

**Process Evaluation of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
(LEAP) Programme**

Proposal

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2.1. Theoretical Frame of Evaluation - Participation or (and) Standardization

1. Introduction


The last decade has witnessed a renewed interest among international bodies that no country is too poor to take care of its vulnerable and excluded groups (ILO/WHO, 2009). Consequently there has been the adoption of several strategies by governments to improve the livelihood of vulnerable and excluded groups. Among these measures is Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs). CCTs have proved to be successful in Latin America in improving livelihood (Norad, 2008). Based on this experience CCTs have been recommended to many countries in sub-Saharan Africa as a tool for improving the livelihoods of its people. However, the success story of CCTs in Latin America does not make it automatic success in sub-Saharan Africa. Hence there is a need to verify the extent to which CCTs are effective in improving livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa. However before this can be done, it is imperative a process evaluation is undertaken. This study therefore will seek to conduct a process evaluation on one of such CCTs intervention in Ghana.

2. Background

Evidences of social transfers promoting education, ensuring food security and improving healthcare among vulnerable and excluded groups have been recorded globally. For example, in Mexico, 70% of households participating in the Progresa (Social Transfer) programme showed improved nutritional status with an impressive growth rate of one centimetre per child annually among children aged 12-36 months (Rawlings, 2004). Also, the humanitarian assistance provided to many African countries to tackle predictable food crises and other disasters was estimated to be US\$3 billion in 2003 (DFID, 2005). This amount yielded only minimal long-term impact as exemplified by the 16% severely or moderately food insecure households in the poorest regions of Ghana (WFP, 2012). It is estimated that Social Transfers which include CCTs could reach the same people at a much lower annual cost per person, having a greater long-term

difference in their lives (DFID, 2005). The European Commission (2010) also indicates that there are clear linkages between food insecurity as a problem and social transfers as a solution to that problem. It states that, food security depends, at least, as much on access to food as it does on availability of food; hence transfers which make possible such access to food, are vital for ensuring food security.

Consequently, CCTs have become popular among governments and donor agencies for improving livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa. The Commission for Africa for instance has identified social transfer as a key tool in improving livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa. It advocates that donors should commit to long-term, predictable funding of these strategies, with US\$2 billion a year immediately, rising to US\$5-6 billion a year by 2015 (DFID, 2005). In view of this, the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) was commenced in the quest to break the intergeneration cycle of poverty in Ghana. But the success story of social transfers in Latin America does not make it automatic success in Ghana. Thus while cash transfers worked in Latin America the conditions in Ghana may be different, and as a result render the intervention ineffective in dealing with the country's development challenges.

While a proposal has been laid out already to address the effectiveness of CCTs within the framework of the Capability Approach, it is imperative a process evaluation is undertaken to ensure the validity of findings from the impact study. For this reason this study seeks to conduct a process evaluation of LEAP. 

3. Objectives


The general purpose of this study is to verify if the implementation process of the LEAP is consistent with planned processes. To this end, the study seeks to ascertain if

- Cash transferred reaches target audience
- There is co-ordination of social transfers interventions
- Capacity to implement the programme is adequate
- Delivery systems are reliable


4. Research Questions

- Does the LEAP grant reach the target recipients?
- Is there co-ordination of social transfer interventions in Ghana?
- Do the implementing agencies have adequate capacity to implement LEAP?
- Are the delivery systems for LEAP grants reliable?


5. Literature

This section attempts to conceptualise the study by looking at conditions necessary for the successful implementation of social interventions and the relevance of process evaluation. In addition, it provides an overview of the intervention to be evaluated, i.e., LEAP 


5.1 Necessary Conditions for Implementing social transfers



As captured in the previous section, it is important processes are followed to ensure successful implementation of any social interventions. The European Commission (2010) asserts that if these conditions are absent or not well defined, there would be the need to establish them  this section looks at some of the necessary processes that must be followed to ensure successful implementation of social interventions.


