach was also adopted to enable triangulation of data. Quantitative data was collected to ascertain the number of respondents whose perceptions were related. Through the quantitative information that was gathered, the percentages of beneficiaries receiving assistance and role allocation in cash transfer schemes were calculated.

Overall, a descriptive design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data through survey questionnaires and FGDs.

For this study, the unit of analysis was 44 603 poor and vulnerable households who live in Epworth district. The target population were 354 households that have been receiving cash transfers under the ZHSCT since February 2013. The households include orphaned children, the disabled, chronically ill, elderly and people who are food-poor and labour-constrained. A sample of 231 households was however used because it was not feasible to study all the 354 beneficiaries due to resource constraints. For the FGDs, the participants were also drawn from community representatives participating as Child Protection Committee (CPC) focal point persons within the ZHSCT scheme.

### SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The researcher employed purposive random sampling to select participants for the study. The sample size was determined using sample size calculator found online ([www.surveyssystem.com/sscalc.htm](http://www.surveyssystem.com/sscalc.htm)).

This calculator is used to determine how many people are needed to participate in an interview or survey in order to get results that reflect the target population precisely as needed. In the study, confidence level was kept at 99%, confidence interval at – or +5 while total population size was 354. As a result, sample size became 231 (155 females and 76 males), representing 65 % of the total population. Each individual within the target population was assigned a number for arbitrary selection of subjects from a table giving each a chance to be selected for inclusion in the study. The sample was representative of the various sub groups (orphaned children, the disabled, chronically ill, elderly) within the

beneficiaries receiving cash. For children, it was only those acting as breadwinners were selected. This was done to ensure that generalisations from findings could be applied more accurately to other vulnerable beneficiaries. Of these, 26 respondents were selected for the focus group discussions from 231 members who were participating as community focal point persons for the ZHSCT. In the ZHSCT scheme in Epworth females constitute a greater percentage of beneficiaries and CPC focal persons, thus the samples were deliberately selected to reflect this situation.

### DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Two data collection tools were employed; survey questionnaire interviews and FGDs. The two methods were chosen as the best method to collect the required quantitative and qualitative data.

### Survey Questionnaire

A questionnaire survey was self-administered by the researcher. It comprised of three sections; (A) Development programmes section to capture general understanding of respondents on social protection programming and development partners that are known, (B) Community participation section to capture opinions, views and perceptions on community participation in general and with reference to cash transfer schemes. Last section (C) on Community participation and community involvement to capture view on who should participate within communities. Through the questionnaire survey, the researcher was able to probe and elicit for clarifications and explanations on ambiguous issues from the respondents. Since the questionnaires were administered on face to face, the researcher had the opportunity to observe

gestures and expressions as the interviews were being conducted and this proved useful on the question that required views on incentives in participation. Other issues such as coordination of community participation through government not previously listed within the questionnaires also noted as respondents were expressing views on these issues.

### **Focus Group Discussions**

The FGDs were conducted to collect data that could be used to triangulate data from the interviews. The discussions were conducted with a group within the ZHSCT scheme that of community representatives who had a stake in the programme not only as beneficiaries but as facilitators of programme implementation. Four FGDs sessions were conducted to gain insights on group's perceptions. The groups were purposively structured, two groups with males and females only and the other two sessions with mixed gender. Gender dynamics are relevant in the analysis of community participation and the researcher sought to capture perceptions from women only and men only so as to compare and find similarities, if any. The sessions with mixed gender were done so as to take note of any significant differences in perceptions and responses. Two FGDs had 6 respondents while the other two sessions had seven respondents. The numbers in each group were kept low to ensure that all group members had an equal opportunity to participate. The group members were also kept few to ensure that the moderator could keep track of all interactions within the groups so as to capture the views under discussion. Each took an average of 62 minutes. The questions that were developed for the FGDs elicited similar information from respondent as in the questionnaires. This enabled the research to cross-check on

inconsistencies and major differences in responses from the two data collection methods. The main focus of FGDs was to gather perceptions on development in Epworth establish the main stakeholders, perceptions on participation in social protection programmes and perceived benefits from participation. Sustainability was considered throughout the data collection process as it formed the core of the study. Gender dynamics in development were also captured as they presented an important phenomenon that could not be ignored in cash transfer schemes.

