



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



EXPANDING
**SOCIAL
PROTECTION**

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VULNERABLE FAMILY SUPPORT GRANT PHASE OUT STUDY



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April 2016

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To all of you we say Thank You

Jane Namuddu and Herbert Mayengo



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDO	Community Development Officer
LCD	Labour Capacity Dependency
MIS	Management Information Systems
SAGE	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
SCG	Senior Citizens Grant
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
VFG	Vulnerable Family Grant
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loans Associations



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1.1 Introduction

ESP programme has over the last five years been implementing the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) programme. Two programme components were implemented namely; the Senior Citizens Grant (SCG) in all the 15 districts and the Vulnerable Family Grant (VFG) in 6¹ of the 15 pilot districts. The VFG is designed to target poor and vulnerable households which have extreme labour capacity deficiencies and high dependency ratios. It was specifically intended to reach households containing a high proportion of older people, children – particularly orphans - and people with disabilities – also known as Labour Capacity and Dependency (LCD) Targeting.

If present in a beneficiary household, adult women are selected to be the actual recipient of the transfers. Targeting for the VFG was based on national civil registration datasets generated through a civil registration exercise carried out by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), but with application of numerical scores to the members of each household according to age, sex, disability and orphan hood status.

Aggregate household scores are then calculated automatically in the SAGE MIS. An eligibility threshold (of 15%) is set for each district based on analysis of the UNHS 2009/10. Only those households scoring above the threshold are targeted. This is to allow distribution of beneficiaries to reflect differences in scale and depth of vulnerability between sub-counties within the district.

The VFG therefore used a set of proxy indicators based on weighted demographic characteristics to target households for eligibility for the grant. Final verification of eligibility would take place at the parish level, by Sub- County local authorities, led by the CDO.

¹Districts implementing the VFG grant included; Kiboga, Kyenjojo, Kaberamaido, Nebbi, Apac and Katakwi

Following the end of the SAGE pilot in 2015, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development decided to phase out the VFG with effect from November 2015. According to the MIS data, the total VFG households during that period were 13,131 in the 6 districts where the VFG was implemented. During that period, a total of 12,954,124,200/= was disbursed in the VFG districts. Before the phase out ESP made efforts to inform beneficiaries that the VFG was going to be phased out a study was conducted to establish beneficiary knowledge of the end of programme.

1.2 Objectives

Broadly the objective of this assessment was to establish the beneficiary knowledge on the end of the program, the nature of investments they have made and their plans on sustainability beyond the program.

Specifically we set out to;

1. To establish VFG beneficiaries' knowledge on the end of program.
2. To assess the impact of the program on VFG beneficiaries
3. To establish the potential for sustainability of beneficiaries after the end of the program

1.3 Report structure

The report is structured based on the objectives. The first section presents the general findings of the assessment starting with a general description of beneficiary characteristics. The sections following are thematically developed based on the objectives. Additional subthemes follow on from the main thematic areas of Vulnerable Family Grant as presented below.

The assessment was quantitative and was conducted in all the 6 pilot districts with 24 sub counties that were implementing the Vulnerable Family Grant (VFG).

2.1 Sampling

30 beneficiaries were randomly selected from each of the sub-counties using systematic sampling procedures to ensure representativeness of respondents in each of the sub-counties.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY



2.2 Data Entry

At the end of the payment cycle, all the collected data forms were entered by Monitoring and Evaluation officers in a well validated data entry template. Analysis was done by the M & E coordinator at the secretariat level.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

Introductions were made to all beneficiaries prior to conducting the interview, the purpose and objectives of the assessment were explained to beneficiaries and consent sought before starting the interview. Beneficiaries were encouraged to accept or decline participating if they were not comfortable participating.

CHAPTER THREE: STUDY FINDINGS

3.1 Respondent's background information

Respondents that were interviewed were all beneficiaries as they came from benefiting households. Majority of the respondents were aged between 35 and 64 years (43.7%). These were followed by those aged 65 to 70 at 22.8 percent and the least represented age category were those aged 76 and above. According to the program design, the VFG households have primary recipients (these are household members nominated by the entire household to collect the money on behalf of the household. In addition, the household members also nominate a person to receive the money on their behalf if the primary recipient is not able to collect the money. Of the interviewed recipients, 81.7% were primary recipients while only 18.3% were nominated recipients. Approximately 7 in very 10 respondents (73.8%) were females. This is not surprising because according to the program design, the VFG preferred recipients are women if at all they exist in the households. With regards to education level, 35.6% had no education, 29.7% had attained lower primary education and only 5.1 % had attained secondary and above. This means that the population under study was largely under educated. The socio demographic characteristics of respondents are as summarized below.

