e. the Bank's participation would leverage additional donor funding for these programs (p. 5).

Phase I of the ESPP (2001-2003), which the World Bank called 'Enhanced Crisis Management' comprised 4 components:

i. Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM);
ii. Public Works Component (PWC);
iii. Children in Extremely Difficult Circumstances (CEDC); and
iv. Social Protection Strategy component (SPS) (World Bank, 2000b).

Other external agencies that later supported the ESPP initiative included DFID, the European Commission, Australian Aid (AusAID), New Zealand Aid (NZAid) and The German Development Bank (The KfW) (Smith et al., 2012:13). Given the unprecedented economic decline, the government took a 'quick-wins' approach in 2001 and picked four strategic pillars of the National Social Protection Strategy for speedy implementation. These were the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM); the Health Assistance Programme; the Public Works Programme; and the Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances Programme (ibid.).

It is important to note that the World Bank was the driving force behind social protection in Zimbabwe before other agencies joined. The development and adoption of the ESPP was upon the instigation of the Bank and this confirms that social protection agenda was externally influenced right from the beginning. This is in conformity to Hickey (2007) who views social protection as a donor policy and Gaventa (2005) who views policy as a product of external agencies. The fact that the World Bank would not fund the ESPP as originally planned is a reflection that external agencies are not independent and their support is determined by global politics of the day. While the Government of Zimbabwe had outstanding arrears, the major reason for the World Bank's reversal of its initial commitment to fund ESPP was the US embargo against Zimbabwe. The reversal of the Bank was also a blessing in disguise as it allowed the Government of Zimbabwe to take control of the ESPP. The Government was able to fund the ESPP from the national budget despite the international isolation. The ESPP did not gain the popularity among external actors that it would have gained if it was funded by the World Bank yet the Government of Zimbabwe adopted ESPP and did remarkably well to wholly fund the components especially BEAM until the height of the economic collapse of 2008. Overall, the ESPP was watered down by the harsh economic realities.

### 5.3.1 The Public Works Programme (PWP): A transition from food handouts

Food distribution programme in Zimbabwe dates back to 1982 when the government launched it to lessen the burden imposed on vulnerable citizens by the persistent drought (Zeleke and Turigari, 2011). Since then the programme has undergone several stages of transition as the government tried to reduce dependency and invest in long term productive mechanisms. Zeleke and Turigari (2011) consequently note that "Over the years the food distribution programme has undergone several transformations – from Free Food Distribution Programme to Food-for-Work programme in 1985; to the Grain Loan Scheme and to Public Works Programme (PWP) in 2000" and, the government ensured that all the phases of transition incorporated "at least one agricultural input support programme that included crop and fertilizer packs, tillage and/or other packages" to support the productive capacities of the vulnerable population (p. 2). The public works supplemented incomes for the poorest households by providing labour-intensive temporary employment with road maintenance being the major activity.

As noted earlier, the PWP had political support from the government of Zimbabwe as it was in line with government's policy thrust of moving away from food handouts, that it believed promoted a dependency syndrome. It is thus not surprising that PWP emerged as one of the pillars of Zimbabwe's Enhanced Social Protection Strategy formulated in 2000. The major thrust of the PWP was to mitigate food insecurity by "transferring incomes to non-labour constrained (NLC) vulnerable households through participation in community works whilst labour constrained households (LCH) accessed free food distribution" (Zeleke and Turigari, 2011, p. 3). Due to incessant droughts, it became more of a drought mitigation safety net than an asset creation programme (ibid.). According to the World Bank, the PWP enrolled 75,000 participants at an approximate cost of US$300,000 in 2012 that dropped to 9,671 in 2013 (cited in UNCT and GoZ, 2014, p. 93).

The transition from food handouts to public works reflects more of a Government policy choice than external agency preference. The Government of Zimbabwe has ever been ambivalent to food handouts and it believes in supporting the poor to produce their own food. Thus the Government has a strong inclination to provision of agricultural inputs to the poor communities instead of food or cash handouts. The public works programme also allays the Government's reservation over dependency syndrome (dependency syndrome is defined in chapter 2). Despite its role in 'improving' lives or economic development, the paradox of aid is that it distorts 'policy ownership, fiscal sustainability, institutional development and autonomous long-term economic growth' (Moss et al., 2006: 5).

### 5.3.2 The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM)

BEAM was designed to retain children in schools by providing a fee waiver for needy rural and urban children at both primary and secondary schools (World Bank, 2000). This fund was established by the government of Zimbabwe in 2001 to support orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) in 61 districts. "Assistance is restricted to support of school fees and levies through block grants to schools, rather than cash transfers to individuals" (World Bank, 2011, p. 61). The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare is the custodian of BEAM but implements it with close collaboration from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (formerly Ministry of Education, Sports, Art and Culture). BEAM mainly aims to prevent poor households from adopting adverse coping mechanisms like withdrawing children from school (Smith et al., 2012).

Since inception, BEAM became one of the major social protection programmes in Zimbabwe in terms of coverage and national budgetary allocations. It started in 2001 with around 600,000 primary and secondary school children and reached 970,000 pupils (27% of national enrolment) in 2005 with a budgetary commitment of US$35 million (World Bank, 2011, p. 62). That represented 24.5% of all beneficiaries under government funded social assistance interventions and 46.2% of total expenditure in that respect (ibid.) as noted below (ibid). From its inception up to the end of 2008, BEAM was wholly funded by the central government and at its peak it reached 970,000 primary and secondary school children (ibid.). The hyperinflationary environment that engulfed the country in 2008 crippled BEAM, as the local currency was rendered worthless. Eventually, BEAM collapsed in the same year, as the government could no longer fulfil its commitment. Consequently, schools no longer received their BEAM allocation from the government by end of 2008.

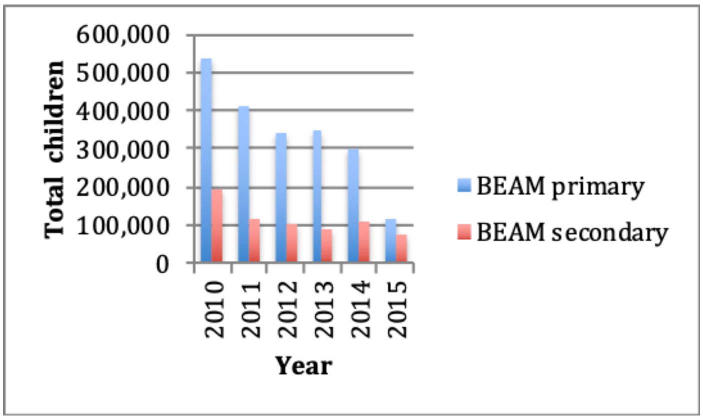
Following the inception of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009 and the introduction of the multicurrency regime, UNICEF partnered the government to resuscitate BEAM.

> I teamed up with Minister of Education, David Coltart, and approached UNICEF to support us to resuscitate BEAM. After submitting position papers for BEAM, UNICEF injected US$20 million into BEAM. We then developed a BEAM selection manual to rationalise selection procedures across the country (*GoZ9*).

The fund was resuscitated in late 2009 with a commitment of donor funds mobilised by UNICEF in collaboration with the government. For the period 2009-2010, external agencies contributed USD20 million for the resuscitation of BEAM (World Bank, 2011). The USD20 million only targeted OVC in primary schools while the government committed USD15 million for secondary school children in 2010 (ibid.). In 2011, external agencies committed USD10 million and the government contributed USD13 million for secondary school children and USD5 million for primary school children (ibid: 14). In 2011, external agencies funded BEAM through the Child Protection Fund (CPF), a funding mechanism for the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer programme (*DP2*). In 2012, the government made a commitment of USD16 million for secondary school children (ibid.). The government would not meet the commitments. For instance, in 2012 the government only released USD5, 600,000 instead of the USD16 million committed. Of $16 million budgeted in 2014 for the secondary school children, only $7million was disbursed and spent towards the programme, to clear previous arrears (GoZ and World Bank, 2016, p. 19). In 2011 42% of deserving pupils did benefit from BEAM (ibid.) while 53.5% did not get the support in 2012 (MoESAC, 2013, p. 17).

Between 2011 and 2015, BEAM enrolment for primary school declined from 537,594 to 118,408, while that for secondary school dropped from 198,220 to 78,925 (GoZ and World Bank, 2016, p. 19). Despite benefiting 80 percent of primary school students in 2013, errors of exclusion are prevalent (ibid.). Uncertain donor funding since 2012 and insufficient support from the government have seen the government incurring BEAM arrears in schools thereby compromising the proper functionality of schools especially that BEAM has been a huge source of funds for many particularly in rural areas as illustrated below.

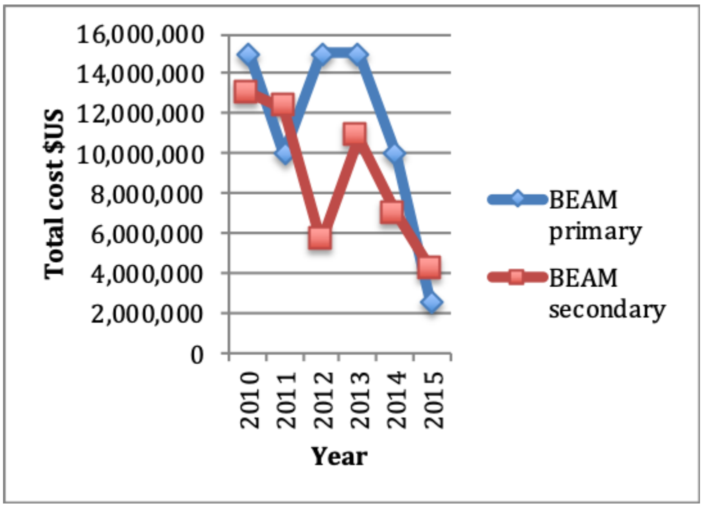
**Figure 9 BEAM total enrolment, 2010-2015**




Despite donor support, BEAM enrolment for both primary and secondary schools has increasingly dropped over the period. It never reached 970,000 children reached when it was fully funded by government.

Author's creation based on figures from GoZ and World Bank, 2016

Figure 10 BEAM actual expenditure, 2010-2015




The increase in funding (primary) between 2011 and 2013 was due to donor funds during the GNU. From 2013 onwards, there is rapid fall owing to the end of the GNU and withdrawal of donor support. Both scenarios reflect huge inconsistent funding.

Author's creation based on figures from GoZ and World Bank, 2016.

External agencies have since stopped funding the programme and whatever amount comes from the government is servicing the arrears. A former government official said "BEAM is practically dead" while one donor official said BEAM could be best described as 'extinct'. While the status of BEAM looks uncertain, it remains a favourite programme for the Government. Thus, despite the financial challenges, the Government keeps holding to it. Consequently, it is a government directive that children under BEAM are not sent away for non-payment of fees and in 2017 the government was settling BEAM arrears for 2016 (*GoZ1*). Government and external agencies' interests are compared in 5.4.5, based on BEAM and HSCT.

### 5.3.3 Children in Extremely Difficult Circumstances (CEDC)

The component was a response to an increasing number of orphans mainly due to HIV/AIDS. By 2000, there were around 600,000 orphans and were expected to increase to 1.2 million by 2005 (World Bank, 2000, p. 5). Regardless of national strides to reduce HIV prevalence, the number of orphans was projected to increase even beyond 2010 and the proportion of vulnerable children would be compounded by other categories like children on the streets, the abused and disabled (ibid.). Thus the component was meant to support children in difficult circumstances by strengthening the ability and capacity of the communities to care for such children. This would be achieved through "strengthening community mobilization and training; and providing grants to NGOs and CBOs working with CEDCs and their families" (World Bank, 2000, p. 7). This component has been supported under the social care services provided by the Department of Social Services in the MPSLSW and includes residential and non-residential care for children, older persons and persons with disabilities (GoZ and World Bank, 2016). The social care services component is a small fraction of the social protection expenditure and averages US$740,000 between 2010 and 2014 (ibid.). Table below summarises the expenditure for social care services.

Table 8 Expenditure trends in social care service programmes ($US)

| Programmes | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Children in difficult circumstances** | 190,688 | 208,000 | 200,000 | 65,000 | 108,000 |
| **Maintenance of disabled persons** | 186,640 | 920,000 | 210,000 | 550,000 | 540,000 |
| **Maintenance of older persons** | 287,210 | 80,000 | - | 50,000 | 55,000 |
| **Street children** | - | 30,000 | 14,310 | 21,211 | 14,086 |

Source: GoZ and World Bank, 2016

#### 5.3.4. Social Protection Strategy component (SPS)

The objective of this component aimed to cement the capacity of the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MPSLSW) for strategic planning, implementation and monitoring. It also sought to support technical assistance and influence national dialogue for a social protection framework as well as supporting a study to reform the health fee waiver system (ibid.) Zimbabwe runs numerous uncoordinated social protection programmes implemented by various organisations and without a broader policy framework (World Bank, 2014; MoLSS and UNICEF, 2010). Besides the 'patchwork of policy documents' (World Bank, 2014) evident in separate pieces of manuals and guidelines of operations for different social protection interventions, the desire to have a social protection strategy did not materialise until the development of the NSPPF in 2015 that was launched in December 2016.

## 5.4 The National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC)

This started as a policy response to an increasing number of orphans mainly resulting from the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the early years of the new millennium. It is somehow similar to CEDC but the two were initiated at different years under separate policy regimes and with support supported from different external agencies. NAP for OVC is a partnership between UNICEF (as the frontrunner of other external agencies) and the government while the CEDC is a component of the ESPP that was a partnership between the government and the

World Bank. The purpose of the programme was to meet the basic needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) as well as ensuring that they are protected from all forms of abuse (Jimat, 2010). In 2003, the government set up a Working Party of Officials (WPO) constituting government and development partners and whose obligation was to develop the programme that was eventually approved in 2004 (MPSLSW, 2003). NAP for OVC further buttressed the national legal and policy framework especially the Children's Act (Chapter 5:06) and the National Orphan Care Policy that directly focused on children. It also aligned to the Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (ZNASP), which is the overall guiding policy framework for HIV and AIDS related interventions (Ministry of Labour and Social Services (MoLSS, 2010). At a global scale, the programme complied with the June 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV and AIDS that Zimbabwe was part of (MPSLSW, 2003). Specifically, the UNGASS goals 65, 66 and 67 targeted orphans and vulnerable children and called upon member states "to develop national policies and strategies that build and strengthen the ability of governments, communities, and families to support orphans and children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS by the year 2003, and to implement these policies and strategies by the year 2005" (MPSLSW, 2003, p. 7).

NAP for OVC is a national policy framework that related organisations are expected to align to. This contrasts Zambia where cash transfers were introduced purportedly as a response to high prevalence of HIV/AIDS without any national guiding framework. However, as shall be seen in the following sections, NAP for OVC suffered from inadequate budgetary support from the government and ended up being a donor driven programme.

Below is a summary of the major milestones in the development of NAP for OVC.

**Key milestones for the development of NAP for OVC**

2003 Government set up a Working Party of Officials (WPO) whose oversight was development of the programme, resource mobilization and implementation.

2004 Government approved the programme and reasserted the role of the WPO.

2005 UNICEF supported MPSLSW to establish the National Secretariat to strengthen coordination capacity. A child-led Children's Summit was held and followed by the launch of the programme by Vice President Mujuru. A Programme of Support (PoS) was developed to fund the programme.

2006 Cabinet approved the Guidelines for the Operationalisation of the NPA for OVC and established a nine member Technical Review Committee (TRC) and renamed the programme the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC) to emphasise the need for action now.

2007 Project proposals were called for and 21 organisations were approved by the TRC to access funds mobilised through the PoS mechanism. An M&E framework for the programme was developed and finalised in February 2008.

*Source:* MPSLSW, 2003 (updated 2008)

### 5.4.1 NAP for OVC I, 2004-2010 and the Programme of Support (PoS)

This was a direct response to effects of HIV/AIDS on children. A Programme of Support (PoS) for the NAP for OVC was developed in 2005 "to provide a framework for multi-year, multi-donor funding where donors pool resources together for the implementation of the NAP for OVC under the management of UNICEF" (MPSLSW, 2003, p. 24). The OECD donors comprising the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), New Zealand Aid (NZAID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), German Government, Australian Aid (AusAID) and the European Commission (ibid.) financed the PoS (ibid.). The funding mechanism was established upon the realization that the Government did not have adequate resources and capacity to lessen the impact of HIV and AIDS on children due to socio-economic challenges (Jimat, 2010). By 2007, HIV prevalence was approximately 15.6% (15-49 years) and children orphaned by HIV/AIDS were around 975,956 (Ministry of Health and Child Welfare cited in MPSLSW, 2003). The PoS mobilized a total of US$86 million that was accessed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for programme implementation that signed a tripartite agreement with UNICEF, MPSLSW[10] (Jimat, 2010). Funding decisions were a jurisdiction for the Technical Review Committee[11] and the implementing NGOs were required to report to both the MPSLSW and UNICEF (Jimat, 2010).

Under PoS, more than 80 NGOs were contracted to do interventions focused on orphans and vulnerable children on behalf of the Government (GoZ3) and that was the major shortfall of the programme. The inability of the Government of Zimbabwe to fully fund NAP 1 allowed the external agencies to take control of the programme and 'dictate' terms that the Government was in a compromised position to object. Although external agencies would not fund the government directly for political and fiduciary reasons, NGO implementation of the programme was more expensive than the government (Jimat, 2010). An evaluation of the PoS revealed that

- Despite aligning to national priorities and initiatives, the absence of direct PoS support to government structures that were supposed to play a key role in coordination and supervision, stood out as a systemic design flaw of the PoS, which affected not only the speed of implementation but quality of outputs and, ultimately, results for children;
- UNICEF, with its dual role of fund manager and technical advisor, had little previous experience of large-scale NGO grant management prior to the PoS, struggled to build its capacity in this area, and faced problems in adapting UNICEF's global rules to the new way of working; and
- The NGO approach was fragmented as they rarely addressed the total needs of the children and this was worsened by the fact that attention was on the child alone not the household context. This translated to little impact. (Jimat, 2010, pp. 10-24).

Although the PoS could be the 'best' arrangement for an increasingly internationally isolated Government of Zimbabwe, it became another layer of bureaucracy and extra transactional costs (Jimat, 2010). It overshadowed the role of the government to monitor NGOs for quality assurance especially given the dual accountability system cited below.

[10] It became the Ministry of Labour and Social Services (MoLSS) in the Government of National Unity, 2009-2013

[11] Comprised Government technical line ministries, National Aids Council, donors and UNICEF and decided who got the grant.

- The Tripartite Agreement between the Government, UNICEF and the NGOs; and
- The Project Cooperation Agreement signed only by UNICEF and the NGOs (Jimat, 2010, p. 12).

Consequently, the NGOs became more preoccupied with financial accountability to UNICEF than technical accountability to the Government, given the power in financial control (ibid.).

A government official also noted,

> While the NGO world believed that government had no capacity to run the programme, not much was delivered in terms of benefits to the child. The bulk of the PoS expenses went towards capacitating the NGOs because they needed computers, vehicles, training and other equipment. It was later realized that it would have been better if the capacity building were directed to the government (*GoZ3*).

### 5.4.2 NAP for OVC II, 2011-2015 and the Child Protection Fund I (CPF I), 2011-2013

The programme came into being after a national stakeholder review process of NAP 1 that involved children, government, civil society and development partners (MoLSS, 2010). Its continued focus on OVC was informed by the fact there was an increased number of children orphaned by HIV and AIDS despite a record decrease in HIV prevalence from 27.2% to 14.3% between 1998 and 2010, plus high rates of child abuse (ibid: 4). The design of NAP for OVC II and CPF II was based on the 'Child Sensitive Social Protection Thought Paper', a study commissioned by UNICEF in 2010 that proved there was high numbers of OVC (Schubert, 2011). There was a stakeholder convergence that NAP for OVC II would focus on:

- prevention and mitigation of child abuse;
- increasing access of OVC to basic education and health services;
- promoting access of children to child-friendly justice services; and
- strengthening family livelihoods. (MoLSS, 2010, p. 18).

NAP for OVC II therefore adopted a child-sensitive social protection that was hinged on four pillars of Strengthening of the Household Economy, Child Protection, Access to Basic Services and Programme Coordination and Management, with gender, age, disability, child participation, HIV and AIDS cross-cutting the pillars (ibid.).

As in NAP 1, the NAP Secretariat[12] was in charge of programme coordination and management. The Secretariat was expected to "cascade comprehensive capacity development horizontally and vertically within the Department of Social Services (DSS)" so that DSS would finally take over its roles by 2015 (MoLSS, 2010, p. 36). Similarly, the institutional structure starts from the State and the Cabinet and is complemented by child protection committees at national, provincial, district and community levels, all embedded in a multi-sectoral collaboration and sub-national coordination.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) OVC group of donors developed yet another funding mechanism for NAP II that they called Child Protection Fund I succeeding the PoS. The name was informed by the child sensitive social protection approach that was influenced by UNICEF. Accordingly, "the purpose of CPF is to reduce household poverty and provide protection support such that the most vulnerable children in Zimbabwe are able to secure their basic rights" (UNICEF, 2010, p. vii). The CPF therefore constituted 3 main pillars:

- To reduce household poverty and economic disparity of approximately 55,000 extremely poor households including those with orphans and other vulnerable children by implementing national cash transfers thereby positively benefiting children and women's health and well-being;
- To enhance all vulnerable children's access to effective child protection services including protective services (legal, welfare, judicial) to child survivors of violence, exploitation and abuse; and
- To facilitate improved access to basic education for poor orphans and other vulnerable children in Year 1. (UNICEF, 2010, p. vii).



The Government and the OECD donors co-financed NAP II with additional support expected from other supporters. The Government was expected to be able to commit 50% of the funds for social cash transfers by 2013 (UNICEF, 2010). OECD donors, despite being the major funders of NAP II, would not fund all NAP II activities and, for instance, only funded BEAM in 2011. Like the PoS, UNICEF managed the CPF. The major accomplishments for NAP II was that it reached 55,000 households

[12] It was a unit created by DSS with support from UNICEF to lead programme coordination and management. It comprised 5 personnel paid by UNICEF while MoLSS provides office accommodation, communication and utilities.

through the Harmonized Social Cash Transfer (HSCT) and the initiation of the National Case Management System (NCMS), all funded by CPF I (GoZ, 2015). NAP II also suffered from lack of Government funding due to fiscal constraints and external agencies became the primary funders of the programme. As a result, the external agencies "had a significant influence on how the resources were to be used, causing the government to 'chase the money' (ibid: 17). Given that background, the Government was not in control and eventually it was difficult to measure the impact of the programme on children, as the programme design emphasised outputs more than outcomes (ibid.). This had negative consequences for future potential funding for the programme. "It is difficult to get funding for the HSCT because there are no outcomes, we only have numbers of children reached" (*DP1*).

