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Lesotho



Institutional assessment of
the **Child Grants Programme**
and **Sustainable Poverty**
Reduction through Income,
Nutrition, and Access to
Government Services
Programme pilot project in
Lesotho

Institutional assessment of the Child Grants Programme and Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government Services Programme Programme pilot project in Lesotho

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ASWO	Auxiliary Social Welfare Officer
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CBC	Community-based categorisation
CBT	Community-based targeting
CC	Community Council
CCFLS	Community-led Complementary Feeding and Learning Sessions
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CDM	Community Development Model
CGP	Child Grants Programme
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSC	Citizen Service Centres
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOL	Government of Lesotho
ICWHR	Improving Child Wellbeing and Household Resiliency
IT	Information Technology
LSL	Lesotho Loti
LVAC	Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MIS	Management Information System
MOH	Ministry of Health
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoCST	Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
NISSA	National Information System for Social Assistance
NSDP	National Social Development Policy
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy
OAP	Old Age Pension
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PMT	Proxy Means Test
SILC	Saving and Internal Lending Communities
SPTC	Social Protection Technical Committee
SPRINGS	Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition, and Access to Government Services
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VAC	Village Assistance Committee

Executive summary

This report presents analysis and findings from an institutional assessment conducted during March – September 2019 of the Lesotho Child Grants Programme (CGP), a national social protection programme supporting poor households with children 0–18 years, and the Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government services (SPRINGS) pilot project. The main objective of this study is to understand the institutional architecture and processes of the two programmes and identify those that facilitated or hindered coordination between the social protection and productive dimensions of development interventions seeking to address rural poverty, hunger and food insecurity.

The study is part of a larger project that seeks to identify factors that lead to better articulation between social protection interventions and rural productive inclusion strategies. Growing evidence has shown that complementarity between these interventions and greater coherence between social protection and rural development policies can lead to synergies by strategically addressing constraints faced by poor rural households.

The objective of the CGP is to promote greater levels of education, health and nutrition, especially for children aged 0–18 living in poor and vulnerable households. This is done by delivering quarterly cash payments, equivalent to approximately 20 percent of household consumption, to eligible households. The cash is unconditional but delivered with strong messaging. The CGP has been in place in Lesotho since 2009. As per the latest estimates, it covers approximately 41 000 households in 64 community councils, in all ten districts of the country.

SPRINGS is not a national programme, but a pilot community development project that was implemented with the objective of increasing income and improving poor rural households' livelihoods. The pilot was in place from 2016 to 2018. It covered about 7 000 households and targeted any community member living in one of five selected community councils.

Lesotho has demonstrated a high level of government commitment towards social protection. In 2017–18, Lesotho's social assistance expenditure was 5.7 percent of its GDP. In contrast, most other developing countries spend only about 1 to 2 percent of their GDP. A concerted effort has been taken to implement a comprehensive and coherent social protection strategy, led by the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) created in 2012. The National Social Protection Strategy of 2015 aims to operationalize a set of social protection programmes implemented by various ministries that seek to reduce vulnerabilities across the life course of individuals.

Despite these attempts, the MOSD has had limited convening power to address social protection through inter-sectorial coordination. The bulk of social assistance expenditure and coverage sits outside the purview of the MOSD. Lesotho's social assistance expenditure is around 12 percent of its national budget, but MOSD's share is only 1.4 percent of the budget. MOSD's main programmes are the CGP, an Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Bursary and the Public Assistance programme. These comprise less than 10 percent of the Government's social assistance spending.

While the CGP is implemented directly by the MOSD, an NGO, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), implemented SPRINGS under the auspices of the MOSD. Catholic Relief Services worked with three other NGOs (Caritas Lesotho, Good Shepherds Sisters and Sisters of Charity) and with government officers belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). No formal Memorandums of Understanding with other institutions were concluded for the execution of both programmes.

The design of both the CGP and SPRINGS programmes incorporated learnings from previous assessments and pilots. These findings and other pilots (specifically the Improving Child Wellbeing and Household Resiliency pilot in 2015) ultimately led to the creation of a comprehensive livelihood generation pilot: SPRINGS. The pilot consisted of:

1. Support to create and provide financial education to community-based savings and loans groups in the form of Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC);
2. Formation of market clubs for developing market engagement skills to aid in income generation;
3. Promotion of homestead gardening through keyhole gardens and vegetable seeds distribution;
4. Improve nutritional practices through nutrition education sessions, known as Community-led Complementary Feeding and Learning Sessions (CCFLS);
5. Citizen Service Outreach Days and One Stop Shops to enhance localized access to health, nutrition, education, and protection services.

SPRINGS was able to implement a model that had local support by incorporating elements such as locally recruiting SPRINGS personnel with involvement of local leaders. Implementation of SPRINGS was led by CRS at the national level. On-the-ground implementation was carried out by its partner agencies, which were local NGOs. The delivery model followed for SPRINGS was one of cascading training by NGO and Government staff to Lead Farmers, Field Agents and Community Health Workers. These along with savings and loans groups, nutrition clubs and community-based farmer groups known as *Matsema* groups, assumed importance from the perspective of sustainability as project functions could be phased over to these structures at the time of programme closure. Government representatives at the local and Community Council level, such as Auxiliary Social Workers, Agricultural Extension Workers and Village Health workers, played an important role in targeting and training beneficiaries on home gardening techniques and nutrition.

Targeting and programme articulation

The evolution of the targeting methodology for both programmes was a key process that made articulation between the two programmes possible and effective. For the CGP, a twofold process was initially followed:

1. Household-level information collected through census to create a central registry, called the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA). These data were used to implement Proxy Means Testing.
2. Community validation carried out through Village Assistance Committees.

However, community dissatisfaction with this methodology led to a flipping of this two-stage process. The Village Assistance Committees were envisaged as a key mechanism to involve communities in the different aspects of the implementation of CGP. However, they were criticized for not performing this responsibility adequately and their role declined over time. Now, identification of households through Community-Based Targeting based on five criteria (employment, food security, participation in agriculture or horticulture, ownership of livestock, and the ability of the household to send its children to school) comes first, followed by a detailed survey.

As SPRINGS was designed as a complementary programme to the CGP, it was geographically targeted in five Community Councils in which CGP was not only active, but also where an adequate number of CGP beneficiaries were to be found and where local services were being offered at a higher rate. The five Councils were decided jointly by the MOSD and CRS. An important difference between SPRINGS and the earlier ICWHR pilot was that while ICWHR only targeted CGP beneficiaries, SPRINGS allowed participation from any interested community members to ensure that those households that did not meet the eligibility criteria for the CGP were not excluded from SPRINGS. This was in response to the lesson learned during the pilot ICWHR, where it was found that excluding non-CGP households from SPRINGS was leading to tensions within the community. Though SPRINGS was therefore opened to all, there was a concerted effort to target CGP participants.

NISSA, which is intended to serve as an Integrated Social Information System, is poised to become a crucial coordinating mechanism, to be used for management and monitoring of all social assistance, both within the MOSD and across Ministries. Both the World Bank's Social Assistance Project (2016–2020) and the European Union -funded Integrated Social Safety Net Pilot, which began in 2012, have been providing technical assistance to build NISSA's capabilities. The scale-up of NISSA across the country has been achieved in terms of data collection. As of July 2019, almost 334 000 households in all 64 rural Community Councils of Lesotho are registered with NISSA. However, the vision is bigger than data collection and a CGP payments management system. It is to have a Management Information System (MIS) interface that would aid in targeting, enrolment, payment and case management across different programmes and link to the Social Registry. MOSD is developing a Web Based NISSA portal to enable access to the NISSA data by stakeholders, thus increasing utilization of NISSA. The MIS, web-based portal of NISSA, and expansion of usage of NISSA to all other programmes are yet to be fully operationalized.

Capacity constraints and coordination challenges

Capacity constraint is a key challenge for achieving programmatic coherence between social protection and productive inclusion. The CGP operates in a context where the MOSD struggles to hire a full cadre of its main frontline workers, the Auxiliary Social Workers. At present, there are 56 Auxiliary Social Workers across the 64 CCs. These workers are often overburdened and must perform not only tasks related to CGP, but also all other programmes that come under the jurisdiction of the MOSD, as well as interface with the CC representatives of other Ministries. They handle all case management. Further, VACs continue to act as partners of the MOSD and play an important role in mobilization and sensitization, aid in conducting the CBC workshops, guide enumerators/ data collectors for household data collection, and aid in enrolment and payments events every quarter. This work is unpaid.

Poor communication between the implementing partners for SPRINGS was a key challenge in ensuring complementarity of SPRINGS with CGP. Since SPRINGS was open to any community member, CRS did not share the CGP participant list with its on-ground partner, Caritas, which led to inefficiencies and decreased synergy as Caritas had to go from household to household to identify CGP participants and make a concerted effort to encourage their participation in SPRINGS activities. Moreover, due to their better capacity to save, well-off members of the community were more likely to benefit from SPRINGS than others.

During the implementation of SPRINGS, the CGP Payment Days became effective informal forums for coordinating between Ministries, participants and various public and private service providers. However, these are gradually being replaced by mobile payments.

Regrettably, **the Ministry of Local Government was not able to organize service days during the duration of SPRINGS, due to capacity constraints** such as lack of infrastructure, limited training, and high staff turnover. CRS provided technical assistance and support to implement the Citizen Service Outreach Day. This included designing training manuals and training MoLG staff (specifically the Community Council Secretary) on conducting multi-sectoral meetings wherein different service providers would come together to ensure a successful outreach event. The training of the Council secretaries was a one-day event and was not considered adequate in building MoLG staff skills in planning, organizing and facilitating multi-sectoral service days. High staff turnover and lack of infrastructure were other impediments for hosting the citizen outreach service days.

Overall, **collaboration was intense at the Community Council and Village level, but weak at the District and Central levels. At no level – Central, District or Council – were any formal coordinating mechanisms set up specifically for the CGP and SPRINGS. This would need to change should a larger livelihood development programme be rolled out.**

At the Central level, the MOSD and CRS collaborated in the design and planning stages of SPRINGS, but the relationship was characterized by regular reporting only during its implementation. Interactions between MOSD and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security were mostly limited to emergency situations, primarily through the Disaster Management Team. A Memorandum of Understanding exists between the Ministry of Local Government and MOSD, which allows for an embedded workflow between the two Ministries at the local level.

At the District level, existing coordination mechanisms include the District Administrator's monthly meetings and other cross-sectoral coordination teams such as the District Disaster Management Team and the District Management Health Team. These were not found to be effective for the implementation of CGP and SPRINGS. To some extent, however, the Social Development and Agriculture Departments collaborated by virtue of being placed in the same district level teams. For instance, the Nutrition officer within the District Agricultural officer's office is also part of the Child Protection Team spearheaded by MOSD. There are also opportunities for collaboration in Agricultural Resource Centres, which are close to the Council offices, where MOSD Auxiliaries and MAFS Extension officers often work together.

At the Community Council level, there was a relatively greater degree of cooperation, though largely informal. Four key actors at the Council Level seemingly worked well together: Auxiliary Social Workers of the MOSD, Agriculture Extension Workers of the MAFS, NGO staff of Caritas, Sister of Charity and Good Shepherd Sisters, and the locally elected Community Council staff. The monthly council meetings, which include all NGOs and service providers working within the council, provided a forum that made this informal working relationship between the frontline workers possible.

Key enablers and barriers

The study finds four key enabling factors that have the potential to allow programmes like CGP and SPRINGS to be effective and complementary to each other:

1. An informed programme design which incorporates learnings from past pilots and assessments;
2. Building local support and expertise through local recruitment;
3. Recognition of importance of inter-sectorial work by key stakeholders;
4. A coherent approach to poverty reduction.

Both the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security recognize that mobilization of each Ministry's strength and expertise would contribute immensely to the improvement of programmes that seek to link social protection with agriculture. MAFS did not perceive social protection as something lying outside its purview. Instead, there was a willingness to collaborate with the MOSD, and to engage with the issues of food security, malnutrition and under-nutrition jointly with the MOSD. It was suggested that the two key sector policies, the National Food Security Strategy and the National Social Protection Strategy needed to be linked together.

Further, all the stakeholders interviewed at the national and local level expressed that the SPRINGS pilot had been envisaged with the objective of testing out the **Community Development Model (CDM)**, which aims to graduate households into sustainable livelihoods through combining social assistance with livelihoods and financial inclusion. The CDM necessitates a programmatic framework that brings together different sectors. Poor, rural, food-insecure households face several constraints that cannot be addressed by rural development, agriculture or social protection operating alone. An economic inclusion approach that is strategic and tailored to the needs of extremely poor and food-insecure rural households can trigger synergistic effects to enhance social, economic and productive impacts. In the second half of 2018, Building Resources Across Communities facilitated extensive discussions between Lesotho's main stakeholders, to assist the MOSD in the assessment and design of a Graduation CDM model. The design of the new CDM was presented, revised and ratified in October and November 2018. However, this programme has not yet been operationalized due to funding constraints.

At the same time, weak technical capacity, inadequate financial resources in MOSD, limited human resources and high staff turnover across all Ministries are four key obstacles to achieving coherence. NISSA and MIS need further development to support social protection across all programmes. The MOSD is still young relative to other Ministries and faces challenges in its ability to secure financial and human resources. Lack of staff meant that it was not possible for an MOSD staff member to be seconded with CRS for the duration of the SPRINGS programme. This is one reason

why the MOSD is forced to work without its full cadre of key frontline Auxiliary Social Workers. Another hurdle that the MOSD faces is lack of transportation for its Auxiliary Workers. Though CRS invited relevant government Ministries to key programme meetings, lack of attendance by key actors undermined their effectiveness. High staff turnover and outsourcing of key functions to NGOs results in the loss of institutional knowledge and lack of continuity.

Policy recommendations

This study documents positive impacts from implementing the CGP and SPRINGS programmes jointly, across four key dimensions: household income and resilience, financial education, income generating skills, and food security and diet diversity. However, in each of these there were implementation challenges that would need to be addressed in the rollout of a larger-scale livelihood development programme.

Based on the findings captured within this report, we make the following recommendations:

1. Re-engage on implementing a rural livelihood programme, such as SPRINGS, in partnership with the CGP. Initial groundwork was carried out by Building Resources Across Communities in 2018/19 when the design of a Graduation Community Development Model was presented to MoSD and its partners. The proposed model should be reviewed in order to strengthen inter-institutional collaboration from the onset. Engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security needs to begin now, when discussions regarding the Community Development Model are reinitiated. This programme could be integrated or multisectoral, with a strong emphasis on access to social protection. Roles and responsibilities of each sector, from the central to local level, will need to be clearly spelled out in a cross-institutional coordination framework, with appropriate resources dedicated to increasing delivery capacity. This should also be accompanied by an increase in capacities and resources necessary for coordination.
2. Ensure basic government services are available to the population in remote areas. One-stop centres and citizen outreach days are instrumental in achieving this. Initiate a community outreach model, such as the outreach week organized by the Leribe District administrator.
3. Promote timely and clear communication from the central and district level entities with frontline staff, such as government, community council and NGO staff who have first line access to the community. This minimizes the negative effects of any programmatic changes such as a change in targeting criteria as was the case for SPRINGS.
4. Strengthen the technical capacity of MoSD and NISSA:
 - a. Increase the number of auxiliary social workers on the staff of the MoSD, not just to cover the current vacancies but also with a view to reducing the workload of its existing cadre. This is especially important as the role of the MoSD expands to other programmes.
 - b. Strengthen the institutional capacity within MoSD to advocate for increased resource allocations in a regular and systematic manner, which is not contingent

upon changes in the leadership of the Ministry. This can enable the MoSD to approach inter-sectoral coordination more effectively.

