Implementing cash at scale in response to an epidemic –the case of Liberia

Economic Shocks

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Presentation Outline

1. Liberia Shock Profile
2. Social Protection Response Design and Implementation
3. Role of Social Protection in National Response to the Shock
4. Challenges and Next Steps
Liberia shock profile
SP Response Design

Objectives

Short term
- Stop new Ebola infections
- Mitigate Ebola impact

Long term
- Rebuild resilience to shocks
- Human capital investment = poverty reduction
SP’s Response Design

Response drew lessons learned from a pilot cash transfers programme, following the Triple F crisis of 2008, and SP policy environment in Liberia.

To enhance effectiveness of our response, Technical working groups were created for coordination, harmonization and accountability.
Pre-Ebola SP Context

• Ministry Gender, Children and Social Protection established Oct 2013, hosting, the National Social Protection Secretariat

• Social Protection included as separate Sector under Human Development Pillar in Agenda for Transformation (PRS II)

• CT pilot in two out of the 15 counties, 3818 beneficiary HH, @ receiving $25/m.

• Strategy and policy developed based on CT mid term review & WB diagnostic study.

• EU SOCIEUX technical support to explore scale up July 2014
SP’s Response Implementation

**Step 1**
- GoL led a multi-sectoral joint Ebola response
- MoGCSP through CWG led & coordinated SP response

**Step 2**
- A harmonized SCT mechanism was agreed upon by GoL & SP partners

**Step 3**
Targeting through single tier;
- Labour constrained and ultra-poor HH
- Poor HH directly impacted by EVD

**Step 4**
Transfers & Payments;
- Benefit $ doubled from pre-Ebola average $25 per family/ month
- Payments via commercial bank (Ecobank) at pre-established payment points per county
Number of Targeted Households per County December 2014

- Bomi: 15,400
- Gbarpolu: 60
- Grand Cape Mount: 8,000
- Lofa: 30,066
- Montserrado: 15,466

Targeted HH
Average Rate of Assistance by Partners December 2014
Partner Mapping Nov- Dec 2015

Ongoing Cash Assistance

Refers to any cash distribution (i.e. Cash for Work or Unconditional Cash Transfers) or any Savings and Loan intervention to an individual, community or vulnerable group in response to the Ebola emergency.

November – December 2015
Role of SP in national response

Leading SP response through the National SP Secretariat at MoGCSP

- Defining the need reaching out to development partners for support
- Coordinating the planning, implementation and monitoring of the response.
- Mapping out all SP partners by region and support
- Sustaining momentum of SP support via media and continual partner engagements
Social Protection Challenges

1. Various data pools

2. Limited understanding on policy framework & technical cash transfers capacity and systems

3. Multiple systems - duplication & wastage

4. High turnover of humanitarian staff responding to new global emergencies

5. Poor infrastructure hampered timely delivery of cash – road; banks, agents; connectivity
Lessons Learned

• Most vulnerable population are the hardest hit

• State credibility in delivering social transfers

• Non existent systems for routine identification & monitoring of vulnerability

• Urban informality - a petri dish for the virus

• Coordination critical – credible leadership, relevant and allow flexibility

• CT beneficiaries were more resilient (due to pre-crisis income and food security) – evidence on way forward for building resilience.
Next Steps and Way Forward

- GOL/World Bank/USAID Social Safety Net Project (2016-2022) focus on building social protection systems
- Effective delivery of social transfers and build vulnerable households’ resilience to life risks and future shocks
- Establish a Social Registry with subnational hubs
- Build the capacity of social assistance staff
- Integrate social protection in disaster management preparedness
- Strengthen coordination with clear TOR at subnational levels linking with E-Task teams formed during the crisis
- Enhanced financial inclusion and increase private partner partnership on around ‘Mobile Money’ and other innovations
Thank You