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SUSTAINABLE POVERTY ESCAPES: WHAT RESILIENCE AND RISK FACTORS REALLY MATTER?

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT, INTRODUCTION AND PANEL 1

SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

PRESENTERS

Introduction

Eric Postel, USAID Bureau of Economic Growth, Education and Environment

Beth Dunford, USAID Bureau for Food Security

Panel 1

Andrew Shepherd, The Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

Lucy Scott, The Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

Vidya Diwakar, The Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

MODERATOR

Greg Collins, USAID Center for Resilience

Greg Collins:

So my name is Greg Collins. I'm the director of the Center for Resilience at USAID and I'll be moderating today. I think that this topic, the sort of notion of building in analytics around poverty dynamics, understanding risk in relation to poverty, and then the role that resilience, that set of capacities that allows households to manage through shocks, whether it's a draught, whether it's a health crisis within the household, is really, really powerful. I think it's an important pivot for USAID.

As many of you know, the resilience agenda in USAID was really born out of the draught emergencies in the horn of Africa and the Sahel in 2011-2012, and now we're pivoting. We're continuing on with that work in the dry lands, but we're pivoting to the broader relevance and you'll see that come out very clearly in this work today. So thank you for the Bureau of Economic Growth, Education, Environment, and the Bureau for Food Security who partnered with the Center for Resilience to put together this event that's being co-run by Micro Links and Agro Links. We've got a lot to cover, if we could pull up the agenda.

We do have a lot to cover given the richness of the research, however we've also made time for questions to be asked throughout the day. It's not gonna be lecture and questions. We're gonna have time to have some interaction between the audience and panelists and presenters, however we are a lot of people and we do want to give enough space for people online to ask questions as well.

So the way we're gonna handle the questions is people in-person in the room, write your questions down as they arise, pass them to the center of the room, and event staff will collect them and we'll have them asked by some of the event staff. People online can enter questions into their chat box, and we'll also cue those up and have them asked as well. We're not gonna get to all the questions. That's pretty clear given the timeline. We'll try to get to as many as possible and then we'll keep those questions and provide answers after the fact. So we're gonna start off with opening remarks by Eric Postel and Beth Dunford who we're thrilled to have joined us here today.

We'll then move on to a presentation of the research findings by the ODI team that's seated here on stage. We'll follow that with a short break. It's 15 minutes from 11:00 to 11:15. We're gonna be very strict on that and start right again at 11:15, and then follow with a panel discussion on policy and programming implications of the research followed by brief closing remarks. The only other thing to say is this event is being recorded. You'll receive a link to the recording via email after the event, and then finally if you haven't turned off your phones this is a good chance to take two seconds and do so, so that you don't forever live in infamy of having interrupted the event. We are recording it.

So now I'd like to introduce our first two speakers. First we're gonna have Eric Postel. Since May 2015, Eric served at USAID as both the associate administrator and the assistant administrator for the Bureau of Economic Growth, Education, and Environment. He also serves as the agency's coordinator for the government-wide

partnership for growth program, and the alternate director to the Millennium Challenge Corporation. He brings to these roles more than 25 years of private sector experience working in emerging markets.

Then after Eric we're gonna hear from Beth Dunford. Beth is the assistant to the administrator for USAID's Bureau for Food Security as well as the deputy coordinator for the development of Feed the Future in which she coordinates the implementation of Feed the Future across the U.S. government. I should also mention Beth also co-chairs the agency Resilience Leadership Council. Very pleased to have both of you here today, and with that I'll hand over to Eric.

Eric Postel:

Good morning, everyone. Good morning in the room and good morning to everybody online. I don't know if our ODI team is happy or disappointed that somehow we've managed to bring London-like weather drizzles to Washington today, but welcome to everybody and thank you, Greg for the introduction and for your leadership at the Center for Resilience. I and the rest of the agency's leadership are very pleased with the incredible work the Center has been doing since it's established, so thank you to you and your team.