Table 1: Social demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Class	Frequency/%
Age of respondents	below 35	103 (13.7)
	35-64	328 (43.7)
	65-70	171 (22.8)
	71-75	80 (10.7)
	76 and above	69 (9.2)
Status of respondents	Primary recipient	621 (81.7)
	Nominated/alternative recipient	139 (18.3)

Characteristics	Class	Frequency/%
Sex of respondents	Male	199 (26.2)
	Female	560 (73.8)
Respondents level of Education	No education	267 (35.6)
	Lower primary	223 (29.7)
	Upper primary	185 (24.6)
	Post primary	38 (5.1)
	Secondary and above	38 (5.1)

3.2 Household composition in VFG households

An assessment of the VFG household composition revealed that a relatively big number people permanently lived in VFG households. As illustrated in Table 2 below, 50.3 % of the respondents reported having 6-10 permanent residents while 32.6% of the respondents reported having less than 6 family members and only 17.1% reported having big families with more than 11 household members. The average family size of the sampled respondents was 7 and the maximum number of family members was 25. This indicates that a large percentage of people were benefiting from the VFG grant. This could imply that the right households were targeted since large and poor families had a place in the selection criteria. It could also imply that household family members increased with the grant.

Table 2: Number of beneficiaries in VFG households

Household- members	Frequency	Percentage
less than 6 members	248	32.6
6-10 members	383	50.3
11 and above members	130	17.1
Total	761	100.0

3.3 Age groups of household members

In regard to age groups of household members, most of the sampled families (85.0%) reported having at least one child in the household. As illustrated in the table below, 27.2% of the respondents reported living with persons with dis abilities. Households with

members (adults) in the labor productive age were 75.5% however those working were only 20.0%. This suggests a high level of unemployment. 63.0% of the interviewed beneficiaries reported having a family member in their household aged over 65 and will therefore be enrolled on to the SCG. Although the VFG was targeting a household and the SCG targets an individual, more than half of the phased out VFG (63%) households will have at least a household member benefiting from the SCG and will therefore be secondary beneficiaries. The fact that 85% households reported having at least one child per household indicates that many children will still be reached with the SCG. The persons living with disability are however likely to miss out since fewer households (27.2%) reported having them. There is therefore need to think about interventions specifically targeting persons with disabilities that have lost out with the phasing out of the VFG.

Table3: House hold structure/ composition

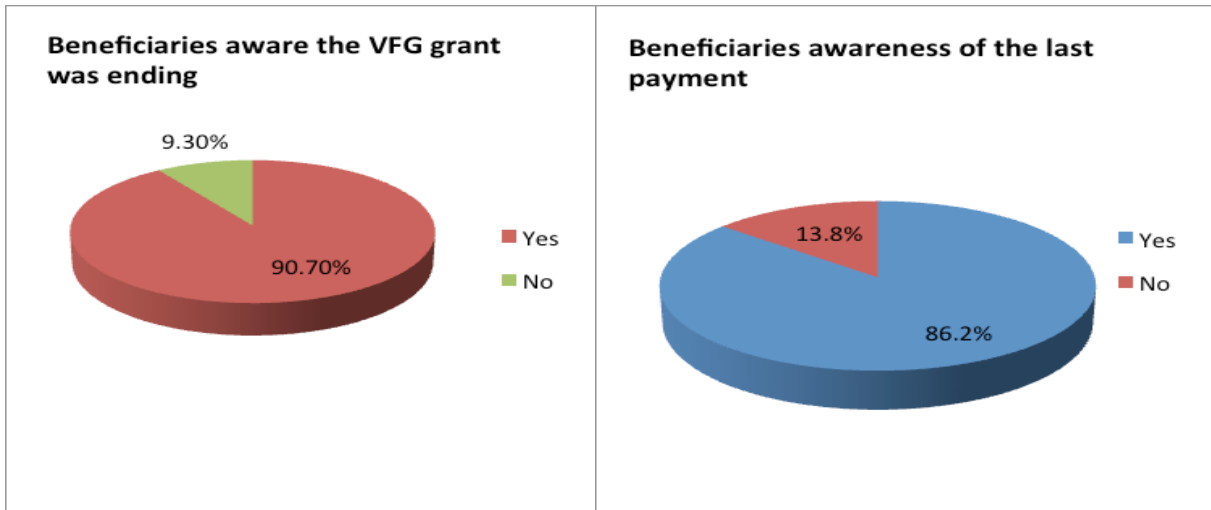
Families with at least	Percentage
Elderly (above 65)	63.0%
Adults (18-64)	75.5%
Adults working	20.0%
Children	85.0%
Living with disability	27.2%

