



## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IN POVERTY REDUCTION IN NYAHURURU COUNTY: CASE OF ST. MARTIN CSA IN NYAHURURU

<sup>1</sup>Kamau Elijah Heka & <sup>2</sup>Anino Calvince Otieno

<sup>1</sup>University of Eldoret, Kenya.

<sup>2</sup>Health HIV and AIDS Response, World Vision Kenya, Kenya.

### Abstract

Kenya is a country in the sub-Saharan Africa with many people struggling with the lack of some basic life necessities. Relevant policies need to be implemented to remedy the situation. Social protection is one of the ways that can be used to reduce the level of poverty through predictable transfers of food, cash, inputs and assets. This study looks into a case study which can show how the social protection can improve the livelihoods of the poor. This was done with reference to other similar or related studies previously done. It was a purposive survey in which random sampling was used to obtain a sample of 60 households. The data was collected using questionnaires and analysis was done using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) V. 20. Both qualitative and quantitative data were considered in the study and was expected to shed more light on effective use of social protection.

**Key Words:** Social Protection, Cash Transfers, Poverty, Empowerment, Social Transfers.

### Introduction

In 2000, the member states of the UN committed themselves to creating a more prosperous, peaceful, and just world, to freeing people from the abject and dehumanizing poverty, to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to ridding the entire human race from need (Braun et al, 2004). Despite such efforts, the poor are becoming increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and in countries where progress has been stagnant, and conflict has been present. This is due to poor markets, low investments and lack of innovations and information (Braun 2004). Poverty and widespread hunger remain in regions of high economic growth and substantial reduction in poverty.

Overall, poverty reduction has been slower among the poorest and excluded groups like ethnic groups, certain castes, women and the disabled. This is due to lack of the necessary resources, ability and knowledge. Many interventions can be derived to solve the situation, among them, social protection (Holzmann and Kozel, 2007). Social protection programs promote economic growth through helping individuals, households and communities to gain assets. They help households to protect assets when shocks occur e.g. floods, drought. By helping households cope with the risks, they permit households to effectively utilize their existing resources. Through change of policies, they facilitate structural reforms to the economy and they directly raise growth rates by reducing inequality.

In Kenya, the formulation of social protection policy has been informed by both international and local experience. In 2007, a National Social Protection steering committee was formed under the chairmanship of the permanent secretary, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development. Through the committee, consultations were made and a social protection policy has been formulated. The mission of the policy is to address poverty and reduce vulnerability in the country through the creation of a framework, which provides and promotes immediate support to the poor and vulnerable to build their productive capacity, thereby facilitating their movement out of poverty and reducing the vulnerability of falling into deeper poverty (Devereux and Sebastes-Wheeler, 2007b). Well established social protection programs in Kenya are APHIA II sponsored by USAID and World Vision by Compassion International (UK aid, 2005).

According to Devereux and Sebastes-Wheeler (2007b), social protection approaches poverty from a multi-dimensional perspective and has 4 categories namely:

- i. Provision measures: This is social assistance and coping strategies. They include social assistance for the chronic poor, targeted resource transfers, disability benefit, single parent grants and social pensions.
- ii. Preventive measures: they seek to prevent deprivation and deal directly with poverty elimination e.g. maternity benefits, community based health insurance, rotating savings and credit groups e.t.c.
- iii. Promotive measures: they aim to enhance real incomes and capabilities, which is achieved through a range of livelihood enhancing programs targeted at individuals and households e.g. Bolsa Familia (Brazil), Beca Futuro (Bolivia), Programa Familias (Argentina) e.t.c.
- iv. Transformative measures: They seek to address concerns of exclusion and social justice, such as the exploitation of workers or discrimination against ethnic minorities following the rights based approach (Devereux and Sabastes-Wheeler 2007a).