I also want to thank Andrew Shepherd and his colleagues from the Overseas Development Institute, ODI for the compelling research that they have carried out under our leveraging economic opportunities project. ODI is world famous for very high quality work that we always pay attention to, and they are a very important player in thought leadership around the world on many different facets of development. And I'm very glad that the people are doing this research. Well it's a collaboration as you've heard between a couple different bureaus and the Center for Resilience, and that's so much of development is across sectors. It's a team sport and this kind of collaboration is very useful.

That's why I'm glad that Beth is here as well, who's a real tireless champion for the fight against global hunger and poverty. Before we hear from Andrew, I'd like to set the stage a bit and offer a few thoughts on the relevance of the findings that are gonna be presented. At USAID we are pleased to be part of an administration effort that's placed a strong emphasis on ending global poverty across the board as witnessed by our mission statement. While we are proud of the tremendous progress that the world has achieved on poverty reduction to date, we also recognize that the work is far from finished. In fact, looking at the geography of poverty it might be that the hardest work is still ahead of us.

As you know a net, and we'll get to that why that word "net" is important, a net of 1 billion people have lifted themselves out of poverty since 1990, but at the same token and as the research shows, 1.7 billion are also at risk of falling back into it. That's almost a quarter of the world's population. The rates at which households experience a transitory, a temporary poverty escape, vary across countries. For example, in Ethiopia 60 percent of households who escape poverty between 1990 and 2009 fell back into it during that same period at some point or another.

So the question before us all today is how do we build pathways for sustainable escapes from extreme poverty? If your people are falling back down, then actually the net number is obviously going to rise. So that's where this research comes in and as I understand it and will learn more, it suggests that to find a sustained solution to break the cycle of poverty, we need to especially focus on people living on \$2.00 to \$4.00 a day. They are the ones who are especially facing that risk of falling back in.

So to do that obviously we have to follow people's trajectories to understand what puts them to a test, identify the capacities that enable them to remain out of poverty, and find commonalities across what's working. Only by asking these kinds of questions as ODI and USAID have been doing and getting evidence-based answers are we going to be able to make steady progress to tackle the chronic poverty, stop impoverishment, and sustain people's escapes from poverty. So here we are today to learn from the findings and to try to ensure that as we go forward at USAID and across all development community that our proposed solutions are driven by the best available evidence.

So I hope that you'll all learn from the case of study. I hope you'll have robust conversations about the data and think about the ramifications of the research to the overall set of work and activities that we're undertaking. Thank you all for being here. You all have many, many things to do, very busy schedules, so thank you for your interest in this topic and for your continued engagement with USAID. On that note I'll yield to the outstanding head for our Bureau for Food Security, Beth Dunford. Beth?

Beth Dunford:

Well thank you, Eric, and thank you all for being here today as we take a deep dive into the new research and consider the implication for each of our efforts. As Greg mentioned and also Eric, I head up the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative, which is supported by the important work of the Center for Resilience. So while I have you all here, I'm just gonna have to do a little bit of bragging about Feed the Future, which I do a little bit. We work closely with our partners within USAID across the inner agency and beyond with many of you here in the room, and we've really made a lot of progress since the initiative began.

We're contributing to very promising results to reduce poverty in Ethiopia, Cambodia, Malawi, Ghana, Liberia, which is seeing reductions in poverty anywhere between 12 and 36 percent in the areas where Feed the Future is working. And we've seen also drops in child stunting in recent years between 12 and 32 percent in Bangladesh, Rwanda, Cambodia, Ghana, Malawi, and Honduras. And so there's a lot of momentum around global food security efforts right now, and with this global commitment running throughout all of the STGs and really the U.S. government doubling down on food security with the passage of the Global Food Security Act, which codifies into law what we're doing, we're in a really good place right now to begin to plan what needs to be done in the next five years and also the next 15 years going forward on food security.

One of the things that's really become clear in this planning effort and what we've learned over the last few years is that resilience needs to be front and center in what we do. This information that's gonna be presented today is really gonna help us

understand and refine why resilience is so important and how we incorporate that in what we do. We know that the world is becoming increasingly complex and risks are intensifying, and this is not just in areas that are prone to draught, and it's not just about draught. Climate change is important of course but also price shocks, conflict, health risks, large health risks, individual health risks all have the potential to tamp down the important gains that we are making to Feed the Future.