### 5.4.3 NAP for OVC III, 2016-2020 and the Child Protection Fund II (CPF II), 2016-2021

Building on lessons learnt from NAP I and II, the MPSLSW together with stakeholders developed NAP for OVC III "with the intent of translating into practice the principles and goals of the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) that relate to children" (MPSLSW, 2016, p. 12). The NSPPF was developed in 2015. The Government and all stakeholders agreed to still concentrate on child protection, as the situation of children in the country still remained bad especially in terms of child marriage, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and child mortality (ibid.). Thus, NAP III has four interlinked pillars:

- Household economic security
- Access to basic social services
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Systems strengthening (MPSLSW, 2016, p. 21)

NAP III suffers from donor fatigue as DFID, the major funder of the HSCT, cut the budget by almost half for the second phase of the HSCT (June 2016-May 2019) (see chapter 6).

### 5.4.4 Government-World Bank-UNICEF ideological battle

The ESPP, despite being the first social protection response 'package' developed to address the socio-economic constraints that confronted Zimbabwe, the programme is rarely mentioned in literature. Even the custodian ministry, MPSLSW, does not have documentation for the programme.

> The ESPP was not popularized but the components became the core pillars of the social protection system that was beginning to mould into place. Unfortunately, the ESPP was also caught up in a period where the government thought there was need for short-term programming given the rapid changing circumstances that Zimbabwe was finding itself in terms of economic downturn and social unrest. This watered down the ESPP (*GoZ2*).

The ESPP was developed in 2000 and barely three years afterwards, NAP for OVC was also put in place. For NAP for OVC, it was UNICEF that was at the forefront providing technical assistance and mobilizing resources. What emerges from this narrative, first, is inter-external agency politics where UNICEF and other development partners would not take over the ESPP, despite it being 'one of the best social protection systems in Africa' (MoLSS and UNICEF, 2010, p. 7). This affirms the ideological 'battle' between the World Bank and the rest of other external agencies. Secondly, governments are swayed from one programme to the other as external agencies push for their policy agendas. Global politics and external agency policies permeate the domestic policy space as the World Bank (in the case of ESPP) and UNICEF (in the case of NAP for OVC) engaged the government to influence policy adoption. Overall, the World Bank and the DFID were heavily involved in the social protection agenda in the early years especially between 2000 and 2006 and when UNICEF joined, it shifted whole focus to children (*SPE*). Thus, the heavy involvement of UNICEF in NAP for OVC is not mere coincidence and NAP's bias towards children fulfils UNICEF's mission.

> As UNICEF, we are involved globally because we are also trying to position ourselves quite strongly in the social protection field. I think it's more of a strategic move by UNICEF noting that if we do not get ourselves very much involved, yes social protection will be there but children will not derive benefit from it. So we had to make sure that we safeguard the interests of children by being at the forefront at a point where we have a global partnership with the World Bank and other big social protection players (*DP3*).

UNICEF's double role in Zimbabwe of providing technical assistance (TA) and managing the donor pooled funds contrasts with other countries where it only provides TA. External agencies do not fund the government directly because of the international isolation and outstanding arrears to the international financial institutions (IFIs). They fund programmes through the United Nations family and international NGOs. In the case of social protection, external agencies fund the HSCT, development of NSPPF and technical assistance through UNICEF under the establishment of a child protection fund (CPF). It is important to note that, since 2000, the World Bank suspended programme funding to Zimbabwe and has been mainly been involved in technical support (assessments and analytical work) (*GoZ8*). That has given space and more influence to UNICEF. UNICEF is therefore at a vantage point to ensure that its focus on children is fulfilled. Similarly, Low et al. (1998) note that UNICEF's technical assistance to GAPVU[13] in Mozambique was motivated by the fact that most of the GAPVU beneficiaries were families with malnourished children.

The experiences of NAP for OVC show that the Government cannot control what it does not fund. The contracting of numerous NGOs in NAP I to do work for the Government was not something the Government would do if it funded the programme. The Government did not own it and would not hold external agencies and NGOs accountable. The establishment of a Child Protection Fund outside the Government was a donor prerogative. The setting up of the HSCT outside the mainstream national programmes was an external agencies' choice too. The decision to fund BEAM under the HSCT only once came from UNICEF and the other external agencies. External agencies decide what to fund, when to fund, how to fund and when to downscale or quit and the Government does not have control over that. However, what the Government of Zimbabwe has done 'persistently' is its resistance to taking over donor programmes like the HSCT.

> The government officials are stubborn and it is a waste of time to approach them. We agreed with the Government to fund the HSCT 50% and donors 50% but they never fulfil that commitment and the programme is 100% donor dependent (*DP1*).

The above sentiments reflect a frustrated donor official who is not happy with what the donors see as Government of Zimbabwe's intransigence. The frustration can be best understood in the context of a contrast in donor and government priorities (see

[13] Gabinete de Apoio à População Vulnerável literally translates into Office for Assistance to the Vulnerable Population.

chapter 6).

### 5.4.5 The Harmonised Social Cash Transfer (HSCT) Programme

The Zimbabwean case is quite unique in the sense that the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer programme was introduced during a period of significant political and socio-economic trepidation. The economy was in a state of collapse with an annual GDP growth rate of -5.7% between 2000 and 2008, 80% of the labour force unemployed, galloping inflation between 2007 and 2008, 80% of the population below the food poverty line, and a political impasse that paralysed service delivery (Seidenfeld et al., 2016, p. 226). Western governments imposed sanctions on the Harare administration over the land reform programme and, consequently, international bi-lateral engagements ceased (ibid.) However, upon the inception of the Government of National Unity (GNU), it was surprising to see the external agencies especially the British and the Government of Zimbabwe ‘converging’ on the HSCT programme. The ‘convergence’ is attributed to research, evidence and data that were used by stakeholders to allay the mistrust and shortage of resources that prevailed during that period (ibid.). While that could be true, it is important to note that the international community had somehow a ‘positive’ perception of the ‘new’ dispensation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Given that the GNU was a compromise between the Mugabe’s ZANU-PF and the opposition MDC, the westerners saw it worthwhile to re-engage the Harare administration. Furthermore, the minister of Labour and Social Services in the GNU was a member of the opposition MDC. The opposition was more appealing to the international community than ZANU-PF. She presided over the inception of the HSCT and its implementation until the end of the GNU in 2013. Upon appointment to the Ministry of Labour and Social Services in 2009, “everything had gone down, there was nothing at pensions and it was difficult to say there was a social protection system in place except a few haphazard interventions” (*GoZ9*).

Starting with the Goromonzi pilot of 111 households, the cash transfers were rolled out to 10 districts in 2012 that were further extended to 16 districts in 2013 and reached a total of 20 districts in 2014 (Seidenfeld et al., 2016, p. 229). From October 2011 to January 2012 the programme targeted about 19,000 households in the first 10 districts and transfers were first received in April 2012 (MoLSS and UNICEF, 2012). The programme was expanded to cover 20 districts (2 per each province) and paid cash to 55,509 households, 10% of a total of 539,057 households that were reached with a census based proxy means test enumeration (UNCT and GoZ, 2014). The government's desire, expressed in ZimAsset, to reach a target of 100,000 households by 2015 and all the 200,000 by 2018 (ibid.) remains unfulfilled to date.

The HSCT programme was designed to meet the following objectives:

a. At output level, to strengthen the purchasing power of 55,000[14] ultra-poor and labour-constrained households.
b. At outcome level, to empower the beneficiary households to increase their consumption to a level which exceeds the food poverty line. This was expected to reduce the number of ultra-poor households as well as refrain them from risky coping strategies like child labour and early marriage
c. At impact level, to improve nutrition status, health and education and to reduce child mortality and HIV prevalence amongst youths aged 15-24 years (MoLSS and UNICEF, 2010, p. 15).

Households of 1, 2, 3 and 4+ members receive $10, $15, $20 and $25 (per month but paid bi-monthly) respectively (*GoZ1*). Households targeted by HSCT are mostly headed by older persons or persons with disability, most of whom are women and mainly widows. Household members are children, elderly, disabled, chronically ill and a few adults in good health. However, 81% of household members are children most of whom are orphans, thus "child protection services are provided in order to respond to cases of violence, abuse and exploitation against children through a case management system" (UNCT and GoZ, 2014, p. 96). By June 2014, child protection services had reached 56,327 children, which was more than double the 2015 target of 25,000 (ibid.). Inclusion and exclusion errors are estimated to be approximately 15 percent and 20 percent respectively and this is deemed to be consistent with international standards (Schubert and Chirchir, 2012). The collapse of the HSCT after 2015 is due to donor fatigue. DFID funds about 75% of the HSCT and its reduction of funding for the programme by almost 50% for the current phase (June 2016-May 2019) has adverse implications. It is also difficult to envisage how a government that

[14] 55,000 were the targeted extreme poor households in 20 districts though there are a total of 200,000 extreme poor households in Zimbabwe.

spends over 90% of its national budget (GoZ5) on the wage bill can be able to fund 'free cash transfers'. Table 9 illustrates the status of the HSCT from 2011 to 2017.

**Table 9 The HSCT programme in Zimbabwe**

| Year | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Caseload** | 111 | 18,940 | 33,200 | 55,509 | 55,509 | 23,000 | 23,000 |
| **Districts** | 1 | 10 | 16 | 20 | 20 | 8 | 8 |

Author's compilation of figures from MPSLSW and *DP2*

Districts have reduced from 20 to 8 and the number of beneficiaries dropped from 55,509 to 23,000 (*DP2*). It is pertinent to note that HSCT was designed to provide cash transfers to 55,000 extreme poor holds in 20 districts, which it exceeded. It therefore emerges that the external agencies expected the government to take over the programme beyond the 20 districts, something that the government was not committed to as shall be seen in chapter 6. Donor frustration over government's lack of commitment to take over funding of HSCT partly explains the downscaling of donor support.

In a broad sense, there is a clash of interests between BEAM and the HSCT, which is now the 'flagship' social protection programme in Zimbabwe. This scenario resonates conflict between the government and development partners over programme preferences. Here the Government prefers BEAM while the development partners prefer the HSCT and are pushing the Government to fully adopt it. BEAM is politically popular and owned by the Government compared to the HSCT that is driven by external agencies. If the external agencies were to pull out of the HSCT, it would collapse as a donor programme and there is no obligation for the Government to take over. Conversely, Government programmes, will stay in place for as long as they are relevant politically, regardless of limited financial capacity. As observed by Feng and Gizelis (2002), welfare programmes are crucial for the survival of a political regime and are therefore determined by "a government's strategic choices to seek support by rewarding the interest groups critical for the government's survival" (p. 217). If the Government would reach around 970,000 children with BEAM compared to the HSCT that has so far reached a maximum of about 55,000 households in only 20 districts, the Government holds on to BEAM because it is a national programme with potential to reach huge numbers. Politics is a game of numbers and numbers matter when it comes to elections. When a programme is essentially patronised by the ruling party the benefiting communities specifically associate that programme with that particular party and pay back through political allegiance.

## 5.5 Development of the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF): A Protracted Process

The idea to develop the policy framework was mooted in 2009 and momentum became high from 2014 onwards (*GoZ1*). There was a realisation and a general consensus from the government and the development partners that the lack of an overall social protection policy framework was the reason why it was difficult to harmonise and coordinate social protection in the country. Even national development strategies from around 2009 to the current ZimAsset (2013-2018) lamented the lack of a social protection policy framework (*GoZ2*). Although there were a number of policy instruments like the Social Transfer Policy Framework, the BEAM Manual and Public Works Guidelines, those tools and the subsequent programmes remained isolated and loosely coordinated (*GoZ3*). Indeed, a former government official echoed the same sentiments "In the absence of an overall social policy framework, social protection remains ad hoc, piecemeal and of little impact, if any. Harmonisation and coordination are virtually not feasible" (*GoZ8*). The need for a policy framework also pertinently emerged after launching the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer (HSCT) programme in 2012 as affirmed below,

> We realised there were other social protection issues that were not covered by the cash transfer programme. So the push for the NSPPF became vocal again as stakeholders desired to finalise the policy document. So UNICEF brought resources to finalise the policy (*GoZ3*).

The policy framework anchors on five pillars:

i. social assistance;
ii. social insurance;
iii. labour market interventions; and
iv. livelihoods support strategies
v. social support and care (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016, p. 14)

The policy takes three approaches to social protection

i. Social protection as a human right, which underscores that social protection is people's entitlement that the State has an obligation to provide as enshrined in international conventions;
ii. Systems approach to social protection that treats the poor and vulnerable as heterogeneous and therefore have different forms of vulnerabilities that require different types of support; and
iii. Multi-sectoral approach to social protection, which calls for a holistic approach to social protection that makes cross-sectoral linkages and is hinged on a life cycle approach. This is envisaged to enhance coordination and harmonisation. (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016, pp. 24-25).

The three above approaches followed by the NSPPF mirror UNICEF's Global Social Protection Strategic Framework. The UNICEF framework underscores the importance of national integrated social protection systems that are hinged on a systems approach and a multi-sectoral approach (see UNICEF, 2012, pp. 49-66), which are replicated by the NSPPF. The NSPPF takes a human rights approach and that also reflects the UNICEF global framework (see UNICEF, 2012, p. 18). UNICEF's life cycle approach is similarly emulated by the NSPPF and is tied to the multi-sectoral approach as seen above.

The policy was eventually approved by the Cabinet in November 2016 and launched in December 2016. What arises is that the process was at the mercy of external agency funding and that is the reason why the development of the policy stopped multiple times when an interested external agency ran out of funds or interest. The process would be stuck for some time and resume when another interested external agency emerged. The Government would not commit funds to the process and it is not surprising that the external agencies drove the process by virtue of being the funders. Consequently, the Government would not control what it did not fund and only played a 'facilitatory' role. Overall, the process was never smooth within the government itself, between the Government and the external agencies, as well as between the external agencies themselves, as interests took centre stage.

### 5.5.1 Inter-ministry power struggles

The trajectory for the national social protection policy in Zimbabwe was quite complex and uncertain as different ministries working on social protection became more concerned with their line ministries' perspectives and not necessarily the broad national scope of social protection. The process started with a 2009 scoping exercise that brought all stakeholders together to find a common way of developing the policy. What emerged is that ministries became attached to specific pillars that they felt were specific to their ministries.

> It was then agreed that we needed to build the different pillars individually and then we bring the pillars together. At the end of the day, everybody then realized that there wasn't any interaction at all amongst the different pillars. Then people thought ok let us take a step back a bit and allow the different pillars to review the programmes that they have, the systems that they have and prepare a platform for us as social protection fraternity to then come together at some point and come up with one policy framework that could guide our interventions. It took us some bit of time to throw in ideas because everybody would want to see their sector somehow reflected but it gave us some good footing towards strengthening our collaboration across the different pillars (*GoZ2*).

The inter-ministry power struggles emerged from the beginning of the process of developing the policy. Related to the above, a former government official also noted,

> The social protection policy took long to come into being due to leadership issues over which ministry should coordinate and drive the process. The MPSLSW is seen as a ministry for social assistance and other ministries felt it was not the best to lead social insurance and labour market issues. There are about 5 ministries that are involved in labour market issues and various government and private agencies on social insurance. So it became a tug of war over who should lead what (*GoZ8*).

The above sentiments affirm the view that policy making is a political process that involves negotiating and compromising as interests are at stake. The above noted differences emerged in spite of the fact that the MPSLSW is the overall ministry that is also in charge of labour issues by definition and mandate. Below is the proposed institutional framework.

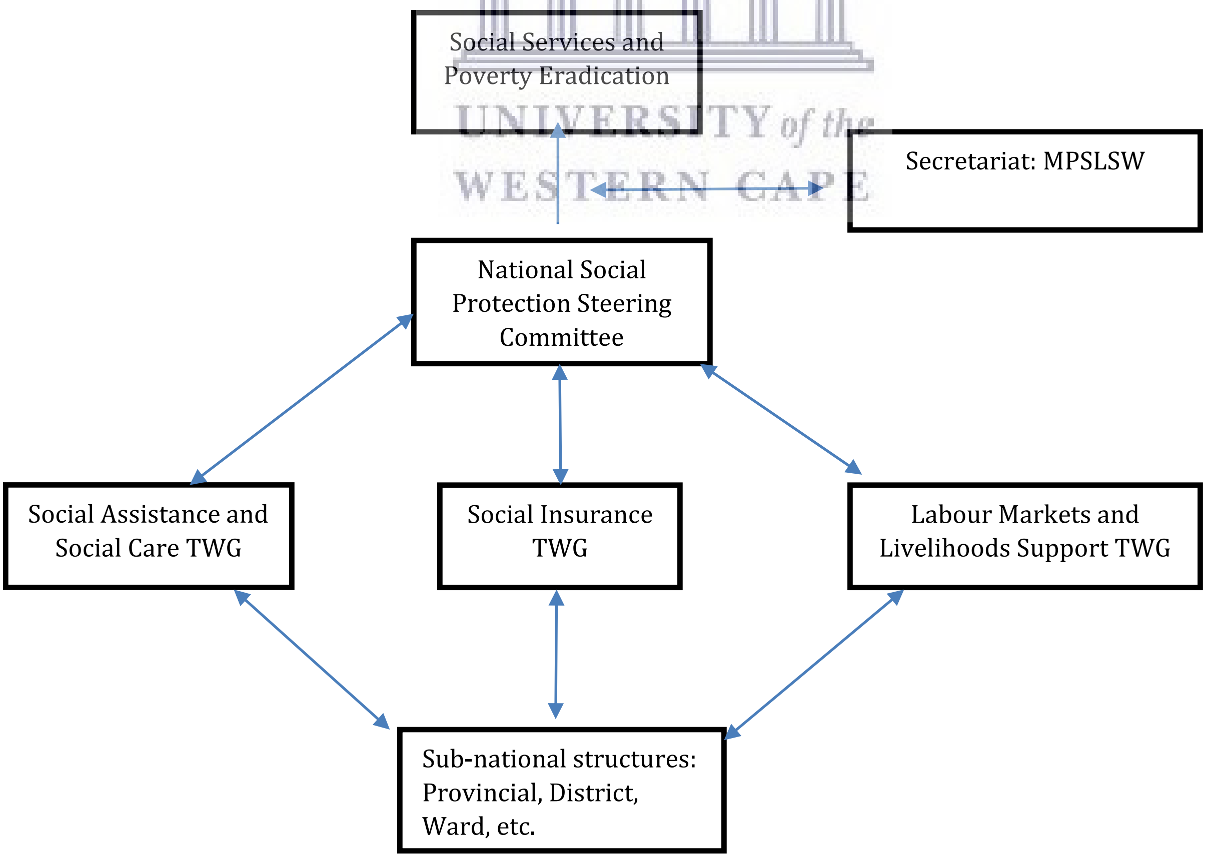
The following ministries are involved in social protection in Zimbabwe:

- Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare;
- Primary and Secondary Education;

- Health and Child Care;
- Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development;
- Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment;
- Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development;
- Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development;
- Local Government, Public Works and National Housing;
- Finance and Economic Development;
- Economic Planning and Investment Promotion; and
- Environment and Natural Resources (GoZ, 2016a)

The above ministries, together with some parastatals, bilaterals, multilaterals and international financial institutions (IFIs), constitute the National Social Protection Steering Committee with the MPSLSW serving as the secretariat. The key pillars of the social protection system define the technical working groups (TWGs) and each TWG comprises various ministries and organisations that work within that specific context (GoZ, 2016a). The framework is illustrated below.

**Figure 11 Social Protection Institutional Framework**




Adopted from the NSPPF

Feedback mechanisms are reciprocal from sub-national structures, TWGs and the steering committee and that reflects an interactive relationship among those structures. The steering committee that reports to the Social Services and Poverty Eradication Cluster, which is an arm for the national development blueprint ZimAsset. MPSLSW plays an oversight role. It was not easy to bring together all the government ministries who run social protection programmes. There was even talk to have a neutral ministry (Finance, Economic Planning or Office of the President and Cabinet) with power to convene all stakeholders (*GoZ8*). For instance, there was a turf war between the MPSLSW and Ministry of Economic Planning over who should lead the process. Economic Planning wanted to lead the process on the basis of it being in charge of the macro-economic fundamentals of poverty reduction yet social welfare issues are in the custody of the MPSLSW (*DP3*). Even when the SDGs came, they were shifted to the Ministry of Economic Planning, despite the fact that the MPSLSW were in charge of the MDGs and were at the forefront of the preliminary preparations for the SDGs (*DP3*).

The inter-ministry tension and the fear that MPSLSW may take back the SDGs resulted in a strange sector ministry allocation.

> …access to basic social services is placed under Ministry of Agriculture. Most of the social protection targets have been allocated to Ministry of Agriculture, which is madness. So we have raised a red flag that this will definitely not work. But in terms of leadership of social protection, it is quite clear that it is the mandate for MPSLSW. We are pushing for a harmonisation agenda for social protection programmes in the MPSLSW because the numerous programmes are a drain administratively (*DP3*).

The World Bank reiterated the same concerns to Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance is also pushing for all the programmes to be harmonised in the MPSLSW as they admit that a litany of loose programmes is costly and burdensome administratively (*DP3*). The Ministry of Finance is receiving technical support from the European Union (EU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a management information system for development partner coordination and the ministry has since benefited from a learning trip in Swaziland (*GoZ7*). The MPSLSW has been the target ministry for adoption of the social protection agenda and UNICEF together with other external agencies have invested a lot in capacity building and technical assistance. It is therefore by design that UNICEF and other external agencies prefer working with MPSLSW, as they do not anticipate any major resistance, hence the push for a harmonisation agenda within MPSLSW.

The inter-ministry power struggles can be understood in the context of a tussle for both control and external agency funds. Social protection was a 'new' and 'external' concept thrown to them by external agencies and they were still trying to comprehend it. All the concerned ministries wanted to be at the forefront of the new phenomenon that de Haan (2011) calls "the fastest growing sectors in the aid industry" in the new millennium (p. 2). They were quite aware of the incentives that external agency agendas bring along. Anderson and Therkildsen (2007) note that there are

> obvious personal interests in working in donor supported project and programme management units and on earmarked donor funded activities in general because of the higher salaries and fringe benefits that are often provided in these arrangements (p. 16).

Consequently, other ministries were fully aware that the MPSLSW, by its welfare nature and national mandate, has traditionally 'benefited' through aid for welfare programmes. They would therefore resist to be convened by the MPSLSW as well as the agenda to harmonize social protection interventions within the MPSLSW. In contrast, the MPSLSW had a better understanding of social protection than the rest of other ministries. Consequently, the social assistance pillar quickly got furnished with the required information ahead of other pillars that took longer (*GoZ2*). That reflected that the MPSLSW's understanding of social protection was essentially in terms of social assistance. It is interesting to note that there was deliberate connection between the deliberations for the NSPPF and NAP for OVC yet it has been the overall framework for implementing social protection for years.