## **Problem Statement**

Currently, 1.1 billion people live on less than 1.25 U.S Dollars per day, which is the recognized poverty threshold (Ravallion, 2009). 430 million live in South Asia, 325 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, 260 million in East Asia and the Pacific and 55 million in Latin America (Braun, 2004). Many children succumb to early death due to hunger and illness while 1.6 billion people live on between one and two dollars per day, often sliding temporarily below one dollar per day threshold (Braun, 2004). A third of those living in absolute poverty in developing countries live in countries defined as 'difficult environments' due to conflicts or state collapse. According to Kariuki (2009), the Kenya was profoundly affected by the 2007 post election violence and the subsequent Mau saga. Many people lost their lives, property and sources of livelihood while others were displaced from their homes and became internally displaced persons (IDPs). This pre-disposes them to the extremes of poverty and hunger. This calls for urgent measures to reduce the poverty levels and ensure food security. Effective social protection is one of the ways out; this study sought to establish that fact.

## **Objectives**

- i. To assess the vulnerability of the people in the study area to poverty.
- ii. To find out how the CSA programs address the risks and the inabilities to cope.
- iii. To assess the CSA's implementation of the social protection policies.
- iv.

## **Hypothesis**

Social protection helps in improvement of the consumption levels of the poor.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Study Area**

Nyahururu District is a newly created district, formerly a division in Laikipia District, with an average area of 16.4 km square. It has a total population of about 93,016 (Constituency office 2009). Most people are subsistence farmers and, the main crops are cereals, pulses, fruits and vegetables. The most vulnerable people are the people living with HIV/AIDS, the landless, urban poor, the elderly, the disabled and the people who are already poor. Most of these people live in the rural areas of the district. These are the target group of the study. Most of the people under the study area are faced by structural poverty.

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. These were self-administered to the beneficiaries of the program. Interviews were also conducted. Data collected included the number of individuals under the program, the number of times that beneficiaries receive assistance, the amounts given in the form of transfers of food or cash, the frequency of beneficiaries-staff interactions, amounts spent on food and medication.

### **Sampling Method**

The survey was purposive and, therefore, the sample was taken from the beneficiaries of the program. Stratified sampling and simple random sampling were applied. The beneficiaries were divided into strata depending on their geographical locations. A stratified sample was obtained by applying simple random method within the strata.

### **Sample Size**

The number of people considered in the study was 60. This number was obtained using the formula  $n_f = n/1+n/N$  (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999), where  $n_f$  is the required sample,  $n$  is the desired sample size and  $N$  is the total population.

## **Data Analysis and Discussion**

Once the data was collected, it was cleaned by going through the questionnaires and coding the data. Statistical analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Chi-square analysis was done to find out whether social protection had the desired outcome, and the results were produced in the form of graphs and pie charts.

### **Impact of the CSA on Education**

For beneficiaries with schooling children, the CSA gives an amount of up to 6,000 shillings per year for those in secondary or higher levels of learning. This subsidizes the little that the parent/guardian has to offer. For primary school, assistance is given in terms of school uniform for the children since the fee is already catered for by the government. The study aimed at finding out whether there is any impact on education by the CSA. It was realized that of the program beneficiaries, 34.78% received financial aid for school fees. This was quite significant as compared to only 2.17% of the non-beneficiaries. This, according to the schools' heads, has led to increased enrolment and retention of students from needy backgrounds. With improved education, the children have better chances at life and they can help to raise the living standards of their families.

## Impact on Health

Besides giving financial assistance for medical fees, the CSA ensures that its beneficiaries, especially those in the HIV/AIDS program are registered with the NHIF. The beneficiaries pay 60/= per month and the CSA tops up the remaining 100/= to hit the required monthly contribution by NHIF. Of the program beneficiaries, 44.83% were registered to the NHIF scheme as compared to only 13.9% of those who were not beneficiaries of the program. From this information, it is clear that social protection can help to improve health by making sure that people have access to the health insurance.

## Impact on Livelihood

To determine this, it was first necessary to know the common source of income for the people in this area. This was as illustrated in fig. 1 below.

