Economic strengthening and child wellbeing and care – positive effects and adverse consequences

Keetie Roelen
STRIVE Symposium
Washington DC, 6 March 2015
Limited evidence base

economic strengthening and child protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Child marriage (n=19)</th>
<th>Sexual violence (n=26)</th>
<th>Physical violence (n=16)</th>
<th>Inadequate care (n=20)</th>
<th>Overall occurrence of each component</th>
<th>Overall % of programmes with this component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of intervention s with this component</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of intervention s with this component</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No. of intervention s with this component</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic strengthening</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/ awareness raising/ life skills (children)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/ awareness raising (adults)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving access to or quality of services (mostly education/day care)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child protection system strengthening</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring/ social Support</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Marcus and Page 2014
Limited evidence base

### Social Protection and Child Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme type and key features</th>
<th>Family Separation</th>
<th>Child labour</th>
<th>Child marriage</th>
<th>Birth registration</th>
<th>Schooling</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Total reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human capital accumulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult labour</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum school attendance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated anti-poverty</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum school attendance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure income transfers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No conditions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Barrientos et al. 2013
This presentation

**Outline**

- consider wider evidence from ES interventions and outcomes for children in terms of child wellbeing and care, and indication for family separation and reintegration/reunification
- consider emerging evidence
- discuss positive effects, programme limitations and adverse consequences
- discuss programme, research and policy implications
Positive effects of economic strengthening

household wealth improves child wellbeing and care

**economic strengthening**

Does a good life for children always depend on how wealthy a household is?

“A child living in a family of poverty surely has disadvantages. A poor family can not have good conditions to bring up a child as a wealthy family does. The lack of money as well as spirit will affect the life of a child.”

[Vietnam, An Giang, male caregiver]

“Rich children have a lot of nutritious food, having enough 3 meals per day with fish, pork, chicken. Rich children do not need to earn money to assist parents. Poor children have to catch fish to assist parents.”

[Vietnam, Dong Thap, 13-year old boy]
Positive effects of economic strengthening household wealth improves child wellbeing and care

economic strengthening

child wellbeing and care

Concern Worldwide Graduation Programme Burundi
Positive effects of economic strengthening

economic stability can prevent family separation

Karnali Employment Programme (KEP) Nepal
Economic strengthening – all good?

Limitations and adverse consequences

Positive effects, but:

>> economic strengthening alone is not enough:
limited behavioural change

>> economic strengthening might have adverse consequences:
competition for resources
Limitations

ES activities have limited impacts on child wellbeing and care

Are there any other issues that you think are important for a child to be well or feel happy?

“Parents play an important role in educating children. Children can not develop properly without care and love from parents. Violence is not necessary in educating. Parents need to spend more time with children and talk much with them.” [Vietnam, An Giang, male caregiver]

- Cash transfers and nutrition: “Just Give Money to the Poor” (Barrientos and Hulme, 2010) is not enough

- VSLA interventions and child wellbeing in Burundi (Annan et al 2013, Bundervoet et al 2011 – IRC): improving economic outcomes is not enough
Adverse consequences

competition for resources

- economic strengthening
- household resources: monetary resources, time
- child wellbeing and care: time, productive activities, household chores
- children’s resources
(1) Household resources

Balancing spending of VUP Public Works transfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utensils</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowed</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid debt</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Consumption**: food, utensils, clothes
2. **Human capital**: education, health
3. **Income generation**: farming, business
4. **Asset accumulation**: livestock
5. **Financial services**: saving, borrowing

Source: Devereux (2013)
Care responsibilities may cause tension with respect to participation in economic strengthening activities. 

>> requires balance between paid and unpaid care work, particularly for women.

“The difficulty is] to spend much time at work and not caring for children and know what they learned at school.”

[Kibilize, adult female, PW]

Source: Roelen and Shelmerdine (2014)
(2) Children’s resources

Source: Roelen (2015)
Children may substitute for adults’ contributions to household reproduction and domestic work

“There are parents who choose to sacrifice some children for being able to go to work in the VUP. [...] These children stay home and are refused to go to school because they’re taking care of their siblings.”

[Kibilize, male child, DS]

Source: Roelen and Shelmerdine (2014)
Way forward

**Programmatic considerations**

- Consider behavioural change/support/advice/parenting components
- Adapt size and type of programme support to reflect household composition
- Consider role of children in asset accumulation strategies and income generating activities
- Acknowledge and consider issues of seasonality
- Integrate childcare solutions into programming
Way forward

research considerations

- Monitor and evaluate ES programmes with respect to child-specific outcomes beyond their theory of change

- Expand set of indicators, including child wellbeing, care, family separation and reunification/reintegration

- Develop studies that allow for disentangling what ES programme components work and how they work

- Use mixed methods approaches
Way forward

**policy considerations**

Economic strengthening is not new...

Create programme linkages to:

- avoid duplication and parallel efforts
- join forces and build on economies of scale
- promote learning and expand evidence base
Thank you!

k.roelen@ids.ac.uk