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Social cash transfer payment systems in sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

Social protection programmes in the form of social cash transfers (SCTs) to vulnerable households and individuals have been adopted at an unprecedented scale across the Global South. While most programmes initially relied on manual cash disbursements, digital 'financially inclusive' payment technologies have been on the rise since the early 2000s. Yet the existing literature on SCTs has paid little attention to the payment modalities, focusing instead on policy making processes, impact evaluations and affordability. This paper addresses this gap through an overview of current practices and trends with regard to SCT payment systems in sub-Saharan Africa. The paper explores the use of different payment instruments and providers, as well as the considerations, practicalities and implications of different payment systems, based on an extensive review of the scholarly literature, as well as a variety of non-academic sources.

The findings reveal an increase in the use of electronic payment instruments, such as bank transfers, card-based payments and mobile money in the majority of SCT programmes in the region. However, as cash continues to be the dominant means of payment across the continent, transfers paid via electronic channels are often 'cashed out', rather than leading to greater financial inclusion or the use of digital financial services among beneficiaries. Most programmes use a combination of cash-based and electronic disbursements to account for low levels of financial inclusion, limited financial infrastructure in certain regions, and the needs of different beneficiary groups. Further, payments are increasingly delivered through private financial institutions, although states continue to play a key role in terms of oversight, administration and coordination. The prominent role of international organizations in the funding, design and delivery of SCT programmes in sub-Saharan Africa has been an important factor in this regard.

Yet limited financial infrastructure and administrative capacity continue to hamper digitization efforts, particularly in low-income countries and rural areas. Moreover, unregulated digitization and privatization of SCT payments has led to adverse impacts on beneficiaries in some cases, highlighting the continued importance of state-owned payment channels such as postal networks. Overall,

the SCT payment landscape in sub-Saharan Africa is changing rapidly, and payment reforms, pilot projects and digitization efforts can be expected to continue as more and more countries enter the digital age and expand their SCT programmes to tackle poverty and inequality.

1. Introduction

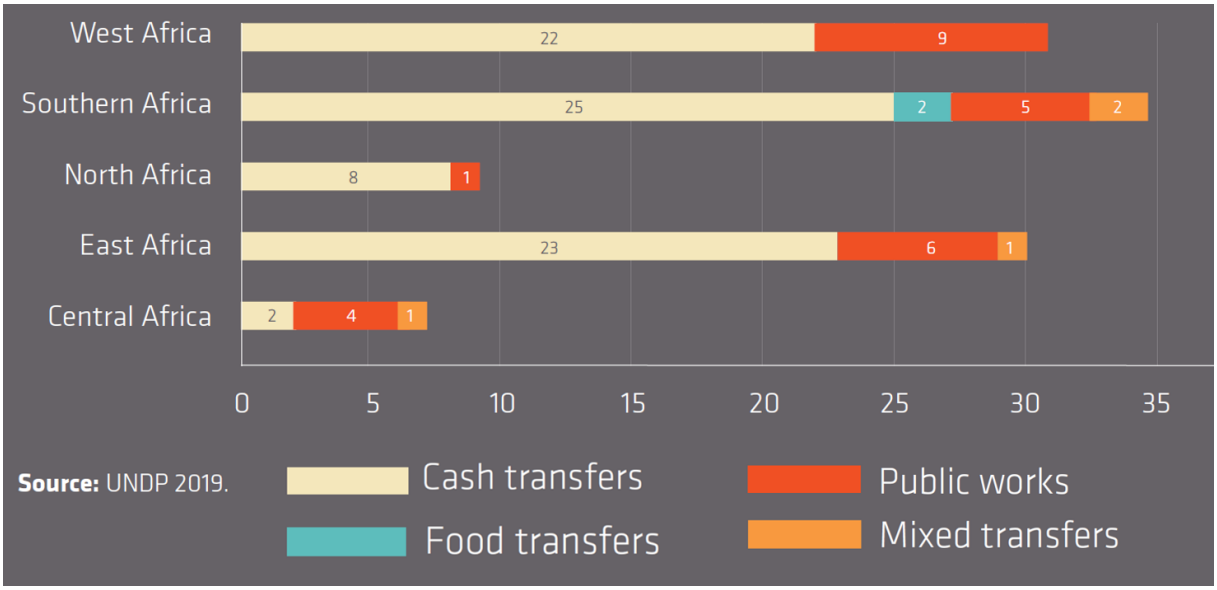
Social protection programmes in the form of social cash transfers (SCTs) have become a key instrument in global and local efforts to tackle poverty and inequality in the global South. Mexico, Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia were among the first countries to establish extensive SCT schemes in the late 1990s (Hanlon, 2009), and by 2016 close to 130 low- and middle-income countries had at least one SCT programme in place (Bastagli et al., 2016). Largely absent from the African continent until the early 2000s, SCTs are now included in development strategies in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Beegle, Coudouel & Monsalve, 2018). The oldest SCT programmes were introduced in South Africa in the 1920s, followed by Namibia, Botswana and eSwatini. In most of Central, East and West Africa, SCTs were only introduced in the early 2000s.

Although social assistance (also referred to as social safety nets)[1] includes both cash and in-kind transfers, Figure 1 illustrates that SCTs are the leading social assistance instrument on the continent, except for Central Africa where public works are slightly more prevalent. The 2019 'State of Social Assistance in Africa' report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) further found that all countries in Southern Africa, as well as close to 90% of West African countries and 80% of East African countries had at least one type of SCT programme in place. The proportion was slightly lower in Central Africa, where five out of nine countries had a SCT programme[2] (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2019).

[1] The World Bank defines social assistance or social safety net programmes as non-contributory transfers in cash or in-kind which are usually targeted at the poor and vulnerable. They include cash transfers (conditional and unconditional), in-kind transfers, such as school feeding and targeted food assistance, and near cash benefits such as fee waivers and food vouchers (World Bank, 2020b).

[2] For further reading on the state and nature of SCT programmes in Africa, see UNDP (2019), Beegle et al. (2018) and World Bank (2018e).

Figure 1: Type of transfers in programmes, per region (UNDP, 2019).



Impact evidence for SCTs has been overwhelmingly positive and numerous studies have illustrated their beneficial effects with regard to health, education, consumption, and the reduction of poverty and inequality (Garcia & Moore, 2012). Moreover, from the perspective of programme designers, cash transfers can have numerous advantages over in-kind aid with respect to reliability, delivery costs, and lower levels of fraud and corruption (Hirvonen & Hoddinott, 2020)[3].

While most programmes initially relied on manual cash disbursements to beneficiaries, the past ten years have seen a growing interest in digital, 'financially inclusive' payment technologies. Yet existing studies on SCT programmes have mostly focused on programme design, policy making processes, affordability and impact evaluations, paying relatively little attention to the payment dimension. This lack of data and comparative analysis is particularly pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa, despite the considerable expansion of SCT schemes in the region, as well as significant financial support for these programmes from international organizations and donors.

Based on a review of the existing scholarly literature, as well as a broad range of non-academic sources, this paper addresses this gap by surveying the current state of SCT payment systems in sub-Saharan Africa and by identifying the overarching trends and developments in this field. More specifically, it illustrates the practicalities, benefits and drawbacks of the various payment instruments

[3] Although this is does not always translate into practice, as demonstrated by the case of South Africa (see Gronbach (2017) and Foley and Swilling (2018)).

identified across the region and provide examples of their implementation in different countries. Further, the paper explores the increasingly prominent role of private financial companies in the establishment and day-to-day operation of SCT payment systems, as well as the use of agent networks and post offices to expand payments into rural areas.

The programmes covered by this review are non-contributory, cash-based social assistance programmes (both conditional and unconditional) in sub-Saharan Africa that make payments directly to households or individuals. These include, among others, social pensions, disability grants, child benefits and poverty-targeted household or family support payments. The paper does not cover contributory social insurance schemes, in-kind transfers such as school feeding programmes or food baskets, workfare or cash-for-assets programmes, agricultural subsidies, education grants, or free basic services, due to their fundamental differences with regard to programme design and delivery. Further, only programmes that are currently active, as well as programmes that were terminated no more than five years ago and ran for at least one year, are included (i.e. emergency transfers, once-off payments or short-term pilot programmes have been excluded). The focus of this paper lies on national safety nets with a minimum level of government ownership – either in terms of funding, implementation or branding – and humanitarian transfers run entirely by aid agencies or NGOs are therefore not covered by this review[4]. While the payment mechanism is never isolated but is influenced by and has impacts on other elements of SCT design, such as conditionality, targeting, beneficiary selection, financing, etc., the limited scope of this paper does not permit a detailed analysis of these issues, which have been discussed in great detail by other authors[5].

The data and case studies presented in this paper are based on a detailed review of over 500 documents, including peer-reviewed academic literature, government documents, programme manuals, impact evaluations, funding proposals and media articles from both print and online sources. The review identified a total of 130 programmes in 44 countries which are presented in tabular form in the appendix. The largest category of programmes (57) consists of general support transfers paid to vulnerable households or families based on a variety of different targeting mechanisms or combinations of targeting instruments (see appendix). Child support grants, including grants paid to caregivers and foster parents, represent the second largest category with 27 programmes, followed by old age pensions (16), disability grants (11) and cash transfers to war veterans (7). The

[4] These are discussed extensively by, for example, Bailey (2017a), International Rescue Committee (2016) and Smith, MacAuslan, Butters and Trommé (2011).

[5] These aspects are covered by, for example, Samson, Van Niekerk and Mac Quene (2006), Bastagli et al. (2016) and Garcia and Moore (2012).

review also includes four funeral grants which are either paid to the relatives of a deceased grant recipient or directly to the funeral parlour. A further nine grant programmes labelled as 'other' comprise grants for genocide survivors, refugees and other specific vulnerable groups.

Of the 130 programmes analysed for this study, 122 were found to be active as of April 2020, although it must be noted that the most recent available data on programme status, beneficiary numbers and grant values for some programmes dates back several years (see appendix) and that some programmes may have been terminated or modified since then. In terms of their size, the programmes range from small, regional or narrowly targeted schemes – covering as few as 92 beneficiaries in the case of South Africa's War Veterans Grant or 850 beneficiaries of the Needy Mothers Programme in São Tomé and Príncipe – to large-scale national safety nets serving several millions of recipients. These include, for example, South Africa's Child Support Grant with 12.5 million beneficiaries or Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme with around 8 million beneficiaries in 2019. The countries that did not have a national SCT programme in accordance with the criteria outlined above as of April 2020, and that are thus not covered in this paper, are the Central African Republic, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea and Gabon.

This paper is structured as follows: Section two outlines the basic considerations that guide the design and implementation of cash transfer payment systems in order to provide a basis for the subsequent discussion of existing payment arrangements. The various payment instruments and payment providers used to deliver SCT payments in sub-Saharan Africa are then introduced and discussed in sections three and four respectively, including practical examples from across the continent. Finally, section five summarizes the key findings of this study.

2. Designing cash transfer payment systems

In the words of Grosh, Del Ninno, Tesliuc and Ouerghi (2007: 156), the main goal of an STC programme's payment mechanism can be described as 'successfully distribut[ing] the correct amount of benefits to the right people at the right time and frequency while minimizing costs to both the program and the beneficiary.' Or, as expressed in the slogan of South Africa's Social Security Agency: 'Paying the right social grant, to the right person, at the right time and place' (South African Social Security Agency [SASSA], 2017). The design of an SCT payment system should thus be guided by the overall structure and goals of the programme, the country-specific context, as well as the respective costs and benefits of different payment mechanisms.

A useful framework for the analysis of existing payment mechanisms and the development of new payment systems is provided by the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) initiative's assessment tool. It proposes three key criteria that should guide the design and implementation of SCT payment systems, namely robustness, accessibility and integration (Inter Agency Social Protection Assessments [ISPA], 2016a). Robustness refers to the importance of reliable, regular, safe and well-coordinated payments to the correct recipient. Accessibility addresses the overall beneficiary experience, including cost and ease of access, payment modalities, communication and dignity. Finally, integration considers the use of existing structures and technologies, links with other social protection programmes, as well as broader considerations of financial inclusion, economies of scale, and shared systems and resources (ISPA, 2016a).

Using examples from sub-Saharan Africa, the remainder of this section outlines the practical implications of these key considerations, thus providing a framework for the subsequent discussion and analysis of existing payment arrangements. Following this introductory section, the selection of a suitable payment provider and the corresponding payment instrument(s) is discussed in more detail in the two subsequent sections.

2.1 Robustness

A 'robust' payment system ensures that payments reach the right person at the right time, in the right place and in the correct amount. The first fundamental aspect guiding the design of the payment system is thus the nature and identity of the beneficiary, as well as of the person collecting the payment – which may or may not be the beneficiary him- or herself (Transform, 2017). Programmes that have extensive geographic coverage and are targeted at large categories of beneficiaries (e.g. all citizens above the age of 60 regardless of their income in the case of a social pension) require different payment solutions than small, narrowly targeted pilot schemes. Large programmes generally require a comprehensive payment solution that can operate in urban areas, as well as rural areas which may not have electricity or mobile network coverage. A 2019 Afrobarometer study found that only about four in 10 African households enjoy a reliable supply of electricity (Afrobarometer, 2019), and a report by the GSM Association (the main industry organisation for mobile network operators worldwide) indicates that sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 40% of the global population not covered by a mobile broadband network in the same year (GSM Association [GSMA], 2019).

Further, while small programmes sometimes operate with Excel-generated beneficiary lists based on paper-based enrolment forms, larger programmes require sophisticated beneficiary and payment management systems that can handle extensive amounts of data and transactions. Examples of such programmes

include Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (8 million beneficiaries), South Africa's Child Support Grant (12.5 million individual beneficiaries), and Kenya's Old Age Pension which supported 833,000 elderly citizens in 2019 (Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research & Analysis, 2019; SASSA, 2019; World Bank, 2019c). As a rule, the larger the programme in terms of beneficiary numbers, the more it can benefit from economies of scale, as the fixed costs of implementing expensive data management and payment technologies are spread over larger numbers of beneficiaries, thus resulting in lower costs per payment (ISPA, 2016a).

Narrowly targeted or conditional programmes often require complex verification processes, e.g. the application of a means test, the regular verification of a beneficiary's disability status, or compliance with certain requirements such as school attendance or medical check-ups (Samson et al., 2006). Implications for the payment system include the need to pause or reduce individual transfers in case of non-compliance with conditionalities, as well as the timely removal of beneficiaries who no longer meet the targeting criteria. This requires a large degree of flexibility and data processing capacity, as well as a quick and reliable way of verifying compliance with conditionalities, e.g. through local volunteers, healthcare centres or schools (ISPA, 2016a). While conditional programmes have been popular in Latin America, few programmes in sub-Saharan Africa have implemented conditionalities. Out of the 130 programmes surveyed, only 22 attached some form of conditionality to the transfer. In most cases, these were 'soft' conditions such as participation in community education programmes without repercussions with regard to the transfer value in case of non-compliance[6].

Another important consideration relates to the identity of the person collecting the payment who may or may not be the beneficiary – i.e. the person entitled to the payment – him- or herself. Despite the increasing introduction of electronic disbursement mechanisms, the vast majority of beneficiaries across the programmes and countries covered in this paper withdraw their payments in cash, rather than using the new payment technologies to move towards cashless transactions. Identity verification thus typically takes place at the pay point and is done either by programme staff of the payment provider.