- c. Develop cost effective mechanisms for regularly updating NISSA data. It is important that recertification of participants is conducted periodically at agreed upon intervals. It is also important to develop a protocol that incorporates updating of NISSA data through community case management conducted by auxiliary social workers. This will help in lowering inclusion and exclusion errors.
 - d. Ensure confidentiality of citizen data will be key, as NISSA is increasingly used by other stakeholders.
5. From a programmatic standpoint, it is further recommended to modify existing programme design as follows:
- a. Regularize and index CGP payments to inflation. The 2015 National Social Protection Strategy envisaged the CGP transfer to be indexed to inflation but this has not happened yet, thus eroding the real value of the programme, by more than 30 percent over the past five years.
 - b. Adopt adequate cash disbursement modalities. Mobile payments led to difficulties at times as these interfaces were often hard for elderly people to navigate. Mobile payments have also led to the loss of CGP Payment Days as a forum for communication between participants and various public and private service providers. Solutions to help the elderly navigate the new interface need to be adopted.
 - c. Revisit the savings and loans component. The following challenges will need to be addressed in any subsequent programme incorporating savings groups: high turnover of field agents due to unsatisfactory remuneration; delays in training savings group members on income generation and marketing skills; frustration among group members regarding borrowers who had taken more than they could afford to pay. Moreover, savings groups linked with banks need to be aware of any “hidden” charges, and several groups supported by SPRINGS were made up of more well-off households as opposed to CGP beneficiaries, whose poverty status did not allow them to save.
 - d. Reduce the length of the nutrition education sessions. Twelve-day nutrition sessions under SPRINGS were too long and need to be shortened. In addition, some caregivers did not have the ability to adopt the feeding practices promoted by SPRINGS as participants could not afford or access the recommended food types to feed their children.
 - e. Link homestead gardening with support to marketing. Market saturation was a very real risk for beneficiaries who were selling similar vegetables within a relatively small local community. It is important, therefore, to establish and support greater linkages to wider markets, including through stronger efforts to develop market club.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This study is a part of a broader project “Improving the articulation between social protection interventions and rural productive development in developing countries: lessons from Latin America and Africa”, financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). In partnership with Universidad de los Andes of Colombia (UNIANDES), FAO carried out joint activities in seven countries from Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa seeking to generate evidence to inform the design and implementation of institutional, policy, and programmatic reforms geared towards strengthening coherence between social protection and productive inclusion interventions targeting poor smallholder farmers. Within Africa, FAO has focused on Ethiopia, Zambia, Lesotho and Mali. This report presents the institutional case study for the Child Grants Programme (CGP) and the Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Government Service Support (SPRINGS) project in Lesotho.

Agriculture and social protection are more effective when they work together. The FAO 2016 Framework for Analysis and Action for Strengthening Coherence between Agriculture and Social Protection elaborates on a twofold rationale for this approach. First, poor, rural, food-insecure households, which are the target of most social protection programmes, depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihoods. These households face several constraints that cannot be addressed by either agriculture or social protection operating alone. Second, a systematic approach to promoting agriculture and social protection will ensure that agricultural growth policies consider the needs of smallholder farmers without inadvertently causing harm to poor and vulnerable rural households (FAO, 2016). Strong articulation, whether between the different components of a programme managed by one Ministry, or across programmes managed by different Ministries, has the potential for triggering synergistic effects that can help to enhance the social, economic and productive impacts on the beneficiary households.

Lesotho has a population of about 2 million and a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 1 318 (World Bank, 2019). This puts Lesotho in the category of a lower-middle-income country. Yet, Lesotho experiences deep and widespread poverty. Its headcount poverty rate was well over 60 percent in the 1990s, but declined from 61 percent in 2002 to about 54 percent in 2018, which means that more than half of the population still lives below the extreme poverty line of USD 1.90/day. One of Lesotho’s greatest development challenges is its high HIV/AIDS prevalence (25 percent prevalence in the adult population) and tuberculosis co-epidemic.

Agriculture contributes 7 percent of Lesotho’s GDP, but is the source of livelihood for the majority, as about 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas (WFP, 2018). Recurring climatic hazards, such as the El Niño-induced drought in 2016, have exacerbated crop failures. Crop production has been declining over the last two consecutive years. A combination of a low performing economy, low incomes, low food production, and high food prices has led to high food insecurity. As per the latest Integrated Food Security Phase classification report (IPC, July 2019), nearly a quarter of Lesotho’s population (around 350 000 people) were facing severe acute food insecurity (IPC Phases 3 and 4) and required urgent humanitarian action. However, food availability per se is not the

limiting factor, as that can be addressed through imports from South Africa. The main issue is accessibility, due to reduced own-production and reduced purchasing power to buy food.

Though the prevalence of stunted children has decreased by 6 percentage points from 2009 to 2014, the stunting rate among children under the age of five remains high, at approximately 33.2 percent (Cost of Hunger in Lesotho, 2016). Further, the same report states that 10.3 percent of children in Lesotho were underweight. The negative consequences of being undernourished follow the child for their entire life and have negative consequences on the economies in which they live, learn, and work. Stunted children receive 3.6 years less school education, and 19.5 percent of all child mortality cases in Lesotho are associated with undernutrition. The annual costs associated with child undernutrition are estimated at 1.9 billion Maloti, which is approximately 7.13 percent of GDP.

To address these issues of poverty and undernutrition, the Government has implemented several social protection programmes. One such flagship programme is the CGP, which provides unconditional cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households registered in the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA). In order to strengthen the impact of the CGP on poverty reduction, accumulation of assets and on encouraging savings and borrowing behaviour for investment, the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), UNICEF, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) implemented a comprehensive livelihood programme in 2015: SPRINGS. The programme had five components:

1. Community-based savings and lending groups, with financial education, known as Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC);
2. Homestead gardening, consisting of support to keyhole gardens and vegetable seeds distribution;
3. Nutrition training through Community-led Complementary Feeding and Learning Sessions (CCFLS);
4. Market clubs for training on market access;
5. One Stop Shop / Citizen Services Outreach Days.

The SPRINGS programme expanded the CGP by offering an integrated package of multi-sectoral income generation and nutrition services. The impacts of CGP and CGP+SPRINGS have been evaluated by a quantitative micro-econometric study (Daidone and Pace, 2018), and a qualitative study (Nesbitt-Ahmed and Pozarny, 2018). Both studies have found positive impacts of the two programmes across economic and health domains. The purpose of this study is to specifically conduct an institutional analysis of the CGP and SPRINGS programmes to understand if any coordination mechanisms were envisaged and created to align the activities of the two programmes, and if so, to determine whether these mechanisms were effective in achieving synergies between the two programmes.

This report is structured as follows: within this introduction, we provide the key study questions that are addressed in the analysis, and an overview of the methodology that is employed; Section 2 gives a brief review of the features of the government's organizational setup, policies and interventions in the social protection sector and its linkages with agriculture; Section 3 provides the bulk of the institutional analysis including a detailed programme description of both the CGP and SPRINGS, an

identification of the key actors involved, the institutional architecture within which they are situated, a brief summary of the synergistic impact of the two programmes from the perspective of beneficiaries, and a value chain of the two programmes being studied; Section 4 presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the key findings.

1.2 Study questions

The general question the study seeks to answer is the following: What are the institutional mechanisms, processes and tools that facilitated or hindered coordination between the social protection and productive dimensions of the CGP/SPRINGS program? To answer the general question, the analysis is guided by the following specific questions:

- What was the institutional architecture of CGP and SPRINGS Programs?
- What are the fundamental processes and sub processes of CGP and SPRINGS that made the articulation between the two programmes possible and effective?
- What were the enabling factors and the barriers in the institutional mechanisms that facilitated or impeded articulation between CGP and SPRINGS, and how did these operate to generate synergies?
- What was the added value of this articulation for the effectiveness of CGP and SPRINGS?
- What are the practical lessons and insights that can be drawn from CGP SPRINGS to inform efforts to enhance coherence between social protection and agriculture interventions?

1.3 Methodological approach

The work conducted for this assessment consisted of a desk-based review of key documents covering social protection policy at the national level; past reviews and evaluation reports of the two programmes; monitoring reports; project reports and other key programme documents. This was followed by a ten-day in-country data collection exercise involving a number of key informant interviews with ministry staff, development partners/donor agencies and implementing partners, as well as focus group discussions (FGDs) with local officials and ex-participants of CGP and SPRINGS programmes. At the end of the analysis period, the emerging findings were presented and discussed at the 'Learning and Sharing Workshop on Synergies between Social Protection and Productive Promotion' workshop, held on October 2–4, 2019, at IFAD Headquarters in Rome, Italy.

Two Community Councils (CCs) (one CGP/SPRINGS CC and one CGP-only CC) were purposely sampled. From the five CCs where SPRINGS was implemented, Menkhoaneng in Leribe district was sampled due to the presence of SPRINGS interventions from the start of the programme in 2015, thereby ensuring an adequately long exposure to the programme. Maisa Phoka, also in Leribe district, was sampled as a comparison CC, which experienced only the CGP programme, against which the coherence achieved through SPRINGS was assessed. The rationale for selecting this CC as a comparison was because the CGP/SPRINGS qualitative impact evaluation study (Nesbitt-Ahmed and Pozarny, 2018) used this CC as a control group. The quantitative impact evaluation of SPRINGS (Daidone and Pace, 2018) also covered Leribe district, thus making relevant findings from these studies appropriate inputs for the proposed coherence study.

Within these CCs, four sample villages were sampled in consultation with district stakeholders for community discussions. This included two villages in Menkhoaneng where CGP+SPRINGS was implemented and two villages in Maisa Phoka where CGP was implemented without SPRINGS. In Menkhoaneng, sample villages were purposely selected based on the presence of SPRINGS services and of beneficiaries who collected and signed for the home gardening kits. Sampled villages in both CCs were relatively more physically accessible, to limit travel time before reaching the FGD point as time was constrained. However, villages which were very close to the towns were not selected, because in such cases it is often difficult to find people at home, as they often travel to towns to run personal errands. In each of the sample villages, one FGD was held with a beneficiary group and one with community council staff and local service providers.

The analysis approach and the interview checklists for the in-country study used guidance provided by two methodological documents. First, the Methodological Guide for Institutional Analysis jointly produced by the Centre for Economic Development studies (CEDE) of UNIANDES and the Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP) (CEDE and RIMISP, 2018). Second, the Framework for Analysis and Action for Strengthening Coherence between Agriculture and Social Protection (FAO, 2016) and its accompanying Diagnostic Tool. The FAO framework manual provides three dimensions that are to be considered during an institutional analysis: 1) Policies and Programs 2) Enabling Environment, and 3) Programme performance. The first two dimensions require a description of the main policies and programmes in both the social and agricultural sector, with their respective objectives and strategic priorities. This is accompanied by an assessment of the coherence existing between the agriculture and social sectors. While we provide such an overview, the bulk of this study focuses on the third dimension, which is programme-specific. This is also where we incorporate the CEDE and RIMISP methodology and focus on the key processes within the CGP and SPRINGS programmes to identify what was working and what was not; where opportunities for greater alignment existed but were not being used; which processes were failing and what mechanisms and tools may be put to better use.

Both manuals formed the basis of the main lines of enquiry for all key informant interviews and FGDs, with the final questions being adapted for specific interviewees and depending on the emerging themes and issues. The main areas of investigation spanned policy and programme details, coordination, coherence and performance. Annex 2 provides a summary of interviews and discussions conducted. Data collection was conducted by two lead researchers and a trained field assistant.

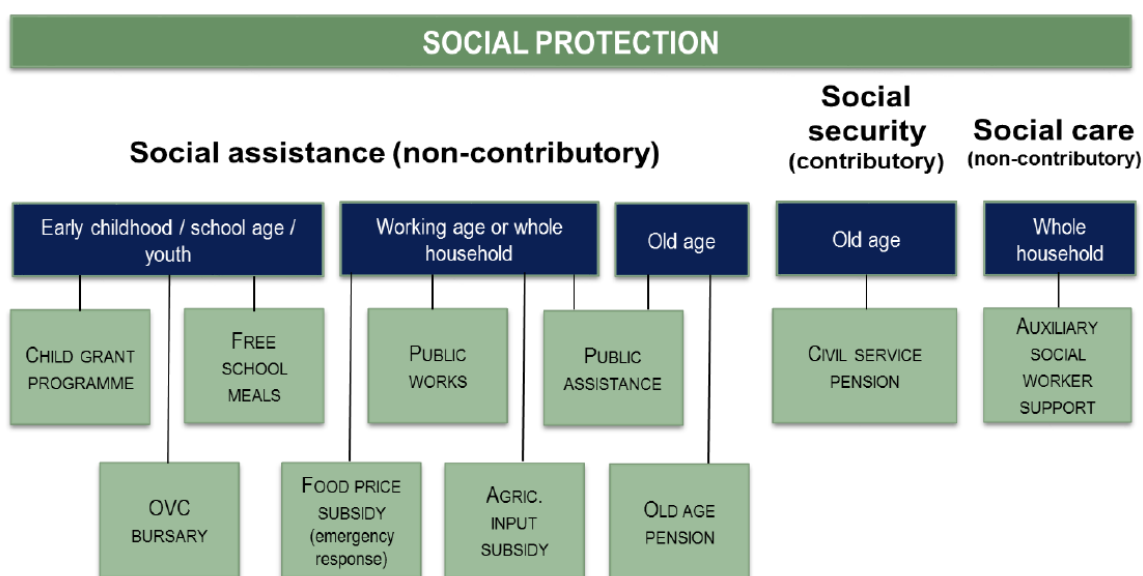
2. Sectoral context

In this section, we describe the context within which the CGP and SPRINGS programmes were implemented. This includes a brief review of the relevant organizational setup, policies, and interventions in the social protection sector. Similarly, we provide a brief review of aspects of the Agricultural sector that relate to social protection. In the latest 2019–2020 budget, the Social Development ministry’s budget was increased to M 419 million, up from M 252 million in the 2018–2019 financial year. The Agriculture and Food Security ministry’s budget allocation was increased from M 335 million to M 704 million (Minister of Finance, Budget Speech, 2019). In comparison, the Ministries of Health, Education, Finance, and Development Planning have much larger budgets. In Lesotho, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national budget. It analyses and discusses ministerial budget submissions and recommends resource allocation and performance targets consistent with policy objectives and financial constraints. It presents the consolidated budget in Parliament for discussion and approval by the Executive (Cabinet) and the Legislature.

2.1 Social protection

In their research study on shock-responsive social protection systems, Kardan *et al.* (2017) provide a summary of the social protection landscape in Lesotho. As shown in the figure below, it is dominated by non-contributory programmes that are targeted across the life cycle of a human being, from early childhood and youth to working age and old age.

Figure 1: Social protection landscape



Source: Kardan *et al.*, 2017.

The MOSD leads the social protection strategy of the country. It was created in 2012 as a spin-off of a department in the Ministry of Health. Following the Ministry’s formation, Lesotho adopted the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP – 2012–2017 and NSDP II – 2018–2022), the National Policy on Social Development (2014–2024) and the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS – 2015). The NSPS aimed to operationalize a set of comprehensive social protection programmes,

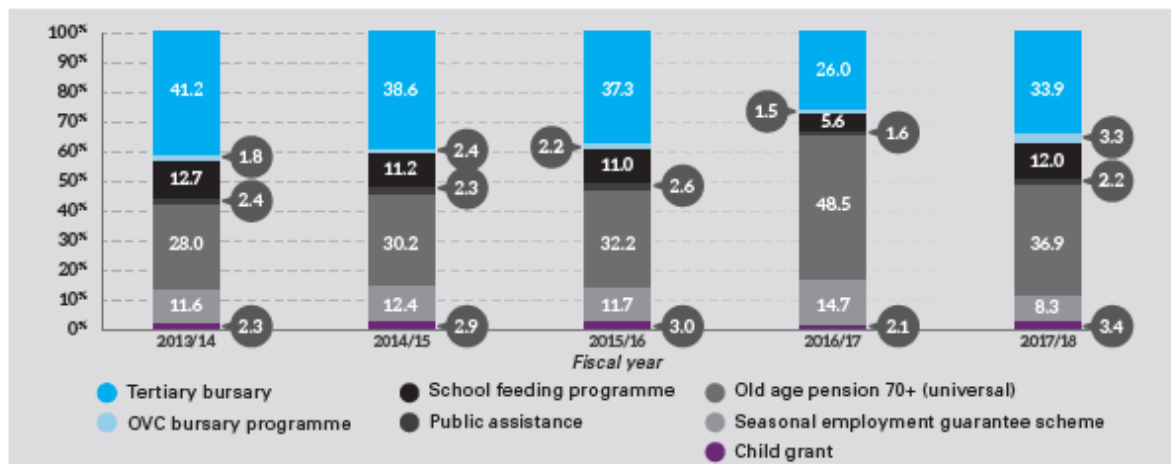
implemented by different Ministries, that reduce vulnerabilities across the life-course of individuals. Along with the other policy documents, NSPS attempted to bring coherence to the social protection sector. Despite these attempts at coherence and commitment to social protection, World Bank (2016) and Kardan *et al.* (2017) noted that the sector remains fragmented. There are other large government programmes run by different Ministries that also perform the role of social protection. This in itself is not a problem, and indeed should be welcomed. However, it does lead to low convening and administrative power of the MOSD, as the bulk of social assistance expenditure and coverage in terms of population is outside the purview of the MOSD.