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The participants' informed consent was ensured throughout the study. The aims of the research were articulated verbally to participants before the research started. Mouton, (2008) notes that human subjects must be informed as to what will happen and their consent should be obtained. In this regard they were treated in such a way that did not harm them both physically and psychologically. Confidentiality was also ensured since the research dealt with participants at household level, and it was made clear that the information shared would be for the sake of the research only. The researcher made sure that no names were collected and ensured highest level of confidentiality and anonymity with regards to any shared information. The researcher protected the respondents' right to anonymity so that their rights to welfare, dignity and privacy were not violated.

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data was analysed using the superordinate through IPA exploration, discourse, content and narrative analysis. The key concepts to be explored were set out in the FGD guides and were explored

during facilitation by probing. According to Maree (2007) discourse analysis is important in qualitative research and for this reason it was also used in the analysis of the qualitative data. Issues raised by the respondents during the discussions were analysed to derive perceptions and thoughts. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data from survey questionnaires was cleaned and coded. The cleaned and coded data was then entered into SPSS and excel spread sheets. A first run analysis was carried out to generate frequency tables of yields and relationship between community participation and sustainability in programmes. The three commonly used measures of describing the location that is the mode, mean and the median were then derived for this data set. The mode derived gives an indication of the values that are occurring more frequently in the data. Other measures of location such as the mean and median also played an important role in the analysis of roles of the community and the components of the projects cycle in which community participation is crucial.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Two hundred and thirty one (231) questionnaires were administered and completed. Of these 231 usable questionnaires, males were 33% (n=76) and women were 67% (n=155). The study also investigated the status of household breadwinners. Among the participants, 31% (n=72) were headed by married men, 16% (n=38) by widowed women, 81% (n=81) by divorced /separated women and 17% (n=40) were headed by orphaned or abandoned children (4 were males and 36 females). Respondents' ages ranged from

15 to 70 with mean at 52.7. All these were considered as labour-constrained and food-poor households. Source of income is one of the key determinants in qualifying for cash transfers, and as such, the study also explored other source of livelihoods among the respondents. Apart from government cash transfers, 49% (n=114) of the respondents were involved in petty informal trading, 30% (n=69) depended on well-wishers (such as churches and compassionate individuals), 19% (n=43) sold their domestic livestock and only 2% (n=5) depended on agriculture (such as small plots crop production). Factors such as elderly, sickness, disabilities and education level can contribute in making families become labour-constrained. Only 24% (n=55) of respondents have disabilities, 15% (n=35) were considered elderly (aged above 60 years) and only 18% had completed either primary or secondary school education.

## UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN EPWORTH

The respondents showed that they understood what social protection is and were aware of the programmes being implemented in the areas. Figure 1 below shows that, (98 %, n=226) of the respondents from the FGDs and (85%, n=196) of the respondents from questionnaire administration were aware of social protection programmes in Epworth district. A significant finding was that, relatively, only (5%, n=12) from the two groups were aware of agricultural or infrastructure based development projects. The non existence of other development project was listed as a major gap since respondents were of the opinion that for well-being to be achieved development was to be all encompassing.

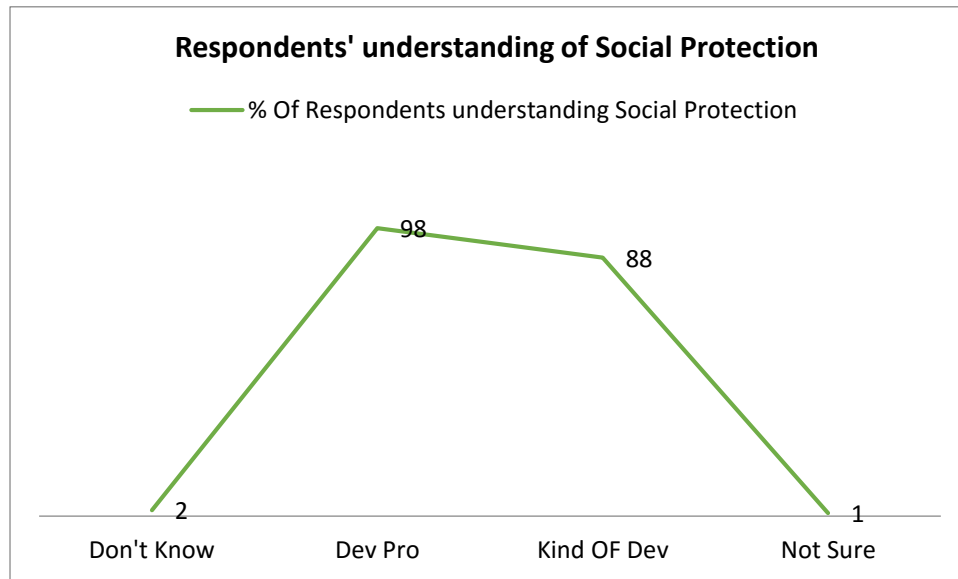


Figure 1: Respondents' understanding of social protection  
 \*Pro-project \*\*Dev-development