So what we're learning, what we know, is that escaping poverty is not a one-way street? Shocks and stresses that are associated with these risks that I just mentioned are causing households to be very much in danger and fall back into poverty at alarming rates. So we have to get better at understanding building the capacity of people to really household and communities and also systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses. In short, what that means is we have to build and strengthen resilience, which I think is why we're all here today.

So results from our resilience zones and also our Feed the Future zones show that the influence that by focusing on making people and communities more resilient, we will achieve our goals of reducing hunger and poverty. So this is true across the board. We have to focus resilience across all the areas that we work. It's not just a draught issue. It's not just an Africa issue. It's really in everywhere we work in order to achieve our goals of ending hunger, poverty, and malnutrition.

So it means that we have to not just focus on humanitarian emergencies, that we need to make long-term investments that help people, communities, and countries manage adversity and manage change without compromising their future well-being. So we'll see today that we have a lot more to learn. I'm really excited to take these learnings into what we do with Feed the Future moving forward and we'll turn it over to the presenters then. Thank you very much.

Greg Collins:

Thank you, Eric and Beth. I think their presence here this morning speaks to the extent to which this research has gotten very high attention. I think that in the way that Eric explained it, much of the work on poverty reduction that lies ahead could be the toughest work on poverty reduction that we've done thus far, in part because it requires that we grapple with the phenomena of transitory poverty escapes that we're gonna be discussing today.

With that, we're gonna move into a presentation by the Overseas Development Institute who in conjunction with USAID's leveraging economic opportunities project carried out this research, and I do recall being on a plane reading the 2014-2015 chronic poverty report – there's copies in the back – and seeing these rates of backsliding and impoverishment, people who are falling back into poverty or becoming poor for the first time, and having this "a-ha" moment that this is why resilience is so important for everything we're doing in development and particularly for poverty reduction. People had said that in a general sense for a long time, but making it tangible, making it real, really required diving into data and showing what are the capacities that prevent certain households from falling back into poverty when other households fall back. So

I'm super excited about the research and we'll move into that now. So let me briefly introduce our presenters.

We've got Andrew Shepherd who's the director of the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network at ODI. He's now led the production of three chronic poverty reports and also contributed the EFAD's 2011 rural poverty report. Lucy Scott is a research fellow with ODI's social protection program and Chronic Poverty Advisory Network. She's co-authored several reports dealing with chronic poverty and labor, and her work focuses on livelihood and social protection approaches to reach and help the poorest households.

Finally, we have Vidya Diwakar who's a research officer in the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network at ODI. She's an econometric researcher and a policy analyst whose work focuses on investigating household level poverty dynamics. Vidya also did a lot of the statistical analysis that informs this work, and we really wanted to have her here in case there's any thorny methodological questions that come up. So with that, I'm gonna hand over to Andrew and to Lucy. Great.

Lucy Scott:

Great. Thanks, Greg. Thanks for having us here. It's a great opportunity to share with you the research which we've conducted and hope we have a really interesting discussion around the findings. So as kind of has been explained, we're here to present highlights from some of the research which we've been conducting and specifically in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Uganda. So just a quick outline to the presentation.

So first we're just going to introduce to you the study and its objective. We'll then give some of the key takeaways from the research, so hopefully can keep those in your mind as we're going through the more detailed findings. Then we'll give a quick introduction to the poverty success stories in each of the three country case studies and give details then after that on the poverty dynamics trajectories, which have been taking place in those countries, and then we'll go into more detail about the research findings before introducing some of the exploratory work which we've been undertaking using multidimensional forms of poverty, and then we will be concluding.

So an introduction to the study. So how did this work come about? Greg has already given quite a good flavor of this. This is a graph from the most recent chronic poverty reports and it shows what subsequently happens to households after they escape poverty. So in particular the gray bar shows those households which after they've escaped poverty have been returned again to living into poverty. So their escape from poverty hasn't been sustained over time. The yellow bar then shows those households which after escaping poverty have managed to remain successful living out of poverty over time.