Lesotho has demonstrated a high level of government commitment towards social protection. Most of Lesotho's programmes are funded directly by the government. Donor support is generally in technical assistance. In 2017–2018, Lesotho's social assistance expenditure¹ was 5.7 percent of its GDP and 12 percent of its national budget (UNICEF, 2017). In contrast, most other developing countries spent about 1 to 2 percent of their GDP. As the MOSD is not the only Ministry that implements social assistance programmes, it does not receive all the budget for social assistance. In fact, the Ministry receives one of the lowest amounts as a proportion of national budget. In 2017–2018, the Ministry of Education was allocated 13.8 percent of the national budget, the Ministry of Health (12 percent) and the MOSD, only 1.4 percent of the national budget.

The three main non-MOSD programmes are the Old Age Pension (OAP) Programme managed by the Ministry of Finance, a Tertiary Bursary programme implemented by the Ministry of Development Planning, and the National School Feeding Programme managed by the Ministry of Education and Training. Over the past five years (see Figure 2 below), more than 80 percent of the government's social assistance spending has been directed to these three programmes (UNICEF, 2017). Another important programme is the public work programme implemented by the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation.

¹ Expenditure on Social Assistance was computed by aggregating expenditure across seven programmes: Child Grant, Old Age Pension, Public Assistance, Seasonal Employment Grant, School Feeding, OVC Bursary and Tertiary Bursary. The first four programmes are termed as Core Social Assistance and the remaining three are complementary (UNICEF, 2017).

Figure 2: Composition of social assistance spending



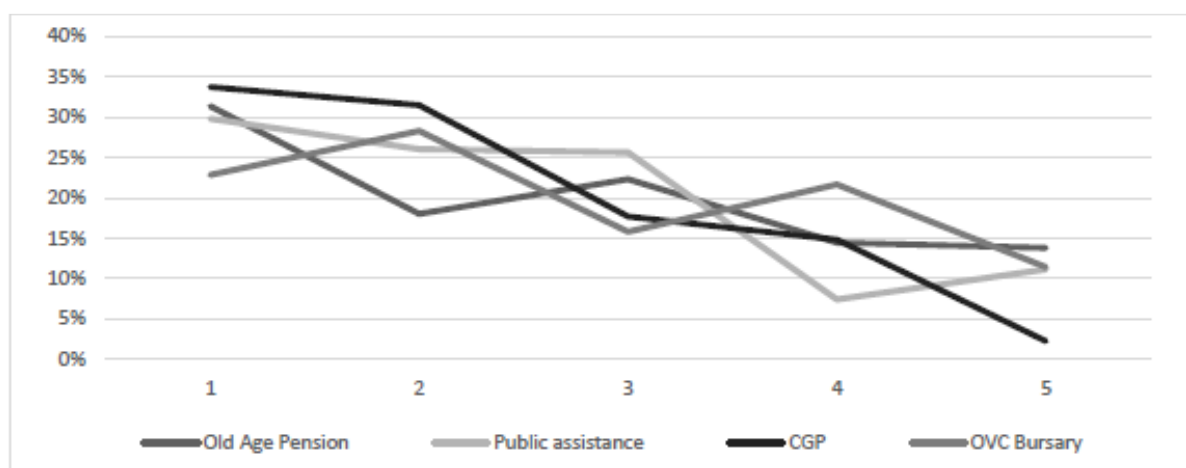
Source: Estimation using World Bank Boost Database (2017), GoL National Budget 2017/18 (2017).

Source: UNICEF, 2017.

The MOSD’s main programmes are the CGP, an unconditional cash transfer targeted to households with children under 18 years of age; the OVC Bursary programme that provides educational support to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) to increase their access to education; and the Public Assistance programme that provides cash and in-kind support to destitute families. As is evident from Figure 2, these three programmes comprise less than 10 percent of the government’s social assistance spending (UNICEF, 2017). When the NSPS was developed, it was envisaged that the MOSD would implement two additional programmes: a universal grant of M 100 per month for households with infants under two years of age and a disability grant of M 250 per person per month. However, these two programmes have not yet been implemented.

An important aspect of the CGP programme is its effectiveness in reaching its target population. The figure below, which utilizes data from the Continuous Multipurpose Survey of 2013–2014, shows that about 65 percent of CGP’s beneficiaries belong to the poorest two quintiles. This makes it the most effective programme at reaching Lesotho’s poorest households, compared to the other main social protection programmes in Lesotho.

Figure 3: Percentage of beneficiaries in each asset quintile



Quintile 1=poorest, 5=richest.

Source: Own calculations based on the 2013/14 CMS data.

*The quintiles are estimated using an asset index, as no consumption or income data is available in the survey

Source: World Bank, 2016.

As part of recent developments to strengthen the role of the MOSD, the transfer of the OAP to the MOSD was planned. The OAP suffers from inefficiencies that are well known and documented in the NSPS and donor reports such as the World Bank Project Appraisal Document and UNICEF Briefs. The implementation of the OAP has been prone to fraud and error and has a high rate of inclusion error. It is estimated that over 56 percent of pensioners are “ghost pensioners” (UNICEF, 2017). Thus, there is a possibility to reduce the fiscal burden of the OAP and to direct these savings to the CGP, which covers only 18.5 percent of the eligible beneficiaries (UNICEF, 2017).

A second important ongoing effort to strengthen the MOSD is the expansion of the NISSA. The NISSA is the national database of household information used for targeting participants of the CGP. The NISSA has been expanded to all rural community councils and the vision is to expand it to urban areas, thus achieving national coverage and making it a functional database that can be used by all other social assistance programmes.

2.2 Agricultural sector and social protection

As stated earlier, about 70–80 percent of the country’s population lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for its livelihood. However, the share of agriculture in GDP is only around 6.3 percent, as per the Budget Background paper for 2012–2013. Most of the population is engaged in subsistence farming and the main crops produced are maize, sorghum, and wheat. As only 10 percent of Lesotho’s total land area is arable, livestock is important, contributing about 75 percent of total agricultural output. Sheep and goats are reared mainly for wool and mohair (World Bank, 2019). The World Bank has identified the following productivity challenges in agriculture: limited arable land, extensive land degradation, small landholding size, outdated farm technologies, limited technical expertise, sub-optimal use of inputs, lack of irrigation and drainage systems, weak rural infrastructure, and limited access to credit and investment capital. The NSDP-II 2018–2019/2022–2023, which prioritized the development of the agricultural sector, identified three broad areas of

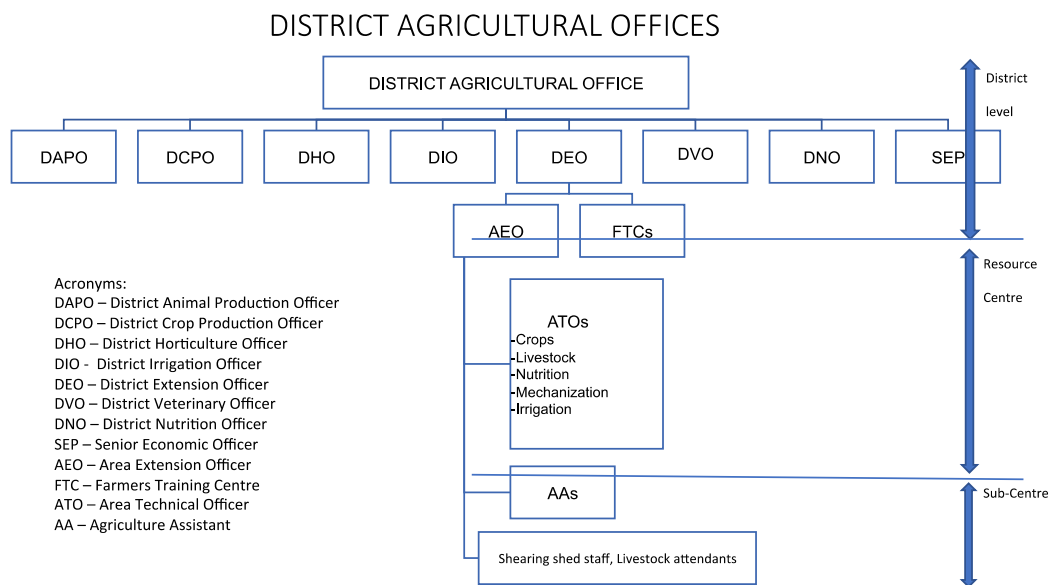
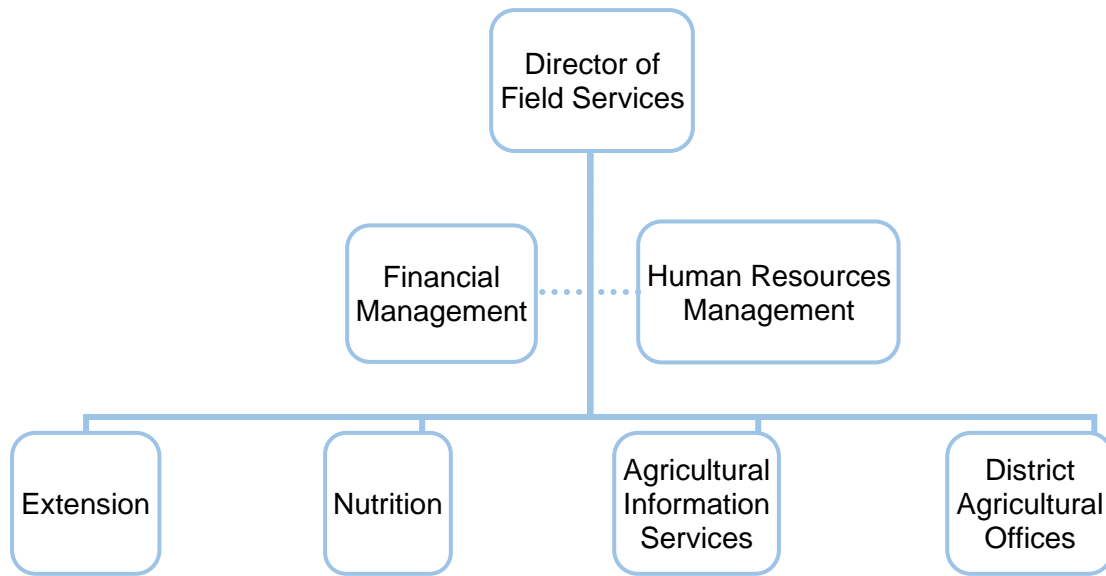
strategic action: i) sustainable commercialization and diversification of agriculture, ii) a well-functioning agri-food system, and iii) rehabilitation of range lands and wetlands.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) has several programmes to promote agricultural production and commercialization. They usually target smallholder farmers and farmers' groups that already have the basic resources as well as better access to the markets than the most vulnerable agricultural households. The main agricultural programmes include the National fertilizer and seed subsidy scheme, the block farming initiative and the Smallholder Agriculture Development Programme as well as the Wool and Mohair Promotion Project. Only a small share of the total budget, less than 6.5 percent, goes directly to supporting smallholder farming (Ulrichs and Mphahlele, 2016). Most of the budget is spent on schemes that do not necessarily have pro-poor impacts or reach remote rural areas.

The MAFS is comprised of seven departments: (i) Crops, (ii) Livestock, (iii) Policy and Planning, (iv) Field Services, (v) Administration and Human Resources, (vi) Agricultural Research, and (vii) Lesotho Agricultural College. The ministry's overall mission is to provide and facilitate services that enhance the productive activities of farmers and promote food security in the long term.

The overall responsibility for providing public extension services to the farmers is carried out by the Department of Field Services. This responsibility is carried out by national, district and lower level offices under a decentralized structure. The Department of Field Services comprises the Extension, Nutrition and Home Economics divisions and an Agricultural Information Office (which produces radio and TV programmes, printed materials, leaflets, newsletters and has a library), each of which is headed by a Chief. Further, the Department of Field Services coordinates the activities of the following offices at the district level: extension, nutrition and home economics, crop production, animal production, veterinary care, irrigation and horticulture. These offices are coordinated by District Agricultural Officers.

Figure 4: Department of Field Services



Source: Interviews with MAFS staff

Each of the ten districts of Lesotho has a district office. Each district typically covers about seven to eight Agricultural Resource Centres, and each of these Centres has three to five Agricultural Resource Sub-Centres. In each resource Centre, there is a technical officer for nutrition, crops, livestock, agricultural mechanization and irrigation and an area extension officer. Resource Centres also work with private partners, NGOs, local authorities (chiefs and councillors), etc. In the Sub-Centres, a generalist agriculturist is responsible for community mobilization.

Although the study indicated that linkages between Agriculture and MOSD are currently limited to humanitarian emergencies, the study also revealed a number of forums that present a good opportunity for cross-collaboration to link agriculture with social protection. For example, the existence of the Division of Nutrition and Home Economics within the Ministry, as well as the Ministry's plans to upgrade it to a full-fledged Department, places the Ministry in a position to collaborate with MOSD on nutrition-related issues. Additionally, the Unified Extension system adopted by the Ministry, that reportedly allows Extension officers to deal with nutrition-related issues, can ensure effective collaboration at Resource Centre and/or Council Level.

Collaborating on specific programmes, such as the Smallholder Agricultural Development Programme, could increase efficiency in public administration and programme management. The Smallholder Agricultural Development Programme supports smallholder farmers in increasing productivity and diversifying into market-oriented agriculture. The programme's initial focus was on four selected districts with high agricultural potential: Botha-Bothe, Leribe, Berea and Mafeteng. Beneficiaries were provided with grants and technical assistance to boost their productivity and market access. In 2017 and again in 2019, the World Bank approved additional funds to support smallholder farmers to test and demonstrate new business initiatives and technological innovations, especially those that focus on climate-smart agriculture. The Smallholder Agricultural Development Programme has utilized the administrative machinery of District and Community Councils.

During our interviews, the MAFS recognized that there are synergies with MOSD when it comes to targeting of eligible participants of various programmes. Indeed, many MAFS programmes that support smallholder agriculture, such as agricultural input fairs, input and fertilizer subsidies, extensive services, share cropping, etc., are intended to be targeted at particular categories of the poor. To improve targeting, the MAFS is developing a National Farmer Registry and electronic voucher management system. The farmer registry is expected to use data that has been collected under NISSA. Opportunities for establishing interoperability between the two systems are being explored. There are considerable efficiency gains (both in terms of human and financial capital) if the two systems are built in such a way that each one feeds into the other. This would also yield better targeting, in that those sections of the poor with differing land and labour capacity are aligned with the right agriculture and social protection interventions, appropriate to their specific needs. However, MAFS is yet to utilize NISSA data in planning and targeting of beneficiaries for its programmes.

Importantly, the Ministry of Agriculture seemed to recognize that mobilization of each Ministry's strength and expertise would contribute immensely to the improvement of programmes that inevitably link social protection with agriculture. Social protection was not perceived as something that lies outside the purview of the Ministry. Instead, there was a willingness to collaborate with the MOSD in this area, and to engage with the issues of food security, malnutrition and under-nutrition jointly with the MOSD. While commercial agriculture is the key focus of the MAFS, there is a realization that vulnerable smallholder farmers must be assisted. The two strategies – the National Food Security Strategy and National Social Protection Strategy – need to be linked together.