The respondents revealed that they were conscious of their socio-economic deprivations considering that Epworth is listed as one of the poorest district in terms of infrastructure, and basic social amenities. As stated earlier in the background to the study, Epworth community is characterised by various negative social phenomena that interfere with the well-being of people.

The ZHSCT scheme was distinguished by (82%, n=189) of the respondents as a recent programme but (13%, n=30) also reported of other social protection interventions by government such as Public Assistance and Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). Government was recognised by most of the respondents as the major social protection implementing partner reaching out to many beneficiaries. The findings show that where communities participate, the benefits of community participation in

programming are quite many. Due to the involvement of the communities, the visibility of government social protection programmes was enhanced. Through community initiatives of information dissemination, knowledge on the government programme was also enhanced. Fig 2 provides information on the respondents' views on the types of services that are offered by various organisations. While no comparative data of beneficiaries receiving assistance from other organisations was collected, findings reveal that government's cash transfers (72%, n=166) is the major service provider in the area. It was also evident from the findings that social protection services related to agriculture (2%, n=5) and clothing (1%, n=2) was not common in Epworth. Some participants in Epworth received vouchers (5%, n=12) and food (20%, n=46) from other organizations such as Plan International.

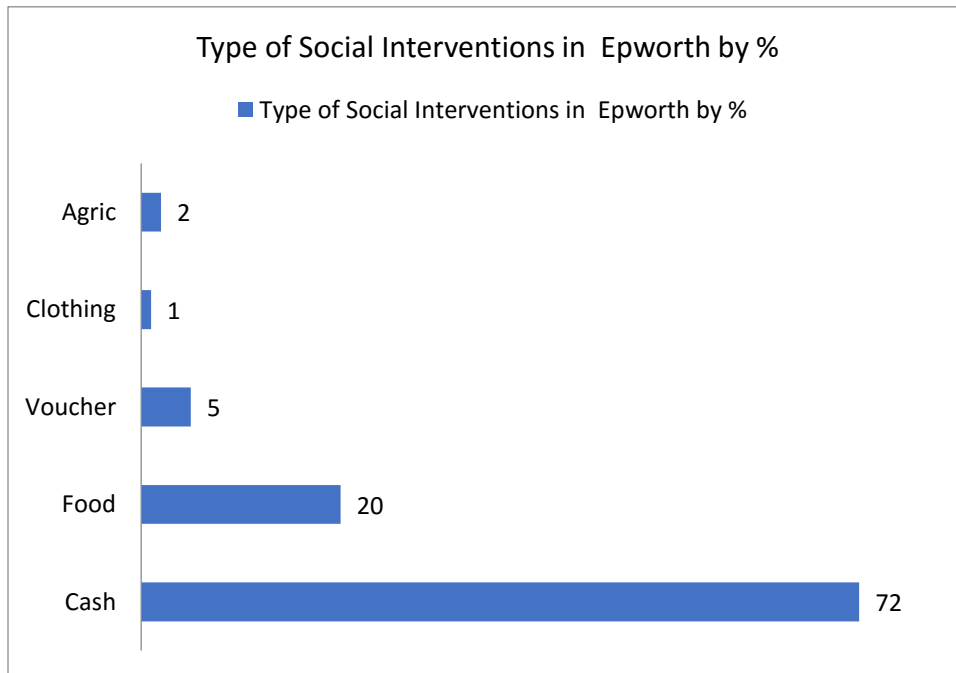


Figure 2: Types of Social Protection Intervention in Epworth

There were inconsistencies in the NGO listed as operating in Epworth districts from respondents in the interviews and from those in the FGDs. The findings imply that services provided by these organisations may not be significantly spread within the community. Respondents were, however, able to make distinctions between NGO, church based and government social protection programs. Respondents were able to articulate implementation time frame for most of the projects particularly for social protection programmes by government. The respondents could not agree on whether certain organisations were still operating in Epworth, possibly, due to the nature of the services that were offered or due as a result of the limited numbers of beneficiaries. The 354 beneficiaries in Epworth constitute a very small percentage from 44 603 households that resides in Epworth. However, respondents from both the survey and the FGDs were quite aware that the programme and the benefits,

though limited to a few, were perceived to be trickling down to the entire community. The respondents' views are pointers to the benefits of community participation in social security programme goals thereby enhancing programme acceptability and ownership by the community.