Being able to nominate an alternative recipient is particularly relevant in the case of transfers paid to minors, the elderly, or the disabled, who may not be able to collect their transfer due to legal requirements (e.g. being underage) or their

[6] Examples of programmes with 'soft' conditions include Burkina Faso's 'Burkin-Naong-Sa Ya' programme (Beegle et al., 2018), Madagascar's 'Vatsin'Ankohonana' scheme (World Bank, 2019e) and Mauritania's 'Tekavoul' programme (World Bank, 2019f).

physical condition. Most of the programmes surveyed for this study make provision for the nomination of a secondary recipient, e.g. a relative, the designated caregiver, or a trustworthy community member. A review of Uganda's Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) programme, for instance, revealed that 64% of beneficiary households had nominated an alternative recipient who could collect the payment on their behalf (Merttens, Sindou, Attah & Hearle, 2016).

Regardless of whether the beneficiary or a nominated recipient collects the payment, a robust payment system requires the accurate and reliable authentication – or identity verification – of the recipient. This process is a vital element of the payment process as it occurs at the payment point and is usually done by the payment provider. Authentication uses three main approaches, typically involving the provision of one or several of the following:

- Something the recipient knows, e.g. a Personal Identification Number (PIN) or password;
- Something the recipient is, e.g. biometric fingerprints or iris scans;
- Something the recipient has, e.g. a payment card or a national ID.

Strong systems should use two-factor authentication, e.g. a presentation of a payment card in combination with a PIN or a fingerprint scan, although this tends to increase the cost and complexity of the payment and verification process (ISPA, 2016a).

Unlike in developed economies where 98% of births are registered, less than 50% of births are registered in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the latest available World Bank data (World Bank, 2015a). Requiring recipients to present a national ID in order to collect a payment may thus not be appropriate and may exclude the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. In response, some programmes, such as Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) programme, have reverted to issuing programme-specific identity cards to beneficiaries. Other countries, such as Kenya and Swaziland, have successfully used the cash transfer programme as part of a broader drive to improve civil registration (Barca, 2017; Smith et al., 2011). As Gelb and Decker (2012: 98) note: 'The promise of a transfer is usually incentive enough to enroll in the identification program [whereas] many would not voluntarily enroll in a nationwide system without some tangible benefit such as eligibility for a cash transfer.'

The last and increasingly popular approach to identity verification is the use of biometrics, such as fingerprint scans, facial recognition, iris scans or voice pattern analysis. Fingerprint authentication has been implemented in several large-scale cash transfer programmes in countries like South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Nigeria and Ghana. In addition to offering a solution to recipients' lack of formal

identification, biometrics solve the problem of beneficiaries forgetting their PINs or passwords, address concerns over fraud and corruption, and help eliminate 'ghost' or duplicate beneficiaries from the system[7]. Moreover, biometric identification systems can be used to support other development initiatives including banking, voting, health care, and the establishment of a civil registry (Gelb & Decker, 2012: 91). However, the high cost of biometric technology can be a significant barrier to adoption for many smaller programmes which are unable to realize economies of scale (Smith et al., 2011). In addition, fingerprint scans may not be appropriate for elderly beneficiaries or manual laborers whose fingerprints may be worn (ISPA, 2016a).

Biometric identification was used by 37 of the 130 programmes surveyed (usually in combination with a smart card as the payment instrument), with fingerprint scans being the predominant form of identity verification. In South Africa, the use of voice recognition technology was planned as an alternative to fingerprint scans in its 2012 grant payment reform, but the system was never rolled out despite the extensive collection of voice samples during the re-registration of beneficiaries (Theobald, 2017).

The value of the transfer, i.e. the actual amount paid to the beneficiary, is another important factor to consider in terms of robustness. Transfer values typically depend on the intended impact of the transfer, the available budget, and the number of beneficiaries the programme intends to reach. While a detailed discussion of the approaches taken by different programmes would go beyond the scope of this paper[8], the question of whether the amount paid is fixed or variable has important implications for the design of the payment system. Paying a fixed amount to the same recipient on a regular basis requires a less complex payment administration and management system than variable transfers under which the amount payable may vary from one payment date to the next (del Ninno, Subbarao, Kjellgren & Quintana, 2013)[9].

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[7] In Nigeria, biometric audits reportedly helped to eliminate 37,000 'ghost' pensioners from the government payroll, and Botswana's biometric enrolment campaign for its social grant and pension programme reportedly led to annual savings of 10m Pula ($1.7m) by reducing the number of beneficiaries by 25% (Gelb & Decker, 2012).

[8] For further reading see Bastagli et al. (2016).

[9] Moreover, even SCT programmes with fixed transfer amounts tend to change the transfer value over time, either to offset the impact of inflation or to reflect a policy change. In Kenya and South Africa, for instance, transfer values are revised regularly to account for inflation, while other countries, such as Namibia and Lesotho, have increased their SCT values at irregular intervals (Freeland & Khondker, 2015; World Bank, 2016a).

A fixed monthly amount is paid by 79 out of the 130 programmes covered in this review. This amount is in some cases inflation-indexed or adjusted to account for inflation on a more or less regular basis. An example of a particularly flexible approach to the actual grant value is Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme, which pays beneficiaries the equivalent of 15kg of cereal per person per month for its public works programme, as well as its unconditional cash transfer programme (World Bank, 2019c). The amount has been regularly adjusted to keep up with inflation, and the programme also provides in-kind transfers as an alternative to cash payments. The share of cash vs in-kind payments has varied over the years, and partly depends on the (predicted) availability of food, as well as donor preferences. However, cash has reportedly become the preferred means of disbursement, not only by the implementing agencies and the Ethiopian government, but also by beneficiaries (Hirvonen & Hoddinott, 2020).

Variable amounts, which depend on household size, the number and age of school-going children or pensioners in the household, or are conditional on attending information sessions, are paid by 33 programmes. For the remaining 18 programmes, information on transfer values was not publicly available and could thus not be determined. Examples of variable transfers for different household sizes include the Lisungi Safety Nets programme in Congo (Socialprotection.org, 2019), the cash transfer programme in Malawi (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2018a), Nigeria's Care of the Poor scheme (Cirillo & Tebaldi, 2016), Rwanda's Vision Umurenge programme (Gatzinsi et al., 2017), Ghana's LEAP transfer (Beegle et al., 2018), and Tanzania's Productive Safety Nets project (Beegle et al., 2018). Examples of additional school enrolment benefits include the cash transfer for vulnerable children in Togo (Beegle et al., 2018), Tanzania's Social Action Fund (TASAF) (UNICEF, 2018b), Malawi's social cash transfer programme (UNICEF, 2018a), and the Vulnerable Families Programme in São Tomé and Príncipe (World Bank, 2018c).

Finally, the payment system should take into account the timing, frequency and duration of the SCT programme. Once-off payments or programmes with limited duration (typically a few months), such as humanitarian transfers in response to a natural disaster in a particular area, require different payment structures than regular monthly payments under an established, permanent and nation-wide SCT programme. While once-off or pilot programmes often rely on manual cash payments and a simple beneficiary management system (e.g. paper files or Excel spreadsheets), more comprehensive and long-term programmes offer the potential to realize economies of scale and to invest in more sophisticated electronic payment technologies. While many programmes have opted for a monthly (or bi-monthly) payment model, a universal payment date or period for the entire programme can result in long queues at payment points, cash shortages and security risks. Staggered payment dates for different beneficiary groups

throughout the month could address this issue but would require a high degree of coordination and efficient communication of payment dates. Although information on the exact payment date or payment period was not publicly available for many of the programmes discussed in this paper, none of them appears to be using staggered payment dates.

Among the programmes analysed here, 58 made payments on a monthly basis, 22 paid beneficiaries every second month, and 27 disbursed funds once every quarter. The remaining programmes either used different payment cycles (e.g. bi-annual or occasional) or did not publish information on their payment cycle (this was the case for 13 programmes). In most cases, the decision to make payments on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis was made as a result of the high cost or complexity of delivering payments every month, particularly in the case of manual cash disbursements via pay points or community structures, and in politically or economically unstable environments[10].

2.2 Accessibility

The question of accessibility, in other words how, when and where beneficiaries receive their payments, should be at the heart of the payment system design process. Considerations of accessibility include the choice of the payment instrument and provider, the location or venue where payments will be disbursed, as well as the overall payment experience for the beneficiary, including communication and information, travelling to the pay point, the actual disbursement procedure, and the existence of a grievance and redress mechanism (ISPA, 2016a).

Payment instruments can be defined as physical tools that recipients hold to receive and collect payments. Traditional instruments, such as vouchers, can be as simple as a piece of paper that displays the amount to be paid and the name of the recipient collecting the payment. Traditionally, most SCT programmes employed these manual 'pull' systems, requiring beneficiaries to collect their transfers in cash at a specified location and on a particular date. These systems were usually run by SCT programme staff or, in some cases, through the national Post Office or other government or community structures (ISPA, 2016a). Electronic 'pull' mechanisms, on the other hand, are based on electronic payments into an account, allowing recipients to withdraw their benefit at a date and time of their choice, either at a designated pay point or at an Automated Teller Machine (ATM), bank branch, contracted retailer or shopkeeper, or a mobile money agent.

[10] Examples of this include Congo's Lisungi Cash Transfer Programme (World Bank, 2020a), disability and old age pensions in eSwatini (Social Security Administration [SSA], 2019) and Liberia's Social Safety Net programme (World Bank, 2016e).

Electronic payment instruments, such as debit cards, smart cards or cellphones are capable of storing the beneficiary's details and transaction history, and allow recipients to either cash out or make cashless payments with their payment card or via mobile money (del Ninno et al., 2013). In recent years, a global movement towards account-linked payments has been gaining strength, with increasing interest from the fields of financial inclusion, social policy and behavioral economics (New America Foundation, 2011). The use of account-linked payments for SCTs will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

The choice of one or more payment instrument(s), in turn, informs the decision of whether payments are made through government structures, a private payment provider, or a combination of both. One of the key considerations when selecting a payment provider is the reach of their distribution network, which might include third-party agents that deliver payments on behalf of the actual payment provider. Without an extensive geographic coverage, beneficiaries might face high travel and opportunity costs to access their transfer, thus eroding the value of the payment (ISPA, 2016a). Achieving full geographic coverage and ensuring easy access to pay points for beneficiaries might require the use of several payment providers serving different areas or types of beneficiaries.

While government-led payment systems offer the advantage of stricter control and oversight, digital payment solutions are typically based on partnerships with private service providers. This is particularly the case for donor-led programmes in countries with relatively weak state capacity, but even state-funded SCT schemes in countries like Ghana, Kenya or Nigeria have outsourced the payment function to private companies such as banks, microfinance institutions, non-bank payment providers and mobile network operators. The potential advantages and risks of using different types of payment providers will be discussed in more detail in section four.

Finally, considerations of accessibility should take into account the overall beneficiary experience, including travel and waiting time, transport costs, paypoint amenities, communication received, as well as issues related to dignity. Beneficiaries of Zimbabwe's Harmonized Social Cash Transfer, for instance, reportedly spent an average of 6 hours collecting the transfer (Angeles, Chakrabarti, Handa, Otchere & Spektor, 2018). This time represents a significant opportunity cost for them. Similar observations were made in Uganda's SAGE programme, despite the relatively low financial cost of collecting the transfer, which was approximately 3% of the bi-monthly transfer value (Merttens, Sindou, Lipcan, et al., 2016). Moreover, pay points in rural areas often lack protection from rain or heat, and do not offer benches or waiting areas, or even basic ablution facilities (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2014).

Finally, informing beneficiaries about the basic payment process, teaching them to use the payment technology, communicating payment dates and locations, as well as explaining how to lodge complaints and grievances, are crucial in ensuring accessibility and the smooth running of any SCT programme (ISPA, 2016a). In Namibia, this tends to be done via radio announcements and word of mouth (ILO, 2014), while Tanzania's TASAF programme has used community management committees to communicate with beneficiaries (ISPA, 2016b) and Ethiopia's Urban Productive Safety Net Programme has established an SMS alert service for beneficiaries who receive their payments into bank accounts (Admassu, 2019).

2.3 Integration

Integration considers the use of existing structures and technologies, links to other social programmes, as well as broader considerations of financial inclusion, economies of scale, and shared systems and resources. While cash-based payment systems usually operate on a stand-alone basis with little scope for integration into existing structures (other than the use of post offices or community venues, for example, for the physical disbursement of cash), electronic payment systems are often adopted as part of a broader payment digitization drive and can create valuable synergies. In Malawi and Kenya, for instance, digital cash transfer payments were implemented as part of a country-wide transition to electronic government-to-person (G2P) payments (ISPA, 2016a;United Nations Capital Development Fund [UNCDF], 2017a). Similarly, Nigeria's Central Bank embarked on the 'Cashless Nigeria' initiative in 2012, thus creating favourable conditions for the adoption of electronic SCT delivery mechanisms (Iazzolino, 2018). As more and more governments are digitizing their payment systems and joining initiatives such as the Better than Cash Alliance[11], integrating electronic SCT payments into the broader national payment environment can be expected to become easier and increasingly cost-effective in the near future.

In areas such as beneficiary identification, enrolment and targeting, SCT programmes can take advantage of existing national ID systems, including national registries, voter rolls, beneficiary databases used for other social programmes, or comprehensive social registries[12]. A social registry or beneficiary

[11] Based at the United Nations, the Better Than Cash Alliance (BtCA) is a partnership of governments, companies and international organizations that accelerates the transition from cash to digital payments to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. The organization currently has 75 members, including national governments from Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America; global brands across the agriculture, garment and fast-moving consumer good sectors; United Nations (UN) agencies; and humanitarian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (BtCA, 2020).

[12] The term 'social registry' is commonly used to describe an information system used to support the implementation of non-contributory social assistance programmes targeted at poor

database is a key prerequisite for the adoption of electronic payment mechanisms, ideally in combination with an electronic management information system (ISPA, 2016a). Based on the beneficiary data contained in the database, the system can create a regular and accurate payroll for each payment cycle, verify eligibility for certain types of benefits, and track if and when payments were disbursed (del Ninno et al., 2013). While few countries in sub-Saharan Africa had such systems in place when they launched their first SCT programmes, their implementation – often supported by donor funding – is certainly on the rise. Almost all large-scale SCT programmes in the region have established such systems or are in the process of doing so, and countries are increasingly managing multiple programmes through a single system. The establishment of a National Social Registry is also a key element of most SCT funding packages provided by the World Bank and is thus often part and parcel of financial support for the establishment or expansion of national SCT schemes (Leite, George, Sun, Jones & Lindert, 2017).

An increasingly important aspect of integration and a key point of discussion in this paper is the potential of SCT payment systems to promote financial inclusion among low-income households and individuals. According to the World Bank, almost two billion people worldwide do not use formal financial services, particularly within lowest income quintile (Demirgüç-Kunt, Klapper, Singer & van Oudheusden, 2015). This 'inability of individuals, households or groups to access financial services in an appropriate form' (European Microfinance Network, 2018), referred to as financial exclusion, is considered to be both a cause and a consequence of social exclusion and a major obstacle to development (European Commission, 2008). Inclusive financial systems, on the other hand, 'provide individuals [...] with greater access to resources to meet their financial needs, such as saving for retirement, investing in education, capitalizing on business opportunities, and confronting shocks' (World Bank, 2014a: xi). Consequently, access to financial services has come to be considered 'essential for citizens to be economically and socially integrated' and is seen as 'a requirement for employment, economic growth, poverty reduction and social inclusion' (European Microfinance Network, 2018). It has been adopted as a core principle for development by the World Bank, the G20 and numerous national governments and is 'positioned prominently as an enabler of [...] the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, where it is featured as a target in eight of the seventeen goals' (UNCDF, 2018).