The European Commission (2010) observes that though social intervention often seek to achieve a common objective of social development (SD), often these interventions cut across several government agencies. Therefore, it is important these interventions are coordinated to ensure they have maximum expected impact. In Ghana for instance several ministries, including Ministry of Health, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development are all involved in the implementation of major social interventions. Indeed IMANI Ghana (2015) reports that as of May, 2014 approximately 40 social intervention schemes were running concurrently in Ghana. Thus to ensure success of any one of these intervention it is important to coordinate all these efforts to ensure maximum impact. In addition other non-state actors such as NGOs involved in the implementation of such interventions must also be brought on board. The European Commission (2010, p.76) states that

“Often, the ministries responsible for traditional social assistance programmes – such as ministries of social welfare – are relatively weak, with little influence over other ministries. Given the cross-cutting nature of social transfers, consideration should be given to locating strategic responsibility in a more powerful ministry, such as finance, the presidency, or a major sectorial ministry” 

Available evidence according to European Commission (2010) suggests that poor countries with limited experience with social transfers often have weak capacity to administer and deliver transfers at early stages of implementation. Thus, it is imperative the capacities of implementing bodies are strengthened to ensure the successful implementation of the project while ensuring gradual implementation in order not to overwhelm local capacity. This approach indeed

conforms to modern models of CCTs such as the Bolsa Familia (BF) which was rolled out gradually in smaller geographic locations before expanding nationwide. This, the European Commission (2010) states will ensure expansion based on observed interest as well as improvement based on lessons learnt. 

Implementation of any social interventions must necessarily ensure the planned interventions reaches target recipients. Hence arrangements should be made to ensure this happens exactly as planned.  The European Commission (2010) alludes that many social transfer programmes have difficulty ensuring transfers reaches the poor. For example it highlights that even the very well-targeted CCT programme in Mexico has 20% of benefits still going to families among the richest 60% of the population. Similarly middle income families benefitted from a subsidised food distribution programme in India, originally meant for the poor. This poor targeting could be a result of corruption according to the European Commission (2010). Therefore, providing clear information to recipients on the size of their entitlement should make it more difficult for implementing agencies and staff to siphon off funds. Again the European Commission (2010) further notes that, “small, regular payments provided by social transfers are much less likely to be embezzled than larger one-off transfers, particularly if they are passed through less corruptible institutions such as the post office”. It is therefore important to ensure interventions reaches the poor otherwise outcome of any impact evaluation will be misleading. 

By their function, CCTs are supposed to be transfers of specific amount on regular and predictable bases, made to beneficiaries. The European Commission (2010), states that regularity and predictability are necessary for the effectiveness of CCTs. In view of this the implementation of any CCT program should ensure there is a reliable and predictable delivery system. 

5.2. Relevance of Process Evaluation

Process evaluation, according to Scheirer's (1994 in Rossi, 1999), "verifies what the program is and whether or not it is delivered as intended to the target recipients" That is, the focus of process evaluation is not to assess the effects of a program on recipient, which is the mandate of impact evaluation. Chen (1990) alludes that the effectiveness or otherwise of a given initiative measured by outcome or impact evaluation alone is inadequate, without evidence that the planned activities actually proceeded as intended. Similarly, Rossi (1999) indicates that the impact of any social intervention on target population is dependent on the extent to which the implementation processes of the intervention affect the identified condition or problem. Therefore, it is not advisable to undertake any impact evaluation without, at least, minimum process evaluation because without a well laid out process evaluation the outcome of any impact evaluation will be inconclusive and misleading. The section attempts an explanation of the need for a process evaluation.

Traditionally many evaluators have assumed that if proper treatment is in place, then planned and coherent implementation will follow (Chen, 1990). However, the fact that a process is outlined in an intervention strategy does not necessary mean it will be implemented accordingly. Chen (1990) indicates that there is often a difference in planned treatment and treatment delivered in many social intervention programmes. Thus there is a need for evaluators to pay attention to implemented treatment rather than planned treatment (Chen, 1990). This highlights the need to undertake a process evaluation to look at the actual implementation of a programme rather than what the programme is supposed to do. Anything short of this, will result in what Chen (1990) calls "*input output blackbox*" assessment where the focus is on whether a project fails or succeed without due acknowledgement of the mediating factors that influence success or

failure. Such blackbox evaluations often mislead policy makers, hence, persistence of the very problem the intervention sought to curtail.