### 5.5.2 Inter-external agency politics

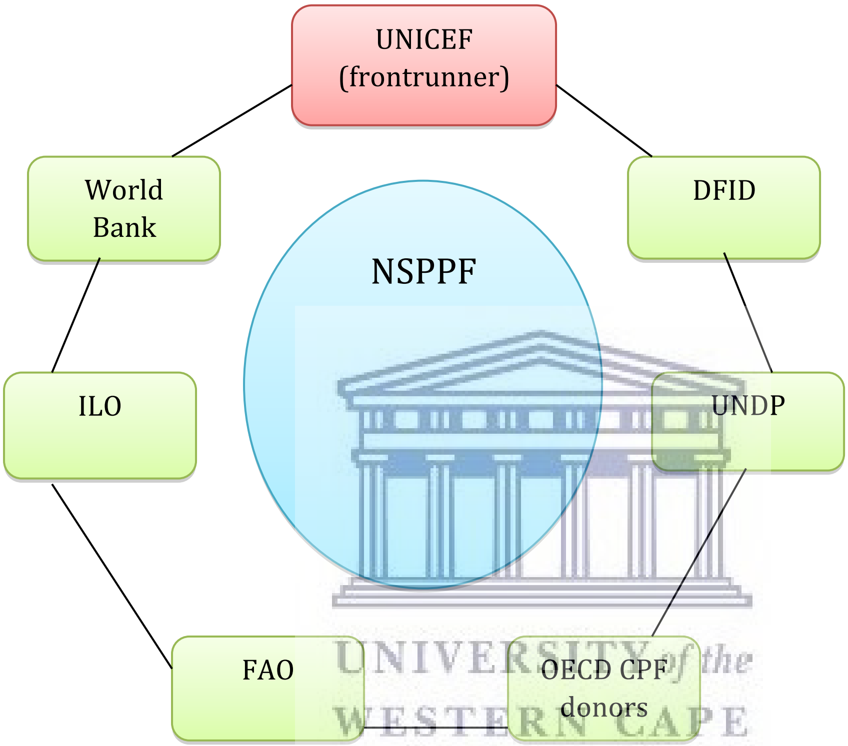
Inter-external agency politics also affected the process as UNICEF (frontrunner) tried both to safeguard its interests as well as to find the best way to incorporate other external agencies' interests. Quite a number of bilateral and multilateral agencies were involved, in one way or the other.

> Talks for a social protection policy started in 2009 with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP disappeared from the agenda and we got stuck for a while. Later on UNICEF came on board but

disappeared again. When UNICEF later on reappeared, they have never stopped and have been at the forefront until today (*GoZ1*).

The fact that the government got stuck upon 'disappearance' of development partners shows that the process was heavily dependent on the 'blessings' of the external agencies and could reflect lack of full commitment from the government (see figure 12).

**Figure 12 Funding agencies for the development of the NSPPF**






Author's creation based on the NSPPF

One common thing is that it seems all external agencies are very comfortable with the role played by UNICEF of managing the Child Protection Fund (CPF) and providing technical assistance to the government. However, that does not absolve the external agencies of any conflict as they too had differences between each other. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) wanted to fast track the policy process, an approach declined by UNICEF.

I actually remember arguing with colleagues in ILO who were pushing the process to be very fast but we said no we want a national dialogue based process where we try as much as possible to ensure that we have involved a wider spectrum of people. At each stage you could get people who would say

> they were never involved and we would take time to get their input and assure them that it was never too late. So the process itself was quite long (*DP3*).

Figure 12 shows that the policy was fully funded by external agencies. The policy process even generated a bit of tension between UNICEF and other development agencies. For instance, the World Bank was very keen to push for a conditional cash transfer approach, which UNICEF does not believe in.

> We did not agree with the World Bank on the conceptual pitch, we know the Bank always have ideas that they want to force down people's throats. We were quite strategic, when we started to push government for this, we quickly put in resources and brought everyone to the table. I think we played the politics right. We actually requested the World Bank to second a consultant to the team developing the policy just to manage the political dynamics but it was clear that they were not the drivers of the process. We made sure that the government was in the driving seat as well and we provided a lot of backstopping to the government to ensure that they were the ones in charge and we did not get swayed into the World Bank thinking of social protection. The World Bank's thinking on cash transfers has always been conditional. However, they are now beginning to appreciate the value of unconditional cash transfers. Recently they did an analysis in Zambia and their report shows unconditional cash transfers are increasing recipient household consumption by 56% above the transfer value. Hearing this from the Bank, I said to myself 'Well, the Bank is seeing light at last' (*DP3*).

The above narrative portrays development partners as political players with vested interests in the social protection agenda. They are all driven by the motive to fight poverty but disagree on the best approach to achieve it. Thus, each one of them would 'fight' to impose its approach. By resisting the World Bank's influence, UNICEF was trying to protect its rights-based child-sensitive approach to social protection that would be sustained by unconditional cash transfers. In 2010, UNICEF partnered MoLSS to commission an institutional capacity assessment of the Department of Social Services to execute its national mandate of childcare and protection (Wyatt et al., 2010; Schubert, 2010). UNICEF used its 'neutral' position to take charge of the policy process and the claim that the Government drove the process is mere tokenism. The policy space was essentially a 'battlefield' for UNICEF and the World Bank as they both tried to impose their ideas on how best to programme social protection to reduce poverty in Zimbabwe. The absence of the government from the funders says a lot about who controlled the process. Indeed, 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'.

### 5.5.3 Government-external agency policy contestation

It is fundamental to note that Zimbabwe runs a litany of fragmented social protection interventions from both the government and development partners. Mupedziswa (2018) notes that social protection programmes in Zimbabwe are impressive on paper as they only reach a very small fraction of the vulnerable due to "limited resources and lack of capacity, poor targeting and the limited coverage of the schemes" (p. 44). Masuka et al. (2012) reiterate that social protection in Zimbabwe is adversely affected by retarded human and financial capacity attributable to political and economic constraints prevailing in the country.

> Zimbabwe supports a highly varied, diffuse mix of social safety nets interventions, while many African countries today are backing the emergence of single flagship interventions, such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme in Ghana, the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia (PSNP), and the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF). Despite a sustained economic crisis and recurrent emergencies, Zimbabwe has retained many of the same social safety nets interventions for over 20 years. Most programs have not been scaled up to respond to recent crises, which is a key shortcoming in the sector (GoZ and World Bank, 2016, p. viii).



The rationale behind holding on to old programmes that may be out of touch with realities of the time could be that the government is quite aware of the political capital they invested in such programmes. Dismantling such programmes for one flagship social protection programme could be politically risky. This conforms to Hickey's (2007) observation that social protection plays to elections, party politics and politics of patronage and that political elites determine the terms of policy and political debates, who benefits and size of a social protection initiative. ZANU-PF is a party that has been in power since 1980 and thrives on such programmes to sustain its hold to power. Thus the old programmes still guarantee the politicians the votes that they need most, contributing to the reluctance for policy reform. The flagship programmes referred above are donor driven (except PSNP in Ethiopia to some extent) programmes where the various governments conceded and 'abandoned' their traditional programmes. The Government of Zimbabwe is 'resistant' to external agency influence and allows external agencies to create and fund programmes of their choice that it is not committed to adopt.

> There are too many pieces of social protection against little resources. The challenge for Zimbabwe is that there is no rethink of policy and strategy to suit the current context of economic recession. Since 2000, there is no policy reform and it is a business as usual approach. There is no consolidation of the little resources for improved impact (*GoZ8*).

They may be old programmes but their strength is that they are institutionalized within the government system. In contrast, external agency funded programmes are institutionally fragile. External agencies create parallel programmes instead of supporting the Government to improve the current national programmes. Due to the prolonged economic crisis, Zimbabwe has been incapacitated both in terms of financial and human resources. Overall, social protection initiatives like BEAM are not adequately resourced due to the economic crisis and governance issues. Similarly, Mupedziswa (2018) underscores the importance of political stability and solid governance in developing and implementing social protection interventions. The external agency supported parallel programmes incur high administrative costs (GoZ and World Bank, 2016).



### 5.5.4 The tokenism of participation

The process of developing the NSPPF started in August 2014 and the first submission of the draft to the cabinet was in November 2015. In July 2014, there was a high level workshop for ministers (*GoZ2*). UNICEF engaged consultants in 2014 to start working on the policy document, first consultative meetings started that same year and the process gathered a lot of momentum in 2015 (*DP3*). External agencies funded the process including expenditure for the policy consultancy. However, not all actors matter in the policy space and not all voices are incorporated into the policy. Manipulation, decoration and tokenism are non-participation and are the three bottom rungs of Hart's ladder of participation (Hart, 1992).

From the beginning, the process of developing the policy was predominantly a preserve for actors at national level. UNICEF provided the technical support and a series of workshops and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) were signed between the government and the development partners to push the process (*DP3*). A national steering committee comprising the government and development partners was set up to discuss and lead the process at technical level.

> The national steering committee was multisectoral. It included line ministries whom we thought could be champions in the various pillars of social protection. The Ministry of Finance, the Office of the President and Cabinet, development partners and UN agencies were part of the steering committee. We also roped in representatives of special groups primarily organisations for persons with disabilities, older persons, private sector, and Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) of the University of Zimbabwe. That steering committee allowed us to coordinate the process and consultations for various pillars. We had one international and three local consultants (2 based in South Africa and 1 based in Zimbabwe) who played a facilitatory role. The steering committee's role was primarily to coordinate these activities, supervise the consultants and help in engaging various stakeholders throughout the consultation process. Overall, after that process, our role as convenors for social protection was cemented (*GoZ2*).

A working party of secretaries which was a committee of permanent secretaries chaired by the permanent secretary of MPSLSW, provided oversight for the process. A cabinet committee of ministers also chaired by the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare was the highest structure set to oversee the development of the policy. Final approval of the policy document was the jurisdiction of the Cabinet.

There is wide acknowledgement from both government and development partners that the policy process was very consultative.

> The process was highly participatory and highly consultative. We had consultative meetings, validation meetings, high level meetings involving the permanent secretaries and the ministers. All those teams met and considerably looked at the draft policy that we had developed and went further to refine it. This made our life much easier when the policy was going through the approval process because all the ministers who are in the Social Services and Poverty Eradication Cluster of the ZimAsset had sight and discussed the draft policy before (*GoZ2*).

At national level, it involved consulting the central government and the development partners. The Ministry of Finance and MPSLSW, bilateral and multilateral agencies were the key players at national level. These were deemed to be the key people dealing directly with policy. According to *GoZ2*, provincial and district consultative workshops were also held to get views of stakeholders involved at those levels. Validation workshops were then held at both provincial and national levels to ensure that the policy draft encompassed views from all the stakeholders. Impact Research, a research consultancy firm operational in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, led the consultation.

The involvement of the parliament in the development of the NSPPF could not be ascertained. The parliament is a national and formal institution that bears *visible* power (see figure 3 in chapter 2) and is principally supposed to play an important role in ensuring that 'the policy process is democratic, accountable and serves the rights of the people' as asserted by Gaventa (2005). The lack of active involvement of the parliament in the development of the NSPPF undermined an institution whose political capacity would have helped pushed the agenda to the executive arm of the government. It is not surprising that attempts by external agencies to influence the parliament to vote for more budget commitment for social protection have not born much success.



> We actually had a breakfast meeting with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Poverty Eradication which is social protection essentially to actually give them the evidence and push for the budget process that they need as parliamentarians to make sure that social protection is adequately reflected in the budget and it's adequately resourced without it losing the whole human dividend that they can get (*DP3*).

A more political engagement with the parliamentarians from the beginning potentially produces a better political buy-in for social protection than merely 'giving them evidence'. It was surprising to note that the chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Poverty Reduction was not aware of the NSPPF and not sure if the committee had contributed to the NSPPF (*GoZ10*). Indeed, the parliament is never mentioned in the NSPPF (see GoZ, 2016a). The role of the parliament is further strategically important as it 'shepherds' the national constitution, another important tool within the *visible* power arena. Despite rhetorically obliging the state to provide social services and social care to the needy, the constitution remains a useful tool for lobbying and advocating more social spending from the government.

Participation of the communities, the intended target of the policy, is seemingly sceptical from the beginning to the end of the 'consultative' process. "The process was highly consultative but what I do not see is community participation. This process was spearheaded by Impact Research, perhaps they can tell you more" (*GoZ8*). However, participation of the communities could not be ascertained especially that social welfare officials at district level were not aware of the policy development process. In fact, it appeared they were hearing it for the first time from this researcher. "I am not aware of any social protection policy development taking place. If you get a copy, I would be more than grateful if you share with me" (*GoZ6*). All the four district officials were not aware of the policy. What they are familiar with are the old guiding manuals they use in the implementation of the various social protection instruments like the HSCT, BEAM and the Drought Mitigation Programme. The fact that government officials at district level were not aware of the policy makes participation rhetorical. Indeed, what is of paramount importance to the communities is receiving assistance to meet their daily needs. They are not concerned about the processes leading to the programmes that they find themselves in. When the communities are not actively involved in the policy processes they are 'pacified' into accepting the status quo and are reduced to 'welfare recipients'. This conforms to the role of *invisible* power (see figure 3 in chapter 2).



The researcher could not ascertain the participation of NGOs in the consultation process for the NSPPF. All the research participants from the NGOs expressed ignorance of the process and some were not even aware of the policy. Although, the policy acknowledges involvement of the National Association for Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), the umbrella body, the depth of the involvement is not clear. Most of the international NGOs, like the bilaterals and multilaterals, are domiciled in the capital city of Harare where most of the national consultative activities took place. Their absence from the day of the launch could probably indicate that they were not involved in the process. NGOs are also important providers of social protection in Zimbabwe.

In terms of lack of active civil society in social protection, Zimbabwe is like the rest of other African countries, except South Africa. There is no active civil society participation in social protection in Zimbabwe. Civil society in Zimbabwe are more into welfare provision than lobbying and advocacy. The external agencies in Zimbabwe are also not keen to support civil society activism in social protection as noted by one of the officials. “The Government of Zimbabwe does not listen to civil society and it would be meaningless for us to fund civil society organisations (CSOs) to lobby for social protection” (*DP1*). However, there have been attempts to register a CSO in the name of Platform for Social Protection (Zimbabwe chapter) but they have not been successful due to the alleged restrictiveness of the Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) Act (*CSO3*). Consequently, there was lack of meaningful involvement of civil society in the *invited* space and no civil society *claimed* the space to lobby for social protection and that reflects a restrictive political environment.

The three bilateral agencies, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), together with UNICEF at the forefront were the key players in lobbying the government and advocating social protection policy. One of the donor officials noted “there is pressure from the SDC and DFID to cabinet to pass the National Social Protection Policy Framework” (*DP4*). There are challenges of ownership of the policy if the pressure to pass the policy came from the external agencies. The ‘carrot and stick’ approach applied by the external agencies worked well but it remains to be seen if all stakeholders commit themselves to the policy framework. Another donor official noted, “the National Social Protection Policy Framework was not written by the government but by consultants funded by UNICEF. Now the government owns it and claims credit” (*DP2*). This assertion is an admission of who drove the policy and displays that while external agencies claim that the Government drove the process, credit still belongs to them not the Government. If consultants wrote the policy, it may not be obvious that the contents are a true reflection of the priorities of the government and it does not follow that the government is bound by the policy document. This spells uncertainty over financial commitment and political will for the implementation of the policy.

> On the government side, there are two levels. The technical level has a clear appreciation of social protection and the appetite to sort of push the social protection agenda is quite there. But when you go a gear up to the political and policy level, it's not very much there and can only be there when it can be converted to votes. There is a lot of lip servicing and the approach is very rudimentary and driven by a political end rather than a social end. The unfortunate thing at both political and technical layers of the government is that their understanding of social protection is on the humanitarian side not from a developmental angle (*DP3*).

The above sentiments reflect that the external agencies' success in pushing the agenda in Zimbabwe is limited to technical not political levels of the government. While external agencies may be driven by social motives to fight poverty, politicians are driven more by what keeps them in power than anything else. Therefore, the high level of the government, which is very political, remains sceptical and suspicious as noted at the Victoria Falls conference organised for the Cabinet by UNICEF in 2015.

> You fly ministers all the way to Victoria Falls to be with them for two hours. The first day was actually to drill them on social protection. The second day was essentially window dressing day with the Vice President and so forth. But you could still tell that we are not talking the same language. For instance, Nyasha Chikwinya[15] remarked "This social protection you talk about…you want to give money to the apostolic sect so that they marry more wives and bear more children". When you hear this from a minister, you realise we are still a long way to take the agenda up there (*DP3*).

*DP3* seemed not to realise that the ZANU PF Government does not subscribe to 'free' cash transfers and their attendance at the conference was merely a political gesture to maintain 'good' relations with external agencies. The difference between Government and the external agencies on social protection is ideological. Such conferences are measured as participation when they are essentially expected to rubberstamp the external agency agenda. The delay in the approval of the policy by the cabinet needs to be understood from an ideological standpoint. UNICEF had a full draft of the

[15] Then Minister of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development

policy around September 2015 that it submitted to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare for her to submit it to the Cabinet for approval.

> At one point we were told the draft policy had gone to the Cabinet when it did not. When the process started, she[16] was very enthusiastic and, in my view, I could tell that she was taking the policy for her performance appraisal. At one point she called me to ask the whereabouts of the policy and I told her we submitted to her team. I had to make sure that her team gave her another copy. However, when political expediency took over, it disappeared from the radar until a new principal director who, sort of, understood the vision came on board and started pushing. (*DP3*).

It is fascinating to note that *DP3* complained about the delay in approval of a draft policy submitted to the Government by UNICEF. The impression one gets is that the Government was expected to approve a UNICEF policy, not a national policy. A national policy is not driven by external agencies but by the Government itself. When a minister asks for a copy of the policy from an external agency official, it says a lot about the policy making process. It shows the power of external agencies to push their agendas. It is clear that the policy was driven by external agencies. The combination of UNICEF and other external agencies was powerful to ensure that the policy was approved. It is pertinent to note that *DP3* was a Government employee before joining the community of external agencies. *DP3* has been at the frontline of pushing for both the HSCT and the development of NSPPF and this confirms why external agencies are keen on recruiting from the Government as noted below.

One of the major strategies used by the external agencies is to recruit from the government. External agencies remunerate better than the governments in Zambia and Zimbabwe (and across the continent in general) and that easily attracts government technocrats to cross over. Some of the officials in the external agencies who are at the forefront of moving the social protection agenda are former government technocrats particularly in MCDSS (Zambia) and MPSLSW (Zimbabwe). This adds an interesting dimension to the debate on the role of external agencies in the evolution of social protection. As former government technocrats, they are masters of how government systems function and therefore are strategic in influencing the adoption of social protection. The government personnel see them as 'colleagues' not 'strangers' and

[16] Prisca Mupfumira, the then Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

therefore 'willing' to 'listen' to them. The external agencies therefore piggyback on such individuals to move the social protection agenda. That is a role that the expatriate staff would struggle to achieve.

### 5.5.5 External financing and the rhetoric of government ownership

> Ownership implies that the recipient government's political objectives dominate the development agenda, and that transparent local political decisions are made based on broad involvement and participation of local stakeholders. This requires that government, parliament and other political institutions make decisions about policy and resource allocation serviced and advised by the civil service without distorting donor interference (Anderson and Therkildsen, 2007, p. 9).

The social protection policy process in Zimbabwe fell short of the above description of the concept of ownership. World Bank, the International Labour Organizations (ILO), the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and all members of the OECD CPF donor group (GoZ, 2016a) supported the process of developing the NSPPF. Along the process, there were issues of funding. For instance, the World Bank funded the first draft and when their funding ended, UNICEF came on board and funded the process until the cabinet approved the policy (*GoZ3*).

> Why donors are not funding Government directly is a political issue. The relations with the West are frozen and the money is coming from the West. So donors are more comfortable supporting government programmes but not giving government the money to a point where even when we have the money we have restrictions in as far as what money can be channelled through government systems (*DP3*).

While the NSPPF was passed, it is difficult to discern how both the government and the implementation partners intend to implement the policy without costing and an implementation plan. It remains to be seen how they would move forward without an outline of the costs, activities and specific ministries responsible. The implementation plan was developed separately but submitted together with the policy to the Cabinet for approval. "We submitted the policy framework together with the implementation matrix so that they are handed over to the cabinet for approval" (*DP3*). However, the policy was approved and launched without an implementation plan. The absence of costing makes sceptical if there is any commitment and political will from the government and development partners to fund implementation. In the introduction of the policy, the following statement casts doubt over the commitment to fund the implementation.

> It must be pointed out that because this is not a Strategic Plan nor is it a Programme document, there is no implementation plan included as part of this document. There was consensus among workshop delegates that a Policy Framework of this nature should be a guiding document for a very long time in the development of programmes and interventions designed to address both goals and objectives and, as such, could not be limited to a specific time frame (GoZ, 2016, p. 19).

There is a rhetorical attempt to commit the government to be the main funder of the policy and a deliberate reference to Section 30 of the Constitution that obliges the State to fund social protection within permissible resources. "…the state must take all practical measures within the limits of the resources available to it, to provide social security and social care to those who are in need" (GoZ, 2013a, p. 23). There is also another rhetoric to align the NSPPF to the Social Services and Poverty Eradication Cluster of the ZimAsset[17] (see GoZ, 2013b).

> Thus, the government commits itself to be the central funder of social protection and undertakes to mobilise new and additional resources to fund social protection. To this end, social protection will be funded mainly from government revenue augmented by funding from private sector, civil society organisations and development partners (GoZ, 2016a, p. 48).

Without costing and an implementation plan, the policy is reduced to a wish list of objectives, target group(s), policy options and expected outcomes. At the conclusion of data collection for this study, this researcher was informed that a draft of the implementation matrix was submitted to the government by UNICEF and the government was still to share the revised version (*DP3*). If UNICEF spearheaded the development of the implementation matrix, it then shows there is no guaranteed

[17] Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation, a national development plan for 2013-2018

commitment and ownership from the Government. External agencies, not the Government, funded the development of the policy. Brinkerhoff (1996) notes,

> New policies often reconfigure roles, structures, and incentives, thus changing the array of costs and benefits to implementers, direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders…As a result of these problematic features of policy implementation, no amount of donor pressure or resources, by themselves, can produce sustained reform. It takes ownership, both of the policy change to be implemented and of any capacity-building efforts intended to enhance implementation (p. 1396).

It is difficult for the government to own a policy and fund its implementation when the policy was not its initiative. With the economy struggling and resources limited, the government may be having 'better priorities' than social protection. Although the development partners claimed that the government led the process, there were a lot more efforts from development partners than the government. While the development partners have played an enormous role to develop the policy and the implementation matrix, their commitment to fund implementation is not certain, given their massive downscaling of their funding for the current phase of the Child Protection Fund (2016-2019). Overall, both the government and the development partners are hesitant to make a commitment to fund the policy. At the time of data collection, the NSPPF had just been launched and nothing was yet tangible in terms of implementation of the policy. External agency funding through UNICEF, instead of direct budget support to the government as in Zambia, has come at a cost of less external agency policy influence in Zimbabwe as shown by not so much interest from the government to robustly adopt the policy. Setting parallel structures outside the government allows the external agencies to control how their money is spent, on one hand, but also augments the government's intransigence towards the social protection agenda, on the other hand.

## 5.6 Key persons in the social protection agenda

Like Zambia, there are individuals who were instrumental in the adoption of social protection by the Government of Zambia. The role of these individuals are a pointer to the fact that the social protection policy process is better understood as a political agenda than technically as a mechanism to fight poverty. For theoretical motivation for this methodological approach, see the previous chapter (4.5). For Zimbabwe, I identified two individuals; one hired by external agencies to design and evaluate the HSCT and the other one from the Government, that is, the MPSLSW.