In the early 2000s, the rapidly expanding SCT programmes were identified as a new and innovative way to tackle the high levels of financial inclusion in the

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and vulnerable groups. Modern social registries consist of a beneficiary database, as well as a management information system (MIS) through which information can be retrieved, organized and analysed (ISPA, 2016a).

global South. Together with other forms of G2P payments, transfers were reaching at least 170 million people worldwide in 2009 and the majority of G2P payments were targeted at the poorest and most vulnerable parts of the population (Pickens, Porteous & Rotman, 2009). The shift towards electronic payments opened up opportunities for linking SCT programmes with broader financial inclusion initiatives, starting with the provision of bank accounts as a prerequisite for other financial products and services. Social cash transfers and financial inclusion, which are two 'separate but potentially complementary policy agendas' (Bold, Porteous & Rotman, 2012: 1), are thus increasingly converging into a single headline objective: replacing cash-based SCT payments to the poor with digital transfers into 'financially inclusive' accounts and establishing links with the formal financial sector, i.e. by making payments through private financial service providers (Department for International Development [DfID], 2009; Klapper & Singer, 2017; Torkelson, 2017).

The extent to which integration of the SCT payment mechanism(s) into the broader financial system can be achieved depends to a large extent on a country's regulatory framework for the financial sector. Legal requirements for the opening of bank accounts, the establishment of agent networks by non-bank financial service providers, as well as regulations for mobile money providers, can determine which payment solutions can be used for government cash transfers, and whether the payment mechanism can be financially inclusive. If, for instance, strict Know-Your-Customer (KYC) regulations require SCT recipients to provide a formal ID, proof of residence, income statements or other official documents, which the poor frequently do not possess, in order to open an account, it might not be possible to implement an account-based payment solution (ISPA, 2016a). Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have developed different approaches to address this issue. In Kenya's Cash for Assets programme, close to 20% of recipients lacked the identification necessary to open a bank account. In response, the World Food Programme allowed recipients to designate an alternative recipient with the required documentation to withdraw the payment on their behalf (Zimmerman & Bohling, 2013). Several other countries, including South Africa, have introduced a tiered approach to KYC regulations, exempting certain marginalized groups up to a certain transaction limit from tedious documentation requirements. According to the World Bank's Global Financial Inclusion and Consumer Protection Survey, 60 countries worldwide had adopted tiered KYC regulations by 2017, including 41% of participating sub-Saharan African countries (World Bank, 2017).

Another increasingly relevant field of financial legislation relates to the rise of mobile money and includes regulations on the issuing of 'e-money' by mobile network operators (MNOs), requirements relating to MNOs having to partner with banks, and their ability to offer interest-bearing accounts to their customers. Uganda's SAGE programme, for example, decided to pay social transfers via the

Post Bank rather than using mobile money (which would have been cheaper and more convenient) due to insufficient regulations with regard to MNOs offering financial services (Parliament of Uganda, 2018). However, many African governments – most notably in East and West Africa – have adopted a relatively flexible and progressive regulatory approach[13], which is expected to result in the increasing uptake of mobile money as a payment mechanism for SCTs in the future.

3. Payment instruments for cash transfers

According to the Global Findex database, the overwhelming majority (80%) of people who received Government-to-Person transfers[14] in high-income countries in 2017 received their transfers into an account. In low-income economies, this figure was considerably lower, with only 39% of recipients receiving their payments into an account (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2017). This is partly due to the levels of formal financial inclusion in sub-Saharan Africa where only a third of adults had an account with a formal financial institution in 2017. About the same share of the adult population reported making or receiving digital payments in the same year. While these figures have increased compared to previous studies, they remain much lower than in most other parts of the world. In Europe and Central Asia, for instance, account ownership with a formal financial institution and digital payment activity was almost twice as high, with 65% and 60% respectively (World Bank, 2018b). SCT programmes in sub-Saharan Africa therefore face the dual challenge of low levels of financial inclusion and limited physical and financial infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. This has led to the emergence of a large variety of different payment instruments and providers (or combinations thereof) across the continent, and frequent changes in the ways in which SCT payments are delivered.

After having outlined the basic considerations underpinning the design of a SCT payment system in section 2, this section will introduce the main payment instruments used in sub-Saharan Africa, including cash, vouchers, magnetic stripe

[13] For further reading on mobile money regulation see Madise (2019).

[14] These include SCTs and other social benefits (e.g. subsidies, unemployment benefits, or payments for educational or medical expenses), as well as public sector wages and pensions (Demirgüç-Kunt, Klapper, Singer, Ansar & Hess, 2017). Given the lower levels of financial inclusion among the poor – compared to better-off government employees – the share of SCT beneficiaries in low-income countries receiving their payments into an account is likely to be even lower than the aggregated share for all G2P transfers. Isolated data on account-based SCT payments was not available at the time of writing as most large-scale studies focus on aggregated G2P payments, i.e. including public sector wages and pensions.

cards, smart cards and mobile money. Moreover, it will discuss the role of store-of-value accounts which can be used in combination with different digital payment methods and play a crucial role in facilitating financial inclusion.

The choice of one or more payment instruments for a specific SCT programme should address the general design considerations outlined in the previous section, particularly with regard to the overall beneficiary experience and financial inclusion. From the point of view of implementing agencies and governments, however, two other issues tend to be of crucial importance, namely the cost of implementing a particular payment mechanism, and its potential to address concerns of fraud, corruption and leakage. The direct cost of implementing and maintaining a payment system represents a significant share of the total programme costs and can – in extreme cases – take up half of the administrative budget which was the case for Lesotho's manual disbursement system (World Bank, 2016b). In addition to transport and security-related costs, programme staff in cash-based payment systems often spend several days or even weeks (e.g. in Malawi or Mozambique) distributing cash via pay points, thus causing high opportunity costs and lower levels of productivity (Arruda, 2018b; Hemsteede, 2018). Additional costs incurred in Zambia's cash-based SCT programme included allowances paid to pay point managers, as well as charges paid to its Community Welfare Assistance Committees for assisting the payment process (UNCDF, 2017b).

The recent trend towards payment digitization is thus partly driven by the desire to realize cost savings, given the lower cost per transaction for e-payments compared to cash, despite higher upfront implementation costs (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014). In South Africa, the delivery cost of SCTs reportedly dropped by 62% after moving to a bank account-based system (Pickens et al., 2009), and Brazil's Bolsa Familia programme reduced its transaction costs from 14.7% to 2.6% of total payments when it bundled several benefits onto a single electronic payment card (Cull, Ehrbeck & Holle, 2014).

Another key factor driving the adoption of e-payments for SCTs is their potential to increase transparency and traceability, and to reduce fraud, corruption and leakage associated with cash-based transactions. Leakage, i.e. the fraudulent diversion of funds, was estimated to range from around 4% of transfers in South Africa to 15% in India in 2009 when most programmes were still using manual, cash-based disbursement methods, as well as a paper-based enrolment and record-keeping system (DfID, 2009). In addition, cash-based payments offer greater scope for corruption or demands for bribes by the payment agent (Barca, Hurrell, MacAuslan, Visram & Willis, 2010). Finally, the combination of paper-based application systems and record-keeping with manual cash payments has been associated with high rates of 'ghost beneficiaries' or (potentially) fraudulent

applicants in the system[15]. A World Bank review of social pensions in sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, found that the number of pensioners in both the contributory and non-contributory pension schemes in Botswana, Lesotho, and Namibia was higher than the total number of elderly in the country. According to the report, this 'indicates either many 'young' retirees or systemic error and fraud' (Guven & Leite, 2016).

In practice, many SCT programmes in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted a 'mix and match' approach, combining several payment instruments within or across their SCT programmes. Although the use of multiple payment instruments and providers adds complexity in terms of programme administration and management, the 'patchy' nature of the financial infrastructure, network coverage and payment provider activity in most African economies often requires this approach in order to reach the largest possible number of beneficiaries. The programmes covered by this survey were classified according to the following categories of payment instruments: Cash, basic payment cards (including electronic vouchers and prepaid cards), smart cards, bank accounts (usually in combination with fully-functional debit cards or smart cards) and mobile phone-based payments. The last category includes payments into mobile wallets which can be used to make electronic payments, as well as more rudimentary systems which merely use the mobile phone for cash-outs from mobile money agents or programme staff). Out of the 130 programmes surveyed, only 47 used a single payment mechanism for all beneficiaries, while the majority of programmes (71) used at least two different payment instruments. No information was available for 24 programmes, which includes programmes that are still in their early stages and have not (or only recently) started to make payments, as well as several small programmes for which little or no up-to-date information was available.

The Alternative Responses for Communities in Crisis (ARCC) programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), for instance, used five different payment mechanisms for its SCT component, including mobile money, local savings and loan cooperatives, microfinance institutions, private-sector money transfer organizations, or via implementing NGOs and local traders (Bonilla, Carson, Kiggundu, Morey & Ring, 2017). Similarly, SCT beneficiaries in Namibia can choose between withdrawing their payments from ATMs, receiving them via bank transfers or collecting them from designated post offices (Mutonga, 2018). Pensioners in Botswana have the choice of collecting cash from pension officers

[15] A government verification exercise in Tanzania's TASAF programme identified more than 55,000 beneficiary households that should not have been in receipt of the TASAF benefits. Of these, almost 13,500 were found to be 'not poor', 4,352 beneficiaries were local government leaders, and almost 14,000 beneficiaries were reported as being dead (Wright, Leyaro, Kisanga, & Byaruhanga, 2019).

at the local community council or from post offices, or having the money deposited into a personal bank account (Cirillo & Tebaldi, 2016).

While this approach was initially a necessity rather than a choice for many implementing agencies, the adoption of a multi-provider and multi-channel 'choice system' for SCT payments has become one of the key SCT payment reforms promoted by the World Bank. This is expressed in a 2019 Focus Note released by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), the World Bank's financial inclusion think tank, stating that

> the next stage [of payment digitization] is to enable delivery systems that give recipients greater control and voice through choice in where and how they receive and withdraw payments. […] Customers empowered with greater choice can be less dependent on a single bank or local service point, and therefore, they are able to command better customer service (Baur-Yazbeck, Chen & Roest, 2019).

While offering multiple payment instruments and contracting several providers may be beyond the financial and administrative capabilities of small programmes with limited funding, several larger programmes (as outlined above) have implemented this approach or are in the process of doing so.

3.1 Cash-based payments

Since many sub-Saharan African countries are still in the early stages of developing large-scale national SCT programmes, the use of cash-based disbursement methods – generally a feature of pilot or ad-hoc SCT schemes – remains widespread across the continent. As the Department for International Development (DfID) (2009) puts it: 'Direct cash payment is almost always possible in some form and can therefore be regarded as the default against which the costs and benefits of financially inclusive payments can be compared'. As outlined above, manual cash disbursement usually requires the beneficiary (or his/her nominee) to report to a designated pay point at a designated date and time to collect the payment. This approach is typical for in-house payment systems, with programme staff – or, in some cases, community leaders or volunteers – delivering physical cash to beneficiaries after collecting the money from a bank or government office and transporting it to the pay point. Cash is then disbursed based on payrolls generated from programme enrolment data, using either a digital data management system or a simple spreadsheet (ISPA, 2016a).

The main advantage of cash-based payments lies in their low start-up costs and relative ease of implementation through the use of existing programme staff or community members. Hence, direct cash transfers are often preferred in the early or pilot stages of a programme, or in emergency situations where transfers need

to be disbursed quickly and there is little time to set up electronic payment channels (World Bank, 2010). Moreover, cash-based disbursement may be the only appropriate and feasible payment mechanism in particularly remote contexts with limited economic activity and little or no mobile network coverage (ISPA, 2016a). Finally, gathering beneficiaries at local pay points on a regular basis provides an opportunity for programme staff to provide information about the programme, collect feedback from beneficiaries, or offer complementary services such as health check-ups or trainings (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014).

Among the programmes surveyed for this paper, only 15 relied exclusively on manual cash payments via government pay points, community networks or other 'traditional' channels. This includes programmes implemented via the national Zakat board[16] (e.g. in Nigeria and Sudan), two programmes using cheques that must be redeemed at government offices, as well as a number of smaller programmes (e.g. in São Tomé and Príncipe). The majority of programmes using cash payments (79 programmes) had – either fully or partly – outsourced them to the national Postal Network or had contracted private service providers such as commercial banks, payment agencies or mobile network providers. The use of national post offices or Postbank branches appears to be a popular payment channel in sub-Saharan Africa and was used for cash disbursements by 39 programmes in 12 countries (this will be discussed in more detail in the next section).

However, while manual cash payments through government or community structures may be in decline, cash continues to be the predominant means of payment across the African continent (Calleo, 2018; Centre for Financial Regulation and Inclusion, 2016). This is reflected in the way in which beneficiaries collect and use their payments, even where electronic payment instruments, such as debit cards, bank accounts or mobile money are used. Even in South Africa – the country with the most sophisticated financial system in sub-Saharan Africa and a SCT payment system that relies entirely on the use of smart cards and bank accounts – many beneficiaries continue to withdraw their benefits in cash. This is despite the fact that the payment card issued to most beneficiaries (other than those who choose to receive their payment into a personal bank account with a commercial bank) is a fully-functional debit card which can be used to transact electronically 'everywhere where a VISA or MasterCard logo is displayed' (Postbank, 2020). While there is no data indicating how many beneficiaries use their card to make electronic purchases, the long queues at Post Offices, ATMs, pay points and retailers on grant payout days, as well as the fact that most social grant beneficiates are reportedly unaware of the full functionality

[16] For further reading on the role of Zakat in the provision of social protection, see Machado, Bilo and Helmy (2018).

of their cards (Davis, 2019), supports similar observations by civil society organization Black Sash.[17]

3.2 Vouchers and pre-paid cards

Vouchers or pre-paid payment cards provide access to pre-defined commodities or services and can usually be exchanged in designated shops or in fairs and markets. They may be redeemed in the form of cash or used to purchase certain goods or services. This type of payment instrument is most commonly used in humanitarian interventions or emergency responses, often as an alternative to direct food or in-kind aid (European Commission, 2013). The main benefit of vouchers and pre-paid cards lies in the relatively limited need for hardware and technology, as only participating shopkeepers need to be equipped with the necessary devices. Moreover, the implementing agency has full control over how the money is spent and can thus implement dedicated programmes delivering e.g. agricultural inputs or basic foodstuffs. Drawbacks, however, include the need for mobile network connectivity (at least in the case of e-vouchers), the need to constantly re-issue new vouchers, and the lack of links with the national payment system or other social interventions, thus making this instrument more suitable for short-term emergency aid and small-scale cash transfer pilots (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014).

Vouchers exist in both paper-based and electronic form, with electronic or mobile vouchers having become the predominant technology. Mobile vouchers are redeemed through the use of a mobile phone as the transaction device, using an SMS command and/or a PIN as an additional identifier (Smith et al., 2011). Their use is thus similar to a mobile money transaction, except for the fact that vouchers are restricted to cash withdrawals or purchases at designated shops, and offer no additional benefits such as access to financial services or use for payment outside of a pre-defined merchant network (ISPA, 2016a). Mobile vouchers have been used for food transfer programmes in Djibouti (Machado, Bilo, Veras Soares & Guerreiro Osorio, 2018) and South Sudan (Ahmed, 2018), as well as in the DRC's ARCC Cash Transfer Programme (Bailey, 2017b).