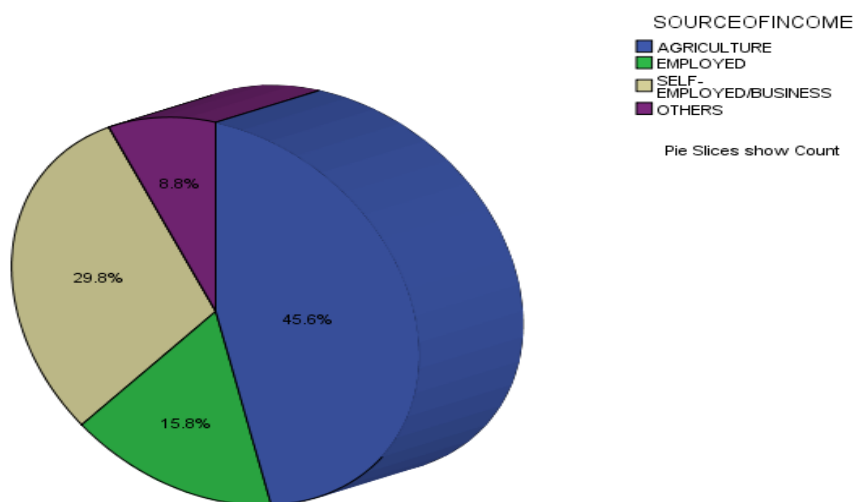


Fig 1: Pie-Chart Showing Income Distribution

This shows that the majority of the population in the study area relied on agriculture as a source of income. In a bid to determine how secure their income is, it was necessary to find out how agricultural productivity has been in the past years. More than half had observed declining production as seen in fig. 2.

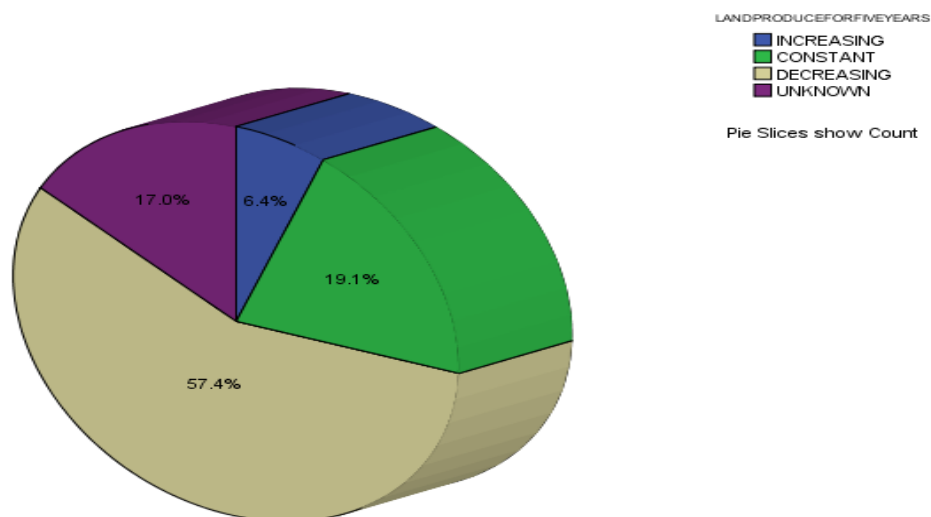


Fig. 2: Pie-Chart for Land Productivity Trend in the Last 5 Years

Therefore, the population was vulnerable since their source of income was not totally reliable.

For those who were in business, it was vital to deduce their source of income. The results were as shown in fig. 3 below.