Furthermore social interventions often include sub interventions which depend on each other to achieve a specific goal. For instance CCT programmes often depend on the availability of hospitals and healthcare professionals to succeed. Thus the incorrect implementation of prior sub interventions will lead to the failure of the other dependent interventions. Therefore it is important to undertake a process evaluation to verify the implementation environment so that a “good innovative idea may not be mistakenly characterized as ineffective in a situation where it was never implemented as designed” (Chen, 1990, p.19).

5.3 Overview of Boilsa Familia

To effectively undertake any process evaluation it important to have a set of criteria based on which the evaluation will be compared to. Rossi (1999) suggests such criteria could be from past experience or performance of similar programs. In view of this, this section highlights key implementation processes of the BF, one of the two models of modern CCTs, to serve as a guide for the process evaluation of LEAP.

The BF in its initial form, Bolsa Escola, was designed to influence the demand for education among the poor. It provided cash transfers to poor mothers, contingent on their children’s attendance to school. It was initially implemented as a municipal program in the outskirts of Brasilia, and subsequently transformed into a nationwide federal program in 2001 (de Janvry et al., 2005).

To ensure coordination of all social protection programmes, the Brazilian government in 2003, merged the Bolsa Escola with two other government social protection programs to form Bolsa Familia. The new program incorporated the health component and expanded the set of conditions, to include child visits to health clinics and attendance of pregnant women to pre-natal care and general health classes.

The selection of beneficiaries under the BF was implemented by municipal governments and it targeted extremely poor and poor households – households with monthly per capita incomes of less than \$R50 (approximately US\$26 at the 2006 average exchange rate) and between \$R50 and \$R100, respectively (de Janvry et al., 2005).

5.4 Over the LEAP Program

The LEAP program was developed with the assistance from the Brazilian government through the Brazil-Africa Cooperation Program on Social Protection, aimed at promoting technical assistance from the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS) to African countries in the development of social policies and programs.

LEAP, like most cash transfers programs in Africa is modelled after the Brazil's BF program and was based on Ghana's Medium term development framework. The program is run by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), under the coordination of a Social Protection Unit (SPU) of MoGCSP. Under the programme payments are supposed to be made every two months via Ghana post offices to target beneficiaries.


Though not all target beneficiaries benefitted from the programme at the onset the initial target recipients include

- Extremely poor elderly above 65 years with no productive capacity
- Assistance, care givers grant scheme for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs), particularly Children Affected By AIDS (CABAs) and children with severe disabilities,
- The incapacitated with no productive capacity
- Extremely poor Persons Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs)
- Subsistence farmers and fisher folk
- Pregnant Women/ Lactating Mothers with HIV/AIDS.

The program is to develop a Single Registry database system to help manage information on beneficiary households as well as on payment procedures. The single register will be the database management system of the LEAP program and it will store and manage data and information on target group. The single registry will also contain information on complementary programs to assist in linking LEAP beneficiaries to the appropriate complementary programs. A component of the single register database is the payment register, which is to manage and monitor the payment process and produce the relevant analysis of the cash transfer or payments to beneficiaries.

The programme is to attach conditions to the grant to encourage poor households to prioritize the human capital development of their members, particular children. This is essential for tackling the inter-generational cycle of poverty. It is also seen as a tool to link up beneficiary's households to other social interventions such as the health insurance scheme, capitation grants and school feeding programme. The conditions tied to the grant include

- Enrolling and keeping all children of school going age in school;

- Registering all members of the family with the National Health Insurance Scheme;
- Registering newly-born children (0-18 months-old) at the Registry of Births and Deaths, attending post-natal clinics and enrolling in an Expanded Immunization Program.
- Preventing all children in the family from child trafficking and from being involved in any of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. 

6. Methodology

The study will utilise the qualitative research method together with the descriptive cross sectional research design to gather data. Patton (2002) defines qualitative methodology as a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as a real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. Qualitative research techniques, therefore, is essential for providing descriptive account of a phenomenon. Therefore considering the descriptive purpose of the study the use of the qualitative approach is justified. The cross-sectional design involves one-shot studies aimed at painting a picture of situation at a particular point in time (Kumar, 2005). Descriptive design on the other hand is suitable for mapping out the terrain of a particular situation.