3.4 VFG beneficiaries' knowledge on the end of VFG program / Effectiveness of communications

On confirming that the VFG was to be phased out, awareness creation was made to inform beneficiaries that the program was coming to an end. This was done through various communications including radio talk shows, local leaders. On assessing whether beneficiaries received the information, findings revealed that 90% of the beneficiaries were aware that the VFG grant was ending. Asked whether beneficiaries knew the payment they were receiving was the final payment, majority of the respondents (86.2%) were aware that this was the last time they were receiving payment and only 13.8% reported they were not aware they were receiving their last payment. This is an indication that effective communication was done prior to the phase out of VFG and

beneficiaries were mentally prepared for the same. It's also important to note the 13% with no information is a sizeable number and this presents an opportunity to make some communication and awareness creation improvements in future.

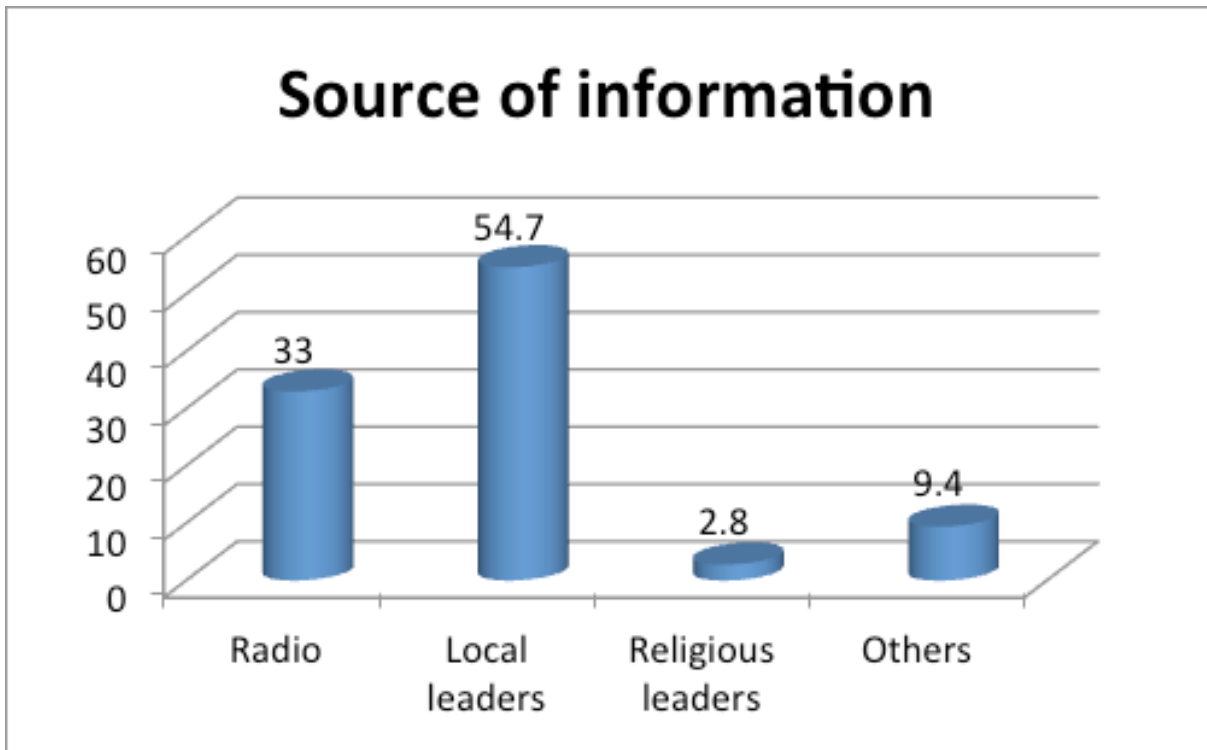
Figure 1: Beneficiaries knowledge on the end of VFG Program



3.5 Source of information on VFG phase out

More than half of the respondents (54.7%) reported that they learnt about the VFG ending through their local leaders while (33.0%) reported knowing this through radio, 9.4% through other sources including community development officers and SAGE staff at the district. Only 2.8% got to know through religious leaders. The high number reported to have learnt this through political leaders could be attributed to the political period which was for campaigns especially given the fact that many community members were not happy about the VFG targeting criteria. It is however important to note that local leaders have a role to play in information dissemination and could therefore be provided with up to date program information. The relatively low number of people reporting to have got the information through radio could be attributed to the high number of female respondents (73.8) compared to only (26.2%) of their male counterparts who mostly have access and control of the radio in a home. Communication at 33.0% may mean that there is still need to review our radio communication strategy for example through mapping of the most listened to radios or times when talk shows, programs or adverts are held to ensure maximum coverage.