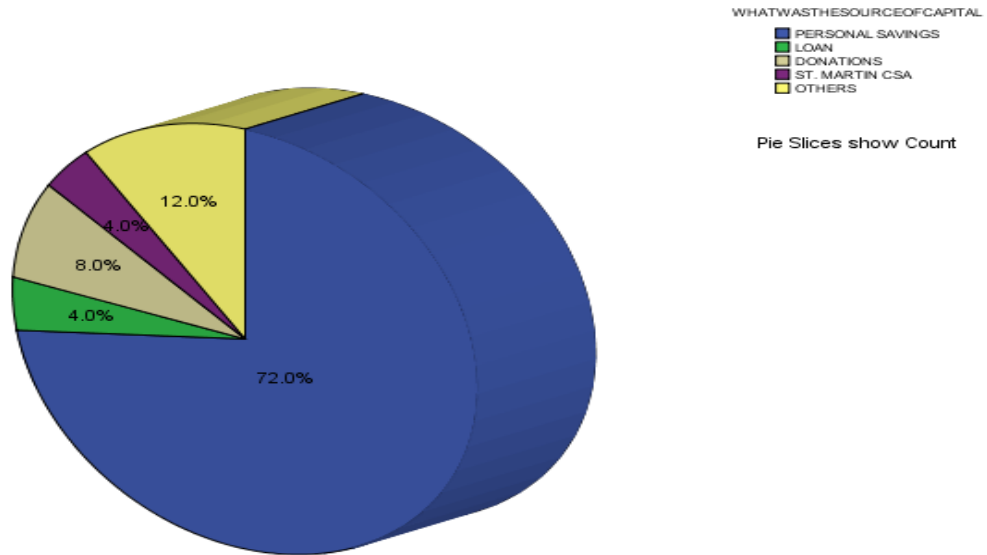


Fig. 3: Pie-Chart for the Source of Capital for businesses

Most relied on personal savings. This was a challenge given that their initial source of income was so compromised. It was, thus, necessary to find out whether the CSA has a saving scheme for the beneficiaries and how this was of benefit to them. It was realized that 45.61% of the beneficiaries had been registered to a savings scheme against 19.3% of the non-beneficiaries. Being in a savings scheme or a self-help group helps the members to save small amounts of money, and they can borrow soft loans from the CSA and start income generating activities (IGA's). This will go a long way in alleviating poverty. To add to that, the CSA gives its beneficiaries starter kits for income generating activities and advises them accordingly besides giving them soft loans. As evidenced above, most people under the program are registered to a savings scheme as opposed to non-beneficiaries. This clearly shows that they have a better chance to improve their lives.

### Food Assistance

The CSA does not give direct food assistance. However, in the most desperate situation, the volunteers mobilize the community to contribute food which is then given to the hungry. Sponsors, friends, and donors can also give their contributions any time at the main office. This promotes capacity building within the society. It also aids in avoiding dependency, so the beneficiaries are empowered to a point where they can fend for themselves without relying on outside aid hence improve their health, educational and nutritional status. This would have achieved the ultimate goal of social protection, which is to reduce poverty levels.