6.1 Population and Sample


The population for the study will include all both implementers and beneficiaries of LEAP. However there would be selection of five implementers and 20 beneficiaries to seek their views vis-à-vis the study objectives. Baker & Edwards (2012) assert that in qualitative research, the number of interviews to be conducted should be dependent on the availability of resources, participants, heterogeneity of the population and how it will influence the responses, and time constraints. Respondents under the beneficiary category will be selected from the study area of the impact evaluation, while implementers will be from both local and national levels.

A judgemental sampling approach will be utilised to select respondents under both implementers and beneficiary categories. Judgemental sampling involves the selection of participants in a study based on a researcher's knowledge and the purpose of the research (Oliver & Jupp, 2006). This sampling method allows for the selection of interviewees whose qualities as well as experiences permit an understanding of the phenomena in question, and are therefore valuable. Thus the choice of this sampling technique was because it allowed for the selection of participants who will suit the purpose of the study in terms of knowledge and experiences they already have concerning implementation processes of LEAP.

Out of the five implementers to be interviewed two will be the Directors of the two units in charge of the implementation of the LEAP programme, i.e., DSW and the SPU of the MoGCSP. The choice of the Directors is obviously because, as head of the units for implementation of LEAP they would be in a position to provide relevant information for addressing the objectives of the study. The remaining three respondents under the implementation category will come from the districts. The purpose for the selecting respondents from the district is have the view of those on the ground to ascertain if process planned at the national level was being implemented as planned. The responses will also reveal the challenges in the implementation process which may be obscured at the national level.

The 20 respondents under the beneficiary category will include those in the study district of the impact evaluation who will not be sampled to respond to questions in the impact evaluation. The twenty respondents will be distributed evenly in all the study areas. The twenty will be purposefully selected from the LEAP register based age, gender and target group.

6.2 Data Collection Procedure

Collection of data will take the form of primary and secondary data. The following, interviews, and observations would be used for the primary data collection. Secondary data collection will be in the form of review of programme reports and policy documents. 

6.3 Data Handling and Analysis

All interviews, including those in local languages, would be recorded and transcribed verbatim into English language and password protected to ensure confidentiality. A relational-thematic framework analysis would be conducted using both inductive and deducted approaches. The deducted approach would mainly be used in relation to the conceptual underpinning of the study while the inductive would be used to fish out new dimension or concepts of the various research questions that might not have been covered.

Thematic framework analysis (TFA) is a content analysis variance of making meaning out of qualitative dataset by organising data according to key themes and concepts that are evident in a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) have outlined 6 phases for carrying out qualitative analysis. These are familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Similar to TFA, relation analysis also involves examination of qualitative data to identify concepts or themes vis-à-vis the research questions (content analysis), but in addition, it explores the relationship between identified concepts. Thus the combination of the two qualitative data analysis methods will greatly enhance the analysis of data to address the research objectives.

The ATLAS.ti, a Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), would be used for the data analysis. The rationale of use of this application is to allow easy management of

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data gathered and also allow easy presentation of findings in the form of conceptual maps or network diagrams and co-occurring coefficient tables, in addition to the traditional narrative commentary. The co-occurring coefficient is a qualitative technique similar to the quantitative correlation coefficient. It examines the associations between concepts or themes in qualitative datasets and give the strength of the association between zero (themes do not co-occur) and one (themes co-occur). Thus, the closer the co-occurring coefficient is to one the stronger the co-occurrence of the themes or concepts and vice versa. The application also uses a similar approach to the TFA in the handling of data.

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You can choose different strategies of creating a program and strategy of process evaluation in Ghana. It is important to know what is the practical purpose of evaluation:

The 1st select a successful program in Brazil and to compare the conditions of implementation in Ghana. How different these conditions together? The aim is to improve conditions in Africa, according to the Brazilian model.

2. Select the successful program in Brazil and to compare the conditions of implementation in Ghana. How different these conditions together? Newly plan objectives and strategies to achieve them in Ghana, according to local conditions in Ghana. Developing participation of the population.

3. Increasing capacities to achieve new goals and strategies.

Your suggestion is quite good. I pointed out as a PhD student at the various options for process evaluation.

Jiri Winkler