### 5.7.1 Bernd Schubert

Bernd is a German national and a prominent social protection consultant in the region of Southern Africa. He started with the design of GAPVU, a key urban safety net programme in Mozambique in the 1990s before establishing himself in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. He leads a consultancy firm called 'Team Consult'. In Zambia, most probably due to the 'German connection,' Bernd was hired by the German bilateral agency, GTZ, to 'single-handedly design, launch, evaluate and promote the Kalomo cash transfer pilot' (*SPE*). His evaluation of Kalomo pilot reflected the positives of cash transfers (see Schubert 2005). However, the evaluation is often criticized for lacking a control group (*GRZ1*) resulting in overstated and too simplistic claims about impacts (Adesina, 2011). Nevertheless, Schubert's evaluation of the Kalomo pilot was very significant in that it cultivated the desire to do more pilots in Zambia and further evaluations, as well as attracting the attention of other countries in the region to adopt social cash transfers. Schubert's role in Zambia reflects how international policy consultants participate in facilitating an external agency-driven social protection agenda. The GTZ strategically hired him as an expert and the Government of Zambia treat him as such. It is pertinent to understand Schubert's role in the sense that he was simply fulfilling the expectations of the donor (GTZ), that is, trying as much as possible to influence the adoption of cash transfers by the Government of Zambia.

His role in designing the Kalomo pilot in Zambia earned him a similar job in Zimbabwe. UNICEF hired Bernd to do a design and initial evaluation of the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer (see Schubert, 2011, Schubert and Chirchir, 2012). His recruitment to design and evaluate the programme was based on his 'policy entrepreneurship' across the region. Schubert also did a scoping study for UNICEF on 'child sensitive social protection' (Schubert, 2010) that was used by UNICEF to influence the design of the HSCT programme. Schubert's roles in Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe reflect how international policy consultants participate in facilitating an external agency-driven social protection agenda. The external agencies strategically hire them as experts and the recipient governments treat them as such. The recipient governments may not be able to influence the process because the consultant is hired and paid by the external agencies. It is pertinent to understand Schubert's role in the sense that he was simply fulfilling the expectations of the external agencies, that is, trying as much as possible to emphasize the value of cash transfers in reducing poverty.

### 5.6.2 Sydney Mhishi

The late Mhishi served for many years in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in Zimbabwe. He was very instrumental in the social protection discourse in Zimbabwe, first as the Director of Social Services, and secondly as the Acting Principal Director for the ministry. He became the face of social protection at the ministry as he essentially facilitated the adoption of the HSCT by the Government of Zimbabwe as well as the development of the National Social Protection Policy before he passed on in 2015 (*GoZ3*). He wanted the HSCT to start as a full-scale programme instead of pilots but the external agencies were hesitant to take that route (ibid.). He was a strategic figure as he mastered the concept of social protection and the art of dealing with external agencies and other government ministries. "During the time of Mhishi, there was a lot of progress and he would get things moving. Now there is a gap" (*DP1*). Thus, the external agencies and other development partners were comfortable working with him and were sure that he understood them well and would articulate their position to his ministry and the government as a whole.

> He was the overall director managing the HSCT and when there would be researches related to the programme he would be the Principal Investigator. In terms of development of the NSPPF, he was again the documented responsible person in terms of spearheading its formulation and initiating its implementation, which he did not live long to see (*GoZ1*).

Mhishi's role is in conformity to Brinkerhoff's observation (1996),

> Unless someone or some group in the country where policy reform is being pursued feels that the changes are something that they need to see happen, externally initiated change efforts whether at the local or national level are likely to fail. Without policy 'champions' who are willing and able to serve as leaders for change, reform is not possible (p. 1396).

However, other government officials thought he was too close to donors and that derailed his promotion and appointment to higher and more influential posts like permanent secretary (*GoZ2*). This reflects that the technical level of the government generally embraced the HSCT while there was little commitment at political level. Thus, submitting to an external agency agenda would potentially make one 'unpopular' with political authority.

## 5.7 Conclusion

External actors heavily influenced the social protection policy process in Zimbabwe. The Enhanced Social Protection Programme (ESPP), though influenced by the World Bank, is crucial in the evolution of social protection in Zimbabwe. It marked the beginning of the social protection agenda and demonstrated that government owned and funded interventions are sustainable compared to interventions outside the government system. The rise of the social protection agenda in Zimbabwe was an ideological battle at three fronts.

Firstly, it was between UNICEF and the World Bank. For instance, UNICEF and other external agencies would not take over the ESPP co-developed by the World Bank and the GoZ. Rather, they dominated and influenced the design and rollout of NAP for OVC through the power of finance. Furthermore, UNICEF contested the World Bank's push for conditional cash transfers in favour of unconditional cash transfers, which it preferred. Given UNICEF's control over the donor pulled CPF, it was strategically positioned to ensure that its preference prevailed over that of the World Bank. Secondly, the ideological fight was between the Government of Zimbabwe and the external agencies (UNICEF, World Bank and others) as the ZANU PF Government is ideologically rooted in agricultural input support to the people to support their productive capacities, not giving them cash. UNICEF was central to the development of the NSPPF and took it as an opportunity to push for 'child sensitive social protection' in line with its international mandate. The fact that external agencies did not fund the Government of Zimbabwe directly compromised the role of the Government. UNICEF and the other external agencies were therefore in charge of the process as they provided the funds. The fact that the Government did not fund the process provided more space for UNICEF and the other external agencies to drive the process. UNICEF handpicked and hired consultants that it knew would push its approach to social protection rather than agricultural inputs (government's preference) or conditional cash transfers (World Bank's preference). Participation and consultation in that regard could be understood in terms of rubberstamping policy contents from the consultants. Whilst there was some degree of participation at national level, the districts and communities were peripheral to the process. Since the policy was driven by external agencies, the commitment of the Government to fund its implementation is not guaranteed.

The concession to approve and launch the policy was a gesture from the Government to keep the external agencies on board. External agency commitment to the policy is also not guaranteed especially since DFID, the biggest donor for cash transfers is downscaling its support. Given the ideological standoff, the Government allows external agencies to fund cash transfers but is not obliged to do likewise. The external agencies can decide to quit or threaten to quit the HSCT but still the Government has its own priorities. Thirdly, it was a contestation within the government itself as different ministries that run social protection programmes (including the traditional leading MPSLSW) 'battled' for control of the process and prevalence of their individual policy positions while the Ministry of Finance was not convinced to fund 'free cash' transfers. Ministries conflicted over which ministry was best placed to coordinate the process as they thought MPSLSW was a 'weak' convenor.

Overall, the future of social protection in Zimbabwe as desired by external agencies is dependent on external agencies' 'goodwill'. Without further commitment from external agencies to fund 'their' social protection and given the ideological differences with the Government of Zimbabwe, the donor driven HSCT and NSPPF sit on a precarious footing both financially and institutionally.

# Chapter 6 Social Cash Transfers in Zambia and Zimbabwe

## 6.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of the two-flagship cash transfer programmes, that is, the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programme in Zambia and the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer (HSCT) programme in Zimbabwe. The chapter looks at the level of adoption for the two countries and the progress to date in terms of upscaling of cash transfers, given the fact that both were donor initiatives. This chapter also reflects the extent to which the external actors succeeded in influencing the adoption of cash transfers by the two governments. The two programmes are compared in terms of targeting, design and implementation, ownership, relationship with other social protection programmes, political context and financing. Generally, the two countries compare well in terms of how the 'flagship' social cash transfer programmes unfolded. It is pertinent to understand how the two programmes were designed, who designed them, why each was designed in a particular way, the motivation behind the design as well as implications for implementation. A discussion of the political contexts for the two countries is important to have a better picture of why the two Governments responded differently or similarly to social cash transfers. It helps to understand why the two countries relate differently or similarly with donors and why they have different or resembling policy preferences. Financing of cash transfers is quite contentious in sub-Saharan Africa and thus makes a fascinating comparative of the two cash transfer programmes in Zambia and Zimbabwe. The two governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe have different levels of commitment to funding of the cash transfers. For instance, the Government of Zambia, besides its resistance in the formative years of the social cash transfers, has by now generally taken the lead in financing the flagship SCT programme. This is contrary to the Zimbabwean case where the government buy-in to the HSCT programme is still uncertain, as the programme is almost 100% donor dependent. The chapter concludes by highlighting the implications of the two countries' experiences for the social cash transfers.

## 6.1 Comparing the SCT of Zambia and the HSCT of Zimbabwe

This section makes a comparison of the cash transfer programmes in terms of design, implementation and the political economy embedded in those processes.

### 6.1.1 Targeting the poorest of the poor

In both countries, Bernd Schubert (see chapter 5), an international consultant, was hired to design the SCT and HSCT. Targeting in Zambia was based on a 2003 National Household Survey conducted by PWAS that concluded that the destitute and incapacitated households constituted around 10% of all the households in the country (MCDSS and GTZ, 2004, p. 2). The 10% threshold was further validated and confirmed by a study on the incapacitated poor commissioned by the GTZ in 2004 (MCDSS and GTZ, 2004; MCDSS and GTZ, 2007). The SCT in Zambia used the PWAS structures and followed a community based targeting system that involved stakeholders from the village to district levels (MCDSS and GTZ, 2007). In Zimbabwe, a pilot 'census' in Goromonzi district and ward 5 revealed that 9% of all the households in ward 5 were labour constrained and food poor and comprised all categories of vulnerable people including children plus orphans, the elderly, chronically ill and the disabled (MoLSS and UNICEF, 2011) and that became the basis for targeting for the HSCT. Based on the 9% threshold, targeting for the HSCT was done by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat) whose officials went into the communities to do the enumeration (*GoZ3*).

Despite the empirical logic for targeting the "ultra-poor", it became a quota that excluded millions of poor people because poverty is much higher than the prescribed thresholds in both Zambia and Zimbabwe. Therefore, this approach to targeting is discredited for separating out "an especially deserving sub-set of the poor from amongst the larger proportion of poor people that are little differentiated from each other in terms of the material conditions of their lives". (Ellis, 2008, p. 10). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the communities in Rushinga district in Zimbabwe revealed that the enumeration process was exclusionary in three ways. First, ZimStat is associated with the national census and therefore some households (some poor and deserving) evaded the agency enumerators because they thought they were doing a national census, an exercise known for a long and strenuous questionnaire. Second, the district has a poor road network, thus the ZimStat enumerators would reach more households close to the roads than those off-road or linked by bad roads. Third, the ZimStat enumerators did not mention the impending cash transfer programme, hence the community mistook them for a routine exercise that they did not feel obliged to participate.

In Zimbabwe, the HSCT was designed as a component of the National Plan of Action for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC II) 2011-15 which sought to respond to the fact that "more than half of the population including 3.5 million children were living below the food poverty line" owing to the general economic decline (Schubert 2010a, p. 7). Team Consult led by Schubert were recruited to support Ministry of Labour and Social Services' (MoLSS) Department of Social Services to "design a national government owned and coordinated cash transfer programme which targeted food poor and labour constrained households" (Schubert 2010a, p. 8). On paper, Schubert and his team were recruited by the MoLSS but were paid by UNICEF, which allowed UNICEF to play an oversight role over the process. That had an implication on ownership of the process (see section 6.1.2).

There is acknowledgement that the cash received would not be adequate given the acute poverty and high prices of food in Zimbabwe. Schubert (2010a: 17) assumed that other supportive mechanisms already in place like Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), Assisted Medical Treatment Orders (AMTOs) and other non-cash assistance would complement the Harmonised Cash Transfer Programme whilst other cash transfers would be replaced (ibid.). However, such expectation would be difficult to fulfil in the context of financially constrained national programmes like BEAM and AMTO and NGOs running parallel projects.



As shall be seen in section 6.1.3, the setting up of both the SCT and HSCT were problematic in the sense that there were already government-run national programmes of a similar nature.

### 6.1.2 Ownership and participation

In both countries, MPSLSW (MoLSS when the HSCT started) (Zimbabwe) and MCDSS (Zambia) implement the cash transfer programmes with funding support from the donors. Despite being a partnership in that sense of implementation, government ownership is questionable (ownership is defined in section 5.5.5). Ownership is crucial because interests conflict (Killick et al., 1998). Anderson and Therkildsen (2007) and Killick et al. (1998) underscore the primacy of government objectives and interests as well as the broad participation of local stakeholders in programme or policy development and reform. The evolution of both SCT and HSCT does not fully reflect that there was local ownership and broad participation. Both programmes were initiated and funded by donors and established parallel to government run national programmes. MCDSS (Zambia) and MoLSS (Zimbabwe) were only implementation structures for the cash transfer programmes. In both cases, UNICEF and DFID spearheaded the setting up of the cash transfer units within the two ministries and worked closely with the unit staff (*GoZ8*, *SPE* and *CP3*). Donors funded the units in terms of resources and salaries. Essentially, the units are the core of the implementation of the cash transfer programmes as they are in charge of coordination and implementation (*GoZ8, GRZ9*). While UNICEF and other donors saw it as a move to strengthen coordination and build the capacity of those ministries to run cash transfers, the implications were problematic.

> …that unit was actually quite wealthy as compared to other units in that department. I think there were some jealous because they were also better paid and had land cruisers, computers, etc. So it did not help. It became more institutionalized in government, it created resentment between the well-funded donor unit and other government units. So the idea of establishing that unit in government was good but the way they did it did not create much government ownership of the programme. It was like donors were funding these people pretending they were supporting the government. (*SPE*).

While the above sentiments were said in reference to Zambia, the researcher also discovered that the same applied to Zimbabwe. In fact, in Zimbabwe, the unit was disbanded in 2014 (*GoZ8*) while the one in Zambia still exists. Anderson and Therkildsen (2007) note that "parallel administrative systems to handle the implementation of donor supported activities-such as donor controlled management units-undermine ownership" (p. 9). However, it is common in both countries for donors to claim that 'the government is in charge' (*CP3, CP4, CP5, DP2, DP3, DP4*) yet government officials assert that 'the pressure came from the donors' (*GRZ3, GRZ4, GoZ1, GoZ2, GoZ3, GoZ8*).

The Zambian case notably changed when the Patriotic Front (PF) came into power in 2011 and began to prioritise the SCT in terms of political will and budgetary commitment. There is now evident government ownership of the SCT, which is attributable to persistent donor influence and the PF's pro-poor political ideology. For Zimbabwe, ownership of the HSCT is still a huge challenge as the programme is overly dependent on donor funds. Gibson et al. (2005) invariably note that the source of the aid "usually retains a great deal of control over the distribution of these resources" (p. 12). The current status of the HSCT and the status of the SCT between 2003 and 2011 befit the observation below.

> Where social protection is assigned low political importance by the ruling coalition, transnational actors can become the main driving force in policy making. Transnational actors may be able to promote the expansion of social protection in a particular country in the face of opposition or, perhaps, ambivalence of ruling elites, particularly where the donors involved have a relatively high level of holding power in relation to the ruling coalition. (Lavers and Hickey, 2016, p. 5).

As further noted by Nino-Zarazua et al. (2010), cash transfers can only be institutionalized, on one hand, when there is political commitment as currently under the PF regime. On the other hand, cash transfers are unlikely to be institutionalized where there is lack of political commitment as is in the case of Zimbabwe.

### 6.1.3 Undermining existing national programmes

When donors initiated cash transfers in both countries, the two governments were already running Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS) (Zambia) and Public Assistance (PA) (Zimbabwe). When GTZ introduced the cash transfer pilot, the Government of Zambia had re-launched PWAS three years prior with the same objectives to address food poverty worsened by the HIV/AIDS crisis and incapacitated households (Pruce and Hickey, 2017). However, GTZ 'marketed' cash transfers as a better intervention than PWAS. The justification for cash was generic, that is, cash allows the flexibility to meet the needs of a specific individual, is logistically and administratively cheaper than assistance in kind, and its propensity to be saved. The GTZ defied the appeal from government officials to integrate the pilot into the national (PWAS) that had support from the Minister of Finance (ibid.). However, the cash transfer pilot was implemented within the same PWAS structures, which shows it could have been at least plausible to integrate it with PWAS. It is important to note that PWAS was the major social protection initiative from the government (Devereux, 2006), historically and in practice. Furthermore, PWAS was on record for reaching all the 72 districts during the years when it was fully operational (ILO, 2008). However, in 2003 PWAS only reached 0.5% of the population as opposed to a target of 2% that year (Devereux, 2006). There has been a massive drop of government budgetary commitment for PWAS since 2008 (ILO,

2008) as cash transfers significantly got more attention than other instruments (Harland, 2014).

While the argument for cash somehow was sensible, why GTZ chose to set up a parallel intervention can be understood in the sense that

> …donors and governments are answerable to, and have to satisfy, radically contrasting constituencies, and their respective remits differ accordingly. Governments have to worry about their electorates, particularly about strategic groups of supporters and 'floaters'. Donors have to remain within the policy parameters of their boards (IFIs) or governments (bilaterals). (Killick et al., 1998, p. 91).

The cash transfer initiative by GTZ was thus a policy directive from the German administration in Berlin, a supranational and closed space (Gaventa, 2005), where the Zambian government and the local communities had no power and influence. Due to the hidden power (Gaventa, 2005) of a bilateral agency and all its financial power, GTZ successfully pushed for the pilot and the government, financially weak as it were, could not resist. As a bilateral donor, the GTZ was thus more answerable to the German government than the recipient government of Zambia. That also confirms the observation that, "in foreign aid, the feedback loop between recipients and decision makers is broken; only donors have political leverage over the decision making process" (Martens, 2008, p. 285). It was also a time when global politics (Hickey, 2007) were really in favour of social cash transfers and the GTZ had to align to that to be relevant to the contemporary development trends. In this respect, social protection emerged as a global agenda pushed from a global platform by bilateral and multilateral agencies. Therefore, GTZ was able to forge ahead with that agenda as mandated by the German government, not the government of Zambia, making it an externally driven initiative. On the contrary, Schuring and Lawson-McDowall (2011) are of the view that donors could not take much initiative due to a policy void that existed during those years. However, the way the Kalomo pilot unfolded points to donor dominance. The decision to implement the pilot in Kalomo is often overstated in the context of drought and high HIV/AIDS prevalence. However, it was also a GTZ prerogative as owners of the funds and Kalomo district also fell within their operational area (*GRZ1*).

Similarly, in Zimbabwe the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer Programme (HSCT) was introduced when there were already social assistance programmes in place run by the government, major ones being, the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) and Public Assistance (PA). As outlined in chapter 5, BEAM is a fee-waiver facility that seeks to retain children in schools by paying fees for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) while PA is a cash transfer to incapacitated households. BEAM could be one of the best social protection interventions for Zimbabwe that has yielded positive results in terms of school enrolment, retention and completion. Both PA and BEAM are national programmes run by the Ministry of Public Service and Social Welfare. However, the HSCT was established to replace PA and the two programmes do not run concurrently in the same districts. PA now only exists in districts where there is no HSCT as this programme is still to be extended to all districts. BEAM at one point (2011) was funded together with the HSCT from the Child Protection Fund (CPF) but the donors have since dropped it and it is now the sole responsibility for the government with all its financial woes. On one hand, the government remains attached to PA and BEAM, regardless of its fiscal constraints, and, nonetheless, the same government is not fully committed to the HSCT. On the other hand, donors support the HSCT and are not willing to integrate into the national programmes like PA. Like Zambia, what unfolds in Zimbabwe is an attempt by a donor-driven HSCT (implemented in a few districts) to replace the PA that is a national programme.



### 6.1.4 Pilots and evidence generation

When GTZ exited social protection in Zambia, the coming in of other donors was not a coincidence but conformed to the global drive for social protection as well as high levels of poverty in Zambia. Quintessentially, social protection was increasingly becoming a popular agenda in global politics. The interest to do more pilots was perhaps informed by three reasons. Firstly, it was a period when donors were still experimenting with different models to see what would be convenient. Secondly, donors wanted to generate as much evidence as possible that they would use to influence the adoption of cash transfers in Zambia and in the region. Thirdly, donors were quite aware of the cost implications of a national cash transfer and would not attempt to fund a national scaling up. The rise of social protection is a product of global donor policy influence as noted by Hickey (2007). The DFID, Irish Aid, Finland and UNICEF were quick to join the social protection agenda and continued funding various models of social cash transfers in Zambia.

By contrast, Zimbabwe only had one pilot in Goromonzi district in 2011. Why there was only 1 pilot in Zimbabwe is understood in the context that social cash transfers were introduced 8 years after Kalomo. By that time, donors had ‘enough evidence’ over the feasibility and value of cash transfers as a tool for fighting poverty. Despite ‘enough evidence’, still donors would not commit to fund a national cash transfer programme. The donors resisted appeals from the Ministry of Labour and Social Services to have full-scale cash transfer programme claiming that they needed to test first. Hence, they started with 10 districts and then scaled up to 10 more to reach a total of 20. At 20 districts, funding challenges surfaced in Zimbabwe whilst Zambia ran a total of 11 pilots between 2003 and 2011. Similarly, in Zambia, donors resisted calls from the MCDSS to scale up cash transfers to all the districts (72 by then) until the Government made a decision to do so in 2013. This confirms the fact that donors were only interested to ensure that Government adopt the cash transfers and take over the funding not to fund full scale cash transfer programme themselves. While it is the responsibility of the government to fund social protection, the MMD government was not obliged to fulfil that responsibility through a donor-initiated programme. That is one of the reasons why the government appealed to donors to scale up ‘their’ programme. Furthermore, both the government and donors were fully aware of the cost implications of a national upscale.

It is common for donors to attribute the rise of the social cash transfers on the development agenda to evidence built over the years. Accordingly, donors have spent lots of resources on evaluations and dissemination of the findings. For instance, findings from the baseline and evaluation of the Kalomo pilot were very ‘promising’ (*GRZ1*). In his evaluation, Schubert (2005, p. 13) states that the overall wellbeing of beneficiary households immensely improved as they could now afford food, begging reduced, they were now saving on livestock such as goats and chicken, and school attendance improved.

Ministry officials echoed the same sentiments.

> We saw absenteeism dropping for children in schools, we saw enrolment rising by about 7%, we saw the numbers of households serving 2 meals or

> more increasing, we also saw the dietary diversity also improving, we also saw households starting to keep goats and chickens as a way of investing that cash (*GRZ1*).

However, Schubert's evaluation did not have a control group, "so when it came to attribution, it was not scientifically convincing to say it's because of the cash transfer and we learnt a lesson" (*GRZ1*). In spite of that shortcoming, Schubert's findings were positive and adequate to attract much attention for the Kalomo pilot. Nonetheless, it still took years to influence the government of Zambia to adopt social cash transfers. The Kalomo pilot became a stepping-stone and a learning point for the other pilots in other districts and the continent as a whole.

Learning from the loopholes of Schubert's evaluation of Kalomo pilot, rigorous evaluations were conducted for the other pilots. For the Child Grant,

> The focus was the under 5 children regardless of being poor or rich. We made sure that we now had a very robust impact evaluation design study and we engaged some consultancy firm from America called AIR (American Institutes for Research) because we wanted results that could withstand any scrutiny from any part of the world. So we really went for the top-drawer research firm and they designed an evaluation that lasted 48 months. Again the design was also very rigorous as well as the impact evaluation (*GRZ1*).