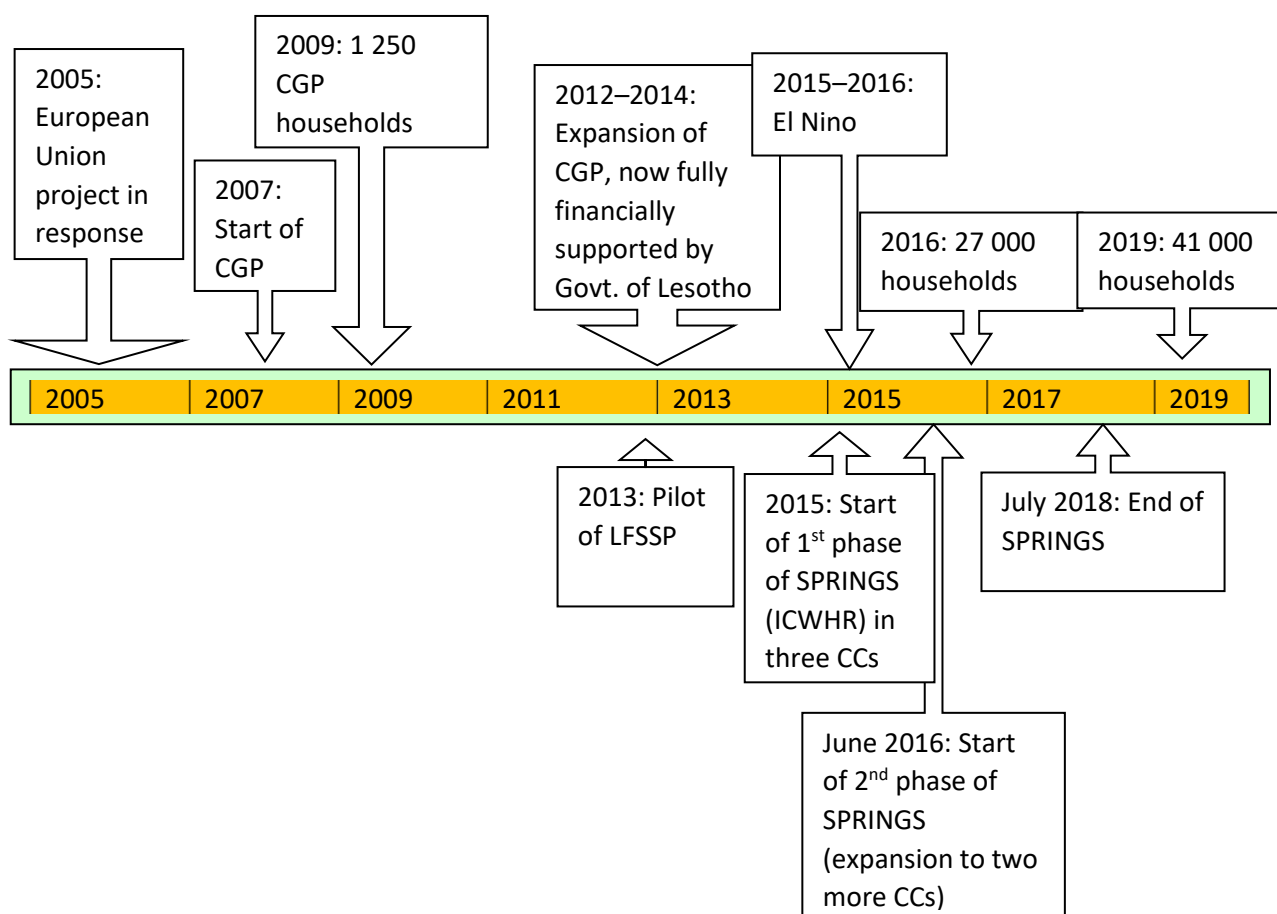
In terms of forums that could be used to collaborate, interviews with key informants revealed a few potential possibilities: leveraging the existing District Extension Working Groups; adopting the Disaster Management Authority committees at the district level on an ongoing basis; leveraging NISSA to target programme participants; and at the national level, a budget sub-committee to approach budgeting in terms of major sectors such as education, economic growth, etc., bringing together the Principal Secretaries and Ministers responsible within a particular sector.

3. Programme analysis

3.1 Programme justification

Lesotho experiences deep and widespread poverty. It is in this context of poverty and under-nutrition that the CGP was envisaged. By supplementing household income, the transfer aims to promote greater levels of education, health and nutrition, especially for children. However, despite positive impacts of the CGP on livelihoods, it was found that the amount of the grant was not adequately high to sustain livelihoods and their ability to graduate from CGP (Daidone *et al.*, 2014). This led to the idea of complementing CGP cash transfers with the delivery of livelihoods training that might lead to synergies to support household resiliency and eventual exit from the cash grant programme (Daidone and Prifti, 2016). This ultimately led to the creation of a livelihood generation project: SPRINGS. In the section below, we elaborate on the evolution and details of the CGP and the complementary project SPRINGS. Figure 5 provides a timeline of their evolution so far.

Figure 5: CGP and SPRINGS timeline



Source: Authors' analyses based on desk review and interviews. CC: Community Council.

3.2 Programme descriptions

3.2.1 Child Grant Programme

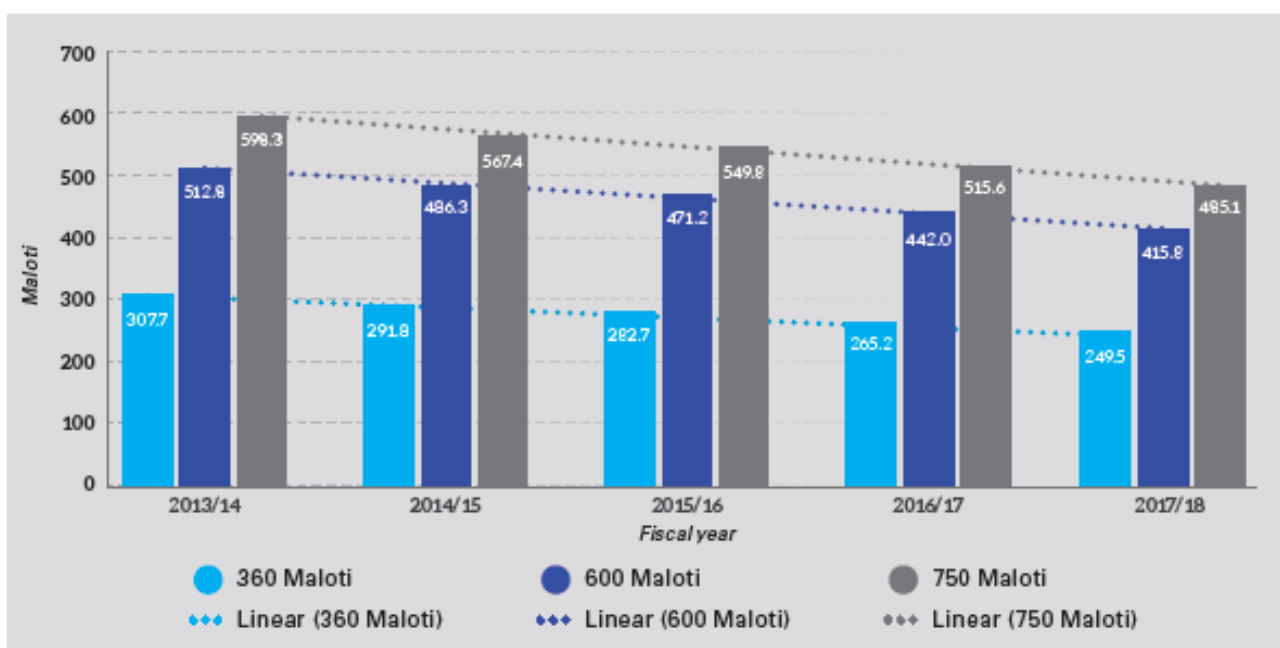
The CGP, run by the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), supports poor and vulnerable households with children aged 0–17 years, aiming to reduce malnutrition, improve their living standards, improve health status, and increase school enrolment.

The transfer value for the pilot CGP in 2009 was set at a flat rate of M 120 (USD 12) per month per household and was disbursed every quarter. However, with effect from April 2013, the cash transfer was linked to household size as follows:

- Households with 1–2 child members M 360 (USD 26) quarterly;
- Households with 3–4 child members M 600 (USD 43) quarterly;
- Households with 5 or more child members M 750 (USD 54) quarterly.

The NSPS had envisaged this to be indexed to inflation but this has not yet happened, eroding the real value of the programme by more than 30 percent over the past five years, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Real value of CGP grants



Source: Estimation based on World Bank Boost Database (2017), GoL National Budget 2017/18 (2017).

Source: UNICEF, 2017.

Payments are made through a cash-in-transit firm at one or two pay points per community council on a quarterly basis. In some areas the payment is made through the Standard Lesotho Bank. Mobile payment (Mpesa, Eco cash) currently happens in 12 community councils covering 6 694 households (MOSD, 2019).

The CGP initially began as a pilot grant to support OVCs to cope with the effects of HIV/AIDS, with financial support from the European Union and technical support from UNICEF. The first phase (until 2012) of the pilot programme was designed and implemented in three rounds. Round 1A of the CGP pilot began in October 2007 with payments in April 2009/July 2010 in three CCs, reaching about 1 250 households (Kardan *et al.*, 2014). The three CCs were selected because they were perceived as 'soft areas', i.e. places that are accessible and have access to several government services, as opposed to inaccessible mountainous regions. By the end of 2012, the pilot programme covered 10 000 households in 21 CCs. During Phase II (2012–2014), the programme became fully supported through the budget of the national government (Pellarano *et al.*, 2016). By July 2019, the programme covered approximately 41 000 households in 64 CCs of Lesotho, in all ten districts of the country (MOSD, 2019).

Programme eligibility is determined by community-based targeting and a proxy means test (PMT) using the NISSA. The NISSA, as mentioned earlier, is a repository of household socio-economic information that was created at the time of launch of the CGP. The vision was to use this repository as an integrated system for any future social assistance programmes introduced in Lesotho by both Government and NGOs (Government of Lesotho, 2015). We explain NISSA and the targeting process in further detail in the section on Key Processes and Sub-Processes.

3.2.2 Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government Services (SPRINGS)

To strengthen the impact of the CGP on poverty, FAO Lesotho began a pilot initiative in 2013, called Linking Food Security to Social Protection Programme (LFSSP). The programme was specifically aimed at assessing the complementary impact of cash transfers for poor and vulnerable households with interventions aimed at increasing the household's food production.

The Programme was implemented in collaboration with international NGO Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Rural Self-Help Development Association, with primary funding from the UK's Department for International Development. The pilot was rolled out in two CCs in Leribe district (Litjotjela and Malaoaneng) and lasted for six months. It provided seeds and training on homestead gardening and food preservation practices to 799 CGP-eligible households, of which half were receiving the CGP transfer and the other half were eligible but not enrolled in the programme. An impact evaluation of the pilot revealed important lessons: that combining CGP cash transfers with the delivery of vegetable seeds and training by the LFSSP had a greater impact on household food production and food security, especially in labour-constrained households, than did each programme in isolation (Dewbre *et al.*, 2015).

Partly due to the El Niño induced drought, and in part due to the evidence generated by the LFSSP, the Improving Child Wellbeing and Household Resiliency (ICWHR) pilot project was launched in 2015. The pilot was funded through a European Union grant channelled through UNICEF, and implemented by CRS, under supervision from the MOSD. It was launched in three CCs where the MOSD provided CGP transfers: Likila (Butha- Buthe district), Menkhoaneng (Leribe district), Makhoarane (Maseru district). The ICWHR consisted of support to:

- Community-based savings and internal lending groups (SILC) with financial education to promote savings, smooth consumption, manage finances, and investment in small income-generating activities;
- Homestead gardening (keyhole gardens, vegetable seed distribution and nutrition training) to have improved and diversified source of nutrition;
- Wellbeing days to enhance localized access to health, nutrition, education, and protection services and to utilize improved knowledge through referrals on existing health, nutrition, education, and livelihood resources.

FAO-Lesotho also supported the ICWHR initiative with the provision of vegetable seed packages, training materials on home gardening and nutrition and training for nutrition officers. The specific input seed package from FAO comprised a kit including 300 grams of seeds (50 grams of six different vegetable varieties: carrot, onion, English rape, Florida broad leaf, beetroot and spinach). The training consisted of demonstrations and hands-on training on the construction and upkeep of keyhole and trench gardens, and included knowledge dissemination on food preservation and production practices to achieve better nutrition (Dewbre *et al.*, 2015).

While there were positive results of the ICWHR, the timeframe of the programme (just a year) was too short. Therefore, a second, revised phase of this intervention, the SPRINGS project, started in June 2016. An important difference between SPRINGS and ICWHR was that while ICWHR only targeted CGP beneficiaries, SPRINGS allowed participation from any interested community members.

SPRINGS expanded the complementary pilot to two additional CCs, Tenosolo in Thaba-Tseka district and Tebe-Tebe in Berea. It also included additional complimentary interventions:

- Income generation, market engagement skills and formation of market clubs;
- Improving nutritional practices complemented with CCFLS.

It also entailed replacing the Wellbeing days under the ICWHR with Citizen Service Outreach Days and One Stop Shops. This followed the same principle of improving access to services for local people, but execution was entrusted directly to the MoLG.

Both design and implementation were again led by CRS in collaboration with UNICEF, government ministries – including MOSD, the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) and MoAFS – and implementing partners: Caritas Lesotho, Good Shepherds Sisters and Sisters of Charity. The funding for SPRINGS was provided by UNICEF. The section below provides an Actor Map that explains the roles and responsibilities of these key actors and the structure within which they operated.

3.3 Actor map

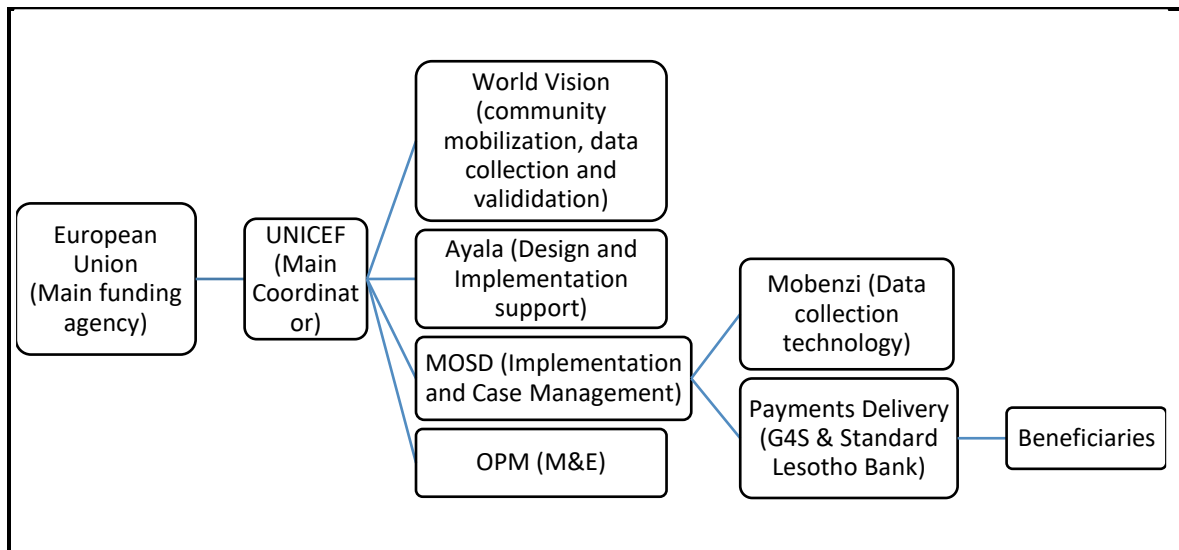
3.3.1 Child Grant Programme

At inception, the CGP implementation actor map was as depicted in Figure 7. It was funded by the European Union and managed by UNICEF in conjunction with the MOSD. A consulting firm, Ayala Consulting, provided the technical support for design and implementation; World Vision undertook

the main roll-out activities of the programme (community mobilization, NISSA data collection and community validation); and another consultancy firm, Oxford Policy Management, was responsible for the independent evaluation of this programme. Other implementing agencies included G4S security and Standard Lesotho Bank for payment delivery and Mobenzi Researcher for data collection technology.