A common alternative to mobile vouchers is the use of pre-paid payment cards, which come in the form of either single-use or reloadable plastic cards with a magnetic stripe. The World Food Programme's SCOPE card is a popular example of this type of payment instrument and is widely used for humanitarian transfers across Africa. The value stored on this re-loadable digital card is redeemed

[17] A report on South Africa's grant payment and collection mechanism illustrating these issues, published jointly by the Black Sash and the Department of Political Studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), is expected to be released in 2020.

through a Point of Sale (POS) device installed at select retail locations where it can be used to purchase food. Top-ups are made in regular distribution cycles and the cards are linked to a comprehensive electronic beneficiary database which includes a biometric identity verification feature (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017). In Somalia, the SCOPE system has even been used as a first payment channel for the country's newly-established national cash transfer programme (World Bank, 2019g). Another example of a card-based e-voucher programme is Angola's Cartão Kikuia programme (World Bank, 2018d) which allows beneficiaries to redeem their vouchers at special government-owned stores. However, except for the programmes mentioned above, the use of vouchers and pre-paid cards has been largely restricted to emergency transfers or humanitarian programmes led by international donors or NGOs and is therefore of little practical relevance for the purpose of this study.

3.3 Debit cards and smart cards

Compared to simple pre-paid cards, magnetic stripe debit cards are a more versatile and more commonly-used payment instrument and have enjoyed growing popularity in the field of SCT payments. These PIN-protected cards can be swiped at ATMs or POS devices, and contain a magnetic stripe on which the cardholder's personal information is stored. Since they are usually linked to an account, debit cards hold considerable potential for financial inclusion and the provision of additional financial services. However, traditional debit cards do not support biometric verification, and generally require network connectivity in order to process transactions (DfID, 2009; Smith et al., 2011).

Smart cards are the most sophisticated type of payment card and are generally used in combination with a biometric identity verification feature, such as fingerprinting or iris scans. The card contains a chip on which several layers of information can be stored, and which is able to record the card owner's full transaction history. This feature makes it possible to conduct off-line transactions in areas with low or no network connectivity and to reconcile the account with the central database at a later stage (Smith et al., 2011). Moreover, smart cards can store additional beneficiary information such as health records or household information and can be linked with other systems such as voter rolls or population registries (Pickens et al., 2009). They can also be used as a single payment instrument for multiple SCT programmes, given their ability to store several different 'wallets' on a single card (Devereux & Vincent, 2010). Finally, if the smart card is linked to a formal account, the technology offers considerable potential for financial inclusion and represents a stepping stone towards the provision of savings, payment services, insurance, credit and other financial services.

Despite their numerous advantages, smart cards also have several shortcomings. Firstly, smart cards can be up to five times more expensive than magnetic strip cards, and chip-reading POS terminals tend to cost twice as much as traditional POS devices (Pickens et al., 2009). These considerable set-up costs make them unsuitable for short-term and small-scale SCT programmes where the possibility of a scale-up is uncertain. Secondly, the use of fingerprints as a verification feature is not always reliable, particularly among older recipients or manual labourers whose fingerprints may be worn. Finally, the use of smart cards does not resolve the need for large amounts of cash to be transported to pay points or merchants in preparation for the monthly pay-out. This is particularly the case in contexts with a limited or non-existent electronic payment infrastructure where beneficiaries cannot use their cards as a form of payment and instead have to rely on cash withdrawals (Barca et al., 2010).

Smart cards were used by 29 of the 130 programmes covered in this paper, including in South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Ghana, Tanzania and the DRC. In most cases, these programmes also made use of the biometric verification feature, thus making it possible to authenticate beneficiaries via fingerprint scans. Although smart cards can be used on a stand-alone basis, i.e. without the need for a bank account, most programmes that used smart cards did so in combination with a bank account for beneficiaries. This gives SCT recipients the option of saving some of their money in their account or receiving additional payments (e.g. from relatives or other government programmes) into this account.

A prominent example of the use of smart cards in combination with bank accounts is Ghana's LEAP programme which uses the national 'e-zwich' platform to make SCT payments. E-zwich, launched in Ghana in 2008, is an interoperable biometric smart card payment system that offers a suite of electronic payment and banking services accessible from a POS terminal or ATM[18]. The platform was developed by payment provider Net1, the company in charge of South Africa's highly controversial biometric grant payment system until 2018. Today, the system is used for the majority of G2P payments in Ghana, with student loans being disbursed via e-zwich since 2013, national service salaries since 2015, and LEAP payments since 2016. However, a 2017 report by the Better than Cash Alliance noted that 'most e-zwich transfers are immediately cashed out because the biometric card is not accepted at retail stores or for household bills' (BtCA, 2017).

3.4 Mobile money

Mobile money can be defined as a financial service which relies on the mobile phone to transfer money, access funds or make payments (GSMA, 2010). The

[18] For further reading on the e-zwich platform see Breckenridge (2010).

power of this new financial technology to expand access to and use of formal financial services is demonstrated most persuasively in Sub-Saharan Africa. The region not only has the highest number of mobile money platforms (144 out of a total of 290 worldwide) but also leads in terms of both registered and active mobile money accounts (469 million and 181 million respectively). Moreover, sub-Saharan Africa represents close to two thirds of the global transaction volume and value, with 23.8 billion transactions worth 456.3 billion USD in 2019. The GSMA forecasts that account adoption across Sub-Saharan Africa will remain strong and that the region will surpass the half billion accounts mark by the end of 2020 (GSMA, 2020).

Initially an instrument for person-to-person payments, such as remittances or small informal commercial transactions, mobile money providers are increasingly adding other financial services to their portfolio. This trend has been particularly pronounced in East Africa, where the success of M-Pesa and other mobile money platforms has radically transformed the financial landscape in the past ten years. The platform has evolved into a comprehensive suite of financial services, including money transfers, bill payments, salary payments, microloans, micro-insurance and even healthcare services (Vodafone, 2020). In some countries – e.g. in Kenya and the Philippines – MNOs are allowed to store mobile money on behalf of their customers, thus essentially acting as non-bank financial service providers, while regulators in other countries require mobile money providers to partner with a commercial bank (Smith et al., 2011). The most successful mobile money platform in Africa is undoubtedly Safaricom's M-Pesa service which originated in Kenya in 2007. Today, the services has over 37 million active customers and almost 400,000 active agents operating across seven African countries, averaging over 500 transactions every second in December 2018 (Vodafone, 2020).

Given the rapid growth of the technology on the continent, it is unsurprising that several SCT programmes across sub-Saharan Africa have started to experiment with mobile money as a new payment instrument. Mobile money has been particularly successful in countries with a weak or underdeveloped traditional financial sector, as well as among low-income and 'financially excluded' population groups, which tend to be the primary recipients of SCTs. And while the share of adults in sub-Saharan Africa with an account at a financial institution rose by a mere 4 percentage points from 2014-2017, the share with a mobile money account nearly doubled in the same period and reached 21 percent in 2017 (Klapper, Ansar, Hess & Singer, 2019). Hence, in addition to its potential role as a payment mechanism for SCTs, mobile money also offers considerable potential as a driver of financial inclusion on the continent.

Using mobile money as a payment instrument for SCTs requires beneficiaries to open a mobile money account (which can be done by the implementing agency)

and to own a basic feature phone. Once the funds have been transferred into their account, beneficiaries are informed via an SMS message and can cash out at their nearest mobile money agent who is often a local shopkeeper or an individual contracted by the MNO. To withdraw their payment, recipients are required to confirm their identity, which is generally done through presentation of their personal Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card and by entering a PIN. Having received a confirming text message, the mobile money agent then cashes out the desired amount (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014). If mobile money is accepted as a means of payment by local shops or service providers, beneficiaries can even use their monthly transfer to pay for goods and services electronically without having to withdraw the transfer in cash.

The fact that two thirds of the estimated 60 million unbanked adults worldwide who receive government transfers in cash own a mobile phone makes the technology particularly suitable for reaching unbanked SCT recipients, providing vast opportunities for advancing financial inclusion (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2017). Moreover, Tirivayi et al. (2016) note that mobile cash transfers are about 20-25% cheaper than in-kind modalities like food transfers, and also tend to be faster and less complex to administer than manual cash transfers. Using mobile phones to deliver payments also opens up opportunities for the delivery of other cellphone-based services, including SMS-based communication with beneficiaries or the sending of 'nudging' messages aimed at encouraging beneficiaries to access healthcare, education services or information sessions (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014). Barca et al. (2010) further mention how communities have been empowered through increased cellphone usage, e.g. as early warning systems to prevent cattle rustling, or to create business opportunities within the community. Finally, the establishment of a mobile money agent network can create local employment and income-generating opportunities as agents typically receive a fee for every transaction (Llewellyn-Jones, 2016).

On the downside, however, mobile money payments require network coverage and electricity, users are usually required to present an ID card in order to open an account, and illiterate beneficiaries may struggle to conduct the withdrawal or to verify whether the transaction has been effected correctly (Barca et al., 2010). Moreover, if the MNO fails to establish a dense coverage of mobile money agents, beneficiaries may face considerable travel and opportunity costs to collect their payment, thus failing to realize the promised cost and convenience benefits of the technology. Even in Kenya, issues with the mobile network infrastructure in rural areas forced the implementing agency to revert to a card-based payment solution offered by Equity Bank, rather than using the widely popular M-Pesa platform for its Cash for Assets programme in 2010 (Klapper & Singer, 2017). Finally, the cost of providing cellphones to beneficiaries – which may be necessary in areas

with low cellphone penetration – as well as the need for financial literacy training, can lead to significant upfront costs (Smith et al., 2011).

Out of the programmes surveyed for this paper, 22 have introduced some kind of mobile money payment mechanism, often in combination with other forms of payment or in the form of pilot projects. These include the Productive Safety Net Programme in Cote d'Ivoire (International Finance Corporation [IFC], 2018) and Madagascar's FIAVOTA programme (Morey & Seidenfeld, 2018), both of which used the Orange Money platform. Ghana's LEAP programme (MobileMoneyAfrica, 2015) and Uganda's SAGE transfer (ISPA, 2016a) have made use of the MTN Mobile Money service for their transfers, and Tanzania's TASAF programme, Rwanda's Vision Umurenge Programme, Senegal's Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale, Zimbabwe's Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme, as well as various state-led SCT schemes in Nigeria, have launched mobile money pilots with various providers in recent years (World Bank, 2016d, 2019b, 2019d)[19]. However, it must be noted that many of these programmes do not operate in the context of a functioning mobile money ecosystem which would allow beneficiaries to use their mobile transfers to make electronic payments. Instead, the technology is often reduced to the very basic function of verifying beneficiaries' identity (which is linked to the phone's registered SIM card) and beneficiaries simply 'cash out' at their nearest mobile money agent.

An interesting exception to this phenomenon is the case of Zimbabwe where the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer Programme switched from community-based cash payments to payment delivery via mobile money (EcoCash) rather abruptly in 2019. The reason for this change was reportedly not the greater convenience or potential cost savings offered by mobile money, but the fact that local banks had simply run out of cash as a result of the country's financial crisis (The Herald, 2020). However, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe started shutting down more and more mobile money agents in early 2020, accusing them of having fuelled exchange rate volatility (Sibanda & Kadzere, 2020). It is therefore unclear if and how SCT payments in Zimbabwe will be made going forward.

As cellphone ownership and mobile money usage among low-income populations increase, the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of mobile money as a 'true'

[19] In addition, numerous humanitarian or donor-led programmes have used mobile money, including the Multipurpose Cash Transfer for refugees in Cameroon (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] Cameroon, 2018), a range of humanitarian transfers by different agencies in Chad (Watson, Devereux, & Abdoulaye, 2016), emergency food assistance for Ebola-affected communities in Liberia (McNutt, 2016), Save the Children's cash transfer programme in Malawi (Nyirongo, 2015), and a cash transfer pilot in Niger implemented by Concern International (Aker, Boumnijel, McClelland, & Tierney, 2014).

electronic payment instrument for SCTs is expected to improve. In combination with increasing regulatory certainty around the technology, as well as its widespread adoption as a regular means of payment, mobile money is likely to play an increasingly central role in the field of digital SCT payments in the future.

3.5 Store-of-value accounts

The provision of a 'store of value' account into which the cash transfer is paid is an increasingly common feature of modern payment systems. As various studies point to the importance of account ownership as a first step towards accessing other financial services, this feature is of particular importance in terms of added financial inclusion objectives[20]. Numerous SCT programmes across sub-Saharan Africa have adopted an account-based payment model, including South Africa, Botswana, eSwatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Namibia. A total of 58 out of the 130 programmes covered here either offered free accounts for beneficiaries (often via the national post bank) or gave beneficiaries the option of having their grants paid into their personal bank account with a commercial bank or microfinance institution. According to the 2017 Global Findex Database, about 140 million account owners worldwide opened their first account to receive a government transfer, including 80 million women and nearly 75 million beneficiaries in the poorest 40% of households (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2017).

In terms of its functionality, a store of value account is usually similar to a basic 'no frills' bank account, and many countries have opted for a bank account-based SCT payment model. However, a store-of-value account need not necessarily be hosted by a bank, but can also be offered by a non-bank financial entity or even a mobile money platform run by an MNO (DfID, 2009). Accounts used for cash transfers tend to have dormancy rules, i.e. the implementing agency or the payment provider withdraws funds and closes the account due to lack of usage after a certain period (usually 30-90 days). This serves as a mechanism to identify 'ghost beneficiaries' and to eliminate inactive beneficiaries from the programme's payroll. In most programmes, accounts are held by individual beneficiaries, although group accounts for a village or a family are, in theory, also possible (del Ninno et al., 2013). Many programmes have opted to provide accounts for beneficiaries free of charge, and some even open the accounts on behalf of beneficiaries in order to reduce the administrative and financial burden on recipients and to ensure smooth implementation of the payment mechanism (DfID, 2009).

[20] Demirgüç-Kunt (2014: 352), for instance, argues that "having access to basic payment and savings accounts increases savings, leads to more productive investments, greater empowerment, particularly for women, and even greater health benefits."

Another important aspect in terms of financial inclusion relates to the functionality of the account. While the most basic type of account merely allows beneficiaries to withdraw their funds in a once-off transaction, thus offering limited potential for financial inclusion, more sophisticated solutions offer fully-fledged bank accounts to beneficiaries, allowing them to benefit from the same functionality as regular private account owners (Bold et al., 2012). Yet, even where fully functional accounts are used, experience across programmes has shown that simply having access to an account does not necessarily lead to increased use of formal financial services, or 'true' financial inclusion (European Commission, 2008). In fact, a common issue reported by SCT programmes across the world is that beneficiaries engage in 'dump-and-pull' behaviour – in other words, electronic payments are cashed out immediately upon receipt and the account serves as little more than a 'mailbox' used to receive what essentially remains a cash-based payment (Klapper & Singer, 2017).

