

# Use instructions of the Lesotho's Child Grants Programme (CGP) and Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and access to Government Services (SPRINGS) project impact evaluation data

## OVERVIEW

This document provides information for using the Lesotho CGP + SPRINGS impact evaluation data, a post-intervention only non-equivalent control group study which analyses the impact of the CGP, the second most important social assistance programme in Lesotho, the largest being the Old Age Pension, and a complementary livelihood intervention, with preferential targeting of households participating in the CGP, which was called Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government Services (SPRINGS). In addition to explaining the data structure, it provides brief information about the programmes and the evaluation.

This dataset is released by the Food and Agriculture Microdata catalogue. The data package contains several datasets related to three primary sources (household, community and business surveys). The survey interviewed households, businesses, and community members between November 2017 and January 2018.

## THE PROGRAMMES

**The Lesotho Child Grants Programme (CGP)** is an unconditional social cash transfer run by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), targeted to poor and vulnerable households. The objective of the CGP is to improve the living standards of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) so as to reduce malnutrition, improve health status, and increase school enrolment among OVC. Households are selected through a combination of proxy means testing and community validation and registered in the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA).

The programme is run by the Ministry of Social Development, with financial support from the European Commission and technical support from UNICEF-Lesotho. As of December 2017, the CGP reached 26 600 households and provided benefits for approximately 65 000 children across 10 districts in Lesotho. Since 2009 the nature of the CGP has been transformed. From an exclusively donor-supported pilot, the CGP has developed institutional and operational systems for roll-out at a national scale. Funding has been taken over by the government, which is now expanding nationwide both NISSA and the CGP, the former serving as a platform for better harmonizing social protection interventions in the country.

At the time of data collection for this study in 2017, households received quarterly a transfer indexed to the number of children in each household, ranging from M360 for households with 1-2 children, M600 for households with 3-4 children, to M750 for households with 5 children or more. The mode of payment is through mobile means (Mpesa, Ecocash), bank transfers and hand delivery by a security company at selected pay-points.

**The Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and access to Government Services (SPRINGS)** started in June 2016, a 30-month intervention expecting to reach over 7 200 households and around 18 355 beneficiaries. SPRINGS overall implementation was led by Catholic Relief Services in close collaboration with UNICEF, government ministries, including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Agriculture

and Food Security, and other implementing partners (Caritas Lesotho, Good Shepherds Sisters and Sisters of Charity). SPRINGS aimed to complement the CGP with a community development package providing support to:

- i. Community based savings and internal lending groups, also known as Savings and Internal Lending Communities - with financial education to promote savings, smooth consumption, manage finances, and investment in small income generating activities.
- ii. Homestead gardening (keyhole gardens, vegetable seeds distribution and nutrition training) to have improved and diversified source of nutrition.
- iii. Income generation, market engagement skills and formation of market clubs.
- iv. Improving nutritional practices complemented with Community-led Complementary Feeding and Learning Sessions.
- v. Enhancing localized access to health, nutrition, education, and protection services collaborating with the Ministry of Local Government to deliver Citizen Service Outreach Days.

SPRINGS prioritized vulnerable communities as determined by a high percentage of social assistance beneficiaries and/or high rates of poverty according to the NISSA. Furthermore, SPRINGS allowed participation not only of CGP beneficiaries, but also from other interested community members to ensure that those households that did not meet the eligibility criteria for the CGP were not excluded, to avoid potential negative community impacts. By the end of SPRINGS, 316 savings groups with 5 899 members (4 895 women and 1 004 men) had been formed, 218 beneficiaries (153 women and 65 men) were engaged in training on income generating activities and 724 had joined market clubs, 6 332 keyhole gardens had been constructed by 6 001 families, 842 beneficiaries had enrolled in nutrition sessions and 85 Ministry of Local Government staff had been trained on conducting multi-sectoral meetings and organizing and executing service days

## **ABOUT THE SAMPLE AND THE IMPACT EVALUATION**

To assess the combined impacts of the CGP and SPRINGS programmes, the study team carried out a non-experimental design impact evaluation with three treatment arms:

- i)* households receiving both CGP and SPRINGS;
- ii)* households receiving CGP but not SPRINGS;
- iii)* households receiving neither the CGP nor SPRINGS, which constitutes the pure comparison group (households in areas where NISSA data was available but CGP payments were not disbursed).

This study design allows to evaluate the stand-alone impacts of CGP and the joint impacts of CGP and SPRINGS with respect to the comparison group. To improve the comparability between the household's groups, the evaluation team used the NISSA registry data to match households with and without CGP based on their socio-demographic characteristics. Before implementing this procedure, the evaluation team took the following decisions concerning the list of households in NISSA to be included in the PSM analysis:

- 1) Including only households having at least one household member below 18 years of age
- 2) Including households residing in one of the six districts of Berea, Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Mafeteng, Maseru, Mohale's Hoek.

- 3) For the comparison group they considered only households living in villages without either CGP or SPRINGS
- 4) Excluding households living in community councils where CGP had been implemented for more than seven years and less than four years.

The objective of the first condition was to target the same typology of households, i.e. those eligible for the CGP. The second condition aimed to limit the extent of the fieldwork to similar agro-ecological areas, while the third condition was needed to minimize the extent of spillovers, which could lead to bias in impact estimates. Finally, the fourth condition aimed to make households as comparable as possible in terms of CGP receipt at community level.