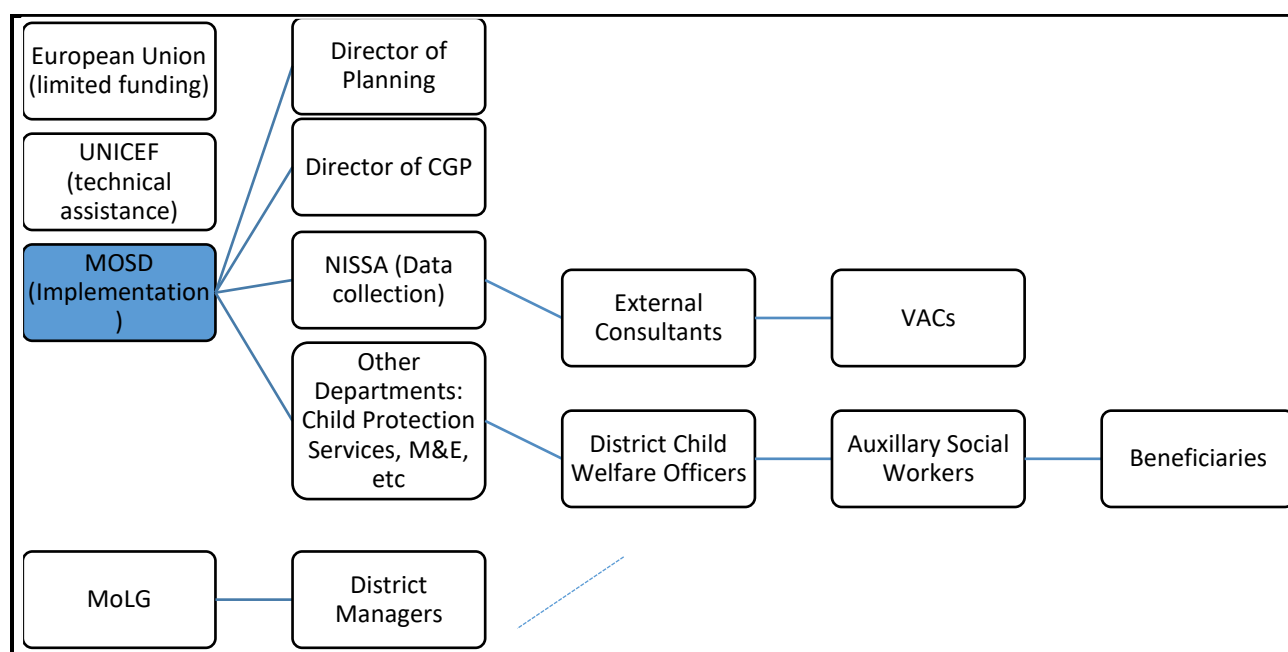
This has evolved to the current situation (Figure 8) where the MOSD has taken full ownership of the programme, from funding, community mobilization, data collection and identification of target participants, to regular reporting. The European Union and World Bank provide financing for further strengthening of the Ministry’s capacity, but the transfer itself is funded through the Government. There is an ongoing effort to strengthen the capacity of NISSA, which hires external consultants to conduct targeting (explained in greater detail in section 3.4). The Auxiliary Social Workers are the primary frontline workers of the MOSD and the interface between the Ministry and the beneficiaries.

Figure 7: CGP Actor map – Inception phase



Source: Flow of Resources of the CGP (Kardan *et al.*, 2014)

Figure 8: CGP Actor map – Current phase



Source: Authors’ analyses based on desk review and interviews.

3.3.2 Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government Services (SPRINGS)

As mentioned above, implementation of SPRINGS was led by CRS at the national level, while on-the-ground implementation was carried out by its partner agencies, which were also local NGOs. CRS was the lead entity for the coordination, preparation and management of detailed implementation plans, budget management, programmatic and financial reporting. It was also the responsibility of CRS to oversee procurement and communication amongst implementing partners. Caritas Lesotho implemented keyhole gardens, SILC and income generation and marketing activities. Good Shepherds Sisters and Sisters of Charity implemented CCFLS and provided support for the implementation of Citizen Service Outreach Days. Below we describe the five components of the programmes and how each was implemented.

Saving and Internal Lending Communities: Two Caritas supervisors were assigned per CC. These supervisors recruited and trained Field Agents from within the community. They provided training, quality monitoring and support. The Field Agents delivered the SILC intervention directly to groups of 15 to 20 individuals. Each field agent was expected to support at least six SILC groups at a time. Field agents trained newly formed SILC groups in a set of nine training modules (average of one module per month). The topics included practical information on how to do budgeting (tracking income and expenses), saving and borrowing, and record keeping. In sum, SILC-related activities included community sensitization, recruitment of field agents, training of field agents, formation of new SILC groups, training of existing and new SILC groups and field staff, and share-out meetings.

Market clubs were intended as an extension of SILC groups, wherein some of the SILC groups were provided with training on how to identify local markets, negotiate prices, arrange transport to market and liaise with buyers.

Homestead gardening and keyhole gardens: For homestead gardening, Caritas appointed Field Monitors who trained lead farmers. The lead farmers in turn supported 10–15 households in keyhole garden construction, planning and maintenance, such as monitoring if gardens had sufficient water, providing advice on where and how to use soil and manure, post-harvest methods, etc. They also received a basic orientation on linkages of keyhole gardens and food preservation to improved nutrition at the household level. Lead farmers demonstrated learned techniques and knowledge to other farmers to encourage uptake of these practices. They also provided food preservation training to households, and, in general, provided continuous technical support to community members. In addition, Matsema groups were formed by field monitors. These are community-based farmer groups that provide guidance and labour to households interested in constructing keyhole gardens.

Community-led Complementary Feeding and Learning Sessions: The CCFLS were targeted to caregivers of children aged 6–23 months who are below the average weight and height of their age. The objective was to increase their knowledge, confidence and adoption of recommended infant and young child feeding and care practices. The approach linked diet diversity with crop diversification and promoted food processing and preservation techniques to increase food availability and smooth consumption especially during the lean season. CCFLS built on keyhole garden activities, as they capitalized on the availability of vegetables and other locally and seasonally available foods (fruits, field crops and animal products). CCFLS field agents, who were Sisters of Charity staff, were trained on the CCFLS model, including recipe demonstration and food preservation. They worked in collaboration with community health workers to introduce the CCFLS model to communities and encourage participation in the programme. CCFLS were designed to take place at least twice a year (lean and harvest season) over 12 consecutive days. CCFLS field agents convened caregivers and their children to meet for about two hours at an agreed venue within the community. Each session included activities targeted towards preventing malnutrition, such as participatory cooking demonstrations, participatory food processing and preservation sessions, reinforcing appropriate health and hygiene messages and optimal child feeding and care practices. Following CCFLS sessions, CCFLS field agents conducted four follow-up home visits (at one, two, three and six months after training) to monitor the child’s health.

One-stop Shops/ Citizen Service Outreach Day: One-stop Shops were envisioned to have two components:

1. A permanent structure based at community council level where people could access information on different services, get specific services or get referred to service providers;
2. An outreach component where service providers of all types (public, private and NGO) and multiple sectors (health, civil, etc.) are called in one place to meet and provide services to vulnerable groups.

CRS provided technical assistance and support to the MoLG to implement the Citizen Service Outreach Day. This included designing training manuals as a guide for organizing Service Outreach Days and training MoLG staff (specifically the Community Council Secretary) on conducting multi-sectoral meetings wherein different service providers collaborate to plan a successful outreach event. It was envisaged that the training would build MoLG staff skills in planning, organizing and

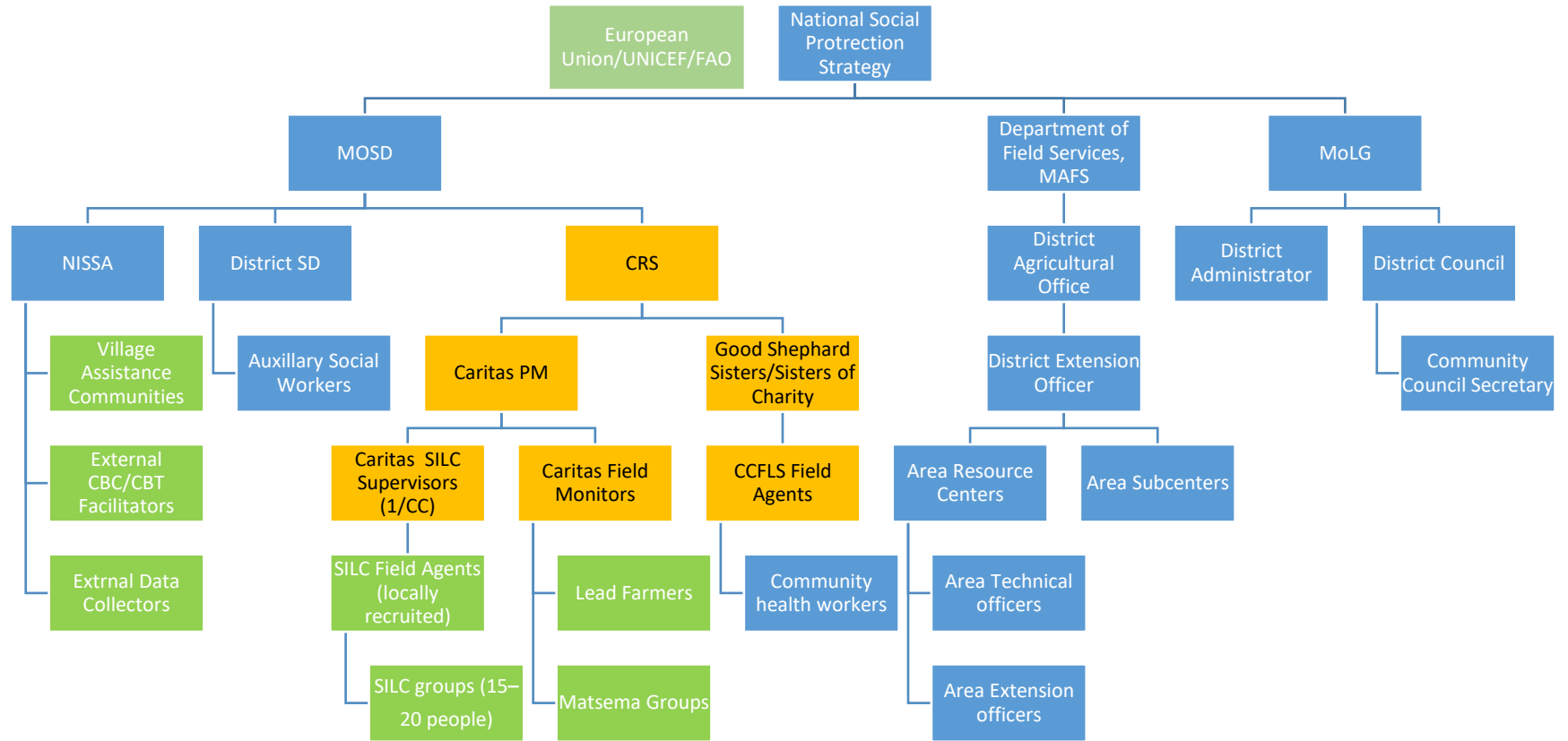
facilitating multi-sectoral team meetings and services days. However, in practice, One-stop Shops struggled to take off due to capacity constraints of the MoLG. The MoLG did not have physical infrastructure to carry out the One-stop Shops and they found the training for conducting Service Outreach Days to be inadequate, which was exacerbated due to the problem of high staff turnover.

These service outreach days evolved out of the Child Wellbeing Days component of the ICWHR, which in turn was an expansion and adaptation of the CRS-run Child Health Day. CRS (CRS, 2015) had envisaged the Child Health Day methodology as a “one-stop-shop” for five key services targeted to children (critical to their development) and their caregivers. Services offered included: health (immunization, vitamin supplementation, growth monitoring and HIV counselling and testing); education (parental education and early child development activities); protection (including birth registration and education on child rights and abuse); sanitation; and nutrition education. The concept behind Child Health Days and Service Outreach days is the same, except that Child Health Days targeted households with children under five years old, whereas Service Outreach days are for all households. They are to be hosted by a multi-sectoral team, made up of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Home Affairs (National Identity and Civil Registry Department), Child and Gender Protection Unit, Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. Notably, a critical element of these outreach days was the issuing of birth certificates, which are a key requirement for households with children to be able to enrol in the CGP.

Figure 9 provides a combined actor map for both CGP and SPRINGS. The main actors can be divided into the National and Community Council level. The intermediary level, operating at the district level (district offices of national government ministries), were not active within SPRINGS. Their involvement was limited to information sharing. However, Government representatives at the local/Community Council level, such as Auxiliary Social Workers and Agricultural Extension Workers, played an important role. Agricultural Extension Workers assisted households that required additional support on keyhole gardens and trained Matsema groups to enable them to share labour for the construction of homestead gardens.

Staff of implementing partner NGOs worked at the local level. Caritas worked in all five CCs on SILC, income-generating activities and keyhole gardens. For CCFLS and Service days, the Sisters of Charity worked in Likila (Buthe Buthe) and Menkhoaneng (Leribe), while the Good Shepherd Sisters worked in Makhoarane (Maseru), Tebe-tebe (Brerea) and Tenosolo Community Council in Thaba Tseka district. The partnership between CRS, CARITAS, Sisters of Charity and Good Shepherd Sisters under the SPRINGS programme was allegedly based on their alliance as members of the Catholic Church. As presented by a CRS key informant: “CRS partners with church partners, who are often weak, to build their capacity”. The relationship, as described by CARITAS, was also a donor-recipient one, with CRS involved in final donor reporting and CARITAS and the Sisters engaged mainly in implementing activities at the local level.

Figure 9: CGP+SPRINGS Actor map



Source: Authors' analyses based on desk review and interviews.

3.4 Key process: targeting

The targeting methodology employed by NISSA for the CGP has evolved over the years in response to evaluations and reviews. In the early years, a community mobilization event would be held during which community members were provided information about a planned census. Following this, household-level information was collected through a census, i.e. all households in the community were surveyed, and used to create the central registry: NISSA. This data included several indicators of wealth, such as dwelling conditions, household asset base and other household socio-economic characteristics. A household score was generated (PMT) based on these indicators that predicted the likelihood of a household having a certain level of consumption expenditure (used as an indicator of poverty). Based on the PMT score, households were categorised into five distinct groups: ultra-poor (NISSA 1), very poor (NISSA 2), poor (NISSA 3), less poor (NISSA 4) and better off (NISSA 5).

Following the NISSA categorization, a community validation process was carried out by a community structure known as the Village Assistance Committee (VAC), established by the programme. The VACs were given the household list collected through the census (without the PMT ranking) and asked to verify those who were the poorest in their community based on a set of criteria provided by the programme implementers. Following the validation process, those households that were categorized as NISSA 1 or NISSA 2 and were also identified by members of their community as being the 'poorest of the poor', and had at least one child, were selected as eligible households. These households were notified through printed certificates and informed of the enrolment date (Kardan *et al.*, 2014).

The VAC consisted of the two pillars of power within a village: the chief and the elected councillor that represents the village in the Community Council. In addition, it included two elected members and the Auxiliary Officer of the MOSD. Though the VACs were envisaged as a key mechanism to involve communities in the different aspects of the implementation of CGP, they were criticized for not performing this role adequately and their role declined over time. For example, in a review report (Shale, 2014) they were referred to as "community structures...used as public participation window dressing and not rights-based structures representing interests of the people".

Another issue was poor communication between VACs and the MOSD. The VACs would send case forms for consideration, but did not receive feedback from the Ministry in a timely manner. Meanwhile, the communities in which they were embedded continued to perceive them as powerful, and responsible for changes and non-changes on the lists of the enrolled households. This created conflict between VACs and the communities. Further, the review (Shale, 2014) highlighted that despite careful thought, there were limitations to the VAC structure in that it left out key community leadership that is critical to child development, such as teachers, health service providers, and child protection officers. Furthermore, utilizing VACs for grievance

redressals was not deemed as optimal due to the presence of chiefs and councillors. Further, despite the guidelines there was no consistency on the standard format of a VAC. Another constraint was that it was not practically possible for a Councillor and Auxiliary officer to be members of all the VACs in their jurisdiction. The key learning from the review (Shale, 2014) was that although VACs may be seen as promoting community participation, the targeting was insulated from public control and recommended integration of community voices in the determination of selection criterion for the CGP.

As a result, a new methodology was adopted in 2016, during the El Niño crisis. By that time, out of Lesotho's 64 community councils, 33 had been registered on NISSA using the old methodology². For NISSA's expansion, however, a revised NISSA registration procedure was rolled out in a further three community councils. Under this 'new NISSA' methodology, the initial methodology was flipped. Now, community identification of households came first, followed by a detailed survey. Due to limited resources and the impending crisis, it was decided to utilize community-based targeting to identify 50 percent of households in a village that fit into the ultra-poor and very poor categories, NISSA 1 and 2. Then, a detailed survey of only this 50 percent was carried out, to which the PMT was applied to identify those eligible for the CGP by removing the better off households (Kardan *et al.*, 2017).

This methodology required that, under the 'new NISSA', detailed data were collected on only 50 percent of households in each community. This was done to save on resources. This element was subsequently rejected after the El Niño crises in favour of a more comprehensive approach. Though the core methodology remained the same, the MOSD, in partnership with key technical partners, decided that detailed data would be collected on all households in the community. Every household would have a PMT score and a category. Community Based Targeting (CBT) or Community Based Categorization (CBC) was retained as a central feature. The household data serves to validate the results of the CBT. According to this methodology, the whole community is brought together and sits in a gathering, then households are classified in terms of four poverty and wellbeing categories using five characteristics: employment, food security, participation of household in agriculture/horticulture, ownership of livestock, and the ability of the household to send children to school. NISSA employs trained facilitators to conduct these CBC workshops. A step-by-step manual is provided to facilitators for this purpose. The ability of the facilitators is crucial in such a methodology.