This behaviour – which has also been observed with mobile money payments – has long been a source of bewilderment among SCT programme administrators, governments, and financial inclusion advocates, particularly given the large body of evidence suggesting that there is considerable demand for formal financial services among the poor. Yet, the reality in most sub-Saharan African countries is that the reach of the formal financial infrastructure – and thus the use of electronic payment methods – remains limited. This lack of a digital payment ecosystem makes electronic payments tedious, insecure and expensive compared to the use of cash, thus offering few incentives or benefits for SCT recipients to make use of digital financial services. Moreover, Bohling (2014) notes that unbanked recipients were frequently not familiar with electronic payment methods and considered the informal savings and borrowing methods they had been using all their lives more familiar and better suited to their needs. Finally, a study among cash transfer recipients in Kenya indicated that only 10% of them were aware that they could use their smart cards as a savings device (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014). On the one hand, this points to the need for financial literacy training, clear communication about the payment system and added financial inclusion features, as well as on-going support and assistance for beneficiaries. On the other hand, however, the persistence of this phenomenon raises fundamental questions about the usefulness and appropriateness of digital payment mechanisms in economies where cash continues to be the predominant means of payment and economic exchange.

A less frequently examined obstacle to financial inclusion through SCT payments is the actual value of the transfer. While payments tend to be relatively generous in developed economies – particularly when they are funded through contributory social security schemes – transfer values in sub-Saharan Africa usually cover only a fraction of beneficiaries' financial needs. The World Bank's 2015 'State of

Social Safety Nets' study revealed that, on average, SCT programmes in lower-income countries only covered 10% of consumption of the average poor person, compared to almost four times as much (37%) in upper-middle income countries (World Bank, 2015b)[21]. How and why households would choose to save part – or all – of these small monthly transfers, rather than using them to cover their most immediate basic needs, appears to be an uncomfortable question for policy makers and financial inclusion advocates alike.

This is, of course, not to dismiss the fact that even the poorest households engage in different forms of saving and financial planning, as illustrated by e.g. the Financial Diaries project (Collins, 2005) or the literature on community-based rotating savings schemes (see, for example, Anderson and Baland (2002), Bähre (2007) and Bouman (1995)). In fact, several SCT programmes have incorporated these findings into their programme design and have introduced a voluntary savings feature for account-based SCT payments. In Ethiopia's Urban Productive Safety Net Programme, for example, 20% of the transfer value is deducted in the form of a voluntary savings contribution, on which beneficiaries receive 7% interest (Admassu, 2019). Other examples include the Child Development Accounts piloted in Nigeria and Uganda, in which matching grants were given to beneficiaries for accumulating savings and encouraging healthy behaviours among children and youth (Zimmerman & Holmes, 2012). Yet the available evidence points to the need to establish a broader digital payment ecosystem, increase the levels of financial and technological literacy among beneficiaries, ensure adequate transfer values, and offer appropriate and suitable tailor-made financial products in order to make digital financial services a viable, useful and attractive service for SCT beneficiaries.

4. Cash transfer payment providers

As outlined in the previous sections, the choice of one or several payment instruments is closely tied to the selection of their respective payment provider(s). This section provides an overview of the different types of payment providers used for the delivery of SCTs across the continent, with a focus on the differences between in-house solutions – i.e. payments made via public entities or government structures – and outsourcing arrangements implemented through private service

[21] In Burundi, CTs correspond to about 18% of the household food poverty line (World Bank, 2016f), Malawi's Zomba cash transfer was equal to approx. 15% of total monthly household consumption (Garcia & Moore, 2012), and Mauritania's Tekavoul transfer amounts to a third of the national poverty line (Harsch, 2016). South Africa's Old Age Pension and Disability Grant are a notable exception to this rule, equalling 1.75 times the country's median income (Garcia & Moore, 2012).

providers. Further, the section briefly looks at the role of non-governmental organizations and local communities in the provision of SCT payments, as these continue to play a role in certain programmes.

4.1 In-house payment providers

Cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa that rely on in-house payment solutions generally do so via one of three payment channels: manual, cash-based payments via SCT programme staff; cash or electronic payments via the national post office; or account-based transfers through a state-owned bank.

The first approach is often used in the early stages of programme implementation, or in countries with a limited financial infrastructure. It requires a high level of state capacity and coordination as it relies on programme staff delivering physical cash to beneficiaries through a network of pay points which are usually set up in village squares, community halls, schools, or local government offices. While payment delivery through programme staff is often seen as a low cost solution, this view does not take into account the fact that it diverts a considerable number of public sector workers from their primary functions, exposes them to potential security risks when transporting large amounts of cash, and creates opportunities for corruption, leakage and bribery. Moreover, as outlined above, cash-based payments through government structures are not considered to be financially inclusive and carry the risk of high levels of fraud, corruption and leakage, which have become key concerns in the design of SCT payment systems in recent years (ISPA, 2016a). As a result, even countries that have relied on in-house payment systems in the past, such as Lesotho, Zambia and Tanzania, are now entering into partnerships with commercial providers and shifting towards electronic payment instruments.[22] Out of the 130 programmes surveyed, only 15 relied exclusively on manual cash payments through government or community structures.

Another option for in-house payment delivery is the use of the national post office network. Post offices have been a popular choice of payment provider in several large-scale SCT programmes across Africa, mostly due to their physical presence in remote and rural areas and their ability to cater for low-income customers. In addition to their traditional function of sending and receiving mail, many countries have established postal banks on the back of their post office network. These banks have been a key instrument for developing country governments to raise small deposits from both rural and urban areas, and to provide basic financial

[22] See Baur-Yazbeck, Kilfoil, and Botea (2019) for Zambia, World Bank (2016b) for Lesotho and Tanzania Social Action Fund (2019) for Tanzania.

services to low-income customers[23] (Kachingwe & Berthaud, 2013). In fact, the delivery of government payments (including salaries, pensions and social cash transfers) was the second most important financial service provided by post offices across the developing world in 2016 (ISPA, 2016a). While postal networks have been used mainly for manual cash-based payments in the past, a general trend towards modernizing national postal networks has opened up opportunities for account-based electronic SCT payments, as well as the provision of additional financial services (ISPA, 2016a). As mentioned above, postal networks were used for SCT payments by 39 programmes in 12 sub-Saharan African countries, increasingly through electronic channels and with the added provision of personal bank accounts.

There are numerous examples of post offices acting as SCT payment providers across sub-Saharan Africa, including social pension payments in Lesotho (World Bank, 2016b) and Cape Verde (ILO, 2015), or the Cash Transfer Programme for Vulnerable Children in Togo (World Bank, 2018a). Kenya's government-led cash transfer programmes transitioned from manual delivery by government staff to payments through the Postal Corporation of Kenya (although only for an interim period) (ISPA, 2016a), and in Ghana the collaboration between the national social welfare department and Ghana Post was a key payment provider for the LEAP SCT programme until 2015 (Oduro, 2015). In Uganda, the national Post Bank was contracted to deliver social pensions under the state-led SAGE programme, and has also been delivering cash payments for several humanitarian programmes through it's 'Bank on Wheels' mobile payment units (Post Bank, 2018). In Namibia, the national postal service NamPost has been a long-standing payment provider for various government SCT schemes, paying around N$70 million to beneficiaries through NamPost every month (Tjihenuna, 2017)[24]. Another recent example is South Africa's social grant programme, which appointed the Post Office in 2017/18 after having worked with various private payment providers since the early 1990s (Gronbach, 2017).

State-owned or national banks represent the third type of public payment provider for SCT programmes. State-owned banks have been used to deliver payments in several large Latin American SCT programmes, including the continent's flagship programmes Bolsa Familia (Brazil) and Prospera (Mexico) (Lindert, Linder, Hobbs & de la Brière, 2007; Masino & Niño-Zarazúa, 2020). The use of state-

[23] For further reading on the role of postal banks in advancing financial inclusion, see Anson, Berthaud, Klapper, and Singer (2013).

[24] In addition, NamPost provides bank accounts and additional financial services – including microloans – through the NamPost Savings Bank (NPSB), its financial subsidiary NamPost Financial Brokers (Pty) Ltd ('Post Fin'), and in cooperation with the Development Bank of Namibia (Kachingwe & Berthaud, 2013).

owned banks offers advantages with regard to oversight and control, as well as a limited need for a business case as state banks may be required to take on government business regardless of traditional considerations for financial return. Moreover, state-owned banks can offer bank accounts, as well as additional financial services and financial inclusion initiatives for beneficiaries, and often have extensive experience in dealing with large-scale government payments (ISPA, 2016a). However, few countries in sub-Saharan Africa have well-functioning state-owned retail banks with a sufficiently large branch network, making this type of payment provider an exception on the continent. The only three examples of state-owned retail banks used for SCT payments identified in this study were Rwanda's Banque Populaire (used in the early stages of its Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme), Banco Internacional de São Tomé e Príncipe (Vulnerable Families Programme), and the People's Own Savings Bank in Zimbabwe (Public Assistance Programme).

4.2 The business case for social cash transfers

While most governments in sub-Saharan Africa seem eager to adopt electronic, financially inclusive SCT payment systems, many of them lack the necessary technology, expertise and experience to implement and manage these systems. Moreover, financial inclusion through payment digitization is seen as a key domain for private sector engagement, as expressed by the World Bank's former Managing Director Bertrand Badré, who stated that 'there is no way you can achieve financial inclusion without having the private sector playing the key role' (Tumwebaze, 2014). Consequently, private financial companies and technology providers have entered the sphere of social protection, forming new alliances and partnerships with governments, aid agencies and NGOs. Broadly speaking, the use of private contractors tends to increase in line with the technological sophistication and complexity of a country's SCT payment system. The introduction of payment cards, the provision of bank accounts, and especially the implementation of mobile-based payment channels usually necessitates the establishment of partnerships with private entities, such as banks, financial service providers, mobile network operators, or technology companies.

Traditionally, financial companies in developing countries had focused their business activities on the corporate sector, as well as the small middle- and upper-income customer segments, located predominantly in urban areas. Expanding the financial infrastructure into rural areas and providing financial services for low-income individuals was seen as a risky and unprofitable exercise, due to the cost of establishing physical branches in sparsely populated areas, the limited purchasing power of the poor, legal barriers such as extensive KYC requirements for opening an account, as well as an insufficient understanding of the needs and characteristics of the 'Bottom of the Pyramid' market (Baradaran, 2014;

European Commission, 2008; Llewellyn-Jones, 2016). However, this attitude changed with the publication of Prahalad's theory on *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid* in which he argues that 'the real source of market promise is not the wealthy few in the developing world [...] it is the billions of aspiring poor who are joining the market economy for the first time' (Prahalad & Hart, 2002: 2). The emergence of this view coincided with the development of new financial technologies and banking models, such as mobile money and agent banking[25], as well as a general relaxation of financial regulations in order to accommodate financial inclusion initiatives. This has created a conducive environment for the creation of a profitable business case around SCT payments and formal financial institutions have shown growing interest in the SCT payment sphere.

The business case behind SCT payments comprises two core components. The first component consists of the fees paid by the government or implementing agency, which should cover the cost of setting up the payment infrastructure, as well as the cost of disbursing payments. However, given the budget constraints faced by most developing country governments, the scope for generating profits, beyond simply covering the cost of establishing and operating the payment system, is often limited. The second component of the business case, which consists of cross-selling additional financial products and services to SCT beneficiaries, has thus been crucial in sparking the interest of private financial service providers (FSPs). As the demand for these additional financial products is expected to increase once beneficiaries have been 'financially included', it is precisely this cross-selling opportunity that has come to represent the 'true' business case for SCT payments by financial companies (Porteous, 2012).

In addition to familiarizing beneficiaries with formal financial services, electronic payments into accounts offer additional benefits for FSPs, such as the possibility to deduct fees (e.g. for insurance policies, payment services or bill payments) and interest payments for microloans directly from beneficiary accounts. Given that beneficiaries receive regular, guaranteed monthly payments under the SCT scheme, the risk of non-payment is reduced considerably, making the provision of financial services to beneficiaries an almost risk-free endeavour for FSPs. Moreover, electronic and account-based transactions can easily be recorded and analysed, thus offering valuable insights into the transaction patterns and overall economic behaviour of the poor (Bold et al., 2012). Finally, gaining a foothold in the sphere of social protection can offer strategic advantages for FSPs, even in cases where the financial returns might be low. Smith et al. (2011) note that cash

[25] Agent banking essentially replaces the establishment of physical bank branches with a network of banking agents. Agents are third parties (either businesses or individuals) contracted by a financial institution to provide financial services on their behalf and deal directly with customers (Rodriguez, Conrad, Davico, Lonie, & Denyes, 2019).

transfer programmes have provided valuable learning opportunities for FSPs, both in terms of testing new payment technologies in small-scale pilot programmes, and with regard to penetrating new markets. In addition, partnering with governments to deliver SCT payments represents an opportunity for private financial institutions to advocate for more favourable regulations based on an implicit social contract and the growing political importance of cash transfer programmes (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014).

4.3 Payments through private service providers

The nature and profitability of the business case outlined above, as well as the design and implementation of the corresponding payment system, varies among different types of payment providers. This section will provide an overview of the most commonly used private service providers for SCT payments in sub-Saharan Africa and discuss the key considerations relating to each entity.

As mentioned above, the use of multiple payment providers – either to compensate for gaps in geographic coverage or to offer a choice of different payment instruments to beneficiaries – is increasingly common in sub-Saharan Africa. This is particularly the case for large-scale programmes operating in the context of a relatively well-developed financial sector. Kenya's new Consolidated Cash Transfer Programme 'Inua Jamii' which makes payments through Co-operative Bank, Equity Bank Ltd, Kenya Commercial Bank and Post Bank, is a prominent example of this approach. The launch of the country's new 'choice model' went hand in hand with the consolidation of its three main SCT programmes under a common payment platform through which it makes payments to around 710,000 beneficiaries (Saya, 2019). This new system, which relies entirely on commercial banks with large agent networks, replaces the previous arrangements under which payments were made through post offices and Equity Bank (del Ninno et al., 2013).

A similar approach has been adopted for Zambia's Support to Women's Livelihoods initiative which has been making payments through a multi-provider model since 2017. When signing up for the programme, beneficiaries can choose the provider and account through which they wish to receive their payment, including two mobile money options (MTN and Zoona), two banks (UBA Zambia and the National Savings Bank) and the Zambia Postal Services Corporation (Baur-Yazbeck, Kilfoil, et al., 2019). The World Bank, one of the main funders of SCT programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, is one of the key advocates of this 'choice model' which reflects its broader goals of promoting financial inclusion and private sector involvement in the delivery of social protection (Baur-Yazbeck, Kilfoil, et al., 2019). Given the Bank's active involvement in the establishment of social safety nets with SCT elements in 40 sub-Saharan African countries – including some of the region's flagship programmes in Ethiopia, Ghana,

Tanzania, Kenya – as well as similar agendas of other donors, the 'choice model' is likely to be adopted by an increasing number of programmes in the future.

Regardless of the precise nature of the payment provider, it should be pointed out that using private contractors for the provision of a social service to the poor carries certain inherent risks which need to be weighed carefully against the benefits of such arrangements. In addition to the typical risks related to outsourcing public services[26], the need to create a business case for private financial companies can expose beneficiaries to the risk of financial exploitation, as illustrated by the case of South Africa. Adequate oversight, clear and enforceable service standards, and active management of the contractual relationship are thus of vital importance for the success of outsourced payment mechanisms in order to protect beneficiaries and to ensure the smooth and cost-effective running of the programme (ISPA, 2016a).