### SOCIAL SECURITY SERVICE PROVIDERS IN EPWORTH

Fig 3 below shows the type of organisations providing social security programmes together with percentages of people they assist in Epworth. The findings revealed that, government (53%, n=122) was common services provider, followed by Roman Catholic (21%, n=49) and Family Support Trust (FST) (16%, n=37). Other Christian churches (2%, n=5), MSF (5%, n=12), Mashambanzou (2%, n=5) and Plan International (1%, n=2), were other organisations providing social protection programmes in Epworth. It was observed that government was a

major provider of services because of wider resource base and also as a chief coordinator of other organisations. Organisation like Plan International scored

lowest coverage in Epworth because it only provides educational support to vulnerable children.

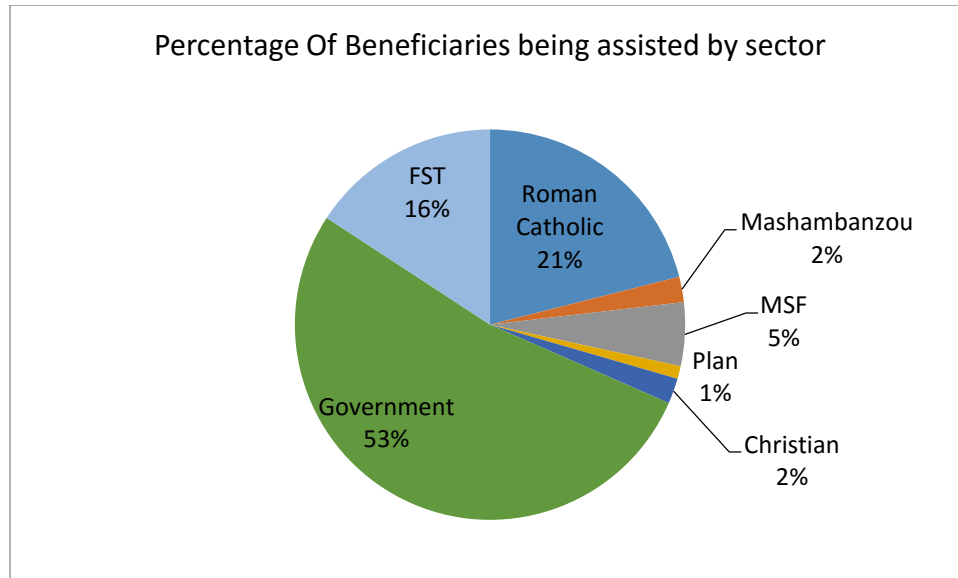


Figure 3: Percentage of Beneficiaries being assisted

Communities acknowledged active community participation in government programmes compared to NGO or faith based organisations. The findings established that, (83%, n=192) of respondents confirmed that the participation of Epworth community was more pronounced in government programmes such as the ZHSCT and BEAM compared to any other agency. Respondents from the FGDs revealed that government was better able to coordinate people hence all other implementing organization should channel resources through community structures that are already in place such as CPCs.

Participation in government programmes was said to be all encompassing as it was associated with participation at various levels from household to community with the potential to participate nationally. Respondents also highlighted that by participating in government programmes,

continuity was ensured. It was further noted that, participation in cash transfer scheme enhanced programme outcomes because without support from CPC focal persons, who facilitate payments of cash by identifying households and notifying them of payment dates, the programme could not have reached the intended beneficiaries.

### ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

There were varying responses as to the role of community in development programmes within a project life cycle. Respondents thought, at varying levels, that community participation should be at all stages from planning, targeting, implementation, monitoring and cash distributions. From the data collected, males (85%, n=65 ) and females (89%, n=138) agreed that implementation and monitoring were critical stages that require

community participation. Respondents from the interviews also suggested targeting as being an important stage where communities particularly beneficiaries can participate to identify those who deserve and those who are not eligible.