The interviews we conducted indicated that the CBC/CBT process has received good reviews from participating communities, in that the facilitators were found to be skilled and knowledgeable. The feedback from communities is that they have a better understanding of both the process and why they are/are not part of the CGP. There are some key challenges in

² As per the interview, in 2012, Lesotho redrew community council boundaries. Prior to the 2012 demarcation, there were 128 CCs (not 64) and NISSA had collected data from 48 of these CCs. However, when the new demarcations are superimposed, NISSA was operating in 33 CCs.

that, at times, communities will ‘gang’ up against the facilitators and want to categorize each and everyone in the beneficiary list. This is a problem that is hard to avoid in a context of almost uniform poverty that a country like Lesotho faces in certain regions.

The role and responsibilities of the VAC accordingly changed to adjust with the new methodology. The role of VAC became facilitation rather than selecting of beneficiaries. The formation of the VAC was opened to the community through the democratic election of VAC members. One VAC member represents about 25–35 households. Therefore, a village of 50 households would have two VACs, and each VAC member would be in charge of facilitation of CBT in the locality in which she was selected. The VACs continue to act as partners of the MOSD and play an important role in the following steps of the targeting process:

1. Intensive mobilization and sensitization: this is key to enable a strong attendance at the CBT workshops. During this process, communities are informed of the role of NISSA, other key stakeholders and the CGP.
2. Conducting the CBC workshops: whereas VAC members would previously sit in isolation of the community and validate the PMT list, they are now co-facilitators of the CBC workshops.
3. Collection of household data: Often VAC members will function as guides to enumerators/data collectors as they go from house to house collecting comprehensive data.
4. Conflict between CBT and household data: These cases are subject to community validation. Currently, NISSA has hired a consultant to work on the development of a community validation module of the NISSA system. The idea is to take the cases where there is a conflict to the community for them to validate. This was explained thus in a KII: “Basically this process starts with the community and ends with the community, so that the community knows who is in the programme and who is not”.
5. Enrolment and Payments events every quarter: the VAC members assist households in bringing the required documents, informing them that the family must select a member to be the payee, etc.

The VACs evolved to play an important role in mobilizing communities around the CGP, accompanying the data collectors, informing enrolled households on the pay dates and accompanying them to the pay centres, providing information on the identities and other issues as the officials may request, guiding enrolled households to lodge complaints and monitoring grants usage in an informal manner. This work is unpaid, and while this issue has been raised previously, there are currently no plans to address it. One key issue is that of limited resources. The CGP operates in a context where the MOSD struggles to hire a full cadre of its main frontline workers, called the Auxiliary Social Workers. At present, there are 56 Auxiliary social Workers across the 64 CCs. These workers are often overburdened and must perform not just tasks related to CGP, but all other programmes that come under the jurisdiction of the MOSD, as well

as interface with the CC representatives of other Ministries. They are supervised by the Child Welfare Officers at the district level. All case management is handled by them.

Interviews and a review of the latest project appraisal documents show that NISSA has now been expanded to all 64 community councils nationwide using this new methodology. NISSA still suffers from inclusion and high exclusion errors. In the past, at times, due to capacity constraints entire villages were not covered, or some households within villages were left out of the NISSA data collection exercise. Another issue is that of recertification. While the old-NISSA methodology has been updated in all the 33 CCs in which it was adopted prior to 2016, there has still been no recertification of CGP programme participants, ten years after the programme first began.

3.4.1 Identifying programme participants for Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government Services (SPRINGS)

As mentioned, SPRINGS was designed as a complementary programme to the CGP. Therefore, it was rolled out in five CCs in which CGP was active (which currently includes almost the entire country). These five CCs were decided jointly by the MOSD and CRS, and were chosen based on physical accessibility, as well as CCs in which local services were being offered at a higher rate than others, and where an adequate number of CGP beneficiaries were to be found. This would then help determine the efficacy of a cash plus programme model, that combines a cash transfer with livelihood generation interventions, such as CGP+SPRINGS. Interviews with both MOSD and CRS key informants suggest that an effective collaborative relationship was forged during the exchange of information between CRS and MOSD. According to a MOSD respondent: “The criterion for selecting councils was based on the agreements that were made between MOSD and CRS on where CGP beneficiaries are located.”

As noted above, an important difference between SPRINGS and ICWHR was that while ICWHR only targeted CGP beneficiaries, SPRINGS allowed participation from any interested community members to ensure that those households that did not meet the eligibility criteria for the CGP were not excluded from SPRINGS. This was in response to the lesson learned during the pilot ICWHR, where it was found that excluding non-CGP households from SPRINGS was leading to tensions within the community between participants and non-participants. As per the October 2017 CRS presentation on SPRINGS, around 60 percent of SPRINGS beneficiaries were enrolled in the CGP.

The overall aim of ensuring that CGP beneficiaries were offered services under SPRINGS meant that a special effort would be needed to reach CGP beneficiaries. This involved a delicate balance during community mobilization for SPRINGS. While CGP beneficiaries were given priority during the programme outreach, SPRINGS personnel also made it clear that all households within the CCs could participate in the programme. To aid CRS to proactively reach out to CGP beneficiaries, NISSA shared the list of beneficiary households with CRS. However, once the programmatic decision was made to open SPRINGS to all community managers, CRS

decided not to share this list with its implementing partner, Caritas. This led to confusion between Caritas and CRS, and increased inefficiency as Caritas, without the official list, had to consult local authorities and do house-to-house calls to identify CGP beneficiaries. A Caritas key informant reported:

“At the beginning of the programme we requested for NISSA database from MOSD in order to identify CGP beneficiaries and our request was not granted. In the end we had to work with the local leaders at community level and to conduct house to house visits to identify and produce list CGP beneficiaries” (Caritas key informant interview).

Another challenge with regards to targeting CGP participants for SPRINGS was a perception that they might not receive their transfers and would be dropped from the CGP if they joined SPRINGS.

3.5 Programme articulation design

The methodological guide followed in this study (CEDE and RIMISP, 2018) identifies the following typologies:

1. Different and independent programmes, which are the responsibility of different institutions, and which target the same population. In such circumstances, there is no a-priori articulation, as the programmes are different in their design and implementation and are carried out based on the institutions' own logic, but they coincide in specific spaces and set of beneficiaries.
2. Programmes that are designed in a complementary way that are the responsibility of one institution and constitute an integrated strategy. These are the cases in which the social protection programmes design their own economic-productive inclusion programmes. For these initiatives, it is the social ministries themselves that design the productive programmes, define the target population and the exit and entry criteria, and determine the budget and resources involved. In such cases, although the articulation is clear, there is no inter-sectoral coordination, making the adaptation of work structures and horizontal coordination impossible. However, inter-institutional articulation does seem to exist.
3. Different programmes, with complementary goals, which are the responsibility of different institutions and are articulated amongst themselves. While they avoid duplicity, the necessary timely and pertinent coordination becomes more difficult even though spaces for articulation and coordination are evident.
4. A single programme that combines social protection and rural development goals, with different components. Such programmes are characterized by being single programmes with different components that articulate their goals and require inter-sectoral coordination for their implementation, as they depend on different institutions.
5. Single integrated programme with different components.

The CGP+SPRINGS case consists of two different programmes, with complementary goals, which are both the responsibility of the MOSD. This belongs to Type 2 typology, as there was no inter-institutional articulation between the MOSD and the MAFS or the MoLG, the other two Ministries with which it interfaced.

Table 1: Typology of programmes

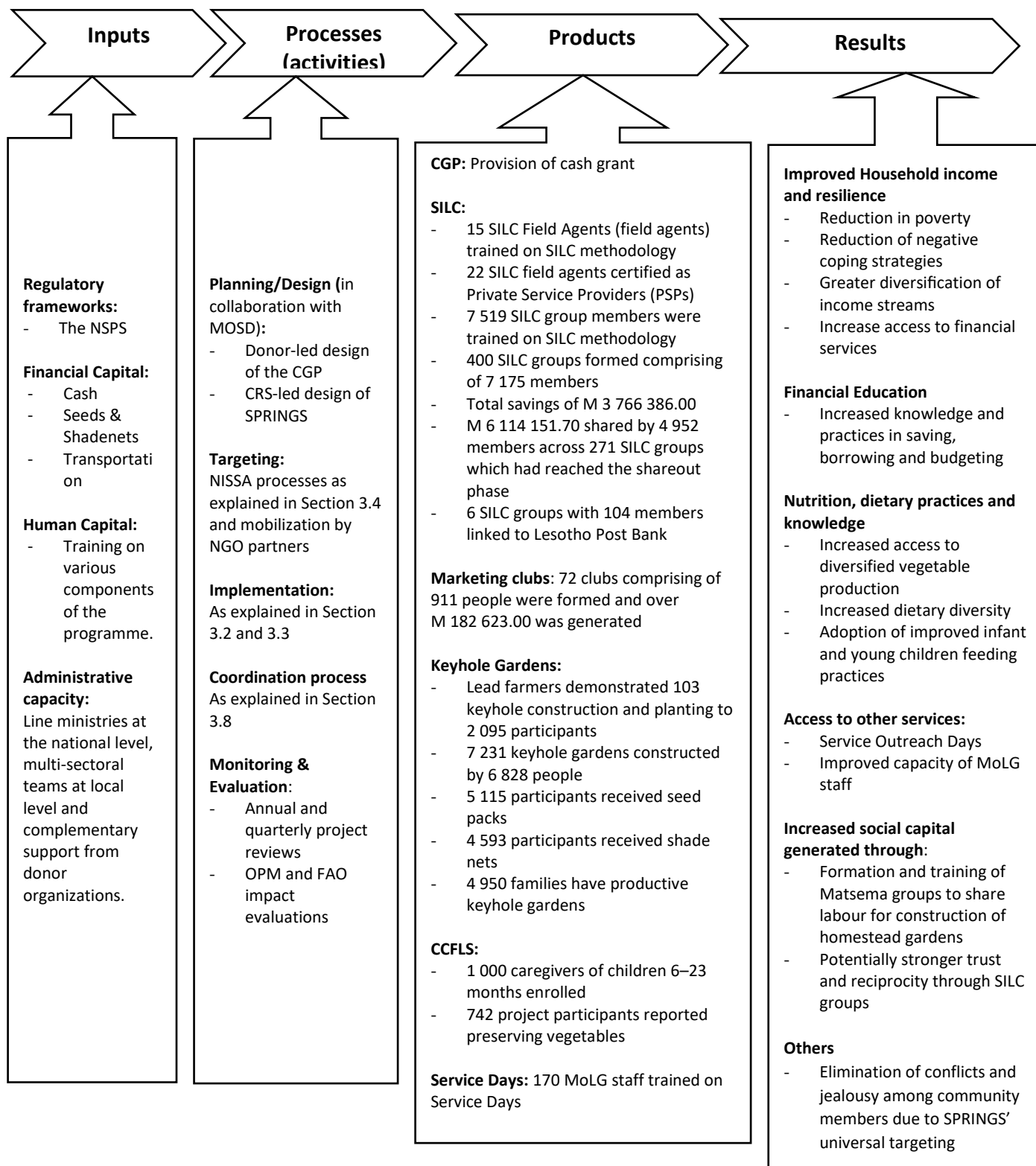
Attributes	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5
Institutions involved	1 or more	1	2 or more	2 or more	1
Programmes involved	2 or more	2 or more	2 or more	1	1
Inter-institutional articulation	Fortuitous articulation	No articulation	With articulation	With articulation	No articulation
Intra-institutional articulation	No articulation	With or without articulation	No articulation	With or without articulation	No articulation

3.6 Value chain of the Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government Services (SPRINGS) programme

In this section, we construct the ‘value chain’, a graphic instrument that presents the "sequential and logical relationship between inputs, activities, products, outcomes, and impacts in which value is added throughout the entire transformation process" (Arregocés *et al.*, 2012, as cited in Maldonado *et al.*, 2015).

We conducted a desk review of project documents and impact evaluation reports, complemented by interviews with key stakeholders to construct the value chain. The value chain is depicted in Figure 10 below. As the activities listed under ‘Processes’ are too detailed to be captured in one schematic figure, we have indicated the section of this report where details of these activities can be found. For the ‘Products’ column, we primarily relied on CRS project documents because an independent process evaluation was not commissioned for SPRINGS. Evidence for what we have documented under the ‘Results’ column is captured in the section on Efficacy and Quality Analyses.

Figure 10: Value chain of CGP+SPRINGS



Source: Authors' analyses based on desk review and interviews.

3.7 Efficacy and quality analysis

Efficacy is a measure of the extent to which a programme has met its purposes. The impacts of CGP and CGP+SPRINGS have been evaluated by a quantitative micro-econometric study (Daidone and Pace, 2018) and a qualitative study (Nesbitt-Ahmed and Pozarny, 2018). **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.** summarises the main results and the recommendations of that study, emphasizing those that are pertinent from the point of view of this institutional assessment. In addition, based on this study, we have added another section that provides more detail on each of the five main aspects studied, with a focus on the issue of quality. Quality here refers to the importance/relevance, sufficiency and satisfaction with implemented activities/processes to produce the intended outputs and outcomes.

Table 2: Efficacy and quality analyses

Household Income and Resilience	
Impact Evaluation (IE) findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabled families to invest in children’s education needs and buy food. However, transfer amount is small and some CGP participants experienced irregularity, leading to debt at times. This was seen less in CGP+SPRINGS, where SPRINGS components increased and stabilized household income. Multiple income streams through CGP transfers, SILC, and small-scale income-generating activities promoted resilience during periods of stress. More positive impacts were observed in older CGP and SPRINGS sites, suggesting that engagement in the programme is important for sustainability of impacts.
Institutional Assessment (IA) findings	<p>In both SPRINGS and non-SPRINGS areas, CGP was perceived as important as it enabled beneficiaries to pay school fees, buy school necessities and food for children. However, a few beneficiaries complained: “The grant is insufficient and payments are often late (sometimes 2 months late).”</p> <p>Consequences of delayed payments were presented by beneficiaries: “We are not able to make payments (and borrow) for SILC in time and this affected our participation in SILC. We were also not able to pay school fees in time.”</p>
Financial Education	
IE Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in knowledge and awareness in SPRING participants on saving, borrowing and budgeting. Increased access to savings and loans through SILC groups, leading to increased income, greater stability of income and reduction in debt.
IE Recommendations	<p>Recommended that MOSD encourage SILC groups by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating benefits to all community members and actively promoting CGP beneficiaries (e.g. at pay points and other events) to participate in SILC groups, with assurance that increased incomes will not terminate CGP payments. Assisting SILC members to scale up their investments into larger-scale enterprises (e.g. connecting them with producer and trade associations at local, district and national levels, such as piggery and poultry associations)
IA Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FGD members in Menkhoaneng Community Council indicated that SILC had cultivated a savings ethic which would enable those receiving the grants to graduate out of poverty. The Council Chairperson noted that she was aware of the