After the Kalomo evaluation, the ministry and the cooperating partners became cautious to do 'robust' evaluations that would generate 'credible evidence' to bolster the social protection agenda. Indeed, 48 months were long and adequate to prove the value of cash transfers.

> The Kalomo results, although the design was a bit defective, are the ones that gave us the motivation to continue expanding the scheme. So because of the improvement in results, we also saw government now coming to start supporting the programme. The government started putting some money and I think the first money from government came in 2006 when they started with very little money but continued increasing the money with time (*GRZ1*).

It is important to note, first, that donors invested a lot in impact evaluations to prove to their mother governments (sources of funds) and to the recipient government that cash transfers are feasible. Secondly, the Child Grant pilots were only a fulfilment of

UNICEF's interests to drive the social protection agenda in the context of children in line with their organisational mandate. However, with so much evidence generated from numerous pilots, still it took long to scale up cash transfers in Zambia. Effectively, more cash transfer models were trialled in Zambia than any other part of Africa (*SPE*). Thus, donors could afford to hire 'top-drawer' research institutes, from as far as the United States of America (USA) to evaluate a small pilot project in Zambia. At the end of it all, donors, more than the government, needed the evidence because what matters to the government is how much political capital it derives (see 6.2.1 in this chapter).

The experiences of the two countries essentially show that political capital is more valuable than evidence. Did the evidence really matter to the governments of President Sata and Robert Mugabe? After running the Kalomo pilot and a host of other pilots, it took almost a decade for the government of Zambia to decide to scale up the cash transfers.

> It took so long because it was a new idea and there was no champion in the government for resource commitment. The ministry (MCDSS) had no power. It was a pilot and government would not just take it over when they knew it would have significant impact over resources. The minister of Finance (Ng'andu Magande from 2003 to 2008) at the time was problematic he did not want cash transfers. We tried everything at all levels to sensitize actors in the political system-trainings inside and outside the country, conferences, and also research to make sure that there was evidence. It was difficult to beat ideology with evidence. (*CP7*).

The Patriotic Front was driven by a pro-poor ideology that contrasted the neo-liberalist Movement for Multi-Party Democracy. Consequently, the SCT became very strategic to Sata's PF party ideology and pro-poor founding principles. The argument for political expedience makes substance especially when one considers the fact that Sata initially "actually struck out any mention of cash transfers in red ink from the first draft" of the PF manifesto (Pruce and Hickey, 2017, p. 18). Furthermore, the massive increase of government funding for the SCT programme only emerged in 2013, two years after Sata ascended to presidency. In Zimbabwe, the Mugabe regime had its own politically strategic programmes and did not see the value of taking the lead in funding the externally-initiated HSCT. Hence, the HSCT remained a donor programme. On the contrary, Sata was keener to try cash transfers after losing presidential elections 3 times.

What also pertinently emerges from the pilots are donors pushing individual agendas, that is, GTZ and Schubert's ultra-poor targeting, the DFID and Stephen Kidd's social pension, and UNICEF's Child Grant. Stephen Kidd, who was Senior Social Development Advisor at the DFID before moving to Help Age International, was very keen on pensions and he believed in the right of all older persons to get a pension (*SPE*). To date, the move to have a social pension in Zambia has not materialised despite the Katete pilot and ILO efforts to push for it. The Katete pilot also brewed inter-ministerial tension between the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) and Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) over who should be the custodian of the social pension pilot (*SPE*). It emerged that the MoLSS could have been envious of the donor resources that the MCDSS was gaining out of the programme. The MLSS felt it had a legitimate claim to run the Katete pilot on the grounds that it was also responsible for contributory pensions in Zambia. However, the Katete pilot was essentially a categorical transfer targeted by age not a pension, thus implying that it was supposed to be in the jurisdiction of the MCDSS. Consequently, donor agendas potentially bring disharmony to the Government, as ministries 'fight' for donor money. "The pilots have very precarious institutional and financial arrangements, and reflect directly the interest of donors rather than a considered strategy by the Government, which has been reluctant to endorse them" (Nino-Zarazua et al., 2010, p. 14). Consequently, the government of Zambia could not take full responsibility for the pilot projects and scale them up to national level (Devereux and White, 2010, p. 60) until the Patriotic Front took over government in 2011.

### 6.1.5 Programmatic disharmony and social tension

Evaluations of cash transfers often overstate their 'positivity' with little attention to the quality of delivery and implementation (see Siampondo, 2015; FAO 2013; Schubert 2005; AIR 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). This researcher's discussions with the beneficiary communities reinforced some of the positives of cash transfers (see details of the FGDs in chapter 1). For instance, some families were saving on small livestock like chickens and goats; some were constructing houses and toilets out of the savings; and others were buying farming inputs such as seeds and fertilizer; and generally children were going to school (FGDs). In rare cases, those who are not in the programme borrow some money from recipient colleagues in times of need. It was interesting to note that communities can easily share food not money, money can only be lent but not shared. Conversely, the programmes are a threat to social cohesion as they simmer tension between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. In both Zambia and Zimbabwe, the researcher noticed that non-beneficiaries envy cash transfer beneficiaries, which distinctly divides the community into two groups of 'the under-privileged many' and 'a privileged few' (FGDs). Similarly, MacAuslan and Riemenschneider (2011) note that cash transfers are pervasive interventions that involve processes that affect social relations such as "initial mobilisation, targeting, registration, payment, communications and, often, monitoring and evaluation" (p. 61).

A study of the Zimbabwe Emergency Cash Transfer Programme (ZECT) implemented by Concern Worldwide and funded by WFP from November 2009 to March 2010 as well as Mchinji Social Cash Transfer (MSCT) Scheme in Malawi revealed tension between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (ibid.). ZECT was an attempt to replace food assistance with an equivalent value in cash. However, ZECT targeting and distribution of cash led to "resentment and tension that participants considered just as significant as having enough food" while mobilisation and targeting processes both strengthened the position of the headman and generated substantial resentment" under MSCT (MacAuslan and Riemenschneider, 2011, p. 64). Ellis (2008) notes that the sense of unfair exclusion influences manipulative behaviours such as

> restructuring of household demography in order to meet scheme criteria for inclusion; collusion between community welfare committee members and beneficiaries on sharing benefits; so-called 'elite capture' in which community leaders or local public officials ensure their friends and relatives are on beneficiary lists; and a sense by public officials that they deserve remuneration for helping manage transfers since this is an extra work obligation not envisaged by their very low salaries (p. 1).

This contrasts with Hickey (2007) who views social protection as an instrument for building social solidarity. The researcher discovered that most of the non-beneficiaries deserved assistance and this reflects the social divisiveness of targeted cash transfers in Zambia and Zimbabwe. In fact, this researcher was inundated by inquiries from non-beneficiaries who assumed the researcher had come to add them to the cash transfer programmes. Cash transfer beneficiaries are disqualified from other programmes like the farm inputs and drought mitigation run by either the government or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in both countries on the pretext of ‘double-dipping’. Disqualification of SCT beneficiaries from other social assistance programmes is against the official position for both MCDSS and MPSLSW that stipulates that cash transfer beneficiaries can be enrolled in other programmes since the cash is not enough. The village heads and councillors are not happy for not being involved in both SCT and HSCT and thus sanction the discrimination of the cash transfer beneficiaries given their leading role in the selection processes in the other programmes.

> Despite the strenuous efforts by deliverers of social protection to explain transparently why certain individuals or families are deemed eligible to receive transfers while others are not, and this includes the involvement of communities themselves in beneficiary selection, a sense of puzzlement and unfairness about the selection process can nevertheless persist in communities long after targeting decisions have been made (Ellis, 2008, p. 1).

Rushinga is an arid and drought prone district. The beneficiaries admitted that those deserving cash transfers are far more than those currently in the programme. When the researcher heard that 22 out 25 wards are receiving cash transfers (*GoZ6*), he got impressed that coverage was high. However, out of a total of 17,125 households, only 775 households (equivalent to 4.5%) are benefiting from the HSCT programme (ibid.). In Kalomo, a district of 9,000 households, only 3,128 households were on cash transfers (34.76%) by the time of this research (*GRZ8*). Such is the reason why the government and development partners would emphasize the geographical coverage, not the caseload, for political mileage. In Zambia, the number of districts implementing the SCT increased from 11 to 17 between 2011 and 2012 but the caseload remained the same. Between 2013 and 2014 districts also increased from 17 to 50 but caseload did not change (see table 1 in chapter 4). Sata’s Government was praised for expanding the SCT programme yet what only happened in those four years was splitting districts in the name of decentralization. While the governments are keen to have a national coverage for the cash transfers, it does not follow that all those that are eligible would be included in the programmes. Even when the caseload is increased, still there will be exclusion of deserving cases due to resource constraints, and besides, the cash transfers target the 'very poor' of the poor.

In both countries, if people benefit from 2 or more programmes, it is called 'double dipping'. Double dipping is a common concept in the humanitarian sector and it is often treated as cheating and warrants being struck off the beneficiary register. The concept of 'double dipping' is denigratory to the poor and contradicts the concept of harmonization. For meaningful impact, multiple programmes could target the same households. However, both the communities and NGOs believe that programmes should reach as many people as possible regardless of the value of the benefit (*DP3*).

> Double dipping is a mentality of an economy of scarcity where resources are scarce and they need to be distributed across the many in need hence there is no economic or moral justification to give more than 1 programme to 1 household. But that at some level has actually limited the potential of complementarities to be realized across programmes. (*CP2*).

Social protection policies and strategies are incoherent, highly 'sectorised' and 'projectised' and that is a common challenge currently faced by many countries in Africa (Holmes and Lwanga-Ntale, 2012). The fact that "each government sector pushes its own projects and programmes" is worsened by "donor driven projects which are implemented either in partnership with government ministries or by international NGOs" (Holmes and Lwanga-Ntale, 2012, p. 16). In Zimbabwe, the name 'harmonised' (in HSCT) creates a false impression that the country has a harmonized social protection interventions yet on the ground programmes remain loose and fragmented. While donors advocate for harmonization of social protection instruments in both countries, the same donors who fund cash transfers also fund what they call humanitarian or emergency cash transfers that are implemented by international NGOs. World Bank (2012) similarly notes that the emergency cash transfers target a very small fraction of the population that is directly influenced by donor preferences.

> Since these cash transfer programmes are not seated in a central organization, their management information systems are usually ad hoc, are not linked to other programmes, and are often of poor quality. The fragmented nature and patchy coverage of these cash transfer programmes reflect their lack of domestic ownership and coordination (World Bank, 2012b, p. 4).

In Zambia, DFID, which is the major donor for SCT, was also funding pilot emergency cash transfers in 5 districts in the Western and Southern provinces of Zambia through Concern Worldwide and Save the Children 'to see how they can make social protection shock responsive' (*CP4*). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, DFID that funds 75% of the HSCT also were funding humanitarian cash transfers through World Vision and Save the Children (*DP1*). However, this could be understood in two contexts. Firstly, the London Administration, the major funder of social cash transfers through DFID, is no longer interested in cash transfers unless they are humanitarian interventions (*DP1*). Secondly, donors would want to keep the international NGOs (their 'kinsfolk') relevant, although the quick excuse is that governments are slow and bureaucratic. Similarly, the noted INGOs in both countries claimed that they were more efficient and responsive than the government (*NGO1-NGO6*). Holmes and Lwanga-Ntale (2012) note that governments in poor countries "lack the technical, fiscal, management and logistical capacity to manage complex programmes effectively, hence the need for external support" (p. 16). While that could be true, funding parallel programmes through NGOs does not make it any better. If donors would invest in building capacity of the governments, it would make a huge difference. Building the capacity of the government to run government owned programmes and policies would be a long-term investment in government institutions in Africa.



### 6.1.6 Value, coverage and predictability

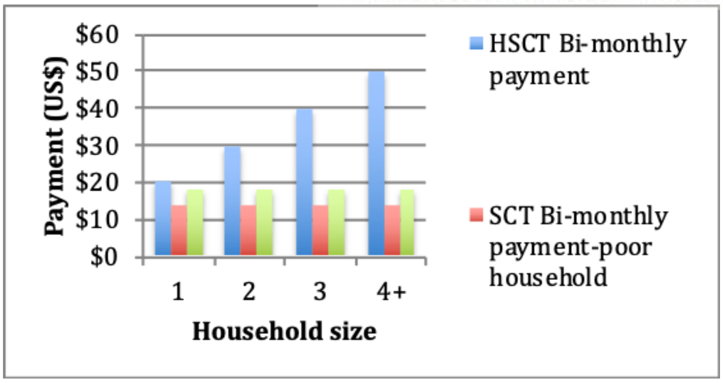
The finding that the cash transfers result in savings needs to be accepted with caution as this researcher discovered that only smaller families are better positioned to save than bigger families. The average household size in Zambia is 6 and 5 for Zimbabwe, which implies that the majority of families in both countries are big. The value of the cash transfer is not adequate and as long as the concept of 'double dipping' prevails, the beneficiary poor and incapacitated households will still struggle for basic subsistence.

That cash transfers should be predictable is brought to test as both the SCT of Zambia and the HSCT of Zimbabwe follow an irregular pattern of inconsistency. For better impact and outcomes, "cash transfers need to be predictable, of adequate value, and provided on an ongoing basis" (McCord, 2010, p. 23). Predictability of cash transfers in Zambia and Zimbabwe is an illusion regardless of the reasons from both the governments and development partners. Skipping months stifles planning and brings misery and uncertainty to the households as some lose their small savings and others get indebted as they wait for payment (FGDs). In all FGDs in both countries, participants bemoaned that it was common for the transfers to stop for several months and resume later without recouping the lost months. In Zimbabwe, in 2015 the programme stopped around March and then restarted in September (FGDs) and in 2017, they would get lump sums for skipped months at times, and at the very best, the communities were receiving cash once in four months (*GoZ6*). In Zambia, the payments were almost six months behind as beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer scheme in Kalomo got their payment for July/August 2016 in January 2017.[18]

Furthermore, to think that those who receive the small amounts of cash would graduate from poverty is too ambitious (Slater, 2009). Graduation from poverty is quite contentious if the transfers are unpredictable and have low value, which most of them are. The concept of graduation "involves households moving out of poverty and away from dependence on social protection transfers, to an independent and sustainable livelihood" (Slater, 2009, p. 1). It is common sense that a household has to meet its consumption needs before it invests in human capital and livelihoods (Devereux, 2000, McCord, 2010). Figure 13 compares payments for the SCT of Zambia and HSCT of Zimbabwe.



**Figure 13 Comparing the values of the SCT and HSCT payments**




The HSCT has a superior value to the SCT because the HSCT payment is pegged per size of household while size of household does not matter for SCT. The HSCT treats disability as one of the vulnerabilities while the SCT has a different payment for them but still inferior to the HSCT payment.

Author's creation based on figures from the MCDSS and MPSLSW

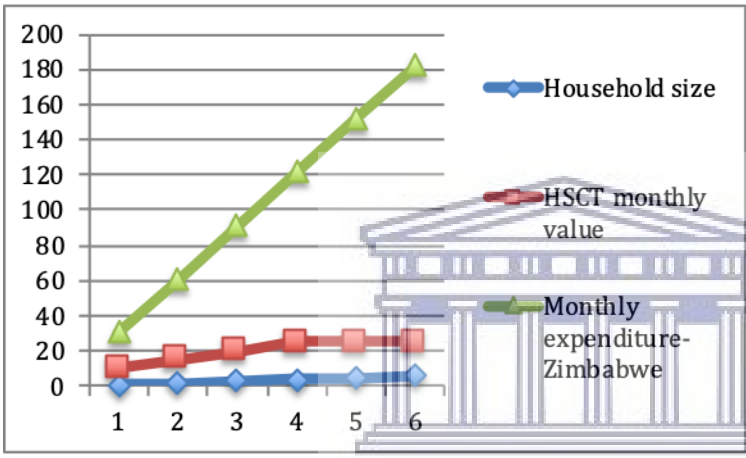
For the HSCT in Zimbabwe, a household of 1 person receives US$10 per month (paid bi-monthly as US$20) when the monthly food poverty datum line (FPDL) is US$30.38 per person (ZimStat, 2017, p. 15). By the same token, a household of 4

[18] Focus Group Discussion with the beneficiaries in Kalomo district on 31 January 2017.

members and above receives US$25 per month (paid as US$50 bi-monthly) against a monthly FPDL of US$151.89 per household of 5 persons (ibid.).

Similarly, in Zambia a household receives ZMK70 (US$7) per month (ZMK 140 (US$14) bi-monthly) and ZMK90 (US$9) (ZMK180 (US$18) bi-monthly) for a household with person(s) with disability against an average monthly household expenditure of ZMK1.588 (US$158.80) (ZMK2.680 (US$268 for urban and ZMK763 (US$76.30) for rural)[19] (Republic of Zambia CSO, 2016, p. 88). When this combines with unpredictability and the targeting criteria, graduation becomes elusive. Figures 14 to 17 compare the two cash transfers in terms of monthly value versus monthly expenditure, geographical coverage and caseload.

**Figure 14 HSCT monthly value versus monthly expenditure in Zimbabwe**

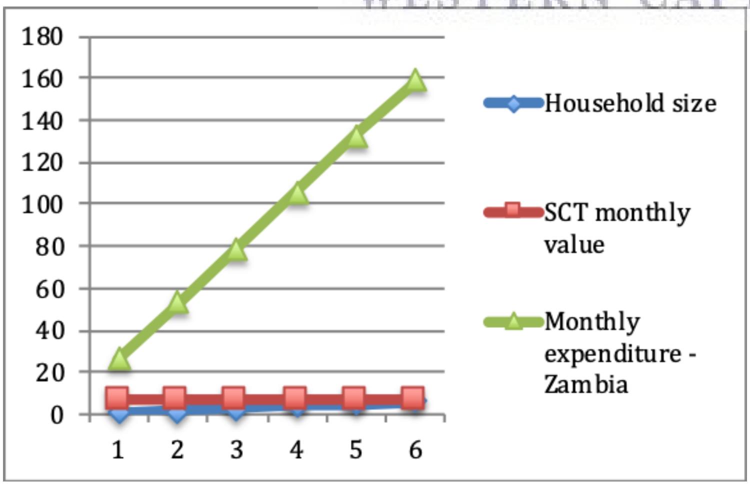



The huge gap between monthly expenditure and payment shows the inadequacy of the cash transfer. Discrimination from other programmes makes it worse. Large households are the most disadvantaged.

Author's creation based on figures from the MPSLSW



**Figure 15 SCT monthly value versus monthly expenditure in Zambia**

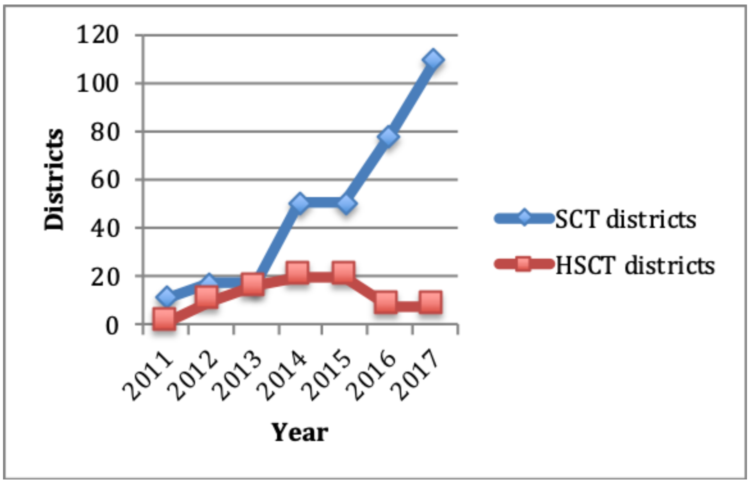



The Zambian situation is worse than Zimbabwe because size of household does not determine how much it gets. Similarly, it is difficult to reduce the gap when the households are disqualified from other programmes. Bigger households are the most disadvantaged.

Author's creation based on figures from the MCDSS

[19] Based on US$1:ZMK10 exchange rate

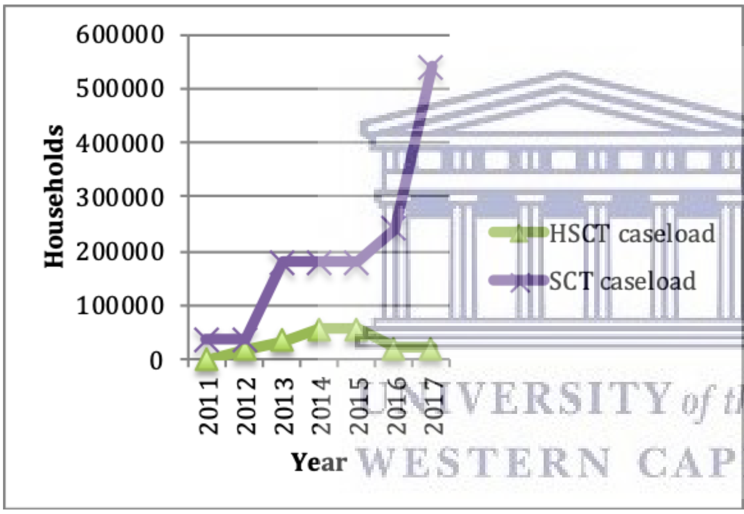
**Figure 16 Geographical coverage for the HSCT of Zimbabwe and SCT of Zambia**




There is a sharp contrast between Zimbabwe and Zambia. While Zambia is increasing coverage to all districts, Zimbabwe's coverage has dropped drastically. Out of 60 districts, Zimbabwe has not gone beyond 20.

Author's creation based on figures from the MCDSS and MPSLSW

**Figure 17 Caseload for the HSCT of Zimbabwe and SCT of Zambia**




The caseloads for the two programmes are in sharp contrast. The Zimbabwean maximum caseload reached is below 60,000 households whilst Zambia reached 540,000 in 2017. The HSCT looks like collapsing and that depicts the dangers of donor dependency.

Author's creation based on figures from the MCDSS and MPSLSW

### 6.1.7 Political context

As noted in chapter 5, Zimbabwe has been under sanctions for about a decade and half. This was further compounded by a heavy debt and outstanding arrears that amounted to around US$13 billion by October 2017 (*GoZ5*). The major institutions owed were the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Africa Development Bank (AfDB). Zimbabwe was thus suspended from the lending list of these international financial institutions (IFIs).

> We are a country under sanctions and we are in arrears too. When you are in that situation, the USAID, the British of this world, the EU and other donors will say 'no money goes to the Government'. The international financial institutions like the World Bank, the IMF and the AfDB will say 'you have

> not paid our arrears'. So, unless we have sorted out these issues then we can have the Government running the system as was before. Remember, there is Donor Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Finance, which used to coordinate donor resources very well but now it is not possible because of sanctions and arrears (*GoZ8*).