4.3.1 Commercial banks and microfinance institutions

While banks traditionally lacked the physical infrastructure to expand into rural, sparsely populated areas, the emergence of agent banking, the adoption of enabling regulations in several countries, and a broader financial inclusion mandate have created favourable conditions for private banks to engage in the delivery of SCT payments. Commercial banks can leverage their experience in cash-handling and payments, as well as their tested systems for risk management and compliance, and can use social transfers either as a form of corporate social responsibility, or as an opportunity to obtain additional government business and tap into the low-income customer segment (DfID, 2009). In addition, banks are well placed to offer basic accounts and additional financial services to beneficiaries, and often have prior experience with handling large-scale G2P transfers such as public sector salaries or pensions.

However, most commercial banks in sub-Saharan African continue to have a limited presence outside urban areas and therefore need to invest in the establishment of a reliable agent network and/or ATM infrastructure in order to ensure national geographic coverage. And although using a branchless banking network of contracted agents is estimated to be 50% cheaper than using bank branches or ATMs, the cost of establishing this agent network, as well as registering beneficiaries for the new payment system and the corresponding bank

[26] These risks include the failure to realize the promised cost savings and efficiency gains, the existence of hidden transaction costs, the difficulty of running fair and transparent tender processes, the inability of states to properly monitor the activities of their contractors, the growing bargaining power of these service providers and the resulting "hollowing out" of state capacity (Jensen & Stonecash, 2005; Milward, 1994; Schönteich, 2004).

accounts, represents a significant upfront cost. If this is not covered – or at least subsidized – by the implementing agency, banks might be reluctant or unwilling to operate in poor, isolated communities. This, in turn, can place additional travel and opportunity costs on beneficiaries collecting their grants, or require the implementing agency to contract an additional payment provider for certain areas (Smith et al., 2011). Moreover, many large banks have limited experience with low-income customers and might need to adapt their products and services in order to cater for their specific needs and requirements (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014).

Despite these limitations, 50 of the 130 programmes surveyed make payments through commercial banks, either directly into beneficiaries' personal bank accounts, or through withdrawals from ATMs. Perhaps the most well-known example is Equity Bank in Kenya, which delivers social transfers on behalf of several SCT programmes, including the government's Hunger Safety Net Programme and the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, as well as payments to World Food Programme beneficiaries (ISPA, 2016a). The bank invested heavily in expanding its presence in rural areas and its role is considered to have been critical in the success of the programmes (Smith et al., 2011). However, while Equity Bank was initially the government's sole banking partner, it is now facing competition from KCB Bank Kenya Limited, the Co-operative Bank of Kenya, and the Kenya Post Office Savings Bank, which have been contracted as additional payment partners. Other prominent examples include Grindrod Bank and Postbank in South Africa (Gronbach, 2017), Standard Bank in Lesotho and Swaziland (Kardan, Sindou & Pellerano, 2014), Banque Al Amana in Mauritania (Mauriactu, 2019) and the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (Admassu, 2019).

Unlike most large commercial banks, microfinance institutions have a proven track record in serving low-income clients in developing economies and tend to have a larger presence in traditionally underserved areas. While they may not have the same number of distribution points across the country as traditional banks, they tend to operate more locally and have a better understanding of the needs of low-income customers (ISPA, 2016a). Microfinance institutions are, however, not always permitted to take deposits or offer store-of-value accounts, thus restricting them to the role of an additional financial service provider in some countries (DfID, 2009). Examples of microfinance institutions delivering SCT payments in sub-Saharan Africa include Opportunity International Bank in Malawi (del Ninno et al., 2013), Amhara Credit and Saving Institution in Ethiopia (ISPA, 2016a), as well as several microfinance providers processing payments for the Social Safety Nets Project in Niger (World Bank, 2016c).

The use of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) for SCT payments represents a special case as these organizations are owned and operated by their

members and thus, strictly speaking, not commercial financial institutions (Lagat, Mugo & Otuya, 2013). While SACCOs are frequently the financial institutions closest to the rural poor, they often operate as individual entities with few formal links between them. This lack of an overarching structural framework, as well as weak internal controls, and the lack of capacity to make investments in sophisticated payment technologies, tend to make them unsuitable as payment providers in larger programmes (ISPA, 2016a). Hence, while SACCOs can undoubtedly play a role in broader financial inclusion efforts, their use as a payment provider for SCTs has been limited to a few exceptional cases such as Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge cash transfer programme (Alliance for Financial Inclusion, 2019).

4.3.2 Non-bank payment providers

In response to the global expansion of SCT programmes, an increasing number of non-bank payment providers has specialized in the distribution of these payments and entered into partnerships with governments or implementing agencies. Some of these entities are related to banks, such as ABSA subsidiary AllPay (a previous payment provider for South Africa's social grant programme), while others operate as independent companies, offering their services either with or without a formal banking partner, depending on the local regulatory framework (DfID, 2009). In general, these service providers tend to offer closed-loop payment solutions based on proprietary technology and rely on the use of smart cards and biometric authentication. While this offers highly secure beneficiary identification and can compensate for a weak national payment system, proprietary systems are not compatible with mainstream financial infrastructure, thus carrying the risk of dependence on a single contractor and the high cost of integrating the SCT payment system into the broader financial system at a later stage (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014).

The most prominent and insightful example of the practicalities, as well as the potential benefits and costs of working with a non-bank payment provider, is the case of South Africa. The country has a long history of using private companies to deliver SCT payments, dating back to the early 1990s. In 2012, the government appointed Cash Paymaster Services (CPS), a private financial company, as the sole paymaster for the country's extensive SCT programme. CPS introduced a biometrically-enabled smart card-based payment system and provided bank accounts for beneficiaries through its banking partner Grindrod Bank. This made a significant contribution to South Africa's financial inclusion agenda, with SCT recipients making up almost a quarter of South Africa's banked population (Centre of Excellence in Financial Services, 2017). However, it soon emerged that CPS' parent company Net1 had established an elaborate network of subsidiaries with whom it shared beneficiaries' personal information, enabling them to

aggressively sell financial products and services to SCT recipients. Payments for insurance, airtime, loans and other financial services were collected via direct deductions from beneficiaries' bank accounts before they could access their monthly payments (Adesina, 2020). It is estimated that approximately 2.3 million of the 10 million grant accounts held by Grindrod Bank were affected by the deductions, i.e. almost one quarter of all grant recipients (Vally, 2016). According to South Africa's Social Security Agency SASSA, 'the total monetary loss [to grant beneficiaries] due to the unlawful deductions was close to R800 million, of which only R1.5 million has been recovered' (Standing Committee on Community Development, 2016).

The case caused a massive public backlash, a series of (still on-going) legal battles, as well as considerable financial, political and social costs for both the government and beneficiaries (Gronbach, 2017). As a result, South Africa's Social Security Agency terminated its relationship with CPS in 2018 and appointed the South African Post Office as its new national paymaster. While this move has come with its own set of problems – including the closure of most of the country's cash pay points, cash shortages at Post Offices, payment glitches delaying electronic payments, and the threat of escalating costs (Davis, 2019; Mashego, 2020) – it was perceived to be the only viable and politically acceptable option at the time.

4.3.3 Mobile network operators and mobile money agents

The emergence of mobile money as a potential payment channel for SCTs has opened up new business opportunities for MNOs and mobile money agents. While the MNO provides the technological infrastructure for the mobile money platform, using mobile money as a payment instrument for SCTs depends on the establishment of a network of local agents who process payments to individual beneficiaries (Klapper & Singer, 2017). Similar to the concept of agent banking, mobile money agents are individuals or small businesses who are contracted by the MNO to interact with customers, register them for the service, assist them with cash-in or cash-out transactions and, where available, provide additional financial services via the mobile money platform (ISPA, 2016a). Agents receive a commission for their services – usually a small fee per transaction – which is paid by the contracting MNO (Oberländer & Brossmann, 2014). In addition, shopkeepers acting as mobile money agents can use SCT payments as an opportunity to generate additional trade in their shops as beneficiaries often spend their transfers on immediate purchases (Smith et al., 2011).

Despite the fact that Safaricom's M-Pesa has become one of the most successful mobile money platforms on the continent, it has rarely been used for cash transfer payments. Instead, MTN's mobile money service has been the most popular

platform used for SCT payments in the region, including in Ghana's LEAP programme (BtCA, 2017), Uganda's SAGE scheme (Okello, 2015), Zambia's Support to Women's Livelihoods programme (Baur-Yazbeck, Kilfoil, et al., 2019), as well as for different humanitarian transfers in, for example, Cameroon and Liberia (Cash Working Group, 2018; McNutt, 2016). Orange Money is another increasingly popular provider of mobile money SCT payment services and has been used in Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Madagascar (IFC, 2018; Morey & Seidenfeld, 2018; World Bank, 2019a).

Where mobile money is accepted as a regular means of payment, beneficiaries could, in theory, pay for goods and services via their mobile phones rather than simply cashing out. This, however, is not the case in most of sub-Saharan Africa, which can put considerable pressure on agents to maintain sufficient liquidity during pay-out periods. In fact, a CGAP review identified liquidity shortages as one of the key problems encountered by recipients, and mobile money agents often face challenges similar to those experienced under manual, cash-based systems, i.e. the need to collect and disburse large amounts of cash, creating security risks and an additional administrative burden (ISPA, 2016a). In fact, one could argue that disbursing SCTs via mobile money in an environment where mobile payments are not a commonly accepted means of payment simply shifts the responsibility for disbursing cash from SCT staff to mobile money agents. In this case it does not represent a truly digital form of payment, offers little potential for financial inclusion, and increases the financial risk and administrative burden for agents.

Further, it must be ensured that recipients are not subjected to coercion or undue pressure by agents or shopkeepers to spend their transfers in their store – a practice which has been reported in anecdotal evidence. Other potential risks include agents making unauthorized deductions from beneficiaries' e-wallets, charging unauthorized 'disbursement fees', or charging higher prices for purchases of goods during pay-out periods (ISPA, 2016a). Beneficiaries of Uganda's SAGE grant, for instance, reported being asked to pay a fee of UGX 1,000 in order to receive their bi-monthly payment at the start of the programme and only later 'discovered that it was a lie' (Merttens, Sindou, Attah, et al., 2016).

Despite the global excitement surrounding the use of mobile money for SCT payments, the practical implementation of the technology has proved challenging, and its transformative effect in terms of financial inclusion has thus far been limited. Due to the absence of a mobile money payment ecosystem, most beneficiaries continue to simply cash out, and gaps in mobile network coverage in rural areas continue to pose significant challenges for MNOs and agents, as reported in Niger and Uganda, for example. Thus far, few comprehensive studies on the use of mobile money and the role of MNOs in the delivery of SCTs have been conducted, and there is a clear need for further research into this issue. The

recent adoption of mobile money as a payment mechanism for several World Bank-funded SCT programmes, particularly in West and East Africa, should generate further insights in this regard.

4.3.4 Other private service providers

In addition to the payment providers outlined above, both manual and electronic payment systems offer a variety of business opportunities for other private entities, including technology companies, security providers and consultants. Since these actors are often sub-contracted by the main payment agency, and thus play a less visible role in the actual payment process, they have received limited attention by scholars and SCT practitioners. However, their role in providing essential elements of the payment infrastructure warrants a brief look at their nature and activities in the SCT payment space, and should be the subject of further research.

While banks, MNOs and other payment providers tend to be in charge of the overall SCT payment infrastructure, the technology, devices and systems used in the disbursement process are usually not developed in-house. Biometric identification technologies, for instance, have been procured from specialized providers such as BioID Technologies in the DRC (World Bank, 2012), Kifiya Financial Technology Services in Ethiopia (World Bank, 2014b), or Aya Technologies in Ghana (Economic Policy Research Institute [EPRI], 2015). And even in manual, cash-based payment mechanisms, the use of private security firms or cash-in-transit companies has been relatively common, including in Lesotho, Malawi and Namibia (Arruda, 2018a; ILO, 2014; Kardan & O'Brien, 2017). However, data on the extent of their services or the contractual agreements with individual companies is limited, and further research would be needed to provide a clearer picture on the role of these providers.

Finally, it should be noted that consultants and payment specialists play an increasingly important role in the design and implementation of payment systems in both government-led and humanitarian programmes. Examples include companies such as Exact Consult (Zambia, Lesotho and Mozambique), Ayala Consulting (Ghana, Lesotho and Malawi) and Samuel Hall Consulting (Somalia)[27]. However, a detailed discussion of their role in the development and implementation of SCT payment systems would exceed the scope of this paper and should be explored in further research.

[27] For further reading see Ayala Consulting Corporation (2014), Baur-Yazbeck, Kilfoil, et al. (2019) and Goodman and Majid (2017).

4.4 NGOs, donors and community-based payments

In countries with limited formal financial channels, SCT programmes have, in some cases, reverted to local NGOs or community structures to deliver payments. However, these organizations or individuals are not defined as actual payment providers but rather as delivery channels for cash disbursements, usually in in-house payment arrangements. Payments through NGOs are more common in cash-for-work programmes as these are often implemented by local NGOs who are then also used to disburse payments to programme participants. Out of the programmes covered in this report, only the DRC's ARCC programme and the Social Safety Nets project in Chad made payments via local NGOs – although even in these cases this mainly appears to be the case for the programmes' public works components.

In addition, as Garcia and Moore (2012: 5) note, 'programs in Sub-Saharan Africa often rely on communities in ways beyond those found in other regions […] Communities are involved in identifying and selecting potential beneficiaries, collecting data, verifying information about beneficiaries, distributing cash, monitoring beneficiaries' use of cash (even in unconditional transfers), and addressing grievances.' Examples where village committees, local volunteers and traditional leaders have played a key role in the delivery and oversight of payments include the Nahouri Cash Transfer pilot in Burkina Faso (Cirillo & Tebaldi, 2016), Tanzania's TASAF programme (World Bank, 2019h) and Zambia's national cash transfer programme (Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, 2018). However, both the TASAF programme and Zambia's SCT scheme are planning to launch electronic payments in 2020, thus reducing the role of communities to beneficiary selection and general programme support.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the role of donors, international organizations and NGOs in the implementation of SCT programmes and their respective payment systems in sub-Saharan Africa is more pronounced than in other parts of the world (Garcia & Moore, 2012). Organizations such as UNICEF, the WFP, or Concern International have been instrumental in implementing digital payment technologies in the context of their own programmes, as well as for national SCT schemes in several countries. Examples include the DRC's Alternative Responses for Communities in Crisis cash transfer programme (Bonilla et al., 2017), Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (Ministry of Agriculture, 2014), Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty scheme (EPRI, 2015), as well as Kenya's National Safety Net Programme (Gardner, Riungu, O'Brien & Merttens, 2017). Further, the majority of SCT programmes in the region have been partly or fully funded by organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, DfID, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization,

WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Red Cross, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, CARE International and Concern International (EPRI, 2015; World Bank, 2016e)[28]. This extensive involvement of international players in the overall design of SCT programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and, consequently, the choice of payment instruments and providers, represents another important field for further research, particularly in light of the central role of cash transfers and financial inclusion on the international development agenda.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the use and prevalence of different payment instruments and providers for SCT programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and to provide an overview of the current state of SCT payment digitization in the region. The research revealed an increasing uptake of electronic payment methods, most notably in the form of payment cards, biometric identity verification, special bank accounts for beneficiaries, and mobile phone-based payment methods. This development has been promoted by international institutions and donors, as well as the emergence of financial inclusion as a key pillar of the global development agenda and the resulting adoption of financial inclusion strategies by numerous national governments. Additional factors driving the adoption of electronic payment instruments include concerns over fraud and leakage in cash-based payment systems, as well as the cost and logistical complexity of delivering cash to ever larger numbers of beneficiaries.