Table 2: Efficacy and quality analyses

	<p>Field Agents training sessions but was of the opinion that more information should be imparted to beneficiaries to reinforce ownership by grassroots communities and discourage beneficiaries' dependence on NGOs or implementers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGDs with beneficiaries indicated that SILC groups were being utilized to meet various needs, not just supporting the development of small business. For example, a few members shared that money from SILC savings was used for buying school uniforms and supplies and paying school fees. Others reported using the money to construct or extend existing houses and purchase food at the end of the year. Some reported indirect benefits, including the ethic of sharing, especially with vulnerable people, less reliance on men and reduced reliance on loan sharks. Further, they noted the complementarity of the two programmes in that the CGP transfer allowed them to participate in the SILC groups. • The CRS Final Project report captured a few issues with the functioning of SILC groups that need to be addressed when planning another livelihood generation programme. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SILC groups linked with Postbank claim that the bank was not transparent enough and levied "hidden" charges on transactions. It was suggested that future interventions include a written agreement between Postbank and individual groups to avoid such misunderstandings. ○ High turn-over of Field Agents due to unsatisfactory remuneration. This at times caused loss of momentum and lack of group monitoring, leading to SILC methodology being compromised. ○ Overload on field agents meant that they were at times unable to cope and regularly monitor all SILC groups. Groups which were not monitored regularly were found to be deviating from the SILC methodology and it took time to get them back on track. ○ Delays in training SILC groups on income-generating activities, Marketing skills and Financial Education. ○ During monitoring, it was observed that most of the share-out money was used for purchasing agricultural inputs, starting small businesses and acquiring small assets like furniture. Some group members were planning to mostly use it to cover school needs and for household capital expenditure such as renovation and furniture. This was confirmed by the FGDs with beneficiaries. • While the FGDs indicated that participants found the creation of SILC groups and financial training to be beneficial and were largely satisfied, there were also certain problems faced by some of the groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disgruntlement amongst some SILC group members regarding defaulted members who had borrowed more than they could afford to pay. ○ Disagreement with the rules of share-out that Caritas insisted on. These rules are designed to ensure sustainability of SILC groups and it is part of the financial education for the group members to understand the rationale behind these rules. ○ There might have been an overzealousness on the part of implementers in some cases. Council members alleged that at times CGP participants were coerced to join SILC groups under the threat that the CGP grants would be withdrawn if they did not participate in the lending groups.
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Table 2: Efficacy and quality analyses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some other Council members also noted that most of the SILC groups were made up of more well-to-do households as opposed to the CGP beneficiaries, whose poverty status did not allow them to save.
Income-generating skills	
IE Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generated additional income from selling vegetables from keyhole gardens. In some cases, this additional income was used to invest in SILC groups and/or productive assets, such as seeds and fertilizers, to generate further income. In several cases, beneficiaries were able to set up small-scale businesses and income-generating activities. Some of those with longer exposure were able to access formal financial institutions such as banks and/or register as formal associations.
IE Recommendations	Caution advised regarding market saturation risk due to beneficiaries selling similar vegetables within a relatively small local community.
IA Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FGDs revealed that saturation of the market was a very real risk. For example, keyhole garden beneficiaries did not report any financial gains because: “We did not sell vegetables because almost everybody has a keyhole and thus their own produce”. The CRS Final Project report noted that the drought lead to low vegetable production, and in some cases there was misuse of inputs such as seeds and shade nets by project beneficiaries.
Food security and diet diversity	
IE Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CGP alone enabled households to increase and improve their food consumption. However, their diet diversity improved for only a short while after they received the transfer. SPRINGS allowed for a more constant supply of vegetables from keyhole gardens and multiple income streams, thus encouraging a diversified diet over a longer time. Improved nutritional and health information, including practices concerning childcare and feeding for caregivers of children aged 6–23 months, through the CCFLS.
IE Recommendations	<p>Recommended that MoAFS encourage maintenance and sustainability of keyhole gardens by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up linkages to enable continuous and consistent effective follow-ups by Lead Farmers, including providing regular refresher training and education to Lead Farmers. Support diversification of garden produce, particularly in cases where beneficiaries in the same community sell similar vegetables, to prevent market saturation and promote availability of diversified vegetables. Capacity development of CCFLS.
IA Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries reported increased access to diversified vegetable production and acknowledged that the <i>Matsema</i> concept enhanced the spirit of working together beyond the social cohesion that already exists within the community. The <i>Matsema</i> initiative encouraged them to assist each other and other labour-deficient households/individuals, such as the elderly and disabled people, in building keyholes.

Table 2: Efficacy and quality analyses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyhole beneficiaries acknowledged and expressed satisfaction about the training they had received from CARITAS. They also reported that they had imparted their knowledge to other community members. They added that some keyholes were made through <i>Matsema</i>, though others were individually constructed. • The CRS Final Project report captured a few issues with the CCFLS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The 12-day sessions were perceived to be too long for some caregivers. This translated to a decrease in the number and interest of parents and caregivers during training. ○ Inability of some caregivers to adopt the CCFLS methodology due to lack of recommended food types to feed their children. • The key informant interviews and FGDs revealed that Sisters of Charity worked very closely with Village Health workers who assisted them to identify malnourished children. In return, Village Health Worker’s technical capacities were developed through learning about CCFLS and by learning to use mobile equipment to capture data.
Access to Services	
IE Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to other support services – envisaged through SPRINGS citizen outreach model (one-stop shop) – was not improved. • While the MoLG received training on how to implement well-being days, this activity was not yet operationalized.
IE Recommendations	<p>Access has remained low largely due to limited staff capacity and availability of resources to effectively service CCs. It was recommended that MoLG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensify advocacy and training to service providers in education, health, agriculture and labour (government and non-government) on the added value of collaboration. • Encourage concrete linkages among programmes, for example through incentivising services/programmes to include beneficiaries on combined interventions.
IA Findings	<p>The CRS key informants reported that they trained local government staff on service days, documented outcomes of the training sessions, and produced and disseminated training manuals. Despite this, MoLG has not been able to organize any service days due to capacity constraints, such as lack of infrastructure. This was accentuated by high staff turnover.</p>
Operations	
IE Findings	<p>The Quantitative study shed light on few operational elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash distribution at pay point is still the main delivery mechanism for the CGP, followed by mobile payments (16 percent) and bank transfers. • Most respondents mention having received instructions on the use of the transfer on children needs. Targeting criteria not very clear to respondents.
IE Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust transfer value to reflect inflation costs and consider different family sizes. • Switch to e-payments such as M-pesa as more than 80 percent of sample households own a cell phone. • Increase clarity on CGP inclusion criteria to avoid negative community dynamics. • Increase and encourage participation in SPRINGS by increasing communication that CGP and SPRINGS are not competing but complementary interventions.

Table 2: Efficacy and quality analyses

<p>IA Findings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some beneficiaries complained that the targeting method had excluded some deserving people. A group from Mekhoaneng Moreneng presented the problem thus: “Targeting has left out some destitute and disabled members of the community who ideally should have been part of the CGP”. Mate Focus Group also reported both exclusion and inclusion errors as a result of the old targeting method. • Several beneficiaries and key informants noted that mobile technology is hard for elderly people to navigate, and they often get blocked out of the system due to expired or incorrect passwords. The loss of Payment Days was also lamented as a forum for communication between participants and various public and private service providers.
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3.8 Intensity of articulation

Based on the actor map, the value chain, and the efficacy and quality analyses, we next typify the intensity of articulation between the key actors identified as per the six levels of articulation proposed by Cobertt and Noye (2008). They caution that greater levels of articulation do not guarantee ‘better’ or more functional articulation as the intensity depends on the context and requirement. The six levels are:

1. Communication, where information is exchanged and discussed.
2. Cooperation, where workgroups or committees are established to support exchange of information, services, and goals among programmes.
3. Coordination, where there are formal inter-institutional agreements for coordination. Individuals are also involved in joint planning.
4. Collaboration, where actors (individual or collective) voluntarily give up part of their autonomy to gain mutual benefits and outcomes. This also implies a centralized operational administration.
5. Convergence, where there is a real restructuring of services, programmes, memberships, budgets, missions, goals, personnel, contractual arrangements for the reallocation of funds, shared resources and a leading agency.
6. Consolidation, where there are multi-agent and multi-disciplinary plans and budgets, together with inter-agency groups that provide services, merged planning and human capital and shared assets.

In Figure 11, we identify the intensity of articulation between the key actors identified in the management and implementation of the CGP and SPRINGS. In each case, the arrows indicate the desired level at which the articulation should exist, as opposed to where it exists currently.

Figure 11: Intensity of coordination across CGP+SPRINGS

	Communication	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration	Convergence	Consolidation
Central Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAFS & MOSD: primarily through the DMT Cabinet Social Protection Committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOSD & CRS: Regular reporting; Joint design & planning CRS and other NGOs 	MOSD & MoLG: MoU			
District Level	DA Monthly meetings		District level teams: DDMT, Health, Nutrition, Child Protection	Outreach Week		
Community Council Level				Monthly Council Meetings: 4 key frontline workers: Aux. SWs, Agr. Ext. Workers, NGO staff, CC staff		

Prerequisites:

- For collaboration: embedded workflow, similar pace of work across Ministries and NGO
- For Cooperation & Coordination: Continuity of staff, transparent information flow

Source: Authors' analyses based on desk review and interviews.

3.8.1 Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Ministry of Social Development

Implementation of complex projects that involve a number of multi-sectorial stakeholders often pose serious challenges for the Government of Lesotho, due to, among other things, low institutional capacity and lack of coordination (Ulrichs and Mphale, 2016). This study revealed that several forums existed that presented a good opportunity for cross collaboration among different stakeholders. However, effective articulation of actions are relatively limited. For instance, it appears that interactions between MOSD and MAFS are currently limited to emergency situations only. This takes the form of a Disaster Management Team, where various government ministries, international and humanitarian organisations, NGOs and the private sector come together to address emergencies. There was clear recognition, however, that collaboration between MAFS and MOSD and mobilization of their combined strength and expertise would contribute immensely to the improvement of programmes meant to link social protection with agriculture. A MAFS key informant reflected this view:

“Even though commercial agriculture presents a bigger picture, MAFS realizes that there are vulnerable individuals under social protection who have to be assisted. Therefore, MAFS needs to be communicating with MOSD and the two strategies needs to be linked together” (MAFS key informant interview).

Respondents from MOSD at the national level voiced similar sentiments:

“MAFS should ideally be the biggest partner. It has advantage that it has staff at the community level and thus a key ministry if MOSD want to move CGP+ forward. MAFS has the biggest ability to take people out of poverty” (MOSD key informant interview).

3.8.2 Ministry of Social Development and Catholic Relief Services

For SPRINGS, the partnership between MOSD and CRS is best described as one of cooperation, taking the shape of regular reporting, and participation in inception, interim, and dissemination workshops. It is typified as cooperation rather than communication only, because both actors cooperated in targeting programme participants (such as NISSA sharing the list of CGP beneficiaries with CRS). One key hurdle we identified is the lack of MOSD staff. It would have been very useful for an MOSD staff member to be staffed with CRS for the duration of the programme. The meetings and workshops, referred to above, provided a forum for stakeholders and implementing partners to discuss issues related to SPRINGS implementation. However, these forums were not effectively utilized. Though CRS invited relevant government Ministries to these meetings, for example, at the launching of the programme, lack of attendance by key actors undermined their effectiveness. One CRS key informant reflected: “During the launching of the programme, all relevant Ministries (MOSD, MAFS, Forestry, Small Business, etc.) were invited and informed about the project. It was only MOSD which attended.” A Caritas key informant stated, “CRS organised two workshops: one at the national level (attended by only one person from MOSD) and another for all government ministries working at the council.”

3.8.3 Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Local Government

As MOSD is a relatively young Ministry, it is one of the first to adopt the Decentralization Model spearheaded by the MoLG. MOSD is one of the seven pilot ministries identified for decentralization and has already devolved its functions, mainly through its Auxiliary Social Workers housed at the council level. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between MOSD and Local Government establishing this working relationship. The Auxiliary Social Workers are the primary frontline workers of the MOSD, who are the interface between the Ministry and the beneficiaries.

3.8.4 District level

District offices of national government ministries were not active within SPRINGS. Their involvement was limited to information sharing. However, our interviews with key informants revealed that several mechanisms were in place to facilitate regular coordination and collaboration at the district level that could be utilized for a larger scale Community Development Model (CDM) that seeks to enhance livelihoods.

We list these below:

1. **DA's Monthly Meetings:** At the district level, the District Administrative (DA) office coordinates the activities of all Government Departments. The DA convenes monthly meetings to facilitate horizontal collaboration that are attended by all Heads of Departments across the district. These meetings provided a forum for Heads of Departments to present their annual plans, report on progress and jointly identify emerging challenges. While both the DA office and MOSD key informants considered these meetings as necessary, absence of agenda, inclusion of issues on the agenda that were not pertinent for all stakeholders, and lack of knowledge or confusion were identified as common problems culminating in poor participation or low attendance.
2. **Outreach Week:** One of the most significant innovations that offered district staff a forum for joint implementation of various programmes was an Outreach Week, initiated by the DA, where all Heads of Departments collaboratively selected a council and visited it for a week to present and offer their services to the communities in a unified manner. Knowledge about the Outreach Week was, however, varied amongst the respondents. One MOSD Key Informant indicated that it was currently an *ad hoc* event that has happened only once when the district was preparing for the Prime Ministers' visit. The event was nonetheless considered critical. Respondents concurred that Outreach Week was a key mechanism through which various actors across the district could interact or work together in addressing community members' needs.
3. **Other Cross-sectorial Coordination Committees:** Other cross-sectorial coordination teams reported during the interviews included a District Disaster Management Team established to ensure an effective collective response to emergencies chaired by the DA. However, it was reported that the District Disaster Management Team addresses emergency and disaster-related issues and only meets twice a year/quarterly. Respondents also reported the existence of the District Management Health Team, mandated to coordinate all health-related issues across the district and similarly chaired by the DA. Additionally, the Nutrition officer housed at the DA's office coordinates with other Nutrition officers placed within different departments across the district. Respondents also reported several portfolio committees that address specific challenges.
4. **Collaboration between MAFS and MOSD at district level:** Generally, findings pointed towards limitations in the partnership between the two departments, even though there seemed to be a common understanding by both departments that they need each other to be able to effectively deliver services. The issue was described by a MOSD key informant: "MAFS has a vital role to play within the CDP livelihood programme, therefore the two ministries need to collaborate". Similarly, the District Agriculture Officer said:

“Although we are currently not working together with MOSD, my office was recently approached by the District Manager about the upcoming CDP and informing us that MOSD will be requiring assistance of MAFS in the future” (District Agriculture Officer).

However, to some extent, both departments collaborated through being within similar district level teams. For instance, the District Agriculture Officer reported that the Nutrition officer within the District Agriculture Officer’s office was also part of the Child Protection Team spearheaded by MOSD. The District Agriculture Officer also indicated that there were more opportunities for collaboration in Agricultural Resource Centres which are close to the Council offices, where MOSD Auxiliaries and MAFS Extension officers often work together. He suggested that the connection should be strengthened. When responding to the issue of likely future participation in the CDM Livelihoods Programme, the District Agriculture Officer cited lack of time, heavy workload and insufficient resources, i.e., personnel (due to vacant positions) and vehicles for transport, as likely barriers to effective participation within CDP.

3.8.5 Community Council level

A relatively increased level of cooperation, though largely informal, was reported at sub-district compared to the national and district levels. There are four key actors at the Council Level that seemingly worked well together: Auxiliary Social Workers of the MOSD, Agriculture Extension Workers of the MAFS, NGO staff of Caritas and Sister of Charity/Good Shepherd Sisters, and finally the locally elected CC staff (the two key members of which are the CC Chief and CC Secretary).

For instance, informants from CARITAS indicated that they coordinated with MAFS at the Resource Centre Level. According to the informant, “The Resource Centre assists our Field monitors to identify lead Farmers”. Similarly, “Although CARITAS did the actual training of Lead Farmers, Extension workers at Council level who were interested in assisting were welcome to do so”. Interestingly, although no working relationships were reported between the Auxiliary Officer and the Crop Production Extension officer, the Extension officer seemingly interacted with the Council and both coordinated public gatherings. An Area Extension Officer said:

“Our office interacts well with the council. For instance, we always inform the council of agricultural-related issues so that they can assist us with dissemination of messages to the chiefs and Councillors” (Area Extension Officer).

Key informants also reported regular interactions with Auxiliary workers at the Council Level. A CARITAS informant commented:

“Since most CGP beneficiaries were initially not interested or reluctant to participate in SPRINGS, during pay-days, we collaborated with Auxiliaries in an effort to lobby CGP beneficiaries to enrol in SPRINGS” (CARITAS key informant interview).

Some form of reciprocal collaboration was reported between the Council and the Auxiliary social workers, where both coordinated their visits to communities (public gatherings or lipitso are held synergistically) in order to reduce transport costs and to avoid the problem of calling communities to too many public gatherings. When describing the role of the CC in this relationship, both the Auxiliary Officer and some FGD members from Matlakeng Community Council said:

“The role of the community council is to /her identify the needy and to consult her on incidences such as the need for food packages etc. though she struggles with transport for which she relies on councils transport” (Matlakeng Community Council).

Auxiliary officers also collaborated with Sisters of Charity where the latter helped them to identify vulnerable people.

A forum which enabled this informal working relationship between the frontline workers was the monthly council meetings, which include all NGOs and service providers working within the council. Focus Group members at Maisaphoka Community Council suggested joint meetings with representatives from line ministries and Councillors, where individual ministerial plans are integrated into a structured and coordinated joint approach. These plans would help to facilitate joint public gatherings.

While the mode of goodwill and informal relationships between implementing partners and local service providers seemed to work relatively well, there were concerns regarding the pace at which government ministries work, as well as lack of information flow across its different levels. The concerns were described by CARITAS informants:

“There seems to be a serious problem of information flow between the different levels. For instance, despite mobilization efforts at higher levels, some Auxiliaries at Council level were not aware of SPRINGS programme at all. Also, both MAFS and MOSD at district level were not aware of the existence of SPRINGS Program” (CARITAS key informant interviews).