The above narrative reflects how politics influenced relations between international organisations (IFIs, bilateral donors and multilateral agencies) and the Government of Zimbabwe. The USA's and EU's labelling of Robert Mugabe as a despot, Robert Mugabe's backlash and intransigency to the international community and his 'overstay' in power did not make it any better. Mugabe would consistently label donors, some UN agencies and NGOs as 'British and American' agencies of a regime change agenda thereby brewing mistrust between the Government and the external players. The external agencies conformed to the politics of the day as their resources are largely from either Europe or the USA. Thus, the DFID, EU, SIDA, SDC and the Netherlands funded the HSCT through UNICEF and not the Government, and other support went through NGOs in line with the international isolation of Zimbabwe. As part of the UN family, UNICEF is considered a neutral player for both the donors and the Government. The ultimate collapse of the economy with a 500 billion percent galloping inflation in September 2008 and the GDP falling by more than 40% between 2000 and 2008 (World Bank 2011, p. 6) made the Government of Zimbabwe 'desperate' for external support. Hence, there were quite a number of donor initiatives, including the HSCT, upon the inception of the GNU.

> It is difficult to plan much for Zimbabwe because of the hostile politics. The politicians and some government officials are stubborn yet the government never fulfils its mandate to fund 50% HSCT according to what we agreed. Now the programme is 100% donor dependent. (*DP1*).

On the contrary, Zambia has experienced a smooth political transition of power and the current President Edgar Lungu is the sixth (after Kaunda, Chiluba, Mwanawasa, Banda and Sata) since the country's independence in 1964. The PF (2011 to date) is the third political party to govern Zambia since independence after UNIP (1964-1991) and MMD (1991-2011). It is for that reason that Zambia is considered as one of the fledgling democracies in Africa. Zambia qualified for the Heavily Indebted Poor

Countries (HIPC)[20] initiative in 2005 that saw most of the debt being cancelled. There has been high economic growth since 2000 especially due to the recovery of the copper industry and agricultural sector. Relations with the international community have been 'cordial' and there has been a lot of donor support to the Government. There has been substantive donor support for the SCT from the DFID, Irish Aid, Finland and SIDA joining in 2016. Critical to note is the fact that donor support for the SCT is directly to the Government unlike in Zimbabwe. The SCT donors have a Joint Financial Agreement with Government of Zambia in contrast to Zimbabwe where the HSCT donors sign an agreement with UNICEF. In Zambia, UNICEF only plays the role of providing technical assistance (TA) to the Government while in Zimbabwe it plays double roles of fund manager and TA provider.

It is striking to note that external agencies managed to introduce similar cash transfer programmes in Zambia and Zimbabwe despite different contexts. This can be understood in the sense that external agencies based their interventions on the 'crises' that prevailed in both countries. Despite the smooth political transition in Zambia, poverty and HIV/AIDS prevalence remained high. For Zimbabwe, the HSCT came at a time of the Government of National Unity (GNU) when the country was trying to recover from the 2008 socio-political and economic meltdown and there was substantive external aid. Furthermore, the same external agencies (especially UNICEF and DFID) played a leading role and used the same strategies of influence in both countries despite funding SCT directly to the government and the HSCT through UNICEF.



## 6.2 Financing social cash transfers

Financing social cash transfers is subject to interplay of interests. Donors have been more interested in social cash transfers than other forms of social protection, as seen in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Despite the erratic disbursement of funds by the government, the Zambian government has increasingly become the leading funder for the social cash transfer scheme since the Patriotic Front took power. On the contrary, in Zimbabwe, there is little commitment from the government and funding for the social cash transfer programme remains a domain for the donors in spite of the donor fatigue. Traditionally, for both countries, contributory pensions took a lion's share of

[20] An initiative by the IMF and the World Bank in 1996, to provide debt relief, to countries with unsustainable debt. The countries numbered 38 in total including Zambia.

the national budget allocated for social protection. In Zimbabwe, social insurance constitutes 86% of the total social protection expenditure in Zimbabwe (GoZ and World Bank, 2016, p. 12). In Zambia, public service pension fund averaged 63% of the social protection budget between 2013 and 2018 (ZIPAR and UNICEF, 2017, p. 3). This implies that both countries' spending on social insurance is significantly higher than other forms of social protection.

In this section, the researcher looks at how the social cash transfers in the two countries have been financed and scaled up or otherwise.

### 6.2.1 Donor priorities and Government priorities: An ideological contestation

> The reason why donors prefer to fund social cash transfers to livelihoods programmes is about being realistic about what works and what does not. Livelihoods are difficult to support technically and financially. Social cash transfers are fairly easy you can have great impact, you know your money would be put to good use and there is assurance for the donors (*CP7*).

The above narrative sums up why donors are not willing to fund livelihoods programmes. While the donors go for short term quick wins, governments prefer long term investments that support the productive capacities of the people to feed themselves. Government financing for the SCT scheme was not easy to materialize as it took many years since the Kalomo pilot to get the will of the Ministry of Finance. Of all the government ministries in Zambia, the Ministry of Finance proved to be hardest to convince on the value of cash transfers to the poor people as a key mechanism for fighting poverty. During the MMD era, Finance Minister Magande did not want to hear about social cash transfers and would always rebuke the MCDSS officials who appealed to his ministry for funding (*GRZ3*; Kabandula and Seekings, 2016). The Ministry of Finance was also conspicuous by its absence from most of the meetings convened under the auspices of the Sector Advisory Group on Social Protection (SP-SAG) as well as other meetings called by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services. They would always find excuses yet it was clear that they did not subscribe to 'free' cash transfers (*GRZ2*). The Ministry of Finance did not also attend the 2006 regional Livingstone conference co-hosted by the Government of Zambia and the African Union.

> It was very difficult to take the Ministry of Finance on board. We started engaging them a long time ago and for us to see the results we had to use

different strategies. At times we would feel like giving up because when we arranged meetings and field visits, they would say they were busy. However, we could not give up because as long as you do not get them on board then nothing is going to happen. So it was persistence, we converted 2 disciples first who then eventually started spreading the word within their meetings and they would also put up a counter-argument if someone said it is not an effective programme (*GRZ1*).

According to *GRZ1*, the first two 'disciples' in the Ministry of Finance to be converted to cash transfers were Mr. Chola Chabala and Mr. Mulele. Mr. Chabala was at that time deputy director monitoring and evaluation but is now the permanent secretary in the Ministry of National Development Planning. Mr. Mulele was in the modeling unit and is now at Cabinet Office working in the Secretary to Cabinet Office. They played a significant role in defending cash transfers and eventually convincing more people from the Ministry of Finance to support the cause.

Similarly, in Zimbabwe, it has also not been easy to get concession from the Ministry of Finance. However, what makes the situation of Zimbabwe quite unique is that the HSCT was introduced at a time when the economy was grounded, thus the dependency on donor funds. Tendai Biti, who became Minister of Finance in the Government of National Unity (GNU) inherited a financially constrained treasury and had to emphasize 'we eat what we kill' to rein fiscal discipline (Biti, 2015). To expect a treasury that struggled to pay salaries for civil servants to prioritise the HSCT was at least impractical. Despite the 'sanity and stability' restored in the GNU era, political and socio-economic challenges returned when the ZANU (PF) took over government again after the 2013 elections. Biti's successor at Ministry of Finance, Patrick Chinamasa, found it hard to fund the HSCT against the liquidity challenges that confronted the government. As usual, he budgeted for the programme with little to non-disbursement of funds.

There is a conviction among the development partners that Minister Chinamasa does not believe in cash transfers and thus it is difficult to mobilise financial resources for cash transfers from the treasury against that background.

When you go to the Ministry of Finance, at technical level they understand social cash transfers but when you go to the minister, he tells you 'no no you

> can't give people free cash, we have to look at productive sectors of the economy…'.

What the development partners seem to undermine is the fact that, besides the treasury being broke, the government cannot commit itself to a programme created by donors when it has its own priority programmes.

The resistance from the Ministries of Finance can be understood in the context of a contrast between donor shifting priorities and entrenched government programmes. Donor initiated projects cannot be sustained when donor priorities shift and without buy-in from the government. GTZ initiated the cash transfers in Zambia but later shifted to other priorities without proper exit strategy but the government would not take over. The HSCT was also set up by donors and the major donor, DFID, has downscaled its funding while the government is not interested in taking over.

Accordingly, McCord (2010) notes,

> Given the unpredictability and capriciousness of donor financing flows, governments may wisely be reluctant to commit resources to pilots or their extension in the short or medium term, in order to safeguard their public finance management credibility, and avoid setting up programming, and associated expectations, which may have to be terminated if donor financing priorities shift (p. 14).

Governments have their traditional and national programmes that they keep holding to regardless of whether there is adequate financial support or not.

There is a stark contrast between government preferences and donor preferences in both countries and that can be understood in the context of the welfare regimes that were adopted since independence. Governments in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique hugely prefer an agrarian welfare regime and that renders the models in neighbouring countries (Namibia, South Africa and Botswana) and those from international agencies less appropriate and less important than programmes supporting peasant agriculture (Chinyoka, 2017). Both governments in Zambia and Zimbabwe believe in supporting the people to produce their own food and this has worked for all the past years except in periods of drought (ibid.). Both the MMD and ZANU-PF governments resisted the temptation to fund cash transfers because they believed in agricultural input subsidies. Governments consider cash transfers consumption expenditure (not investment) that only focuses on individual poverty (not broader economic growth) and therefore prefer "investing in agricultural inputs or subsidy programmes that promote production at household level" (McCord, 2010, p. 15).

In Zambia, the Farm Input Support Programme (FISP) gets higher budget allocation (than cash transfers) from the Government and the same applies to farm input subsidies in Zimbabwe. The Food Security Pack (FSP) is also a programme of particular interest for the Government of Zambia because it supports the vulnerable but viable households to be productive. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, agricultural support makes the largest share of social safety nets funding and between 2010 and 2015 it was 53% with a peak of 67% in 2013 (GoZ and World Bank, 2016, p. 10). The major agricultural support programme in Zimbabwe is the Smallholder Input Support programme that immensely expanded by 40 percent from $87.7 million in 2010 to around $160 million in 2014 (ibid.).

The table below illustrates that there is far higher expenditure and coverage for the Smallholder Input Support programme than HSCT, which reflects contrasting ideological and programmatic preferences between donors and the government. This is resonant with the view that financing of cash transfers is not merely subject to available resources available (government or external) but a matter of "policy choice, susceptible to political interference and constituencies" (McCord, 2010, p. 17).



Table 10 Government budgeting for Smallholder Input Support Programme and HSCT in Zimbabwe

| Expenditure & coverage | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HSCT expenditure ($US) | - | - | 5,598,491 | 7,621, 452 | 17,600,768 | 16,360,734 |
| Smallholder input expenditure ($US) | 89,700,000 | 84,524,000 | 1,117,000 | 158,000,000 | 160,240,000 | 31,671,000 |
| HSCT coverage | - | - | 100,000 | 162,955 | 277,545 | 260,000 |
| Smallholder input coverage | 1,000,000 | 800,000 | - | 1,540,000 | 1,600,000 | 300,000 |

Source: GoZ and World Bank, 2016

In Kenya, in the aftermath of 2008 conflict, the government, regardless of financial crisis, funded cash transfers that promoted political stability (ibid.). In Malawi, most government elites preferred policies that would widely benefit the society (education and health) as well as those that reduced the poor's dependence on handouts (agricultural subsidies and microfinance) while there was little support for cash transfers (Kalebe-Nyamongo and Marquette, 2014). Consequently, how much a government commits to cash transfers is partly dependent on the political capital of the programme.

The then minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in Zimbabwe, Nicholas Goche[21], said "Our party has no problem when donors give poor people money but we have a problem with donors when they want us to give our people money. What people need is food, which they should grow, so why not give them food and not money" (as quoted in Chinyoka, 2017, p. 15). Such sentiments reflect that most politicians do not believe in cash transfers. The adoption of the SCT by the PF government in Zambia was for political expediency. Despite the adoption, more budgetary support still goes to FISP than social cash transfers as shown below. It is pertinent to note that there is more political capital in agricultural input subsidies than social cash transfers.

**Table 11 Government budgeting for the FISP versus SCT in Zambia**

| Programme | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **FISP** | 485b | 500b | 500b | 500m | 1,083b | 1b | 2,856b | 1,785b |
| **SCT** | 42,7b | 55b | 83,1b | 199,2m | 180m | 180m | 552m | 721,18m |

Author's compilation based on budget speeches for 2011-2018 (b=billion Zambian kwachas, m=million Zambian kwachas).

Input subsidies are easily politically manipulated and reach big numbers of people compared to cash transfers that target the poorest that is a very small proportion of the population. That implies that the choice between cash transfers and agricultural inputs/subsidies is more a matter of political ideology than resource constraint. Therefore, the governments in Zambia and Zimbabwe keep on holding to their agricultural input subsidies despite the donors' policy agendas.

[21] Nicholas Goche was expelled from both government and ruling ZANU-PF in December 2014 for aligning to a faction led by former Vice President Joyce Mujuru.

Donors complain over the lack of commitment from the governments to substantially increase the funding for social protection.

> When we talk of financing social protection, the starting point is that the allocation of public resources to social protection in Zambia has historically been extremely low. Zambia has relatively high GDP compared to other countries in the region because of the economic structure that is somewhat benefiting from the mines. So if you take the percentage of GDP, Zambia is spending way below the regional average on social assistance programmes, below 0.5% of GDP. All in all, one should be critical about the fact that the government, with the exclusion of FISP, expenditure on other social protection programmes has been extremely low (*CP2*).

The challenge with the above sentiments is the tendency by donors to impose their will on the government. The Zambian government believes in 'productive' safety nets, hence the commitment of a huge budget for the Farm Input Support Programme (FISP). Social protection, as defined by the donors, is largely 'free' cash transfers that the government does not subscribe to. If donor policy and practice do not conform to national politics, then the government cannot be expected to fully commit to donor initiatives.



The Government of Zimbabwe and development partners agreed to fund the HSCT on a 50:50 basis. The Child Protection Fund (CPF), a donor fund administered by UNICEF is the funding mechanism for the HSCT from the donors' side. Due to the fact that donors do not fund government directly, a private security company called Securico gets the money from UNICEF and gets it to the communities for payment and the ministry only witnesses the payment (*GoZ3*). Deloitte and Touche initially did auditing until UNICEF persuaded the donors to opt for government auditors who are even doing it more diligently (*DP3*). The use of private security and private auditors is not only very expensive but also does not build the capacity of the government. How would the government take over a programme that bypasses it? Given that status, it is not convincing to say the ministry is the custodian and leading agency of the HSCT.

The CPF resonates the huge influence of UNICEF in the policy process. Child protection is therefore central to the HSCT programme and this aligns well to

UNICEF’s mandate to create a world fit for children. The child protection thrust of the CPF and the HSCT conforms to the joint statement made by the DFID, UNICEF, Help Age International, Hope and Homes for Children, Institute of Development Studies, International Labour Organisation, Overseas Development Institute, Save the Children UK, UNDP and the World Bank (2009).

> The joint statement aims to build greater consensus on the importance of child-sensitive social protection. It lays out the particular vulnerabilities that children and families face, the ways that social protection can impact children even when not focused on them, and outlines principles and approaches for undertaking child-sensitive social protection (UNICEF et al., 2009, p. 1).

It is pertinent to note that the signatories above for child sensitive social protection are all supranational actors devoid of even a single African voice or any other region of the developing world. In the same line of thought, Holmes and Lwanga-Ntale (2012) note that the social protection is confronted by several challenges including,

> perceptions that a common African voice is absent and that an African definition of social protection has not been articulated; that the multiplicity of donor interests and interventions may have stifled the emergence of a consistent and harmonized set of social protection objectives for Africa; that traditional African social protection mechanisms have been undermined by the imposition of conventional western social protection approaches; and that policies which are in place are not consistent with actions on the ground (p. viii).

In light of the above assertion, the child sensitive social protection thrust emerges as a donor policy that penetrated the domestic policy trajectory. When UNICEF hired Schubert to do a ‘child sensitive social protection study’, they were trying to domesticate a global policy sanctioned by global actors. Child protection is noble and it is not surprising to see UNICEF supporting or influencing policy initiatives that fulfill its international mandate of child welfare. Indeed, it was strategic for UNICEF and the CPF donors to promote a child sensitive social cash transfer because child protection is also a key responsibility of the Department of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. The ministry would not resist an agenda that suited its mandate, thus the claim that it is the ‘custodian’ and lead ministry of the HSCT programme.

### 6.2.2 The vicissitudes of donor dependency

> Heavy reliance on donor funding for the continued operation and extension of cash transfer programmes means that national programme design is likely to match donor priorities, be consistent with the funding criteria of international bodies such as PEPFAR, and be influenced by the agendas of agencies, such as UNICEF, which channel funds to recipient countries (McCord, 2009, p. 3).

In around 2007, GTZ funding for cash transfers came to an end. "Unfortunately, GTZ programming at a particular time decided to exit the social protection arena and focus on good governance, water and sanitation and other issues" (*GRZ2*). The early exit of the GTZ from the social protection agenda was political, as there was an official in Germany's Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) who vehemently opposed cash transfers (*CP7*). So the decision to quit came from Germany without a proper exit strategy and due consideration of the implications for the beneficiaries in Zambia. It is a common practice by donors to quit at the end of a project cycle and they cannot be held accountable because they report to their mother governments. The influence of a BMZ official to quit social protection in Zambia also shows that donor-funding priorities are also subject to personal preferences of their mother governments and as staff changes, priorities and preferences may also shift.

When GTZ quit the social protection agenda, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), UNICEF and Irish Aid continued to fund the pilots and by 2011 Zambia had a total of 11 pilots. That was despite the studies and evaluations that widely endorsed that cash transfers were affordable and implementable in Zambia (Devereux and Wood, 2008) and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services' proposal to scale up the social cash transfers (GRZ, 2009). In contrast, the hesitancy from both donors and the government to expand the programme proved otherwise. What arises in this regard is the fact that the government's political will is more important than donor funds. In this respect, the PF government asserted itself as political regime that had power to determine who deserves and the size of social protection programme (Hickey, 2007). Further to that, it reflected an "organisational culture, political commitment and political capacity of bureaucratic actors within government to advocate for, and implement, social protection initiatives" (Hickey, 2007, p. 4).

In Zimbabwe, the HSCT has been donor dependent from its inception to date. DFID is the major donor and contributes 75% of the total cost (*DP2*). In the first phase of the HSCT, DFID, European Union (EU), the Netherlands, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) funded it. However, the Netherlands and the EU pulled out during the first phase. The cycle of the HSCT reflects the dangers of depending on donor funding. It shows that a programme cannot be sustained by donor funds as donor priorities are ever shifting.

The second phase of the HSCT (June 2016-May 2019) is hit by a massive decline in funding from the donors that is further compounded by the usual lack of fund disbursement from the government. The current financial status is a threat and says a lot about the programme's heavy reliance on external funding. DFID, the largest funder of the HSCT since its inception reduced its funding by more than half for the current phase.

> Phase II of the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer programme has a very limited scale. DFID has slashed its funding for the programme from 38 million (Phase I) to 20 million British pounds. This implies that only 23,000 households will be reached in the current phase as compared to 55,000 households targeted in phase I. Geographically, the districts have reduced from 20 to only 8. Funding prospects for the HSCT beyond 2019 are uncertain because DFID is looking at other priorities in the Middle East. Beneficiaries in the districts that have been dropped from the programme are not aware of this predicament since the government did not communicate to them (*DP2*).

Realising the political risk of downscaling the HSCT programme, the government did not concede to it and still claimed the programme was in 20 districts (*GoZ1*). It is important to note that DFID funding for HSCT phase II was systematically planned not to go beyond 2019, at least for now. Before Prime Minister Theresa May announced in April 2017 an earlier election (over the Brexit predicament) in the United Kingdom scheduled for 8 June 2017, elections were supposed to be held in 2020. Given that position, it was likely that DFID could not commit funds beyond 2019, as the outcome of the 2020 election would have direct implications to funding for the HSCT, either in the affirmative or opposition.

> Social protection is no longer a central focus for DFID globally. Although the Labour Party supports social protection, the Conservative government is opposed to it and it has become increasingly difficult to get social protection approved. For social protection to be approved by the Conservative government, it has to be linked to humanitarian interventions or systems building. We had to fight to get fund for 2016-2019 for the HSCT programme (*DP1*).

The reduction of DFID funding for HSCT can be connected to the political context in the United Kingdom (UK). In the early 2000s, DFID, under the Labour Government, was in favour of funding cash transfer programmes and expanding ODA but under the current Conservative government and with economic austerity in the UK, the British government attitude to ODA and funding 'welfare programmes' in other countries has turned around completely. Consequently, it would be difficult for the British government to justify spending more taxpayers' money abroad on 'welfare' when it has cut spending on its own people's 'welfare'. Now that the UK elections were held with the Conservatives still in power, it remains to be seen if there is a going to be a policy shift in terms of bilateral support to the HSCT.

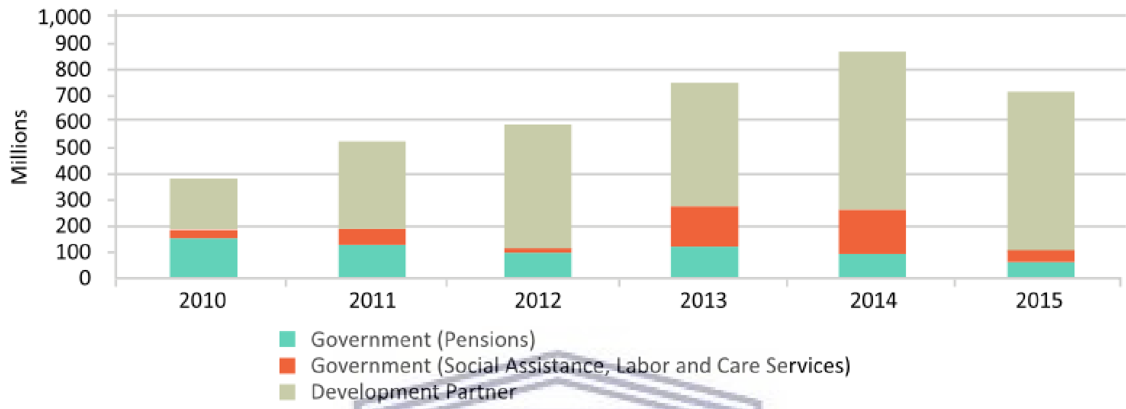
The last disbursement for the HSCT from the government was in December 2016 (as of May 2017), which they strategically coincided with the launch of the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF). The government only released US$16 000 which only catered for the Epworth community (venue of launch) against US$1.2 million promised when they met the World Bank in November 2016[22] (ibid.). For the current phase of the HSCT, DFID released US$8 million while SDC and SIDA released less than US$2 million each and further release of funds from DFID is dependent on the current performance, which makes it no guarantee (*GoZ1*). The 2017 Budget allocated US$6.9 million to the HSCT programme and it remains to be seen if the Treasury will release anything.