Out of a total of 130 SCT programmes in 44 sub-Saharan African countries that were analysed in this paper, the majority (71) use multiple payment instruments and 47 rely on a single payment mechanism. Manual cash disbursements by programme staff or community members are practiced in 15 programmes, whereas 79 programmes disburse cash via other channels, such as post offices, commercial banks or mobile money platforms. Smart cards are used in 29 programmes, usually in combination with biometric verification via fingerprint scans, as well as a bank account for beneficiaries. Payments directly into bank accounts – either provided by the programme or into beneficiaires' personal accounts – are made by 58 programmes, and 22 programmes have used mobile money as a payment instrument.

The increasing digitization of SCT payments has opened up new business opportunities for private financial companies and other service providers who can

[28] South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Mauritius represent the few exceptions to this rule, having established their national SCT schemes almost exclusively through domestic tax-financing and without significant assistance from donors or international organizations.

supply the necessary technology and expertise to design and implement 'financially inclusive' payment systems and who are keen to tap into the previously neglected 'bottom of the pyramid' market. While the use of private contractors offers opportunities for greater payment efficiency and financial inclusion through cutting-edge technology, outsourcing SCT payments to profit-seeking companies can create dependency on a certain provider or technology and raises concerns over the possible financial exploitation of beneficiaries. Nevertheless, a considerable – and growing – number of SCT programmes has partnered with private financial institutions, ranging from traditional banks to microfinance providers and mobile network operators. A total of 50 programmes have entered into various forms of partnership with commercial banks, either for electronic transfers into bank accounts, or cash withdrawals through the bank's ATM network or branches. Some programmes even open bank accounts for all beneficiaries and subsidize the cost of these accounts, while others require beneficiaries to have (and pay for) their own accounts in order to receive their payments electronically.

In addition, large retailers as well as local traders and mobile money agents are increasingly used as payment agents for the disbursement of SCT payments as they represent a flexible and cost-effective alternative to traditional 'brick and mortar' bank branches. State-owned or state-subsidized postal networks and post banks are another popular payment partner and are used in 39 programmes across 12 countries. State-owned retail banks, microfinance institutions, non-bank payment providers, NGOs and local savings and credit cooperatives are not widely used as SCT payment providers in sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite the growing adoption of electronic payment instruments, cash-based payments remain a key element of most SCT programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. At least 94 programmes offer cash payments in some form, and the cash-based nature of the local economy in most African countries makes it unlikely that electronic transfers will fully replace cash-based payments in the near future. Even in programmes where account-based or mobile payments are offered, beneficiaries have often been found to merely use them as a cash-out mechanism, rather than using them as a stepping stone towards greater financial inclusion and payment digitization. This raises the question as to what extent payment digitization truly benefits the recipients of SCTs who continue to queue for cash – except that they now do so at an ATM, bank or mobile money agent, rather than at a state-owned pay point or community centre.

The available evidence suggests that the adoption of electronic payment methods and digital financial services among beneficiaries would require the establishment of a broader digital payment ecosystem in which the SCT payment instrument is accepted as a means of payment even in small local shops and by informal traders. Moreover, financial and technological education of beneficiaries, adequate

transfer values, as well as the development of appropriate and suitable tailor-made financial products, would be required to make digital financial services a viable, useful and attractive service for SCT beneficiaries. Until then, truly cashless SCT payment systems will most likely remain a distant dream.

Overall, the SCT payment landscape in sub-Saharan Africa is changing rapidly, and payment reforms, pilot projects and digitization efforts can be expected to continue as more and more countries enter the digital age and expand their SCT programmes to tackle poverty and inequality. Mobile money is likely to become a more widespread payment instrument as more and more countries adopt appropriate financial legislation for its use, and the number of mobile money users on the continent continues to grow. Finally, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in national lockdowns, physical distancing requirements, and a general boost of the digital economy could transform the SCT payment landscape at an unprecedented pace. Many African governments have rolled out new cash-based social protection initiatives, most of which are delivered through digital channels such as mobile money, e-wallets, bank accounts and electronic vouchers. It will be interesting to see if and how this will affect existing SCT payment systems, and further research should be conducted in this regard.

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Appendix: Overview of social cash transfer programmes and payment methods in sub-Saharan Africa

Table A1: Overview of social cash transfer programmes and payment methods in sub-Saharan Africa

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Angola						
Cartão Kikuia	2014	Geographic Categorical	90,000 households (HH) (2017)	Monthly	KZ 5,000 (2016)	Re-loadable pre-paid card for purchases at government-run shops (as of 2018).
Social Safety Net	2019	Geographic Community (Proxy Means Test) PMT	Not started yet (2020)	Bi-monthly	KZ 5,000 (2019)	Payments have not started yet but plans to contract payment agencies (as of 2019).
Valor Criança Pilot	2018	Categorical Geographic	6,151 HH (2019)	Quarterly	KZ 3,000 (2019)	Cash payments via Development Pathways.
Benin						
Projet de Services Décentralisés Conduits par les Communautés	2013	Geographic Community PMT	12,933 HH (2017)	Monthly	CFAF 3,500 (2017)	MTN Mobile Money with cash-out at MTN agents in Cotonou. Manual cash payments via Caisse Locale Credit Mutuel Agricol branches in rural areas
Appui aux Communes et Communautés pour l'Expansion des Services Sociaux	2018	Geographic Categorical Community PMT	Not started yet (2020)	n/a	CFAF 5,000 (2018)	No data

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Botswana						
Destitute Person's Allowance	1980	PMT	35,441 indiv. (2016)	Monthly	BWP 600-890 (2019)	Cash payments via post offices or programme staff, reportedly also via community leaders. Alternatively payment into personal bank account (not provided). Smart cards and biometric identification.
Old-Age Pension	1996	Categorical	105,754 indiv. (2016)	Monthly	BWP 530 (2019)	
War Veterans Allowance	1998	Categorical	2,010 indiv. (2015)	Monthly	BWP 600 (2019)	
Disability Benefit	2015	Categorical	No data	Monthly	BWP 450 (2019)	
Benefits for Orphans and Vulnerable Children	1999	Categorical Community	3,5076 (2015	Monthly	BWP 650 (2017)	In-kind support, complemented by electronic food voucher.
Burkina Faso						
Cash Supplement to Cereal Distribution	-	Geographical Community	3,045 HH (2016)	Monthly	CFAF 20,000 (2016)	No data
Burkin-Naong-Sa Ya (Social Safety Net Project)	2014	Geographic Community PMT	69,755 HH (2019)	Quarterly	CFAF 10,000 (<5 children) CFAF 13,333 (>5 children) (2018)	Mobile money payments via Orange Burkina and electronic/cash payments via Caisse d'Épargne et de Credit. Negotiations with electronic payment providers are ongoing and nearing completion (as of 2019).

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Burundi						
Merankabandi Cash Transfer Programme Pilot	2018	Community Geographic PMT	50,090 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	BIF 20,000 (2018)	EcoNet Mobile Money payments (as of 2019).
Cabo Verde						
Rendimento Social de Inclusão Program	2017	Geographic PMT	10,683 indiv. (2020)	Monthly	CVE 5,500 (2018)	Paid directly into personal bank accounts. Unbanked beneficiaries are assisted in opening an account.
Basic Disability Penison	2006	Means test	No data	Monthly	CVE 6,000 (2015)	No data
Basic Pension for Children with Disabilities	2006	Means test	No data	Monthly	No data	No data
Funeral Grant for pensioners	-		No data	Other	CVE 7,000 (2019)	No data
Basic Old Age Pension	1995	Means test Categorical	23,000 (2011)	Monthly	CVE 6,000 (2015)	Cash payments via post offices (as of 2016).
Cameroon						
Social Safety Nets Project	2014	Geographic Community PMT	42,999 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	CFAF 10,000 (2018)	Various payment options were explored in 2016, including mobile money and smart cards. Unclear what the current state is.
National Solidarity and Social Justice	2013	No data	118,710 indiv. (2016)	No data	No data	No data

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Chad						
Social Safety Nets Project Pilot	2016	No data	7,604 (2019)	Monthly	CFAF 15,000 (2017)	Cash payments via local NGOs. Electronic payments were the preferred option but not feasible at the moment (as of 2020).
Refugees and Host Communities Support Project	2018	Geographic Community PMT	Not started yet (2020)	Quarterly	CFAF 15,000 (2018)	Payments will be made by microfinance institutions and/or mobile money.
Democratic Republic of the Congo						
Alternative Responses for Communities in Crisis Cash Transfer Programme	2011	Geographic Community	200,000 indiv. (2016)	Monthly	No data	A mix of cash and electronic payments via different partners (NGOs, MNOs, local savings groups, microfinance institutions) was used in the early stages. Today most payments are made via banks and local traders.
Republic of the Congo						
Lisungi Safety Nets System Project	2014	Geographic Community PMT	9,985 HH (2020)	Quarterly	<u>Basic benefit:</u> CFAF 3,333 <u>Additional benefits:</u> CFAF 1,666 per child CFAF 3,333 per pensioner <u>Maximum amount</u> CFAF 15,000 (2019)	Cash payments via Banque Postale until 2018. Payments are now made via banks, MFIs and mobile money providers (as of 2019).

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Côte d'Ivoire						
Programme National des Filets Sociaux Productifs	2015	Geographic PMT	750,000 indiv. (2019)	Quarterly	CFAF 12,000 (2019)	Mobile money payments via Orange Money for beneficiaries in rural areas and via Wizall in urban areas (as of 2019).
Djibouti						
Programme National de Solidarité Famille	2015	Geographic Categorical Community PMT	3,362 HH (2019)	Quarterly	DJF 10,000 (2019)	Payments seem to be made via MFIs, mostly in cash (as of 2018).
Distribution de Zakāt	-	Community	6,740 indiv. (2015)	Other	No data	Cash payments via Zakat committees.
eSwatini						
Public Assistance	1985	Categorical Means Test	5,075 indiv. (2011)	Quarterly	SZL 80 (2015)	Cash disbursement via the post office, moving to electronic payments into bank accounts (as of 2019).
Disability Grant	1985	Categorical Means Test	4,744 indiv. (2019)	Quarterly	SZL 180 (2019)	
Old Age Grant	2005	Categorical Means Test	69,697 indiv. (2019)	Quarterly	SZL 400 (2018)	
Military Pensions	1980s	Categorical	915 indiv. (2014)	Monthly	SZL 600 (2011)	Cheques issued by the Regional Social Welfare Offices and the Tinkhundla Centres.
Young Heroes	2006	Categorical Community	1,700 indiv. (2020)	Bi-annually	SZL 180 (2011)	Payments via the Post Office and via mobile money (as of 2019).
Pilot Cash Transfer Program for Orphans and Vulnerable Children	2016	Categorical	7,063 indiv. (2016)	No data	No data	No data

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Ethiopia						
Productive Safety Net Programme	2005	Geographic Community PMT	2.5m HH (2019)	Monthly	Equivalent of 15kg of cereal and 4kg of pulses per person per month, adjusted annually. Approx. USD 30 (2018).	More than half of all beneficiary households were paid electronically in 2019, using mobile phones and biometric devices. Some beneficiaries receive a food basket or voucher, rather than cash.
Urban Productive Safety Net	2015	No data	No data	Monthly	ETB 170 (2017)	E-payments were a pre-condition for the disbursement of donor funding and all payments are to be made electronically.
The Gambia						
Building Resilience through Social Transfers for Nutrition Security in The Gambia	2016	Categorical Geographic	6,160 indiv. (2017)	Monthly	GBD 600 (2018)	No data
Family Strengthening Program	2011	Categorical Geographic Means test	100 HH (2019)	Once-off	Basic amount: GBD 2,000 per HH Additional payment: GBD 5,000 (2018)	No data
Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project	2014	Categorical Geographic	11,402 indiv. (2018)	Quarterly	GBD 600 (2018)	Cash payments through health facilities.
Social Safety Net Project	2019	Categorical Geographic Community PMT	Not started yet (2020)	n/a	n/a	Payment provider and modality are still to be determined (as of 2020).

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Ghana						
Social Pension (LEAP programme)	2008	Geographic Community Categorical PMT	213,044 HH (2018)	Bi-monthly	GHC 32 (1-person HH) GHC 38 (2-person HH) GHC 44 3-person HH) GHC 53 (4-person HH) (2020)	Electronic payments via the biometric e-zwich smart card and through the Ghana Interbank Payments & Settlement System. Beneficiaries can open bank accounts with any bank.
Disability Grant (LEAP programme)						
Grant for vulnerable households with children (LEAP Programme)						
OVC Caregiver Grant (LEAP programme)						
Guinea						
Productive Social Safety Net Program Pilot	2012	Geographic Categorical Community PMT	13,157 HH (2019)	Quarterly	No data	Payments through Credit Rural bank. Mobile money pilots have been conducted (as of 2020).
Guinea-Bissau						
Rural Community Development Project Pilot	2016	Geographic PMT	16,000 HH (2018)	Quarterly	CFAF 2,666, CFAF 3,333 or CFAF 4,000 (2018)	No data

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Safety Nets and Basic Services Project	2018	Geographic Community PMT	16,500 HH (2019)	Quarterly	CFAF 23,333 (2018)	Payment via different external contractors, not clear how payments are delivered (as of 2018).
Cash Transfer for Orphans, Vulnerable Children, the Disabled and the Elderly	-	Categorical	800 indiv. (2015)	Quarterly	CFAF 3,333 (2018)	No data
Kenya						
Hunger and Safety Net Programme	2008	Geographic Community Categorical PMT	95,619 HH (2018)	Bi-monthly	KES 2,700 (2019)	Electronic payments into bank accounts via Equity Bank (agency banking). Plans to move to a multi-provider model.
Inua Jamii Cash Transfer for the Elderly	2018	Categorical	523,129 indiv. (2019)	Bi-monthly	KES 2,000 (2019)	Choice model with electronic payments via Equity Bank, KCB, Co-operative Bank and Post Bank. All four banks use agency banking (as of 2020).
Older Persons Cash Transfer	2006	Community Categorical PMT	310,000 indiv. (2019)	Bi-monthly	KES 2,000 (2019)	
Orphans and Vulnerable Children Cash Transfer	2004	Geographic Community Categorical PMT	353,000 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	KES 2,000 (2019)	
Persons with Severe Disability Cash Transfer	2010	Categorical community	47,000 indiv. (2019)	Bi-monthly	KES 2,000 (2019)	

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Lesotho						
Child Grants Program	2007	Categorical Community PMT	26,600 HH (2017)	Quarterly	LSL 120 (1–2 children) LSL 200 (3–4 children) LSL 250 (5+ children) (2018)	Predominantly cash payments via pay points and Postal Banks. The government is currently developing an e-payment system (as of 2020).
Old Age Pension	1983	Categorical	85,000 beneficiaries (2020)	Monthly	LSL 750 (2020)	
Public Assistance	-	Categorical Self-targeting PMT	12,000 indiv. (2018)	Quarterly	LSL 250 (2015)	Cash payments via pay points (as of 2016).
Liberia						
Liberia Social Safety Nets Project	2019	Geographic PMT	3,250 HH (2019)	Quarterly	USD 10-34 (dep. on HH size, 2019)	Plans to outsource payments to commercial banks and manual payment delivery providers, status of implementation unclear.
Madagascar						
Vatsin'Ankohonana (Human Development Cash Transfer)	2014	Geographic Categorical Community PMT	39,000 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	<u>Base amount:</u> AR 15,000 <u>Additional payment:</u> AR 5,000 per child in school (2019)	MFIs of mobile banking operators should be used for payments.

