

Social cash transfers, generational relations and youth poverty trajectories in rural Lesotho and Malawi

Research highlight 6 (Malawi): The influence of cash transfers on young adults

Preliminary findings from an ESRC-DFID-funded research project August 2017



Interviews with cash transfer recipients and members of their households revealed that young adults experience cash transfers in a variety of ways:

Young adults as recipients

- * Because Mtukula Pakhomo appears to have been targeted primarily at elderly people, no young adults were direct recipients. Few young people received CADECOM grants either.
- * One young woman who did receive a grant from CADECOM, declared without prompting that registration for this grant had been a good thing in her life.
- * Her main spending was on food for her immediate family; she discussed how to spend the money with her husband, and when she bought maize meal, she gave some of it to her mother.



Young adults in recipient households

- * Most married youth had built their own homes and therefore did not live with the elderly people who were the main grant recipients.
- * However, some lived in close proximity to kin who received grants.
- * Some married youth were given money or food by their recipient kin. Yamikani's grandmother, for instance, gave him money to buy soap. Lamike's parents gave him K2000 from their CADECOM grant which he spent on food.
- * Moreover, Yamikani's grandmother had bought chickens and goats with her money, and would thereby generate income pay for

necessities and for casual labour in her fields. For Yamikani this meant that "our burden will now be lighter".

- * However, some spoke of the stigmatisation they experienced as part of households that received SCTs

Young adults as community members

- * There was little evidence of the influence of SCTs extending beyond the families of those who received them.
- * Some respondents referred to the possibility of SCTs being spent on casual labour (ganyu), but no one explicitly mentioned using their income in this way.
- * Neither did any young adults say that they had benefited from being employed by unrelated SCT recipients.

Cash transfers in the village

Households received social cash transfers (SCTs) from two sources in 2015/6:

Mtukula Pakhomo: the government social cash transfer programme

CADECOM: a World Bank / WFP emergency relief programme implemented by CADECOM in Thyolo District





Impacts on generational relations

- * Many perceived that recipients of SCTs experienced increased power and respect within the household and beyond.
- * Some said their relatives discussed their purchases with the wider family.
- * Blessing, however, said that his grandmother took decisions about spending without consulting anyone else. She chose to share some of her money with others in the family, and he felt he could ask her for money for, for example, buying seeds. However, he did think the money made her more powerful.

Impacts on gender relations

- * SCTs were generally paid to women rather than men.
- * Both recipients and their (male and female) relatives insisted this did not cause any tensions.
- * Some saw the cash as compensation for the lack of male presence in a household. Emily's mother, for instance, said she needed the money as she and both of her daughters were widows. Were one of them married, she insisted, the situation would have been different.



Names have been changed and photographs are illustrative only: they do not portray the individuals profiled and not all are from the case study village.

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