

Policies to Assist Homeless OVC and other Vulnerable Children and Youth

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OVC and other Vulnerable Children and Youth

- There are numerous and multifaceted reasons that affect the ability of families to care for their children, including extreme poverty, PEV, GBV, disasters and the complex impacts of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/AIDs, GBV.
- In Kenya, due to the lack of adequate support structures for family-based care, such as foster care, Charitable Care Institutions (CCIs) have become a source of substitute care.

OVC and other Vulnerable Children and Youth

Until more robust infrastructure and comprehensive services exist to support and protect orphaned and vulnerable children, institutions may remain a “necessary evil”.

Research conducted in Uasin Gishu (UG), Kenya, in 2011 specified that, reasons for placement of orphans in institutional care were destitution (36%), followed by abandonment (22%), neglect (21%), physical or sexual abuse (8%), and lack of an available or able caregiver (8%) (Morantz et al. 2013).

CT-OVC

- Alternative to the CCI is to strengthen the capacity of households to care for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) within the community as key strategic response in addressing the OVC crisis.
- The Cash Transfers to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC) is government social support program which provides regular and predictable (unconditional) cash transfers to poor households taking care of orphans and vulnerable children

CT-OVC

- The main objectives of the social protection program are to support families to cope with vulnerability and encourage fostering and retention of OVC within their families and communities as well as to enhance their human capital development
- The Kenya CT-OVC program started in 2004 with the support from UNICEF and other development partners provided financial resources and technical assistance for the design and setting up of the system implementation and scale-up process nationwide. Currently the government led CT-OVC program has expanded to 69 Counties, 151,243 households and around 750,000 OVC nationwide

CT-OVC

- Emerging evidence confirms that CT-OVC is having a significant impact on children as measured by improved school attendance, future outlook on life, health visitations, household nutrition and therefore impacting the ability of household to uphold children's human rights. There has been a significant reduction of on farm child labour as a result of the cash transfer. However, we did find significant household food and economic insecurity in all participating households, with 23% of all household reporting moderate food insecurity and only 2% reporting being food secure

- The effect of the cash transfers on the future outlook of children and adolescents is another new contribution to human development.
- We hypothesized that children in the CT households feel they will have more opportunities later in life because they feel supported by the government and not entirely dependent on their caregivers for support and opportunities.
- By staying with known relatives and other children, orphans may grow up in a more stable and secure environment favoring their psychological, intellectual, and social development.

CT-OVC

- This group of youth who are benefiting from cash transfers will be easy beneficiary of housing because there are in the community with their families and have opportunity to inherit land.
- However, the youth who has grown up in CCI has lost their lineage and inheritance of ancestral land, because of their long-term institutional care, lost connections to their family home and extended family.

Recommendation

- Existing child-rights evidence-based poverty reduction strategies, such as the cash-transfer to orphaned and vulnerable children program (Bryant JH. 2009) urgently need to be extended to all impoverished households caring for the most vulnerable children and youth.
- Given that household poverty is a primary structural determinant of children and youths' street-involvement, alleviating poverty and improving the circumstances of households to adequately care for children will likely reduce the number of children and youth migrating to the streets.
- Furthermore, there is a need to develop and implement social welfare programs for children and youth already connected to the streets.

Recommendation

- Direct assistance to children and youth through the provision of safe places to live, food, and free and accessible medical care and education is fundamental to their right to special protection and assistance, and an adequate standard of living.