Figure 2: Source of Information on VFG phase out



3.6 Awareness of the Plan to roll out SCG in former VFG Sub counties

Asked whether they knew the plans to roll out SCG, 9 in every 10 (90.2%) of the interviewed respondents were aware of the plan to rollout SCG in the formal VFG sub counties and only 9.8% were not aware that elderly VFG beneficiaries are to be enrolled on the SCG. This demonstrates a high level of awareness creation among beneficiaries.

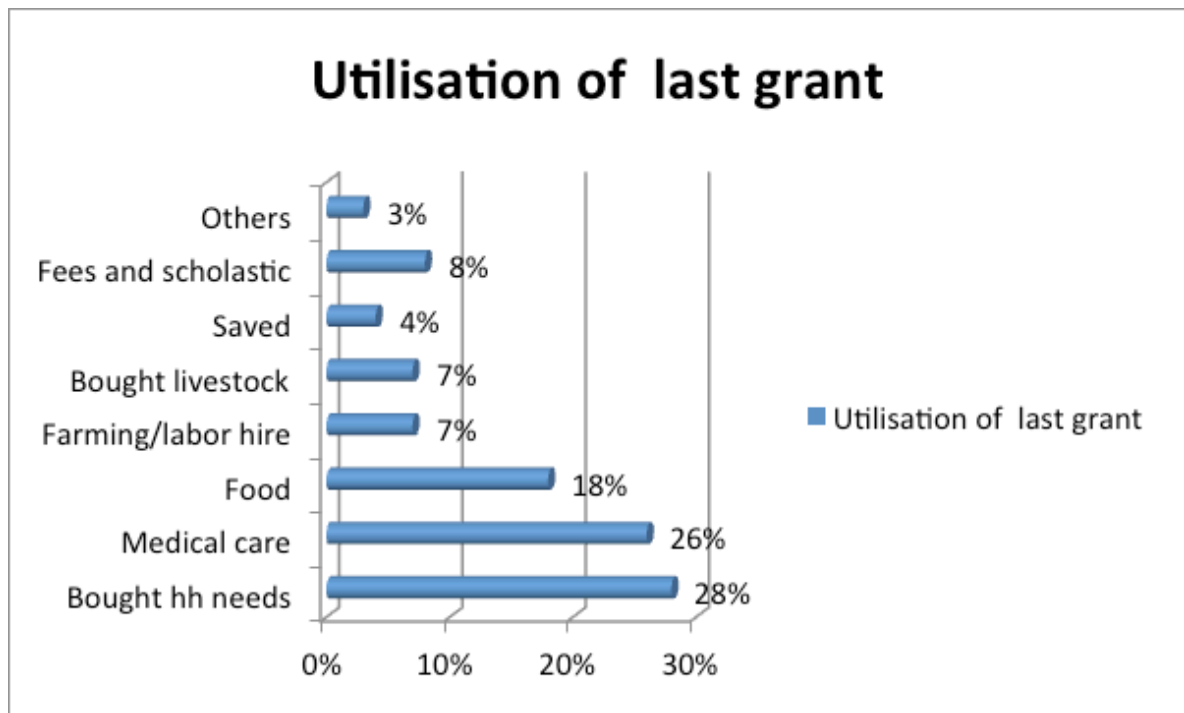
3.7 Challenges accessing money on payment day

Asked whether beneficiaries had any problems accessing their money on the last payment, majority 90.7% indicated that they didn't face any challenges and only 9.3% sighted having problems in accessing their money.

3.8 Effectiveness and Impact of the grant

Most beneficiaries reported spending their transfer on meeting basic needs. The needs reported by the beneficiaries included buying household needs (28%), followed by 26 % who reported having spent on medical care and food (18%). Expenditures on school fees and scholastic materials, hiring labor and buying livestock where reported by 8% and 7 % respectively as illustrated in figure 3below. Saving was among the least reported areas of spending by very few people (4%).