This was further strengthened by the respondents who respectively believed that implementation (88%, n=203) and monitoring (100%, n=231) are the most important components of the project that in which communities should be involved. Respondents from the FDGs said community participation is important but they highlighted that organised community structures like the CPCs as opposed to all community members should take the lead. One CPC community member retorted that:

“It is important for the community members to participate at every project stage. Government is considering communities at implementation stage but initial planning is more controlled by government officials. We request government to include us in defining procedures for those who will be included or excluded in the programme as we know our community members better than government”

While appreciating the role of government in including community in cash transfers, some respondents expressed that communities are not given prominent position at beneficiary targeting levels. Some respondents noted that, when government plans about programme inclusion and exclusion criteria design, community structures are not completely considered until implementation stage.

There were marked differences on perceived roles and responsibilities for the involvement of communities. From Fig 4, respondents (94%, n=217) who are currently benefiting under cash transfers wanted roles to do with targeting to ensure that vulnerable people are not excluded from programmes that are meant to improve their well-being. It was also revealed from the FDGs that errors of inclusion and exclusion could be adequately addressed if the community is involved during targeting stage. The Manual Operation of the ZHSCT states that targeting for beneficiaries was done through household census that was geographically based. As a result beneficiaries were not involved. However, the ZHSCT manual also highlights that CPC members support the selection of beneficiaries through verification of potential beneficiaries. Respondents from the group discussions were consistent as they all thought community targeting could have been more appropriate. The findings may indicate that the beneficiaries (N= 354) are too few compared to the magnitude of poverty in Epworth. As a result, such the respondents assumed that the low number of beneficiaries was a result of flaws in the targeting system that could not recognise poverty at individual and household levels.

The respondents, who were beneficiaries, also wanted less administrative roles like monitoring which was said to be perfectly done by community leaders. From the FDGs the community leaders wanted to take the leading role in implementation, cash distributions and monitoring since these were duties that they explained required dedication that could not be easily found in ordinary community members. Respondents who are currently benefiting under the ZHSCT scheme expressed little reservations for community representatives

to take leading roles at monitoring and implementation stages. The sentiments point to greater social cohesion at community level as beneficiaries recognise

the contributions played by community representatives to ensure that they receive cash transfers on time.

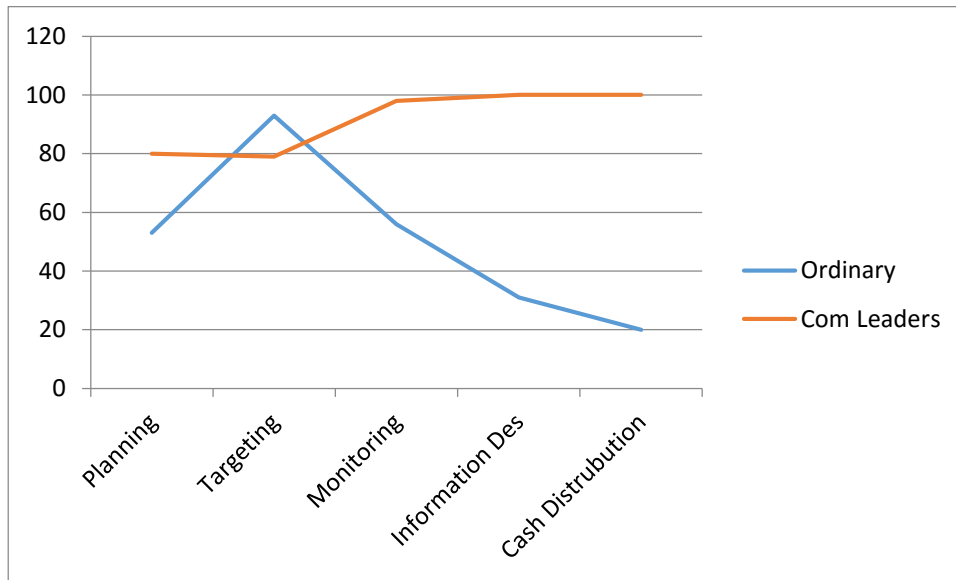


Figure 4: Roles allocation between community leaders and ordinary community members  
 \*Des- dissemination \*\*Com-Community

### BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Respondents highlighted that, through community participation a sense of togetherness has been fostered. Community participation in cash transfer schemes was said to have produced opportunities for bonding within the community. Fig. 5 reveals that (65%, n=49) of male respondents perceived the benefits to improve family cohesion and (80%, n=124) of females commended them for increasing social networks. Women were responsible for day-to-day needs in order to meet social obligations as compared to men who are more concerned with community responsibilities. Beneficiaries from the ZHSCT were also said to be forming local savings clubs, and investing in human capital development through education. Respondents from the FGDs mentioned that, the community in

Epworth was now aware of other developmental issues such as child protection and gender based violence and infrastructural development due to community awareness on developmental issues emanating from their participation in cash transfer schemes. Fig. 5 shows some of the benefits that were observed to be emanating from participation of the Epworth community in cash transfer schemes. While some benefits were not mentioned by respondents, the study inferred that the involvement of the community in mobilising beneficiaries for cash payments significantly reduced costs on the part of government.

Some respondents expressed their happiness with benefits of cash transfer programmes related to education, food security and health. It was observed from the study that, some beneficiaries were

now able to send their children to school and accessing some health service centres. While the study did not establish statistical evidence, participants in group discussions reported that unconditional cash transfers programmes reduced school dropouts of

vulnerable children such as girls. Apart from cash, communities were now forming child protection clubs to fight child abuse and also allowing women to challenge several incidents related domestic violence.

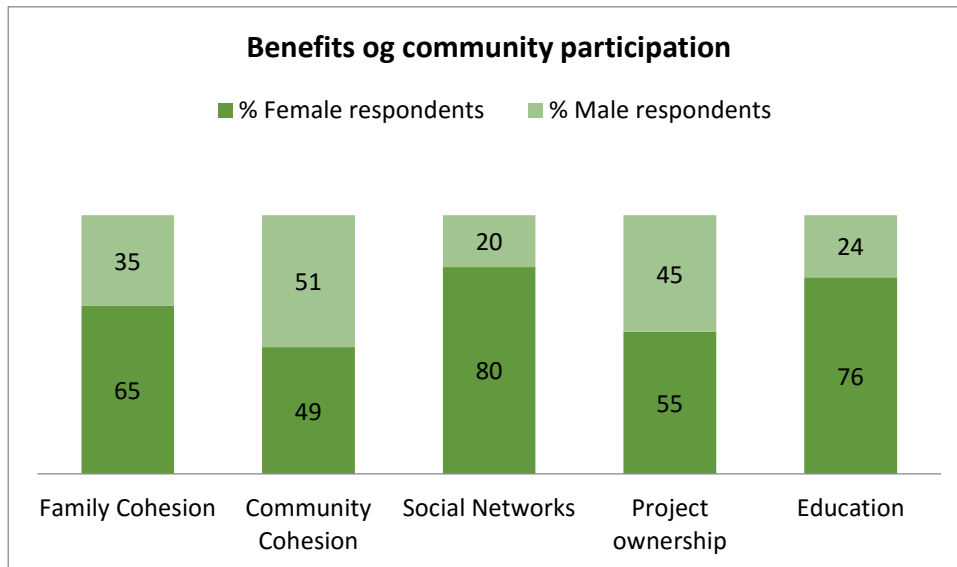


Figure 5: Benefits of community participation

### INCENTIVES AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Another theme that emerged from the study was related to incentives associated with participation in formal social security programmes by community leaders. Most respondents revealed that they were participating voluntarily but they welcomed incentives. Significant findings from some respondents were that beneficiaries of the cash transfer schemes discouraged incentives as they felt that they depleted resources meant for the poor. However, other respondents wanted incentives to be compulsory for all volunteers. Suggestions on the nature of the incentives varied from monetary to uniforms and badges. This was said to promote easy identification as volunteers partnering government in social protection programming. Representatives from CPCs were enthusiastic about the programme

even if they were not beneficiaries because they are identifiable. CPCs wanted more from the cash transfer scheme in terms of long term development projects in Epworth. Some respondents were envisaging a situation where government offered more than coordination of cash transfer scheme and instead coordinated other activities such as infrastructural development.

### GENDER AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Respondents (86%, n=197) noted that, through participation in CPCs as focal persons on community awareness, the role of women in community development work was increased. The participation of women in cash transfer schemes also improved community awareness on gender based violence. By empowering both men and women through cash transfers, social



cohesion at both household and community level was also promoted.

## DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents view community participation in cash transfers as imperative because it provides opportunities for empowerment. Cash transfer, as a government programme, was perceived to be capable of giving enough room for collaboration and networking within and outside cash transfers. Most of the respondents identified with the government programme and the CPC representatives felt that they were part of the arm of government as they were responsible for facilitating the payment of cash to beneficiaries. Similarly, a study by Ghasemi et al (2013) indicated that community participation in social security yielded positive results, where approximately 38% of respondents believed that public participation had a positive influence in reducing poverty and unemployment. Since the CPC were local, most beneficiaries were comfortable to disclose grievances on the programme through the CPCs for onward submission to government representatives. The cash transfer scheme in Epworth was, therefore, viewed by the CPCs, not as only government programme but as a programme for the development of Epworth in which government was providing the needed stimuli in form of cash and the coordination of CPCs.

It was revealed that, both men (65%, n=49) and women (80%, n=61) perceived community participation as important in creating both family and community cohesion. Many advocates of community participation in social protection such as (Anderson, 1994; Bailey et al, 2007; Cecchini, 2009, World Bank, n.d.; Zororo, 2013) argue for community involvement

in a manner that is systematic to ensure that activities are coordinated and proper representations of various marginalised groups are made. For cash transfers, the communities indicated that they wanted to do information dissemination and awareness so that everyone is involved in the community projects. The participation of communities at implementation and monitoring stages was also observed. Such idea also resonates with the proposition of Chambers (1992) who advocates for participatory approaches in any development planning to improve programme sustainability and ownership. It has been argued that the participation of communities can be enhanced through participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation. This is consistent with findings by World Bank (n.d) in Mexico, where it was found out that, families used about 70% of their payments on improved diets, especially more meat, fruits and vegetables. It was, however, noted that respondents were not against the idea of government or any other development agency formulating and planning for programmes without their participation but advocated for the community to be engaged, at least, at programme inception, implementation and monitoring so that skills acquired in one project can be utilised in other projects. Previous studies further substantiate that, participation should be able to transform the situation of vulnerable groups (Loeweson, 2001; Moser, 1983); promote equity and legitimises decision making (Barasa and Jelagat, 2016); and strengthen self-determination which predisposes people towards democratic behaviour. Thus, participation enhances community's aspirations which can result in the continuum of empowerment and fulfillment of sustainable development dictum.

Respondents from the interviews and FDGs all agreed that the cash transfer programme by government was the most prominent programme reaching out to the most vulnerable households in the district. Government was recognised as the ultimate duty bearer for provision of social protection by most of the respondents (53%, n=122). Despite the view by Ghasemi et al (2014) that government and society in general have an equal role in social security provision, the findings established that government is a major player in formal social security. It was the government which persuaded community members such as women to be part of programme. However, Michelson, (1995) believes that, when communities accept programmes, their participation can enhance sustainability of the impact. Generally as proposed by scholars like (Mancini et al, 2004; Zororo, 2013), programmes that are implemented by government have greater chances of impact and sustainability due to its ability to manage and respond to the needs of poor people in a broader spectrum. Studies in Brazil by Echini (2007) have shown that cash transfer schemes are better implemented by government due to the huge financial resources that are required. The ability of the community to detail government social protection programmes indicates that, where government implements social protection programmes, coverage is broad and the numbers reached are usually more as compared to NGOs.

Respondents from the FGDs called on all implementing organisations to work through the CPCs which are structures that were created by government to ensure that there is coordination within the ZHSC scheme. This also creates easy networks which facilitate information distribution with regards to projects. A study by Ennis and West (2012) demonstrates that social

network can be useful in a range of ways, including: facilitating a critical analysis of 'the community'; focusing community work processes; and providing particular understandings about the outcomes and impacts of community work. Community members thought that, if government took the lead, then issues of double dipping and suspicion could be dealt with adequately. On the other hand, Brunori et al. (2010) posit that involving the community in cash transfer schemes can reduce programme costs, and this can further unify people in dealing with their problems together. Same opinion is shared by Gormally et al (2013) who note that, as a rule, community problems require material and non-material help from society, and measures and expenditures for social security are intended to mitigate or provide cover for their problems and risks.