So the graph kind of reveals that in certain contexts and over certain periods of time, households escape poverty and reenter it. I should say here that the main point to illustrate is that one, that some escape the transitory. The data isn't nationally representative in all cases. It uses national poverty lines, but it's just to give a flavor that escapes are not always sustained over time.

So this research is essentially concerned with why some households are able to escape poverty and remain out of it while others escape poverty and then fall back into it. So this life history diagram gives a flavor of a transitory escape from poverty. So this household in Uganda they were able to escape out of poverty, in this case through land, fishing, moving into coffee production, but then since there was coffee wilt disease in this instance they slipped back into poverty. This is followed by an ill health shock, which compounded the impacts of the coffee disease and then fell back into poverty.

So how does this link to resilience? So we're using resilience as that set of capacities that would've meant that in this instance this household following the coffee disease, following the ill health shock, was actually able to manage in the face of those shocks and would be able to stay out of poverty over time. So a flavor of what these research methods involved.

So for each of the three case study countries, so for Bangladesh, for Ethiopia, and for Uganda we started off by analyzing three- or four-way panel data. So panel data is data on household surveys, which return to the same surveys at more than one point in time. So you can see the condition of a household at three separate points in time. So for Uganda this data was actually nationally representative and had four ways, but Bangladesh and Ethiopia the panel data set is rural and not entirely representative of rural areas.

So it was essentially this availability of panel data along with Feed the Future interest countries, which kind of determined the focus country for this research. So following analysis of the panel data, we then purposefully selected sites in each country where there was a high degree of transitory poverty escape and a high degree of sustained poverty escape. So we specifically selected those sites where those poverty trajectories were quite prominent, and we then visited those research sites, normally say three sites in each country, three or four in each country.

We conducted participatory wealth ranking at three points in time so we could determine household trajectories over the last ten years. So what was your situation ten years ago, five years ago, and today, and in the focus group discussion we discussed at the community and more macro level the drivers of escape, the drivers of descent as well. And then we actually specifically went to individual individuals and households which are identified as transitory escape or also sustained escape, and we conducted qualitative life histories with those individuals, and qualitative life histories is a form of open-ended interviewing.

You're essentially looking over people's life course. You're discussing with them the events which have happened over their life, any ascent after poverty, movements into poverty, and what did they feel were the factors which were driving that or what enabled them to go through a shock without being a decline in their situation. So also just to make – there is a method note that's been published for people who are more interested in the details of the methodology behind this study.

So key takeaways. You're gonna probably hear these messages quite a few times today. The first one is that poverty is not a one-way street. As some people escape poverty, others are falling into poverty, and others who have escaped poverty are falling back into poverty. Poverty is a ___ phenomenon for particular individuals and particular households. The second key takeaway is that sources of resilience or those capacities if you like to have a sustained escape can be investigated through looking at why some households escape poverty and remain out of it, while other households escape poverty and fall back into it. In other words, they experience a transitory poverty escape.

Sources of resilience include household characteristics such as resources. These could include livestock, land, the value of productive or durable assets, activities which could include engagement in the non-farm economy, and also household attributes such as household size and education of the household head. At the same time it's important to remember that households are operating within certain contexts. It can't just all be down to an individual household to sustain their escape from poverty, and in particular shock, whether health shock or flooding as well as systemic stresses or stresses which are changing over time such as land degradation or increase in climate variability can reduce the likelihood of poverty escape staying sustained.

They thought it would be useful to just quickly introduce the three country context and where this research was undertaken. I'm probably gonna go relatively quickly since I'm sure quite a bit of it is familiar to you. The main point to make is that these three countries have been phenomenally successful at reducing poverty since the early 1990's and so this is Bangladesh. The blue line gives the numbers of people in poverty or extreme poverty, which is then the red line, and the bars give the proportion of the population living in poverty is the blue bars, and in extreme poverty is the red bars.