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
FIAVOTA Emergency Drought Response Programme	2016	Geographic Categorical	65,000 HH (2020)	Monthly	Once-off: AR 180,000 per HH Monthly payment: AR 30,000 per HH (2019)	Mobile transfers via Orange money, as well as cash via savings associations. Local implementing partners distribute cash in other areas.
Let Us Learn	2016	Geographic Categorical Community PMT	3,963 (2019)	Bi-monthly	AR 10,000 (2019)	Same payment method(s) as the Vatsin' Ankohonana programme.
Malawi						
Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme	2006	Community PMT	287,157 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	Base amount: MWK 2,600 (1-person HH) MWK 3,300 (2-person HH) MWK 4,400 (3-person HH) MWK 5,600 (4-person HH) Additional payments: MWK 800/child in primary school MWK 1,500/child in secondary school (2017)	Various payment models, depending on who funds transfers in certain areas. Bank accounts and debit cards in UNICEF-funded districts. Irish Aid has also invested in e-payments (as of 2019). The World Bank plans to transition to e-payments by 2024, but still uses cash payments as of 2020.

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Mali						
Jigisemejiri (Emergency Safety Nets project)	2013	Geographic Community	79,186 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	FCFA 10,000 (2019)	Orange Mali was contracted as mobile money provider in 2014, no details on current payment model.
Mauritania						
Tekavoul Social Cash Transfer	2015	Geographic Community PMT	34,067 HH (2020)	Quarterly	MRU 500 (2019)	Banque el Amana contracted to deliver payments in various regions in 2018. Biometric pilot launched in 2019. Most payments made via smart cards with biometric verification.
Elmaouna (Shock-responsive Cash Transfer)	2017		3,800 HH (2019)	Other	No data	
Mauritius						
Basic Widow's Pension	1950s	Categorical	19,282 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	MUR 6,210 (2019)	Payment into personal bank account.
Child Allowance	1960s	Categorical	13,480 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	MUR 1,400 (age 0-10) MUR 1,500 (age 10+) (2019)	

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Basic Retirement Pension	1950	Categorical	215,334 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	MUR 6,210 (age 60 - 89) MUR 16,210 (age 90-99) MUR 21,210 (age 100+) (2019)	Payment into personal bank account.
Basic Disability/ Invalidity Pension	1950s	Categorical	32,075 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	MUR 6,210 (2019)	
Constant Attendant's/ Carer's Allowance	1950s	Categorical	6,351 indiv. (2015)	Monthly	MUR 3,000 (2019)	
Basic Orphan's Pension	1950s	Categorical	349 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	MUR 5,210 (age 3-20, student) MUR 3,710 (age 3-15, not student) (2019)	
Guardian's Allowance	1950s	Categorical	335 indiv. (2015)	Monthly	MUR 1,000 (2019)	
Inmate's Allowance	1950s	Categorical	709 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	MUR 790 (2019)	
Social Aid	1983	Categorical Means Test	16,975 HH (2018)	Monthly	MUR 1,054 basic benefit MUR 1,482 max. benefit (2019)	
Funeral Grant	-	Categorical	3,743 indiv. (2018)	Other	MUR 10,300 (20120)	
Unemployment Hardship Relief	1983	Categorical Means test	708 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	MUR 468 (2019)	

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Mozambique						
Programa Subsídio Social Básico	1990	Categorical Community Self-targeting	550,000 HH (2017)	Bi-monthly	MZN 540 (1 pers. HH) MZN 640 (2 pers. HH) MZN 740 (3 pers. HH) MZN 840 (4 pers. HH) MZN 1000 (5+ pers. HH) (2019)	Payments delivered mostly in cash. Plans to contract private provider and move to payments via smart cards and/or bank accounts.
Child Allowance Pilot	2018	Geographic Categorical	1,307 indiv. (2019)	Bi-monthly	MZN 650 - 1500 (dep. on HH size) (2019)	No data
Namibia						
Old-Age Pension	1949	Categorical	170,386 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	NAD 1,300 (2019)	Cash disbursement via smart card and biometric verification, as well as electronic transfers into personal bank accounts or Nampost accounts. Cash delivery via mobile ATM units to rural areas.
War Veterans Subvention	1965	Categorical Means test	14,274 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	NAD 2,200 (2017)	
Disability Grant	1995	Categorical	41,061 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	NAD 1,250 (2019)	
Special Maintenance Grant	2012	Categorical	5,529 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	NAD 250 (2018)	
Foster Care Grant	1960	Categorical	15,687 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	NAD 250 (2018)	
Child Maintenance Grants	1960	Categorical Means test	123,526 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	NAD 250 (2018)	
Vulnerable Child Grant	2014	Categorical	226,646 indiv. (2018)	Monthly	NAD 250 (2019)	

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Place of Safety Allowance	1960	Categorical	No data	Other	NAD 10 per day (2018)	Paid by cheque (as of 2016).
Funeral Benefit	-	Categorical	20,000 indiv. (2011)	Other	NAD 3,000 (old age/ disability) NAD 10,000 (veterans) (2018)	Benefits are transferred to undertakers and can be claimed by beneficiaries to pay for funeral.
Niger						
Projet de Filets Sociaux – Cash Transfers for Food Security	2011	Geographic Community PMT	149,003 HH (2019)	Monthly	CFAF 10,000 (2019)	Payments via MFIs (mostly in cash), despite plans to move to e-payments via private providers.
Nigeria						
Household Uplifting Programme	2016	Geographic Categorical Community PMT	413,428 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	NGN 5,000 basic transfer NGN 5,000 cond. top-up (2020)	Cash and electronic payments via private providers. Procurement process for certain states is still ongoing (as of 2019).
Child Development Grant Programme	2013	Geographic Categorical	110,509 indiv. (2019)	Monthly	NGN 4,000 (2019)	No data
In Care of the Poor	2007	Geographic Categorical Community PMT	27,000 HH (2017)	Monthly	NGN 1,500 per child NGN 5,000 max. transfer NGN 10,000 bonus after 1 year (2015)	Cash payments via local government offices, as well as electronic payments via mobile banking.
Zakat distribution	-	Geographic	No data	Other	Variable	Cash payments via Zakat committees.

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Rwanda						
Vision 2020 Umurenge Program	2008	Community Categorical	237,941 HH (2019)	Monthly	FRW 7,500 (1-person HH) FRW 21,000 (>5-person HH) (2017)	Cash and electronic payments via local savings and credit cooperatives, as well as Banque Populaire. Digitization is in process; mobile money pilot is under consideration.
Direct Support for Disabled Former Combatants	-		2,821 indiv. (2015)	Monthly	FRW 20,000 (category 4) FRW 25,000 (category 3) FRW 50,000 (category 1) (2018)	No data
Genocide Survivors Support and Assistance Fund	1998	Categorical Community	27,584 indiv. (2017)	Monthly	FRW 7, 500 (category 1) FRW 30,000 (category 2) (2017)	Mostly cash payments, plans to move to e-payment system in line with Vision Umurenge programme.
Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme	1997	Categorical	11,000 indiv. (2018)	Other	<u>First instalment:</u> FRW 60,000 Basic kit <u>Additional payment:</u> FRW 120,000 (Privates) FRW 600,000 (Colonels) (2018)	Basic needs kit paid in cash, subsequent allowances paid into personal bank accounts.

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
São Tomé and Príncipe						
Needy Mothers Program	-	Categorical Community	850 indiv. (2019)	Quarterly	STD 13,3333 (2018)	Manual cash payments at pay points.
Subsidy to the Unknown	2004	Categorical Community	1,021 indiv. (2014)	Quarterly	No data	Manual cash payments at pay points.
Continuous Subsidy	2004	Categorical Community	2,024 indiv. (2014)	Quarterly	No data	Manual cash payments at pay points.
Vulnerable Families Program	2019	Geographic Community PMT	2,624 indiv. (2019)	Bi-monthly	No data	Payments via Banco Internacional de São Tomé e Príncipe, unclear whether cash or electronic.
Senegal						
Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale	2013	Geographic Community PMT	292,068 HH (2019)	Quarterly	CFAF 8,333 (2018)	Mobile payments via Orange Money (approx. 15% of beneficiaries), cash payments via post offices for remaining beneficiaries (as of 2019).
Cash Transfer Pilot to Address Hunger Gap	2017	Geographic	8,175 HH (2018)	Monthly	CFAF 45,000 (max. amount) (2018)	Orange Money in 2017, cash payments via post offices in 2018. No payments in 2019.
Initiative de Protection Sociale des Enfants Vulnérables	-	Geographic Categorical	900 indiv. (2011)	Monthly	CFAF 7,500 (1 child) CFAF 15,000 (per add child) (2013)	Cash payments via banks.

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Conditional Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children	2008	Categorical Community	4,956 indiv. (2011)	Quarterly	CFAF 9,000 (Kindergarden) CFAF 10,417 (Primary 1) CFAF 11,250 (Primary 2) CFAF 12,083 (Second. 1) CFAF 13,750 (Second. 2) CFAF 3,333 (Prof. training) (2015)	Payments via local postal bank branches (Poste Finances).
Seychelles						
Social Welfare Assistance	2008	Categorical Means Test	2,978 HH (2015)	Monthly	SCR 5,250 (2019)	Payment into personal bank account.
Abandoned Child's Benefit for Orphans	1987	Categorical	573 indiv. (2016)	Monthly	SCR 1,540 (2019)	
Family Allowance	2011	Categorical Means Test	No data	Monthly	SCR 2,592.50 (basic) Add. components (2019)	
Funeral Grant	1987		1 beneficiary (2016)	Other	SCR 2,000 (2019)	

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Sierra Leone						
Social Safety Nets Program	2007	Geographic Community PMT	182,718 indiv. (2019)	Quarterly	SLL 83,333 (2019)	Cash payments via external provider in 2019. Programme had previously used Splash Mobile Money.
Somalia						
Cash Transfers (various programmes)	-		800,000 indiv. (2017)	Monthly	No data	Various payment methods used by different providers. WFP's SCOPE care (e-voucher) widely used (as of 2019).
Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project	2019	Geographic Community	Not started yet (2020)	Quarterly	n/a	Payments will be made via SCOPE card and WFP's agent network.
South Africa						
Child Support Grant	1998	Categorical Means test	12.45m indiv. (2019)	Monthly	ZAR 440 (2020)	Payments into personal bank accounts or post bank account, alternatively cash withdrawal via smart card at retailers, ATMs or pay points.
Disability Grant	1946	Categorical Means test	1.05m indiv. (2019)	Monthly	ZAR 1,860 (2020)	

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Foster Child Grant	2004	Categorical	386,019 indiv. (2019)	Monthly	ZAR 1,040 (2020)	Payments into personal bank accounts or post bank account, alternatively cash withdrawal via smart card at retailers, ATMs or pay points.
Old Age Pension	1927	Categorical Means test	3.55m indiv. (2019)	Monthly	ZAR 1,860 (60-74 years) ZAR 1,880 (+75 years) (2020)	
Care Dependency Grant	2004	Categorical Means test	150,001 indiv. (2019)	Monthly	ZAR 1,860 (2020)	
Grant in Aid	2004	Categorical Means test	221,989 indiv. (2019)	Monthly	ZAR 440 (2020)	
War Veterans Grant	1928	Categorical Means test	92 indiv. (2019)	Monthly	ZAR 1,880 (2020)	
South Sudan						
South Sudan Safety Net Project	2020	Geographic Community Categorical PMT	Not started yet (2020)	n/a	n/a	Payments will most likely be delivered via external providers and with biometric verification. Mobile money pilot has been conducted as well.

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Sudan						
Zakat Fund	1984	Categorical Means Test	2.16m HH (2016)	Other	Variable	Cash payments via local Zakat committees.
Shamel Programme	2016	Community PMT	600,000 HH (2018)	Quarterly	SDG 200 (2018)	Cash payments via Zakat committees and post offices. In Khartoum, electronic payments via bank accounts and debit cards by two contracted banks.
Tanzania						
Productive Social Safety Nets (Tanzania Social Action Fund)	2012	Geographic Community PMT	1m HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	<u>Base amount:</u> TZS 10,000 TZS 4,000 (per child <18) <u>Additional benefits:</u> TZS 4,000 (infant <5 years) TZS 2,000 (primary school) TZS 4,000 (lower sec.) TZS 6,000 (upper sec.) TZS 38,000 max. amount (2016)	Payments still predominantly in cash via local village committees. Nationwide roll-out of e-payments (predominantly via mobile money but with a bank option) expected to be rolled out in 2020.
Zanzibar Universal Pension Scheme	2016	Categorical	27,758 indiv. (2019)	Monthly	TZS 20,000 (2019)	Cash payments via government pay points (as of 2016).

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Togo						
Cash Transfer Programme for Vulnerable Children in Northern Togo	2012	Geographic Categorical Community	18,270 indiv. (2017)	Monthly	CFAF 5,000 per child CFAF 20,000/ 10,000 bonus	Cash (and possibly electronic) payments via post offices.
Safety Nets and Basic Services Project	2017	Geographic Community PMT	61,000 HH (2019)	Quarterly	CFAF 5,000 (2020)	Mobile payments via Moov. New payment system combining cash and mobile payments is planned (as of 2020).
Uganda						
Senior Citizens Grant/ Direct Income Support	2016	Geographic Categorical PMT	150,000 indiv. (2018)	Bi-monthly	UGX 25,000 (2016)	Cash and electronic payments via post office, with cash delivery and biometric verification in rural areas. Post bank is planning to launch an agency banking model for payments.
Northern Uganda Social Action Fund	2003	Geographic Community	125,684 indiv. (2019)	Monthly	UGX 20,000 (2016)	Cash and electronic payments via banks with a mandatory savings component for the public works programme.

Programme	Start	Targeting	Coverage	Payment	Monthly grant value	Payment
Zambia						
Support to Women's Livelihoods	2016	Geographic Categorical	12,748 indiv. (2018)	Other	ZMW 2,000 (2019)	Multi-provider model, beneficiaries can choose between mobile money and bank payments.
Old Age Benefit	2003	Geographic Categorical Community PMT	632,000 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	ZMW 90 (2018)	Predominantly cash payments via community members, government pay points and post offices. Plans to launch biometric e-payments (as of 2019).
Disability Benefits				Bi-monthly	ZMW 180 (2018)	
Zimbabwe						
Harmonised Social Cash Transfer	2011	Categorical Community Geographic PMT	65,000 HH (2019)	Bi-monthly	USD 10 (1-person HH) USD 15 (2-person HH) USD 20 (3-person HH) USD 25 (>4-person HH) (2019)	Cash payments via local committees until 2018, mobile money payments via EcoCash since 2019.
Public Assistance	1988	Geographic Means test	8,500 HH (2019)	Monthly	USD 20-25 per HH (2018)	Payments via the People's Own Savings Bank, plans to introduce biometric smart cards.
National Heroes Dependants Assistance	1985	Categorical	2,444 indiv. (2015)	Monthly	Variable	No data