The government has mastered the art of 'conceding' to any conditions set by the donors to attract them to release funds. For instance, the government does not object to 50% funding of the HSCT but they do not meet that obligation. When the

[22] The Government of Zimbabwe is currently re-engaging the World Bank. The Bank has made it a pre-requisite for the Government to fund the HSCT as one of the conditionalities to get support.

government promised the World Bank to release US$1.2 million and also announced a budget for the HSCT in the 2017 national budget, the DFID, SDC and SIDA were consequently enticed to also make their funding commitments, which they announced on the launch of the NSPPF. Figure below summarises sources of financing for social protection in Zimbabwe.

**Figure 18 Overall sources of financing for social protection in Zimbabwe**

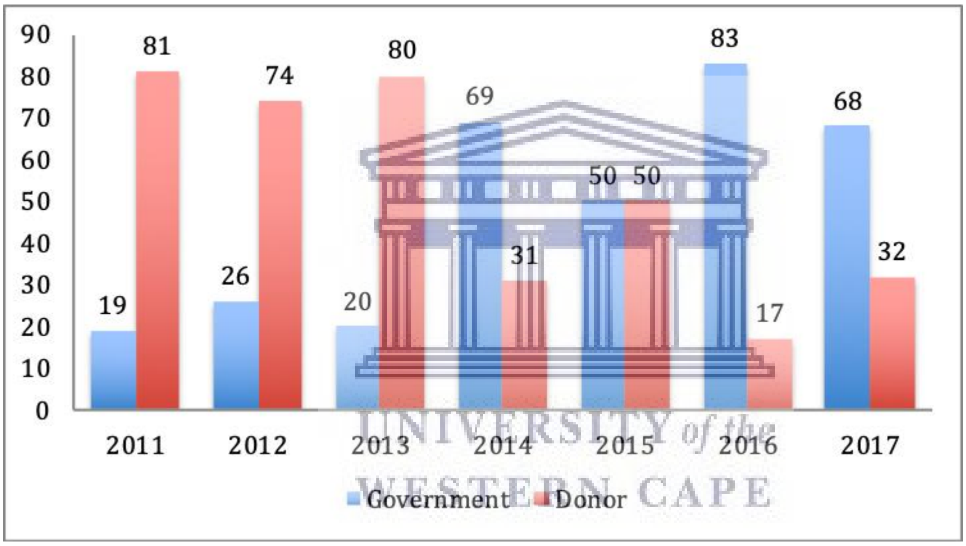



Source: GoZ and World Bank, 2016

Figure 18 illustrates donor dominance in social protection interventions in Zimbabwe. Generally, donors are funding 90% of social protection in Zimbabwe and the same applies to the HSCT, as there is not much coming from the government (*GoZ8*). The current withdrawal of donors makes the situation of social protection quite volatile. The government is meaningfully visible in the public pensions whilst the development partners dominate a larger proportion of the funding for other social protection interventions.

Conversely, the Government of Zambia has been increasing the budget for the SCT over the past few years as illustrated in figure 19. 2017 national budget implied that the programme is being extended to all the districts in 2017 and expected to reach over 500,000 households which doubles the previous year (PwC, 2016, p. 16). The government's highest contribution between 2011 and 2017 is in 2016 when it contributed 83% of the funding for the SCT the donors' 17% contribution was the lowest in the same period. While the contributions are not consistent, the general trend is that the government now contributes more than the donors. Overall, the allocations for the SCT have increased more than seven-fold since 2010 (UNICEF 2016b, p. 2). Broadly speaking, the budget allocations for social protection have increased by 133% since 2010 although in 2016 the sector accounted for 2.4% of the total national budget of Zambia, which was a decrease by 0.3% from 2.7% in the 2015 budget (ibid: 1-2). Figure 19 illustrates the 'see-saw' effect where government funding is increasing while that for donors is decreasing. On a positive note, the proportion of social protection rose from 2.4% of 2016 to 4.2% in the 2017 national budget (PwC, 2016, p. 16). Accordingly, the expenditure for social protection increased by more than double from K1.3bn budgeted for in 2016 to K2.7bn in 2017 (ibid.). Furthermore, the SCT scheme got the largest budget increase of all the social sector programmes in 2016 and a 67% increase from 2015 prompting it to reach 242,000 households by the end of 2016 (ibid.) as reflected in figures 19 and 20 below.

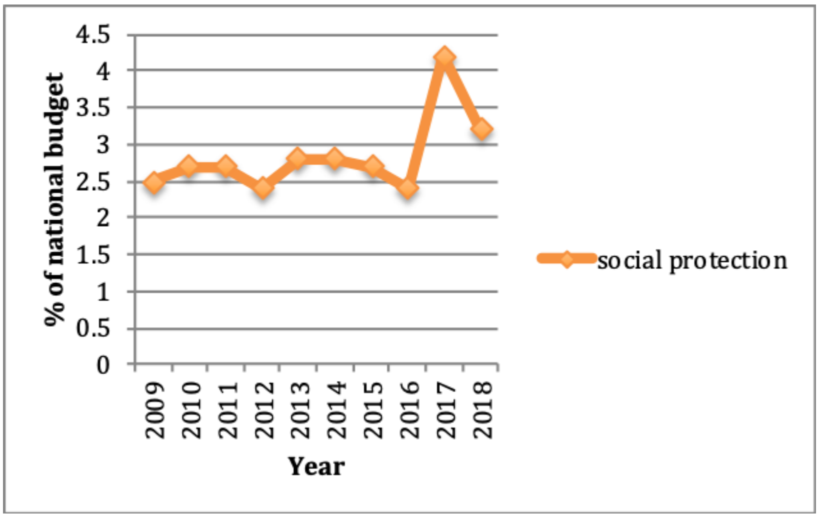
**Figure 19 Government-donor funding (%) for the SCT in Zambia**






Author's creation based on figures from MCDSS

**Figure 20 Social protection proportion of the national budget in Zambia**




Author's creation based on 2009-2018 budget presentations

The budgetary allocation for social protection has been on an upward trend since 2011 even though its proportion of the national budget has been consistently undulating. From 2009 to 2016, the proportion stagnated between 2.4% and 2.8%. 2017 had the highest proportion and yet dropped again in 2018.

## 6.3 Conclusion

Social Cash Transfers have become popular on the development agenda and are increasingly becoming the face of social protection in Africa and beyond. What is critical to note is the leading role that has been played by the various multilateral and bilateral agencies especially in the policy evolution and policy transfer. The so-called 'cash transfer revolution' originates as a global phenomenon being promoted by multilateral and bilateral agencies as a suitable mechanism to fight poverty. This is resonant of Hickey (2007) and Gaventa (2005) who both view policy as a product of global politics and a contestation of interests at global, national and local arenas. The social cash transfer discourse involves various players driven by various interests at the various levels. The donors presented their choices as demand driven initiatives. The Zambian SCT was presented by the GTZ as a response to droughts and high HIV prevalence during those years while the HSCT was responding to the socio-economic crisis of the time. In that regard, social protection is presented as a response to high levels of poverty as also conceptualized by Hickey (2007). Despite the importance of socio-economic context, politics play a very dominant role (ibid.).

What is important to note, cash transfers in Zambia started when the concept was relatively new and the donors were keen on testing different models since there was no convergence on the modalities by then. However, for Zimbabwe, the HSCT was designed in 2011 when cash transfers had already gained momentum across the region and beyond. That is the reason why there was not much piloting in Zimbabwe compared to Zambia. In both countries, the donors showed no regard for national programmes in place with similar objectives (like the Public Assistance (PA) and Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS)) as they set up parallel interventions. This is a dominance of donor policy over domestic policy. The phenomena in both countries are reflective of donors who are keener to promote their programmes than supporting national programmes already in place. Donors are financially strong and command international authority that the two countries found increasingly difficult to resist.

There is a sharp contrast between funding for the two cash transfer programmes. In Zambia, though it started as 100% donor funded, the government is now leading funder at 83% as of 2016. However, there is suspicion that the Government of Zambia might have committed itself to something it cannot afford, as disbursements of funds are erratic. The ten-year funding agreement with DFID compels the government to increase funding over the period, failing which DFID would quit. Nonetheless, DFID is the largest donor for the cash transfer programmes in both countries. For Zimbabwe, donors do not fund the government directly due to international isolation of the regime. They rather fund the HSCT through the Child Protection Fund managed by UNICEF. The HSCT is almost 100% donor dependent and that explains why it is under threat from donor fatigue. What is perhaps critical to note is that DFID has downscaled its support for social protection in favour of other priorities. It seems both programmes may be difficult to sustain without DFID, unless it makes a U-turn or another donor comes in to replace it. It is also not clear how the other donors will react to the downscaling by DFID. The current DFID funding for the HSCT of Zimbabwe ends in 2019 whilst that for the SCT of Zambia ends in 2020 and beyond that, either the government takes over or the programmes collapse. The ever-shifting donor priorities are a lesson that the future of social protection lies in government owned national programmes not the donor-funded initiatives.

Overall, donor policies and agendas, no matter how good they may look, are bound to face challenges from being adopted by the recipient countries especially if they do not conform to national politics. The two countries always have huge budgets for agricultural input subsidies as they believe in supporting people to produce food not giving them ‘free’ cash. For that cause, agricultural inputs subsidies in both Zambia and Zimbabwe enjoy bigger fiscal support from the treasuries than cash transfers.

# Chapter 7 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis. Firstly, the chapter summarises the main findings of the study in order to map out the contributions of the study to the debate on social protection. Secondly, it connects empirical evidence with theory to assert the contribution of this study to the body of knowledge. Accordingly, the researcher interlinks findings in the empirical chapters (4, 5 and 6) and the theoretical chapters (2 and 3). Thirdly, the chapter looks at the policy and political implications of the study given the ideological differences of different actors whose common motive is to fight poverty. Lastly, the researcher makes recommendations for future research bearing in mind that this study may not be exhaustive of all the dimensions of the debate on the political economy of social protection.

## 7.2 Main Research Findings

External agencies have played a central role in influencing the institutionalization of social protection in sub-Saharan Africa. Social protection in Africa is a product of the global policy thrust of the external agencies (section 3.6). For instance, social protection in the two country case studies mirrors UNICEF's 'child sensitive social protection' policy thrust, which it has deliberately framed not only to uphold child protection but also to ensure that the agency becomes relevant in the social protection agenda. The external agencies have employed various strategies to exert their influence (sections 4.6 and 5.5). They hired experts (consultants, think tanks) to help influence adoption of the agenda. Consultants were hired to write the national social protection policies. External agencies funded pilots and numerous researches and evaluations to generate evidence for cash transfers (sub-sections 4.4, 5.4.5 and 6.1.4). In that respect, top-drawer research institutes like the American Institute for Research (AIR), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Oxford Policy Management, the Institute of Development Studies of University of Sussex (IDS) and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill were hired to do research and cash transfer evaluations.

Establishment of cash transfer management units within the two ministries (MCDSS and MPSLSW) that are fully funded by the external agencies ensured that the external agencies still maintained their influence (sub-section 6.1.2). Even where the external agencies claim to give space to the government, they still exert influence through the so-called technical assistance (sub-section 6.1.7). Technical assistance essentially implies that the external agencies support the technical capacity of the government in a particular social protection policy instrument (social cash transfers) of their (external agencies') choice even if it is not a priority for the government. Financing social protection has been an important tool for the external agencies to maintain their influence. They funded pilots and in the case of Zambia, they still fund a proportion of the budget for the flagship SCT programme. The seesaw funding model for the SCT where the government increased its budgetary allocation for SCT while the external agencies reduced their funding to focus more on technical assistance ensures that the government of Zambia would not abandon the SCT. The conditionality of the funding agreement (2010-2020) between DFID (major donor for the SCT) and the Zambian government that dictates that DFID would pull out if the government did not honour its obligation is a mechanism to ensure that social protection is institutionalised (section 6.3). In Zimbabwe, the HSCT is very much dependent on external funds since inception as the government rarely disburses funds for the programme.

The development of social protection policies in the region is one way the external agencies have influenced the institutionalization of social protection (sections 4.6 and 5.5). Quite a number of countries in Africa now have national social protection policies. As noted in this thesis, Zambia got its social protection policy in 2014 while Zimbabwe passed one in 2016. In both cases, social protection policy development was initiated and fully funded by the external agencies. Initiating and funding the development of a policy is one solid way of ensuring that the government adopts and institutionalizes social protection. It is a way of ensuring that social protection becomes mandatory to the government. In the eyes of the external agencies, a policy is tangible evidence for their success in promoting adoption of social protection. In Zambia, UNICEF and ILO have gone further than that to initiate and support a Social Protection Bill to entrench social protection as a human right and make it obligatory to the state to deliver (sub-section 4.6.7).

One result of external influence is the narrowing of social protection to social cash transfers, which only address one pillar (social assistance) of the social protection policy. Due to overemphasis of cash transfers by external agencies, cash transfers have become a synonym for social protection. This is despite the fact that the social protection policies, whose development was influenced by the external agencies, are 'comprehensive' and anchored on several pillars. The external agencies opted to fund cash transfers because they believe cash transfers are easiest (of all the pillars) to fund and have quick results that make it easy to account to their governments and taxpayers back home (sub-section 6.2.1). In both countries, external agencies have popularized cash transfers over other pillars of social protection, potentially leading to piecemeal implementation of the policy. In Zambia, the external agencies managed to influence the government (coupled with political will from President Sata) to increase funding for the SCT programme over the years at the expense of other social protection interventions.

Another important finding is that cash transfers are generating tension between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries as well as between beneficiaries and the traditional community leaders. Targeting a small proportion of the poor implies that majority poor are excluded. Non-involvement of the traditional community leaders (councillors, headmen and chiefs), allegedly for being partisan, fuels tension. Traditional leaders are the gatekeepers of the rural communities and possess significant political power and influence. While they are not directly involved in the SCT and HSCT, they command the government social protection interventions at the community level. Thus, traditional leaders disqualify the SCT and HSCT beneficiaries from being enrolled to other programmes on the pretext of 'double-dipping' yet the official position of the MPSLSW and MCDSS is that cash transfers are not enough and beneficiaries can be enrolled in other programmes. As a result, the simmering tension is divisive to the community.

One further finding is the role of 'policy entrepreneurs' (Roberts and King, 1991; Karch, 2007; Mintrom, 1997; Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000) in promoting social protection (sections 4.5 & 5.6). External agencies identify key personnel from within and outside the government that they 'incentivise' to support the cause. Such technocrats become 'experts' and leading figures in the concerted efforts to push for the adoption of social protection. Due to their expertise and strategic importance, policy makers and politicians rely on them for policy advice. As noted in this study, the likes of Bernd Schubert, Charlotte Harland Scott and Sydney Mhishi played the role of 'policy entrepreneurs' for social protection. Through Charlotte Harland Scott who co-authored the 2011 Patriotic Front (PF) Manifesto, the agenda reached Michael Sata who adopted it both as a Presidential aspirant and as President of Zambia.

## 7.3 Implications for Theory

The research underscored the primacy of politics in social protection. The study is based on the voices of essentially all the actors in social protection. Triangulating the voices of the government, external agencies (bilaterals, multilaterals & IFIs), INGOs, CSOs and the rural communities brings richness and depth to the debates on social protection. It helps understand how the different actors diverge or converge in terms of approaches and interests. It also helps to understand the power dynamics within the policy space: who is more powerful and who is less powerful, who voices and whose voice matters, who makes decisions and who follows decisions, who drives the policy and who follows, who has the money and who follows the money, who consults and who is consulted, and whether the rural communities (perceived beneficiaries) are active participants or ‘passive’ recipients. The political economy explains why priorities for the government and the external agencies differ.

The synthesised framework (figure 3 in chapter 2) theorises how various actors interact in the social protection policy space. External agencies like World Bank, ILO, DFID and UNICEF use their *hidden power* in a *global* and *closed policy space* when they came up with their social protection policy positions without or with little involvement of the recipient countries. It is at that level that external agencies set the agenda for social protection. Their policy positions have been tools to influence adoption of social protection in Africa. The framework shows that the global actors have used various strategies of influence including finance as forms of *hidden power* to promote the social protection agenda. The concept of participation is brought to test. What emerges is that it is not every actor and every policy space that matter in the policy process. Important decisions were made in a *closed policy space* between the external agencies and their mother governments, between the external agencies themselves and between the external agencies and the government at national level.

At *national* level, the external agencies interact with key ministries (MCDSS, MPSLSW and Finance) to influence adoption of social protection. Again, decisions at that level are made in the closed space as both the government and external agencies use their *hidden power*. The *visible power* of the parliament and the constitution is not involved at that level. The role of political parties is only visible when a particular party like (the PF of Zambia) decided to adopt social protection after recognising the potential to generate votes.

Consultation of local actors often implies rubberstamping of decisions already made in the *closed space* at *national* and *global* levels. However, in Zambia, civil society (PSP, CSPR and JTR) lobbied the government in the *claimed space* and ensured that the government consults them in the *invited space* thereby contributing to the policy. In Zimbabwe, civil society did not *claim* the space for social protection and there were a limited number of actors in the *invited space* and eventually the content of the policy was determined in a *closed space*. The effectiveness of the civil society to challenge the status quo in the *claimed space* or *invited space* is dependent on the political context and their autonomy to be representative of the poor. The lack of involvement of beneficiary communities (*invisible power*) in the policy process makes it complex to pursue a social contract for social protection. The beneficiary communities are not aware of what gets to the decision making table and tend to accept their situation and be 'grateful welfare recipients'. They would not voice their concerns because they perceive the cash as a privilege not an entitlement. When the GTZ quit social protection in Zambia, there was no exit strategy and the cash transfer beneficiary communities were not informed of the predicament. The government would not be held accountable because it was not their programme. Similarly, when DFID downscaled its funding for the HSCT from 20 to 8 districts (2016-2019) there was no exit strategy and again the beneficiary communities were not informed. That renders participation as a mere tokenism. This reflects in Hart's (1992) participation ladder where the bottom 3 rungs (out of 8), that is, manipulation, decoration and tokenism, are non-participation.

Literature underlines limited research on the role of politics in shaping the rise of social protection in sub-Saharan Africa (Hickey, 2007; Casamatta et al., 2000; Niles, 1999). However, there is notable acknowledgement that politics need to be accorded a central role in research for insightful and in-depth understanding of the poverty alleviation agenda (Ellis et al., 2009; Grant, 2006; Leftwich, 2008; de Haan, 2013; Mkandawire, 2001). This study therefore explored the roles of the various actors in the policy space, from global to local (sub-section 2.1.3). The study goes beyond the dominant narrative of 'politics of patronage' that views politics as 'detrimental' to poverty alleviation, which is centred on the State and individual politicians as the political players. Thus the study also looks at politics as an 'enabler' and treats all actors involved as political players with vested ideological and political interests in the social protection agenda.

The study refutes the tendency to view external agencies as neutral players (Leftwich, 2008) and asserts that they are active and powerful political players that influence policy decisions. External agencies are accountable to their mother governments and thus the recipient 'poor' governments do not have control over their decisions. Their global policy positions are predetermined and developed in their mother countries and reflect policy choices of their mother governments. This conforms to what Gaventa (2005) calls the *global level* where policy originates, a *closed space* for the recipient countries where there is exercise of *hidden power* and where crucial decisions are made. The study thus concurs with both Hickey (2007) and Gaventa (2005) whose theoretical frameworks portray the influence of global actors on national policies (sub-sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2). Hickey (2007) illustrates that social protection mirrors donor policy and practice as well as global social policy trends. The study affirmed Gaventa's (2005) use of the various forms of policy space and the various actors and the extent to which they influence decision-making.

Literature on policy diffusion and policy transfer underscores the role of external agencies (global forces) (Zurn, 2005; Obinger et al., 2013; Dobbin et al., 2007; Meseguer and Gilardi, 2009; Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996 and 2000; Simmons et al., 2008; Casey and McKinnon, 2009; Granvik, 2015) and this is affirmed by the study (sections 3.2 and 3.3). The study similarly confirms what Granvik (2015) terms the deployment of 'soft' power by external agencies to persuade adoption of social protection (section 3.2). 'Soft' power entails flying national policy makers to international workshops, study tours, hiring consultants, supporting civil society (and even creating in the case of Platform for Social Protection (PSP) in Zambia-section 4.6.5) to lobby and advocate for social protection, sharing best practices from other regions and funding pilots to prove the efficacy of social protection. The study discovered another form of 'soft' power used by external agencies, that is, the recruitment of staff from the government. External agencies, therefore, have been the key drivers of the rise of social protection in most low-income countries in the region.

The study connects to Lavers and Hickey (2015 and 2016) in the context of the interaction of transnational ideas and politics to shape social protection. The value of social protection as a political tool for votes (Hamer and Seekings, 2017; Hickey, 2007; Yates et al., 2006; Granvik, 2015; Pelham, 2007 and Dlamini, 2007) strongly emerged in the context of Zambia. However, it is less profound in Zimbabwe, which implies that there is still need for more research to have more insights over the variance of country experiences. The fact that policy process is a political process that involves multiple actors driven by different ideologies (Leftwich, 2008; Martens, 2008; Reinikka, 2008; Hickey et al., 2018; Ramalingam, 2013; Brock et al., 2002; Hill, 2005; Juma and Clark, 1995; and Unsworth, 2015) is what this study found to be a protracted social protection policy trajectory in the two countries. The policy processes took years of power struggles and negotiations within the government, between the government and the external agencies and between the external agencies themselves.

Another contribution of this study is that the drive for social protection by external agencies immensely undermined national policies (section 6.1.3). Hickey's framework (2007) did not foresee this outcome of compromised domestic policy sovereignty. The SCT in Zambia overshadowed PWAS that was redesigned to meet the same objectives three years before the commencement of the SCT. The HSCT in Zimbabwe was established to replace public assistance (PA) that was also similar in nature. Both PA and PWAS, despite the challenges they face, are national programmes institutionalized in the government compared to the SCT and HSCT that were established parallel to government programmes. The SCT only started as a pilot in Kalomo that was extended to a few other districts. The pilots were run for about 8 years, as the government of the day was not committed to adopt the concept and donors would also not commit to national expansion of the cash transfers. The HSCT was piloted in one district before it was extended to a total of 20 districts that have since dropped to 8 districts in the current phase. Both the SCT and HSCT overshadowed the national programmes. In the case of Zambia, the SCT now gets more resources from the government than PWAS and the Food Security Pack (FSP). In Zimbabwe, though the government remains not fully committed to fund the HSCT, the external agencies still influenced the government to allow the HSCT to replace PA. Here, the external agencies used their *hidden power* of finance to promote their choice of programmes at the expense of national programmes as governments 'follow' their money.

Contrary to Hickey's framework (2007) that underscores positive outcomes of social protection, this study found that social protection programmes also perpetuate social tension in the communities where they are implemented (sub-section 6.1.5). MacAuslan and Riemenschneider (2011) and Ellis (2008) also criticize cash transfers for being exclusionary and pervasive. Social tension is a negation of social solidarity mentioned by Hickey (2007) as one of the positive political impacts of social protection. The tension that exists between beneficiaries (privileged few) and non-beneficiaries (underprivileged majority) of the SCT and HSCT as well as between beneficiaries and community leaders (councillors, headmen and chiefs) underscores the social divisiveness of targeted social protection. When the community is divided, social protection potentially perpetuates inequality that it is supposed to fight. It is difficult to measure social protection against social justice if it leaves other poor people behind despite the 'justification' for targeting (Devereux, 2016).