The PSM procedure was conducted in four steps:

1. Selecting a list of characteristics that are thought to influence the probability of being eligible for the CGP
2. Estimating the propensity score for each household in this reference population and excluding households out of the “common support”.
3. Matching each CGP household with a household in the potential comparison group with the closest propensity score.
4. Randomly extracting households from the CGP and CGP-plus-SPRINGS groups and selecting the matched comparison households.

Data collection was conducted between November 2017 and January 2018, surveying overall 2 014 households, 1 550 of whom were eligible for the CGP (8 212 individuals), while 464 were not (2 106 individuals). The former group was used for the impact evaluation, while the full set of 2 014 households was used for a spillover and cost-effectiveness analysis. Among the eligible households interviewed, 1 343 were targeted by the PSM analysis, while the remaining 207 households were on the list of potential substitutes provided to the service provider in case of non-response (13.35 percent replacement rate). Table 1 provides a summary of the geographical distribution of the household sample, by eligibility and treatment status.

#### Survey sample by eligibility, treatment status and districts

district	eligible				ineligible			
	comparison	CGP	CGP + SPRINGS	Total	comparison	CGP	CGP + SPRINGS	Total
Maseru	272	22	164	458	40	13	59	112
Butha-Buthe	1	66	123	190	0	34	60	94
Leribe	81	61	154	296	16	18	62	96
Berea	67	230	0	297	10	48	0	58
Mafeteng	130	80	0	210	20	61	0	81
Mohale's Hoek	99	0	0	99	23	0	0	23
Total	650	459	441	1,550	109	174	181	464

## CONTENT OF THE DATASETS

The FAM catalogue contains 26 household survey datasets, 8 community survey datasets and one non-farm business survey dataset. Below you find some tips for their use:

- The file hh\_sec\_0 includes the household identification details, such as district, community council, electoral division, etc. The household treatment status is given by the field **hh0q5**, while

the eligibility status is given by the field **hh0q6**. If the users aim to estimate the direct impacts of the programmes, they need to select households eligible for the CGP. For Stata users, this entails running the command:

**keep if hh0q6==1**

- The unique household identifier throughout the datasets is given by the field **HHID**
- The file **hh\_sec\_1** includes the basic information concerning the household members (roster). The unique individual identifier is given by the field **ID**. Alternatively, users can also uniquely identify individuals by the pair **HHID MemberID**. For instance, if users would like to match the roster (master dataset) with labour and time use variables (section 7, using dataset), they would need to run the following commands:

**use hh\_sec\_1.dta, clear**

**match 1:1 ID using hh\_sec\_7**

or alternatively

**merge 1:1 HHID MemberID using hh\_sec\_7**

The output would be the same

Result	# of obs.	
not matched	1,061	
from master	1,061	( _merge==1)
from using	0	( _merge==2)
matched	9,257	( _merge==3)

In this case there is no perfect match since section 7 provides information on labour and time use of household members with 6 years of age and above.

- The file **hh\_filters** includes fields that either represents section filters or household level variables that are included in sections which logically have a different statistical unit of analysis. For instance, section 4 provides information on livestock holding and production. It starts with the following filter question: *“Did you or any household member own or herd/rear any livestock/animals in the past 12 months?”*. If no, the interview continues with section 5, if yes, a range of questions is asked to the respondent. The information is set in a matrix form (see questionnaire), and this is reflected in **hh\_sec\_4**, where the unique identifier is given by the pair **HHID LivestockID**. However, at the end of the section, two questions on livestock by-products at the household level (not at the livestock level) are asked too: **hh4q13 hh4q14**. These are included in the filter dataset.
- The unique community survey identifier is given by the field **CommunityID**. It can be used to match sections of the community questionnaire where the statistical unit is the community. For instance, if the users aim to match section 2 (civil infrastructure, master dataset) with section 3 (wages and agricultural prices, using dataset), the following commands should be run:  
**use cc\_sec\_2.dta, clear**  
**match 1:1 CommunityID using cc\_sec\_3**  
For sections where the statistical unit is different, users should carry out a 1:n match. For instance, linking section 3 with section 4 (retail prices) will need:  
**use cc\_sec\_3.dta, clear**  
**match 1:n CommunityID using cc\_sec\_4**
- The unique community survey identifier **CommunityID** cannot match the community survey with the household survey. For this task, users need to use the field **CSIDHH**. Communities are clusters of villages under a unique chief and in few communities, multiple village surveys have

been conducted and a n:1 match is not feasible. For this reason, if the data user would like to create a set of community characteristics to be used as control variables in a regression analysis at the household/individual level, it is mandatory to create first a dataset of community characteristics, by taking the average/median/min/max of the variables of interest, followed by a n:1 match. Not performing this exercise will end up in an error by Stata

- Similarly, the business survey can be n:1 linked to the community survey via the **CSIDHH** field after creating and collapsing a dataset of community characteristics.

**NOTE: for more information visit**

[https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Lesotho-CGP-SPRINGS-Impact-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Lesotho-CGP-SPRINGS-Impact-Report_FINAL.pdf)

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca1916en/CA1916EN.pdf>

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