The respondents highlighted a number of benefits from participating in cash transfer schemes that were beyond the scope of the scheme. In terms of gender based violence, respondents noted that survivors were now reporting cases through CPCs so as to receive counselling. The CPCs were also community watchdogs on child abuse cases; they disseminated information on cash transfer and other developmental programs in Epworth. The beneficiaries were also improving not only in terms of food consumptions but also through investment in education, shelter, income generating activities implying changes in livelihoods. These findings are similar to those found by Skovdal et al (2011) where empirical studies revealed that community participation increased social acceptability of the programme. As a social protection programme, the cash transfer scheme was therefore transforming the lives of the household participating in ways that were beyond the immediate concerns of the households. This concurs with Cash

Transfer Operational Manual which spells out that, cash given to beneficiary is expected to strengthen household economies and enable poor households to move away from the poverty trap (MLSS, 2012). The CPC members exhibited a lot of knowledge not only on cash transfers but on other social protection issues such as education, nutrition, health and child abuse. The knowledge acquired by communities can prove to be a good basis for sustainability of the impact from cash transfer schemes.

An interesting point of discussion for this study is centred on the recognition of gender imperative in development projects. The study established the importance of women and men occupying same roles in cash transfers programmes. The inclusiveness of the cash transfers through targeting most marginalised groups such as women, elderly and children offered opportunities for the community to increase social cohesion and social capital development. The significance of social capital in community is appreciated by scholars like (Ahmad et al, 2011; Wood, 2002; Zororo, 2013) who believe that, community participation enhances the creation of social capital which promotes collective action and sustainability in programme outcomes. Hamdi, (1988) found out that social cohesion may not readily exist in a community but may come due to community participation. This was the case in Epworth district with regard to cash transfer schemes. While other scholars have criticised Cash Transfer programmes for taking an inconsistent approach to gender (Lia et al, 2008), the study yielded that parents were encouraging their daughters to pursue education and reinforce their economic status in the future. Although less research has examined the impact of cash transfers

on gender dynamics, the study by World Bank (n.d) in Latin America established that, due to cash transfers, families received about 13% more for keeping a girl child in middle and high school than a boy, because fewer girls traditionally stay in school beyond the elementary grades. Thus, cash transfers can also increase the child's education grade, reflecting the reality that the lives of poor people can be transformed by a robust social security system. This reinforces the role of cash transfer programmes in restoring gender equity, developing social and human capital as important tools in achieving the inclusive and sustainable development discourse.

## CONCLUSION

Basing on the findings, it is concluded that sustainability in cash transfers is enhanced by community participation and it also goes beyond the scope of the programme to address other issues of human development. Social cohesion exhibited by an understanding between community representatives and beneficiaries in the programme confirms that social bonds within the community were significantly strengthened. There were diverging views pertaining to the issue of incentives but generally respondents were in harmony in most of the opinions that were submitted on the role of community participation in social security. The cash transfer scheme relies on community participation and participants suggested for the development of a national strategy for their systematic engagement. Evidence from the study is that, social cohesion increased among the vulnerable groups where social networks were often considered to be fragile. The study suggested that, government must take the lead in formulating policies that promote the participation of communities in a holistic manner.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Zimbabwe Harmonised Social Cash Transfers, there are programming recommendations that are critical to promoting programme sustainability.

- **Programme Recommendations:** Epworth is an urban district where issues of cohesion and social networks may not be the same as in a rural set up. Comparing the dynamics in rural areas may provide an opportunity for adaptation to promote the participation of communities. The Epworth community is already engaged and are already exploring other activities outside the cash transfer programme and as such, government must support such community initiative by promoting group formation, training and capacity building on developmental issues so that the impact achieved so far can be sustained.
- **Policy recommendations:** The cash transfer programme is an effective social security initiative but it must also encompass community engagement policy to ensure that programmes are contextualised and informed by the vulnerable people's realities. Community engagement policy will ensure that cash transfers are implemented not in isolation but being supported by other programmes and activities within the community. More so, the number of vulnerable groups targeted will then match those in need of care. Respondents lamented the relatively low engagement of beneficiaries receiving cash transfers at targeting phase compared to other stages of

project cycle. So there is also need to put some policy mechanisms to counter such a defect to ensure that intended beneficiaries are reached.

- **Future studies:** The findings from the study indicate that future studies can be done to explore human development in cash transfers and the relationship with community participation programme sustainability. Respondents highlighted that, beneficiaries were investing cash in human development particularly education thus it is important to examine how community participation can promote this. The issue of volunteerism in community development still needs to be explored considering mixed views from respondents on incentives for community representatives.

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