Hickey (2007) and Gaventa (2005) assume that the external agencies (global players) are homogeneous but this study found out that they are ideologically different. While some external agencies may be driven by the same motive of 'fighting poverty' in Africa, their approaches to that cause do not always converge. Mkandawire (2001) affirms the ideological divergence within the external agencies. Their global policy positions diverge in many respects (section 3.6). In many instances, there are ideological 'battles' between the external agencies, and even among personnel within the same agency, as each one of them would 'fight' to ensure that their policy position prevails over the rest. In Uganda, the World Bank insisted on the narrow Social Risk Management (SRM) while DFID pushed for a broader transformative approach (Hickey and Bukenya, 2016). Related to that, the study also discovered that not all the external agencies are active in the forefront for social protection. There are some who are at the forefront and pushing the agenda (UNICEF, ILO, DFID, World Bank and GTZ-now GIZ) while others write cheques without pushing a particular ideological position (SIDA, Finland, EU, SDC and Irish Aid).

There has been a varied degree of adoption of social protection in the region and yet there has not been much research that seeks to understand the variation. This study goes a long way in examining why the external agencies have been more successful in some countries and less successful in other contexts. The study analyses the variation in terms of the political contexts of Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as the interests driving the various actors. While the variation in the region has mainly been explained in terms of evidence (lack or availability of it) or whether a country is low or middle income, this study goes beyond that to add the centrality of politics in that debate. In that respect, the study provides a contextual understanding of the adoption, partial adoption or non-adoption of social protection.

The study adds substance to the challenges of externally driven interventions. Social protection in low-income countries is more donor-driven than nationally owned thereby making sustainability and ownership problematic. It challenges the external agencies and other stakeholders alike to think about how best to support poverty alleviation in Africa. The external agencies have maintained their influence through funding social protection in low-income countries (sections 3.5; 6.2 and sub-sections 4.6.4 and 5.5.5). Budget support is often portrayed as a 'neutral' way of funding development in developing countries. However, this study noted that budget support is an instrument for the external agencies to exert their influence, which also confirms findings of other studies (Anderson and Therkildsen, 2007; Gibson et al., 2005 and Swedlund, 2013). It is difficult for the government to own what it does not fund –'he who pays the piper calls the tune'.



## 7.4 Policy and Political Implications

The debate over the slow (or lack of) institutionalization of social protection in low-income countries like Zambia and Zimbabwe goes beyond evidence that social protection works and points to political ideology as a fundamental dimension. Despite investing in cash transfer pilots and evaluations to build evidence, adoption of social cash transfers by the governments has been slow and dependent on resources of external agencies. This study therefore bears the following implications for policy.

It is important for external agencies to align to national priorities if their support is to make significant change. The study underscores how external agencies' priorities differ from the government's own. Governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe are more inclined to supporting the productive capacities of people to produce their own food than cash transfers. Therefore, the policy thrust for the two countries is heavily inclined to agricultural input subsidies as noted in the Farm Input Support Programme (FISP) of Zambia and Command Agriculture (former Smallholder Input Support Programme) of Zimbabwe. Despite the financial constraints that confront the two African countries, FISP and Command Agriculture command huge budgetary support from the Ministries of Finance. This shows that while external agencies prioritise social cash transfers, the government prioritises agricultural support. While the government of Zimbabwe budgets for the HSCT, there is little disbursement of the funds thereby making the programme dependent on external funds. While the government of Zambia now funds the SCT more than the external agencies, still disbursement has been erratic making the programme to rely on external funds.

Instead of setting up parallel programmes, external agencies need to identify national programmes that they can support. Building the capacity of the government to run government owned programmes and policies is a fundamental role that external agencies can play. The fact that such programmes have gaps is an opportunity for the external agencies to strengthen institutional capacity of the government and influence re-design to meet the contemporary and country specific poverty trends. This study found out that externally driven social cash transfers undermined domestic policy in the sense that they were set up parallel to similar or related national programmes. The emergence of the SCT and the HSCT overshadowed nationally entrenched Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS) and Public Assistance (PA) in Zambia and Zimbabwe, respectively. Policies that are externally driven, no matter how much money the external agencies invest in them, are institutionally precarious and potentially bound to collapse upon exit of the external agencies. Conversely, policies and programmes entrenched in the government structures (PA, PWAS, Food Security Pack (FSP), the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM)), regardless of financial constraints, are rooted in the government and politically sustainable.

Related to the above recommendation, it is also important for both external agencies and the governments to partner to strengthen the existing institutions for better, improved and effective programme delivery. This implies both parties working together in the true sense of partnership and consciously aware that building and strengthening the capacity of the government is a long-term investment.

It is also important for external agencies to take advantage of 'positive politicisation' of programmes and policies and partner the government from within the government instead of looking at politics in patronage terms only. This underscores the comparative importance of the role of political interests and 'evidence of what works' in social protection. While there has been more attention on the role of evidence and less on political interests, the experiences of the two countries show that political will is more important in institutionalization of social protection. The experiences of the two countries show there is an intricate relationship between government political interests and choice of policy. Government funding goes where it potentially generates votes. Michael Sata initially deleted any mention of 'cash transfers' in the PF manifesto (despite demonstrated evidence that cash transfers work) and the PF member of parliaments were initially not vocal about cash transfers. However, Sata made a decision to scale up the SCT two years after getting to power. Given that background, the PF's adoption of social protection inclines to political expediency. In Zimbabwe, the lukewarm response from the government could be an indication that they do not see much political gains from the HSCT compared to the programmes run by the government. In Malawi, Joyce Banda's political branding of social protection affirmed rising significance of social protection in pro-poor political ideology though it did not guarantee her an electoral victory (Hamer and Seekings, 2017). Reform influenced from within the government is politically sustainable.



Each country's political context needs to be prioritised in policy processes as it is directly related to policy evolution. It is the political context that determines the extent to which different actors exert their influence in the policy process. Success of the social protection agenda is not universal and depends on the context of a specific country. For instance, the social protection agenda is more successful in Zambia than in Zimbabwe due to various contextual factors. This is despite the fact the same external agencies have been involved in the two countries. In low-income countries, given their economic challenges, the external agencies have generally exerted influence with varied degree of success, as is evident in this thesis. In Zambia, when government changed from the MMD to the PF, the political context shifted in favour of social cash transfers and the external agencies made inroads in the policy space as shown in the development of the social protection policy, increasing fund commitment from the government and the development of the Social Protection Bill. In Zimbabwe, the

HSCT started during the time of the Government of National Unity (GNU) when the country was trying to recover from 2008 economic collapse. Efforts to initiate the development of a national social protection policy also started in the same period. The political context is significantly unique in the sense that the external agencies fund the development of the social protection policy and the HSCT through UNICEF. The funding mechanism is due to the fact that the Harare administration has been under sanctions since 2000 and owes the IFIs billions of US dollars. It is thought provoking to note that funding the HSCT and the development of the NSPPF through UNICEF came at a cost of less policy influence for the external agencies. Zambia is a different political context because it is considered one of the countries that has had smooth political transition for years and therefore gets lot of support from external agencies direct to the government. However, budget support from the external agencies came at a benefit of more policy influence from the external agencies.

In connection to the above, 'the failure' of the 'push' for cash transfers in Zimbabwe is also a clarion call for the external agencies to realise that funding social protection through UNICEF might be the only option they have but not the best. Working directly with the government through budget support would have produced better policy adoption. This could be an opportunity for the external agencies, especially the bilaterals, to influence their mother governments to re-engage the government of Zimbabwe in the spirit of working together to fight poverty.



Governments need to put in place mechanisms to coordinate and monitor external support and ensure that it aligns to national development priorities. It is important for the government to have clear-cut priorities and open up the policy space for all stakeholders including grassroots.

## 7.5 Implications for Research

The political economy of social protection has gained traction in scholarship in recent years. This study connects to a number of related studies being spearheaded by some universities. These include the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) project on *'the Political Economy of Social Protection'*, University of Cape Town Centre for Social Sciences Research (CSSR)'s project on '*Legislating and Implementing Welfare Policy Reforms'* and the University of Manchester's project on *Effective States for Inclusive Development*

*(ESID).* The debate on the politics of social protection started with basic frameworks like Hickey's (2007) that generated research interests. As research gets to the empirical depth, conceptual frameworks are refining and reframing. For instance, Lavers and Hickey (2016) now advocate for a political settlement[23] approach to focus more on national actors and internal processes. This study therefore postulates the following future research recommendations.

Firstly, there is need for more country specific researches that look at how the national political context influences adoption of or resistance to social cash transfers. This study has noted that while political context is a determinant factor in the social protection policy processes, it varies and each country has its own context. Thus, whether social protection is internally or externally driven, depends on the context as shown in this study.

Secondly, the discovery of individuals who played a role in the rise of the social protection agenda calls for more research that explores roles of such individuals to get an ethnographic understanding of the policy process. Such individuals are in government, external agencies or 'independent'. External agencies' approaches can also reflect individual preferences. For instance, Stephen Kidd's drive for universal pensions at DFID influenced the agency's approach (for example, it funded the Katete pilot in Zambia) and when he joined Help Age International he introduced a new thrust on universal pensions as evident in feasibility studies on universal pension in a number of African countries (Seekings, 2016). The establishment of Zanzibar's Universal Pension is attributed to Help Age International (whose idea originated from Stephen Kidd) as well as support from individual technocrats within the government. In Uganda, donor advocacy and lobbying targeted senior leaders in Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Finance, parliament as well as the First Lady and the President to pressurize the Ministry of Finance to commit funds to Senior Citizen Grant (Hickey and Bukenya, 2016). The role of individuals like Ng'andu Magande (see Kabandula and Seekings, 2016) in resisting social cash transfers calls for more research on similar individuals to get a balanced understanding of the varied adoption of social protection across the continent. Similarly, recruiting from the government is an interesting tangent of 'soft power'

[23] Defined by Khan (2010, p. 4) as a combination of power and institutions that is mutually compatible and also sustainable in terms of economic and political viability.

deployed by external agencies to influence the institutionalization of social protection. More research is required to trace the role of technocrats recruited from the government.

Thirdly, there is need to establish the role of the parliament in the social protection discourse. In both countries, there were different levels of involvement which this study could not deeply engage with due to constraints of time and resources. Given the important role of the parliament in policy and law enactment, engaging with former and current Members of Parliament, exploring past and current parliamentary debates and consulting the print media would potentially add further insights on the social protection policy processes in the two countries, and in other countries.

Fourthly, given the role of the external agencies in promoting social protection and the fact that a number of African countries now have social protection policies in place, it is also important to study the content of the policies to see how far they reflect local context and global policy positions for external agencies. What UNICEF calls 'child sensitive social protection' is the overall framework for the social cash transfers and social protection policies in Zambia and Zimbabwe. In Zanzibar, UNICEF and consultants from IDS (University of Sussex in the United Kingdom) were instrumental in the creation of Zanzibar's Social Protection Policy (Seekings, 2016).



Fifth and last, there is need for research to pursue the concepts of participation, ownership and social contract as this study minimally evokes them. The pursuit of these concepts in research on social protection is still scanty and therefore there is need to be exploring them further to bring more insights on what value they hold in the social protection agenda. Hickey and King (2016) is an example of such a thrust.

Overall, the rise of social protection in Africa is a complex global phenomenon shaped by a wide range of actors interacting at different levels and whose access to policy space and degree of influence are determined by the power and interests that each actor holds. While external agencies were influential through various forms of 'soft' power, the decision to adopt social protection was a political contestation between the government and the external agencies, within the government itself, between the external agencies themselves and between personnel of the same external agency. Such complexities fulfil the hypothesis that the dominance of external actors and their ‘push’ for a particular instrument of social protection distorts the broad vision of social policy; compromises the State’s political and budgetary commitment to social policy; and overall, undermines national policy sovereignty.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 Interview Guide for Government Officials

- Date of interview
- Introduction
- Interviewee's organisation:
- Interviewee's job title:
- Interviewee's main roles and responsibilities:
- Interviewee's experience with social protection:
- Before we continue, please confirm whether you are willing to be quoted directly, or would you prefer your responses to be anonymous?

| **Government Officials** | |
|---|---|
| **Overarching theme** | Semi-structured questions |
| **Appreciation and status of social protection** | What is your general understanding of social protection? What does it entail and how did it emerge? What is the current status of social protection in the country? |
| **Motivation for social protection** | What would you say is the global motivation for social protection?<br><br>From the perspective of your ministry, what is the national motivation for social protection? |
| **Government-donor partnership** | How are donors promoting social protection?<br><br>How is your ministry working with donors to promote social protection?<br><br>What is the division of roles between donors and your ministry?<br><br>What are your ministry's expectations from the donors?<br><br>What are the donors' expectations from your ministry? |
| **Coordination** | Who coordinates the process and how is your ministry involved? Any inter-ministerial taskforce on social protection? How does it work and how influential is it? |
| **National Social Protection Policy Framework-Draft** | What are the processes that led to this domestic framework?<br><br>What was the role of donors?<br><br>What was the role of your ministry?<br><br>How did you converge and diverge in the process of developing the policy? How were differences resolved and upon whose compromise?<br><br>From your experience, who is driving the social protection process? |

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| | Why?<br><br>What have been the major milestones?<br><br>How does the current social policy framework address the concerns of your ministry?<br><br>How does it address the concerns of donors? How far do the donor concerns align to the local context?<br><br>How will it be implemented? |
| **Financing** | Who finances the social protection programme (HSCT)?<br><br>How much is the government contributing?<br><br>What are the conditions of the finance? How do you meet the conditions?<br><br>What are the advantages and disadvantages of reliance on donors/government for financing of social protection? |
| **Technical capacity** | How technically capacitated is your ministry to run the HSCT programme?<br><br>How are the donors supporting you in this respect?<br><br>How relevant is the support? What are your expectations? |
| **Partner Cooperation** | How have you addressed the expectations from the donors?<br><br>How do the donors meet your expectations?<br><br>At what point would you say the donors were not willing to cooperate? How did you respond?<br><br>At what point would you say your ministry was unable to meet the expectations of the donors? How did the donors react?<br><br>Major milestones to date? |
| **Participation and Ownership** | What is your general comment on participation and ownership of the NSPPF and the HSCT programme?<br><br>How have the following participated in the process: national, provincial and district government structures; CSOs; and community?<br><br>From your experience, who would you say owns the process? Why?<br><br>Challenges and opportunities? |
| **Implementation** | Who is responsible for the overall implementation of the HSCT programme?<br><br>What is the role of your ministry in the implementation matrix?<br><br>What is the role of the donors? Community leaders?<br><br>How do you target intended beneficiaries?<br><br>What is the status of the HSCT programme in terms of , coverage, |

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| | inclusion and exclusion? How do you minimise these? |
| **Sustainability** | How long is the government/donors committed to fund the HSCT programme?<br><br>Any plans to scale up the HSCT programme to national level? How and why?<br><br>Would you prefer the government taking over the funding or donor funding? Why?<br><br>What is the future of social protection in the context of the present financing position?<br><br>What would say is the impact of the HSCT programme on the beneficiary communities?<br><br>How far is the programme meeting the intended goals of your ministry?<br><br>In terms of graduation, what is the status of the HSCT programme?<br><br>How would you respond if someone accuses cash transfers for causing a dependency syndrome? |
| **Wrapping up** | What is your ministry's future plans for social protection in the country?<br><br>Anything else you would like to say that you think is relevant?<br><br>Could I please have any documents that you think are relevant?<br><br>Who else do you think I should talk to? |

## Appendix 2 Interview Guide for External Agencies

- Date of interview
- Introduction
- Interviewee's organisation
- Interviewee's job title:
- Interviewee's main roles and responsibilities:
- Interviewee's experience with social protection:
- Before we continue, please confirm whether you are willing to be quoted directly, or would you prefer your responses to be anonymous?

| **External agency officials** | |
|---|---|
| **Overarching theme** | Semi-structured questions |
| **Motivation for social protection** | What would you say is your organisation's motivation for social protection at the following levels:<br><br>Global?<br><br>National?<br><br>Community? |
| **Strategies of promoting social protection** | How has your organisation promoted social protection in the country?<br><br>How have you influenced the government and other stakeholders to embrace social protection?<br><br>Which key ministries do you work with? How, when and why?<br><br>How do you work with the parliament and political parties to promote social protection? |
| **Financing** | How do you finance social protection?<br><br>How much finance is going to social protection?<br><br>How do you share financing of social protection with the government? How do you interact with Ministry of Finance?<br><br>What are your expectations from the government?<br><br>What does the government expect from you?<br><br>Out of the total budget, what percentage would say gets to the targeted community? |
| **Technical Advice and Capacity Building** | Technically, how are you promoting institutionalisation of social protection?<br><br>At which levels do you provide technical support? What has been the response of the government to your technical support? |
| **Global Social Protection** | How does your organisation approach align to the local context? What values drive the approach? How does the headquarters guide you and |

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| **Approach** | how contended are you? Any expectations from headquarters? Is social protection a central focus of your organisation globally-why and how? |
| **National Social Protection Framework** | What has been the role of your organisation in the design of the social protection policy framework?<br>What would you say was the role of the government?<br>How much resources were committed (financial and technical)?<br>How participatory was the process?<br>How far did/does the process reflect the local context?<br>How far is the local framework aligning to your global policy framework?<br>What have been the successes, failures and challenges? |
| **Trust and Cooperation** | How have you addressed the expectations from the government?<br>How does the government meet your expectations?<br>At what point would you say the government was not willing to cooperate? How did you respond?<br>At what point would you say your organisation was unable to meet the expectations of the government? How did the government react?<br>How do you work with politicians, bureaucrats, CSOs and community gatekeepers?<br>Major milestones to date? |
| **Partnership-donors, INGOs & CSOs** | Which other donors do you work with and how do you relate in social protection? Which INGOs & NGOs/CSOs do you work with and how do you support them? How, where and when do you converge or diverge? |
| **Participation and Ownership** | What is your general comment on participation in and ownership of the social protection process?<br>How have the following participated in the process: national, provincial and district government structures; CSOs; and community?<br>From your experience, who would say owns the process? Why?<br>How would you react if the government says you are driving the process? |
| **Implementation** | Who is responsible for the overall implementation of the programme?<br>What is the role of your organisation in the implementation matrix?<br>What is the role of the government? How do you work with MoPSLSW/MCDSW? Gatekeepers?<br>How do you deal with political interference, if any?<br>How do you target intended beneficiaries? |

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| | What is the status of the programme in terms of inclusion and exclusion? How do you minimise these? |
| **Sustainability** | How long is your organisation committed to fund the programme?<br><br>Any plans to scale up the programme to national level? Why?<br><br>Is the government to take over the funding or to co-fund? How and Why?<br><br>What is the future of social protection in the context of the present financing position?<br><br>What would say is the impact of the programme on the beneficiary communities?<br><br>How far is the programme meeting the intended goals of your organisation?<br><br>In terms of graduation, how have you fared? |
| **Wrapping up** | What are your organisation's future plans for social protection in the country?<br><br>Anything else you would like to say that you think is relevant?<br><br>Could I please have your Country Strategic Plan, Position Papers and other relevant documents?<br><br>Who else do you think I should talk to? |

## Appendix 3 Interview Guide for NGOs and CSOs

- Date of interview
- Introduction
- Interviewee's organisation
- Interviewee's job title:
- Interviewee's main roles and responsibilities:
- Interviewee's experience with social protection:
- Before we continue, please confirm whether you are willing to be quoted directly, or would you prefer your responses to be anonymous?

- **INGOs and CSOs**

| **Overarching theme** | Semi-structured questions |
|---|---|
| **Basic appreciation of social protection** | What is your general understanding of social protection? What does it entail and how did it emerge? |
| **Motivation for social protection** | What is the motivation behind social protection at global, national and organisational levels? |
| **Participation** | How has your organisation contributed to social protection in the country? What is your contribution? How do you lobby and advocate social protection? How do you work with communities? |
| **Donors and Financing** | Which donors you work with? How do they support you? Who supports you financially? What are your expectations from donors? How far are they fulfilled? How do you fulfil the expectations of your funders? Milestones? Challenges? |
| **Networks** | Do you belong to any civil society forum/working group/committee on social protection? How does it work and how influential is it? Interaction with donors & government? |
| **Relations with government** | How do you work with the government in the social protection agenda? How do you support each other? Do you work directly with the government? Which ministries? Any milestones? Any challenges? Any expectations from either side and how are they fulfilled? |
| **Social Protection Policy Framework** | Are you aware of any social protection policy framework in this country? What are the pillars of the policies? How did the policy come into being? How were you involved in the policy process? How far does the policy reflect your concerns? How far does the policy address the local context? From your experience, who owns and control the process? |
| **Wrapping up** | What is your organisation's future plans for social protection in the country?<br><br>Anything else you would like to say that you think is relevant?<br><br>Could I please have any documents that you think are relevant?<br><br>Who else do you think I should talk to? |

## Appendix 4 Interview Guide for FGDs

- Date of Interview
- Introduction
- Ground rules

| FGDs GUIDE | |
|---|---|
| **Knowledge of the HSCT/SCT programme** | • What do you know about the programme?<br>• Who funds the programme? Who runs the programme?<br>• How much is received per individual/household?<br>• Where do households collect the transfer?<br>• Frequency, duration and consistence of the programme?<br>• Who is involved in the programme and how are they involved? |
| **Selection and targeting** | • How are beneficiaries selected? Who does the selection?<br>• Who qualifies and who does not qualify? Who are the most vulnerable? How fair is the selection criteria?<br>• Any exclusion or inclusion cases?<br>• What would you say is the fairest selection criteria? Why?<br>• Community expectations? |
| **Participation and Ownership** | • How was the programme introduced to the community?<br>• How far were the community involved?<br>• How does the programme meet your preferences?<br>• Any consultation of the community? By whom, when and how?<br>• Who do you think owns the programme? Why?<br>• Would you agree if someone says you are the owners of the programme? Why? |
| **Gender and Power dynamics** | • How do women participate in the programme? How do men participate? How do households make decisions on how to spend the cash?<br>• Who decides how cash transfers are spent?<br>• Are children involved in decision making? How?<br>• Are cash transfers always spent on food? What happens when the household has other needs?<br>• Which food is usually bought? Dietary and nutrition needs for children?<br>• Are there ever conflicts over how the cash transfers are used within the household? If so, can you share an example of what prompts conflict and how it was resolved? |
| **Relations with programme staff** | • What is the role of the DSS/donor staff? How do they address your concerns? How do they facilitate the selection process?<br>• What are your expectations from the staff and what do they expect from you? How do you meet each other's expectations? |
| **Relations with community leaders** | • What is the role of chiefs, headmen and councillors in the programme? How do they participate in the selection process?<br>• What would you expect from the community leaders? What do the community leaders expect from you?<br>• Where do you converge and diverge with the community leaders? |
| **Impact of the programme** | • How has the programme affected your lives?<br>• How do beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries relate?<br>• If the programme were to stop today how would you cope? Did the programme stop/discontinue in the past? How did you cope? |