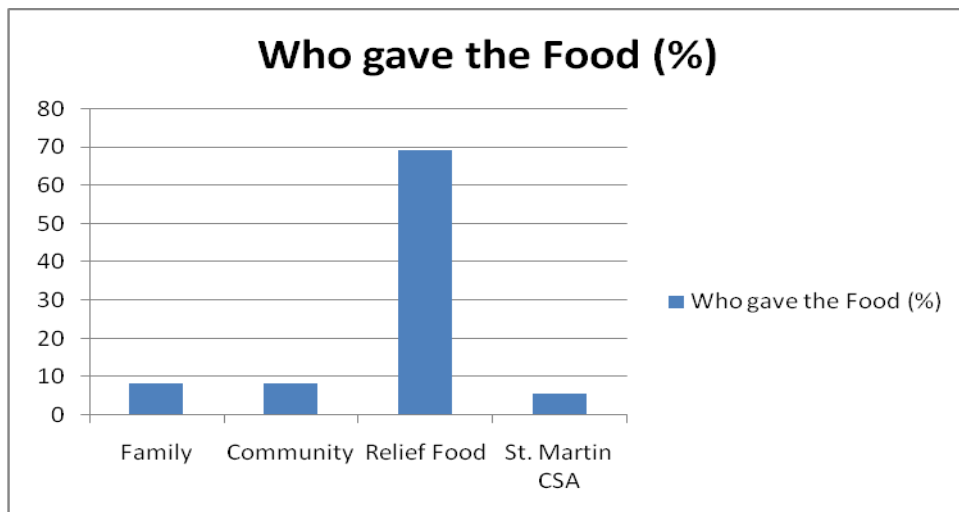


Fig. 4: Bar Graph for Food Aid Received in the Last 2 Years

Of all the people interviewed, a majority had received food aid in the last two years. This need, according to many, was due to the adverse weather conditions. The CSA identifies this as a problem since the food aid is a short term solution. Most contributors gave food aid, but the CSA only gave a few who were vulnerable. In some other cases, the CSA volunteers mobilized the community to come together and contribute towards helping the needy within the community. This would reduce dependency on the program since the community would be empowered. The individuals are saved from total deprivation and are empowered through access to savings schemes and income generating activities. As such, even if the program ceased functioning, the spirit of oneness in the community would persist; hence ensuring continuity of social protection.

## Hypothesis Testing

The chi-square test was used to assess whether registration into the program had in any way helped to improve the living standards of the vulnerable.

*Table 1: Chi-Square Analysis*

Variable Investigated	Observed Value	Expected Value	Df
Education	16.92	19.43	2
Financial	10.725	8.978	1
Livelihood	17.643	19.643	3
Health	3.5	5.5	2
Food Security	14.442	13.5	3

*Source: Authors' Own Compilation (2013)*

There is no significant difference between the expected values and the observed values. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that social protection helps in improving the living standards of the poor.

## Recommendations

The analysis above clearly indicates that communities with vulnerable people should come together, form self-help groups and try to solve their own problems instead of waiting for help. This can even help them to lobby for their rights. The government, through the relevant role players, should roll out the National Social Protection Strategy since this would go a long way in reducing the poverty levels in Kenya. Not only would it insure the people's property, but also prevent them from getting into absolute deprivation. This would also aid in making sure that people are not dependent but are empowered to deal with their problems using the available resources.

## References

- Braun, J. (2004). *Eliminating Hunger and Reducing Poverty*. Washington DC: IFPRI.
- Braun, J., Swaminathan M.S. and Rosegrant M.W. (2004). *Agriculture, Food Security, Nutrition and the Millennium Development Goals*. Washington DC: IFPRI.
- Devereux, S. and Wheeler, R.S. (2007a). 'Debating Social Protection.' *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 38(3), May 2001, pp1-7.
- Devereux, S and Wheeler, R.S. (2007b), 'Social Protection for Transformation', *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 38(3), May 2001, pp23-28.
- GoK (2005-2010). Social Protection Policy. Nairobi: Ministry of Gender, Children and Social policy. Viewed 10<sup>th</sup> October 2012 <[www.gender.go.ke](http://www.gender.go.ke)>
- Holzmann, R., and Kozel, V. (2007), 'The Role of Social Risk Management in Development: A World Bank View.' *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 38(3), May 2001, pp. 8.
- Kariuki, K.E. (2009). 'Destruction of Mau a Tragedy for Kenya and Africa'. *American Chronicle*, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Viewed 10<sup>th</sup> October 2012 <<http://www.americanchronicle.com>>.
- Mugenda, M. and Mugenda, G. (1999). *Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches in Research Methodology*. Nairobi: Acts Press, pp. 138-141.
- Ravallion, M. (2008). More People Surviving Below Poverty Line. Washington DC: World Bank. Viewed 7<sup>th</sup> October 2012 <<http://www.worldbank.com>>.
- UK aid. (2010). *Development of Social Protection Strategy*. Nairobi: UK aid. Viewed 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012 <<http://www.gender.go.ke>>.
- Wanjohi, M.D (2009). *Constituency Demographics*. Constituency Office, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Nyahururu; Kenya.