Figure 3: Beneficiary Utilization of the last grant



3.9 Investments since receiving the grant

Majority of the respondents (85%) reported that their households made investments since they started receiving the SAGE grant. Only 14.7% reported they have not invested. Investments were in the area of livestock, small road side businesses

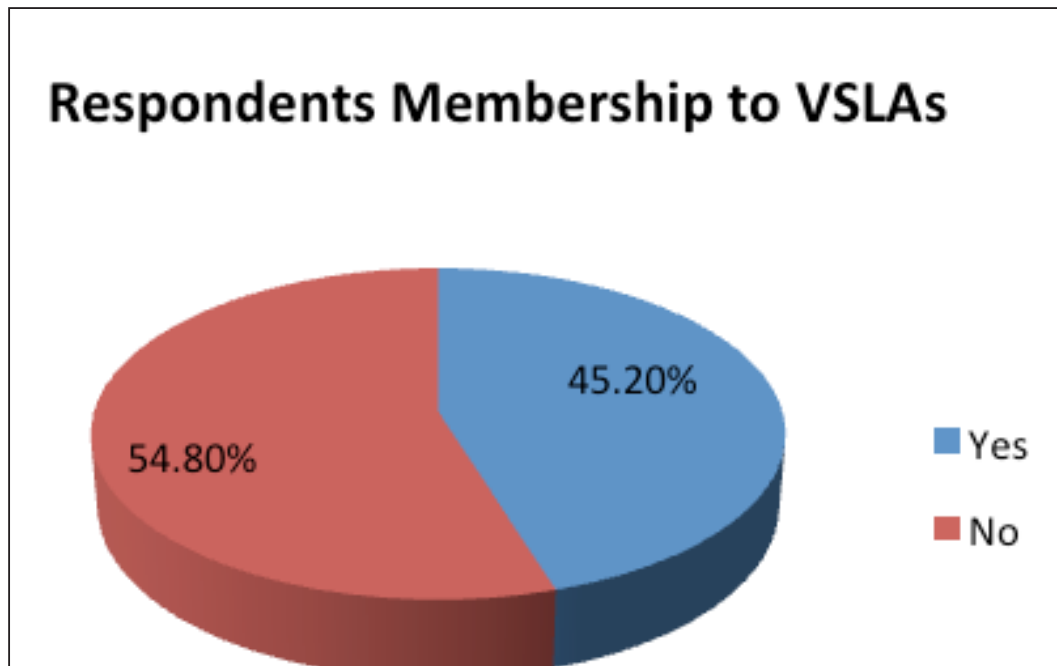
3.10 Household savings from the grant

Findings indicated that slightly more than half of the households (52.4%) have made savings from the VFG grant while 47.6% reported not having made any savings. This could be attributed to the fact that the grant is for the entire household hence requiring consensus prior to investing. It could also imply that the money is mainly spent on meeting other household needs with nothing is left for saving by the household. Since the population in the VFG interviewed households is high as indicated in section..... above, it could imply that the 25,000/= per month is too little to enable the household members make meaningful investments or savings.

3.11 Membership to Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)

Slightly more than half of the respondents (54.8%) reported not being members of any Village Savings and Loans Association as illustrated in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Beneficiary membership to VSLAs



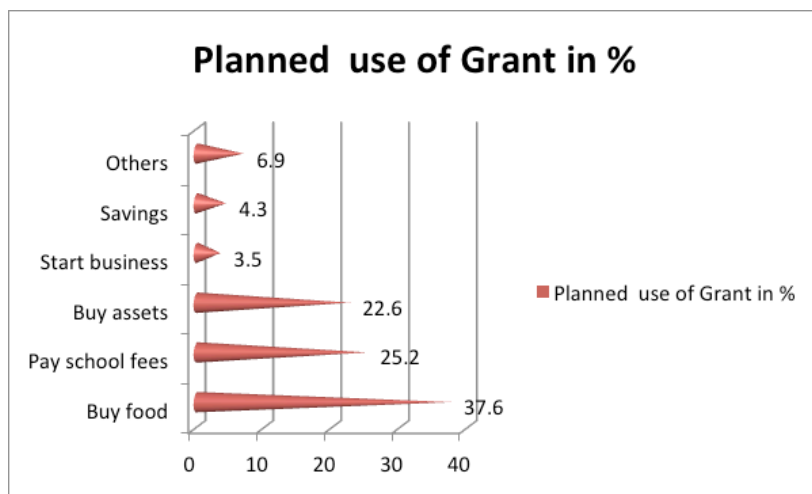
It was however not established whether respondents who reported being members of the VSLAs joined as a result of receiving the grant, were motivated by something else or were even members to the VSLAs before SAGE started. The limited number of respondent's membership to VSLA can be attributed to the household ownership of the grant vs individual ownership in the SCG where the grant belongs to an individual and decision making on investment and joining the group is easy. It is also plausible that the limited membership is due to the many demanding needs in VFG households combined with high poverty levels and vulnerability in the VFG households. The findings imply that benefits of the grant after phase out are limited and sustainability is minimal. It is therefore important to recommend former VFG beneficiaries for support where possible.