3.9 Analysis of formal and informal institutional mechanisms

While there are formal mechanisms in place for inter-sectoral coordination at the policy level, none existed that were specifically tailored for the CGP+SPRINGS programme. Existing coordination mechanisms are not programme-specific, but function across various activities of the different Ministries. The NSPS had called for the establishment of a Cabinet Social Protection Committee, with a secretariat in the Prime Minister’s office and supported by several

coordination committees: a National Social Protection Policy Committee at the level of principal secretaries to coordinate programmes, a Social Protection Technical Committee at the director level, and ten District Coordination Committee, one for each district. The National committee has been meeting on an annual basis for the last three years (World Bank, 2019). The district committees would have had their first meetings in July/August 2019 (MOSD, 2019). Another formal mechanism is the District Disaster Management teams convened when the country is hit by droughts, such as the El Niño drought of 2017.

Perhaps one of the most important coordinating mechanisms is the ongoing effort to institutionalize a single national registry system (the NISSA) that is used for management and monitoring of all social assistance, both within the MOSD and across Ministries. As part of this effort, the World Bank's USD 20 million Social Assistance Project (2016–2020) includes within its mandate support for the expansion of NISSA throughout the country. As of July 2019, NISSA is currently being used for the CGP and OVC Bursary Programmes in 22 CCs. Within these CCs and for these two programmes, NISSA supports the process of targeting, enrolment, payments, and case management. It is also used by UN and non-UN agencies, such as World Food Programme, FAO, CRS and World Vision for social protection targeting. Similarly, the ongoing European Union -funded Integrated Social Safety Net Pilot, which began in 2012, had planned to integrate the Public Assistance Programme also within the NISSA's ambit.

More broadly, the mandate of the Integrated Social Safety Net is to strengthen the governance of social protection in Lesotho, primarily by engaging UNICEF as a technical partner. It aimed to create a set of common operational tools connected by a Management Information Systems (MIS) interface that would aid in targeting, case management and payments across different programmes and link to the National Registry. While wiring of districts so that they are connected to the MIS is ongoing, the incorporation of the Public Assistance Programme into the NISSA, linking to the National Registry and creation of a NISSA portal on the MIS, are yet to occur. However, NISSA's scale-up across the country has been achieved. As of July 2019, almost 334 000 households in all 64 rural CCs of Lesotho are registered with NISSA (MOSD, 2019).

An informal mechanism that worked well for obtaining synergies between CGP and SPRINGS was Payment Days. During the implementation of SPRINGS, Payment Days became informal forums for coordinating between Ministries and implementing partners. For instance, CARITAS key informants used the forum to mobilize CGP beneficiaries to join the SPRINGS component. The informant reported:

“Given that most CGP beneficiaries were initially not interested/ reluctant to participate in SPRINGS, during pay-days, we collaborated with Auxiliaries in an effort to lobby CGP beneficiaries to enrol in SPRINGS” (CARITAS key informant interview).

Participants in the Menkhoaneng Moreneng Focus Group reported the existence of a good working relationship between CARITAS staff members and Auxiliary officers during the Payment

Days, where both CARITAS and Auxiliary officers encouraged participants to partake in either SILC or keyhole gardens. Group members also reported the engagement of Extension officer in this activity:

“The Extension Officer also attended Pay days and would use it to talk to us encouraging us to participate in keyhole gardens and farming in general. This happened during public gatherings.”

“The Auxiliary Officer encouraged us during the pay days about the importance of being part of SILC groups and keyhole gardens” (Menkhoaneng Moreneng Focus Group).

Councillors, in turn, reported problems emanating from the replacement of manually-operated days with mobile payments: “Mobile payment system has reduced our ability to intervene in payments delays and other related issues”.

One CGP participant group expressed their concern on the replacement of paydays:

“We used to interact more with the Auxiliaries during the era of manual payments. The Auxiliary was always present during paydays and she used the paydays to pass messages, e.g., the importance of using cash for school essentials and ensuring that school children eat well” (CGP participant group).

At Ha Mots’oane, CGP beneficiaries explained that, prior to the mobile payment system, they would meet the Auxiliary whenever they went to the council to collect their money. They expressed their discontent:

“The Auxiliary does not visit the village regularly. We know where to find her but she lives too far from our village. Sometimes when we get to the Council, we are told that she has gone to other places or is on leave” (Ha Mots’oane CGP beneficiaries).

Similar notions were expressed by beneficiaries at ‘Mate:

“We often need to meet the Auxiliary for complaints and to notify her about the presence of needy children. We try to send reports to her but she does not come to the villages. However, before the mobile payment system we used to interact better with her during paydays” (‘Mate beneficiaries).

Nonetheless, with the exception of a few beneficiaries who experienced problems with mobile payment systems (mostly related to lack of experience, delays in deposits and other technical problems such as connectivity and password expiration), the majority seemed to prefer the new system and reported that it saved them long trips to the council, long queues and the possibility of being mugged.

4. Enabling factors and barriers

Based on the review and the interviews conducted, four main enabling factors emerged that allowed the CGP and SPRINGS to be effective and complementary to each other. First, both programmes have incorporated lessons learned from previous pilots and implementation procedures. As described in sections 3.2 and 3.4, both the CGP and SPRINGS have seen a constant evolution in some of their key implementation processes and in the design of their complementarity. The targeting process for the CGP has incorporated learnings from how the community validation was initially carried out, evolving to the situation today where it has shifted to community-based targeting. Accordingly, the sequencing of conducting the census for collecting household-level data has changed. While it was previously conducted prior to the community validation for the proxy means testing, it is now carried out to validate the results of the CBT. Similarly, SPRINGS was designed based on the learnings from the two earlier pilots: the LFSSP and the ICWHR. The targeting process for SPRINGS also changed from the ICWHR in response to how the community perceived exclusive targeting to CGP participants; to avoid discord, SPRINGS was made available to all residents within the CCs it operated in.

A second key feature of both CGP and SPRINGS has been local ownership. For CGP, the targeting process is carried out through CBT in which the VACs play an important facilitator role. Within the SPRINGS, the NGOs CRS and Caritas locally recruited field agents for implementing SILC groups, and trained lead farmers for the homestead gardening. Similarly, Sisters for Charity collaborated with the community health workers for implementing CCFLS. Training and relying on local technical capacity meant that the NGOs had local support to carry out their activities and that the communities benefited from building local expertise, even after the programme ended.

A third factor that could potentially play a key enabling role is the gradual recognition of the importance of inter-sectorial work by key stakeholders. Both the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security recognize that mobilization of each Ministry's strength and expertise would contribute immensely to the improvement of programmes that inevitably link social protection with agriculture. From the perspective of the MAFS, social protection was not perceived as something that lies outside the purview of the Ministry. Rather, there was a willingness to collaborate with the MOSD, and to engage with the issue of food security, malnutrition and under-nutrition jointly with the MOSD. It was suggested that the two national strategies – the National Food Security Strategy and National Social Protection Strategy – need to be linked.

Fourth, there is enthusiasm for implementing a comprehensive community-led livelihood development programme. All key stakeholders interviewed at the national and local level expressed that the SPRINGS pilot had been envisaged with the objective of testing out the

Community Development Model (CDM), which aims to help households graduate into sustainable livelihoods through combining social assistance with livelihoods and financial inclusion. The CDM necessitates a programmatic framework that brings together different sectors in implementing the National Social Protection Strategy and the National Policy on Social Development. These policy documents emphasize an economic inclusion approach wherein the vulnerable population is facilitated to participate actively in the country's social and economic development. SPRINGS ended in mid-2018, but the plan was to use the lessons learned from this pilot and incorporate them into a larger country-wide CDM Programme. In the second half of 2018, Building Resources Across Communities facilitated extensive discussions between the various stakeholders to assist the MOSD in the assessment and design of a Graduation CDM model. The design of the new CDM was presented at a Design Validation Workshop in November 2018 and later revised and ratified following the October 2018 Stakeholder Review Mission. However, due to funding constraints this programme has not yet operationalized. The time gap between the end of SPRINGS and the start of the envisaged CDM Programme is perceived as a strong set back. It should be noted that extensive thought was put into the design and operational structure of a potential CDM model, and can be leveraged when a policy window opens to proceed with the CDM model.

The failure of the CDM Programme to launch as envisaged in 2019 manifests some of the key barriers in achieving articulation between social protection and rural development interventions. These include: weak technical capacity; inadequate MOSD financial resources; inadequate human resources across all Ministries; and high staff turnover across all Ministries. NISSA and MIS need further development to support social protection across all programmes. This includes recertification of CGP programme participants and rectifying high exclusion errors.

Recognizing its capacity constraints, the MOSD indicated that even when the CDM programme is rolled out, it is likely that this would take the shape of partnerships with other development partners such as NGOs. The MOSD is still weak relative to other Ministries in its ability to secure financial and human resources. Vacant posts, limited manpower, lack of technical capacity and lack of resources (e.g. transportation vehicles) for implementing various programme activities were reported by stakeholders at national, district and community council level. Lack of MOSD staff meant that it was not possible for an MOSD staff member to be staffed with CRS for the duration of the SPRINGS programme. This is also the reason why the MOSD is forced to work without its full cadre of key frontline workers, the Auxiliary Social workers. With regards to financial resources, the lack of vehicles to transport government service providers such as Auxiliaries and Extension Workers was brought up multiple times. We were informed that at times, informally, CRS provided transport and sometimes lunch for Government field workers, thus enabling them to perform better.

Another related issue is that of staff turnover, with the resultant loss of institutional knowledge and slowing of the ongoing processes of partnership building. Lack of continuity of staff was cited as a major barrier to coordination. A Caritas informant said: “At every meeting/workshop, Government nominates a new person to attend and this results in lack of continuity”.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Different activities were embedded within the CGP + SPRINGS programme, which required cooperation and collaboration between various stakeholders. While in most cases the cooperation existed, the collaboration achieved was a form of *ad hoc* information sharing between institutions, rather than a broader, more inclusive and accountable process. We typify the intensity of coordination between the key actors as communicative at the District and Central level but collaborative at the Community Council and Village level. Four key actors at the Council Level seemingly worked well together: Auxiliary Social Workers of the MOSD, Agriculture Extension Workers of the MAFS, NGO staff of Caritas and Sister of Charity/Good Shepherd Sisters, and finally the locally elected Community Council staff.

It should be noted that there was no formal coordination mechanism established specifically for the CGP and SPRINGS, but that existing inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms at the policy level were relied on instead. For implementation of SPRINGS, the MOSD and CRS collaborated in the design and planning stages, but during the implementation phase, the relationship was characterized by regular reporting only. Interactions between MOSD and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security are mostly limited to emergency situations, primarily through the Disaster Management Team. A Memorandum of Understanding exists between the MoLG and the MOSD which allows for an embedded workflow between the two Ministries at the local level.

The key Ministries recognize that mobilizing each other's strength and expertise would contribute immensely to the improvement of programmes that inevitably link social protection with rural livelihoods. A key enabling factor for successful collaboration is the consensus that has been achieved in this regard.

While key stakeholders expressed the desire to collaborate, a hurdle in achieving this is lack of capacity, both in terms of financial and human resources. This is further compounded by staff turnover which leads to loss of institutional knowledge and lack of continuity. This was a key constraint experienced across the three critical Ministries involved in SPRINGS implementation: MOSD, MoLG and the Ministry of Agriculture. Lack of capacity is one reason why donor funding in the recent past has been focused on increasing the capacity of the MOSD and NISSA.

Based on the findings within this report, we make the following recommendations:

1. Re-engage on implementing a rural livelihood programme such as SPRINGS, in partnership with the CGP. Initial groundwork was carried out by Building Resources Across Communities in 2018/19 when the design of a Graduation Community Development Model was presented to MoSD and its partners. The proposed model should be reviewed in order to strengthen inter-institutional collaboration from the onset. Engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security needs to

begin now, when discussions regarding the Community Development Model are reinitiated. This programme could be integrated or multisectoral, with a strong emphasis on access to social protection. Roles and responsibilities of each sector, from the central to local level, will need to be clearly spelled out in a cross-institutional coordination framework, with appropriate resources dedicated to increasing delivery capacity. This should also be accompanied by an increase in capacities and resources necessary for coordination.

2. Ensure basic government services are available to the population in remote areas. One-stop centres and citizen outreach days are instrumental in achieving this. Initiate a community outreach model, such as the outreach week organized by the Leribe District administrator.
3. Promote timely and clear communication from the central and district level entities with frontline staff, such as government, CC and NGO staff who have first line access to the community. This minimizes the negative effects of any programmatic changes such as a change in targeting criteria (as was the case for SPRINGS). The list of CGP participants was not available at the local level, creating barriers to obtaining synergies. In addition, the successful adoption of CBC/CBT targeting methods by NISSA emphasizes that its important to convey clear and uniform information at the local level for ensuring support and collaboration.
4. Strengthen the technical capacity of MoSD and NISSA:
 - a. Increase the number of Auxiliary Social Workers on the staff of the MOSD, not just to cover the current vacancies (currently there are eight CCs with a vacant staff position for ASW) but also with a view to reducing the workload of its existing cadre. ASWs interface with participants of all programmes implemented by the MOSD, not just the CGP, and coordinate across the CC staff as well as representatives of other Ministries. As the role of the MOSD expands to other programmes, it will not be possible for just one ASW to handle participant queries and needs for all villages within their assigned CC.
 - b. Strengthening the institutional capacity within MoSD to advocate for increased resource allocations in a regular and systematic manner, which is not contingent upon changes at the helm of the Ministry. This can enable the MoSD to approach inter-sectoral coordination more effectively.
 - c. Develop cost effective mechanisms for regularly updating NISSA data. It is important that recertification of participants is conducted periodically at agreed upon intervals. It is also important to develop a protocol that incorporates updating of NISSA data through community case management conducted by auxiliary social workers. This will help to reduce inclusion and exclusion errors.

- d. Ensuring confidentiality of citizen data will be key, as NISSA is increasingly used by other stakeholders.
5. From a programmatic standpoint, it is further recommended to modify the existing programme design as follows:
- a. Regularize and index CGP payments to inflation. The 2015 National Social Protection Strategy envisaged the CGP transfer to be indexed to inflation but this has not yet happened, thus eroding the real value of the programme by more than 30 percent over the past five years.
 - b. Adopt adequate cash disbursement modalities. Mobile payments sometimes led to difficulties, as these interfaces were often hard for elderly people to navigate. Mobile payments have also led to the loss of CGP Payment Days as a forum for communication between participants and various public and private service providers. Solutions to help the elderly navigate the new interface need to be adopted.
 - c. Revisit the savings and loans component. The following challenges will need to be addressed in any subsequent programme incorporating savings groups: high turnover of field agents due to unsatisfactory remuneration; delays in training savings group members on income generation and marketing skills; frustration among group members regarding borrowers who had taken more than they could afford to pay. Moreover, savings groups linked with banks need to be aware of any “hidden” charges, and several groups supported by SPRINGS were made up of more well-off households as opposed to CGP beneficiaries, whose poverty status did not allow them to save.
 - d. Reduce the length of the nutrition education sessions. Twelve-day nutrition sessions under SPRINGS were too long and should be shortened. In addition, some caregivers did not have the ability to adopt the feeding practices promoted by SPRINGS, as participants could not afford or access the recommended food types to feed their children.
 - e. Link homestead gardening with support to marketing. Market saturation was a very real risk for beneficiaries who were selling similar vegetables within a relatively small local community. It is important, therefore, to establish and support greater linkages to wider markets, including through stronger efforts to develop market clubs.

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Annex 1: Map of Lesotho

Map of Lesotho showing geographical areas where CGP-SPRINGS was implemented



Source: CRS SPRINGS presentation at Dissemination Workshop, 2018.

Annex 2: Summary of number of interviews and discussions conducted

Hierarchy	Type of interview	# of interviews
Federal	KIIs with Ministry Officials and NGOs (MAFS, MOSD, NISSA, MOLG, UNICEF, European Union, WB, CRS, Caritas, Rural Self Help Development Association)	10
District	KIIs with District Officials	2
Council	FGDs with Council staff (Council representatives, Agriculture Extension Officers, MOSD staff, NGO staff)	2
Community	FGDs with Chief/ Village head, other community leaders, representative of community members, lead farmers, and SPRINGS Beneficiaries.	4



FAO, together with its partners, is generating evidence on the impacts of coordinated agricultural and social protection interventions and is using this to provide related policy, programming and capacity development support to governments and other actors.

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