Asked whether there are potential dangers in being part of the VSLAs, respondents noted that membership to the groups requires money and it's hard to join a VSLA if you are not assured of an income or if you do not have an account. It was also reported that membership is individual not as a household. Since many of the VFG households had labor constraints, it not surprising that their involvement in VSLA is minimal.

3.12 Planned use of the transitional grant

Beneficiary households were paid a transitional grant equivalent to 3 months payment equivalent to (75,000/=). Many of the households had not received their two previous months totaling the amount to 125,000/=. Beneficiaries were asked to share their intended use of the grant. This is presented in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Respondents planned use of the transitional grant



As evident in Figure 5 above, many of the beneficiaries (37.6%) were planning to spend their transitional grant on buying food. From the pay point exit surveys it is known that the grant also affects the beneficiaries' eating patterns. In the December 2015 report, 64% reported that they had better quality food, 31% indicated that they had more frequent meals while 5% reported bigger meals.

School Fees and scholastic materials: Paying school fees and purchase of scholastic materials was reported as the second key area beneficiaries were planning to spend their transitional grant on at 25.3%. This is in agreement with existing information from the previous exit surveys and the evaluation report which indicate that VFG beneficiaries spend much of their grant on paying fees. We can therefore report that VFG led to increased access to education and is likely to contribute to human development of children from poor and vulnerable households.

Buying assets: Buying of assets ranked third with 22.6%. The productive assets beneficiaries were planning to buy included buying livestock specifically chicken, goats, pigs and cows for the few who planned to upgrade from goats to cows. Other reported assets include; radio, mattresses and blankets among others. Very few of the

respondents (3.5%) had plans of using the money to start small businesses to enable self-sustenance. 4.3% reported that they will be saving the money. The intended form of saving was however not explained.

3.13 Respondent’s knowledge of programs providing support to the vulnerable

With the phasing out of the VFG yet no alternative support was provided or recommended to the former VFG beneficiaries other than those above 65 years who were to enroll for the SCG, it was important to establish whether respondents had any knowledge on where they could get services within their sub county once in need. Research results indicated that An investigation to find out whether respondents were aware of any government program/NGO that can provide support to the vulnerable when in need in their sub-county showed that, only 22.5% knew that such programs exist and majority 77.6% did not have the knowledge. The lack of knowledge on the same among beneficiaries can be attributed to the absence of such programs in the communities.

Table 4: Showing beneficiary level of knowledge of programs providing support to the vulnerable

Any programs	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	167	22.5%
No	577	77.6%
Total	744	100.0%

4.1 Conclusions

Beneficiaries had full awareness of the end of the program and a high percentage was in the know that the payment they were receiving was the last payment. Despite this, it is not evident that many households were planning to invest the last grant in income generating projects that were likely to bring in income to the households as evident in the 3.5% that were planning to invest in business.

Majority of the respondents reported having spent much of the grant on basic necessities, medical care and education thus meeting household recurrent expenditure as opposed to development assets. This does not indicate has an impact on sustainability after the VFG is phased out.

It's also not guaranteed that former VFG households will continue accessing the services they were accessing during the time of the grant. Although a high percentage of households (63%) had elderly over 65 and will therefore enroll for the SCG, there is no guarantee that this money will be spent on the entire household as it was during VFG since SCG is an individual grant and therefore decisions on how to spend it are personal.

4.2 Recommendations

It is important that government and development partners are encouraged to design and implement a programme targeting the vulnerable households to enable vulnerable households continue receiving support.

Local governments working through the CDO's should follow up with the households formerly benefiting from VFG to refer them to available programs. Special efforts should be made to ensure children that had been enrolled in school are supported to get educational support so that they do not lose out on education that they had benefited from.



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