So basically it shows Bangladesh is enormously successful both at reducing the number of people living in poverty and extreme poverty and also those proportions. This is monetary poverty measured using national poverty line. Some of the main drivers in Bangladesh include the green revolution in agriculture, investments in rural infrastructure, also economic structure reforms enabling the growth of the ready-made garment sector. Migration is another key driver, both international and internal particularly for female-headed households in Uganda and Bangladesh but not the case for male-headed households. So this could perhaps reflect the fact that migration in male-headed households is more short-term for households to cope say with a seasonal lull in labor rather than the objective being for the man to migrate for a longer term with the aim say internationally of bringing in significant wealth for that household.

In Ethiopia, neither internal nor international migration emerged from the data analysis or the qualitative work as a significant strategy. Another point is that positive strategies can go wrong. This is probably a bit obvious, but I think it's worth kind of stating here. So this includes taking a loan for productive purposes. It could be that the enterprise, the investment option actually fails or say you just haven't cultivated high value crops, you make a big investment in cultivating those crops, which is then wiped out by disease.

That was what we saw earlier in the life history diagram. Also in Bangladesh there emerged two additional kind of drivers of escape, poverty being transitory, and this involves people making up-front payment to engage in international migration where the job actually fell through, or making the up-front payments needed to access the salary job, which again didn't come through. So households that actively tried to pursue positive strategies, but something had gone wrong and they just weren't able to either undertake that strategy or the strategy did not enable them to experience a sustained escape.

So before we move on to the next part of the presentation, we thought it would be useful to open the floor up now for some questions if anything has been unclear as I've been going through or something emerges as particularly interesting, and then we'll be moving on more to household attributes in the conclusion later on.

Kristin O'Planick: Great. So a reminder if you're in the room please write your question down and pass it to the end of the row. We have people going up and down to collect them, and we'll start with some questions from the webinar.

Webinar Moderator: So we have a question from Stephen Greiff and Ezgi Ucaner. They have to do with insurance and financial services. So the question is, "Did the study look into the ability of financial services to shield customers from shocks? If it did look into financial services, did they see a higher impact?" We also had a related question on health insurance, so if you could speak to the role of health insurance in protecting against transitory escapes.

Lucy Scott: Sorry, are we pooling the questions?

Andrew Shepherd: Do you want to take a number of questions and pool them and we respond, or do you want us to go one-by-one?

Webinar Moderator: We have quite a few, so that's fine. We have a couple questions from around trauma and extreme poverty. They are from Dorothy Douglas-Taft and Margie Brand. The essence of the question is "Extreme poverty is recognized as trauma-inducing. Did the study determine if trauma care as a part of economic development made any notable positive impacts on resilience?" I'll give one more, a question from Amadou Camara, "Why was land not a source of escape in Ethiopia?"

Lucy Scott: Great. Starting with the last question first, land in rural Ethiopia. So land ownership per se in Ethiopia didn't emerge as a factor which sustained poverty escape. The reasons which the qualitative work kind of uncovered if you like for this, one reason was because of a lack of high quality, high yield input. So people were more in track whereby they were cultivating low quality, non-hybrid varieties of crops. So that wouldn't sufficient to produce enough either for consumption or for sale to sustain an escape from poverty.

In addition, in the context of rain-fed agriculture, so there's limited irrigation in particular with climatic variability, kind of shifting of seasons, then it becomes much

more difficult to have high levels of production. Around health insurance, which is a really interesting question, we didn't actually come across anybody who had any health insurance certainly in the qualitative work. In the panel surveys, I'll let Vidya maybe answer in a bit more detail, but it wasn't as significant. There were just not enough people who had health insurance to be able to do any analysis on that at all.

Personally I think health insurance would be really important, but yeah, there just isn't the findings out there to show that. So in terms of wider financial services, Vidya is actually gonna touch on this a little bit later in the presentation. We did look at credit in a way and the importance of kind of appropriate credit in sustaining escapes and how if that credit isn't appropriate can actually do the reverse of that, but Vidya will explain in more detail later. I'll let Andrew answer I think.

Andrew Shepherd:

Well I'm not aware that the study produced anything about the impact of trauma care. It's not something that we specific looked at, but I think it is potentially something that one might want to go forward to look at in some way. I think probably you'd need to design a specific study to do that around one of your programs if you have programs working on trauma care. I guess it's worth saying on health insurance that this will come up in the second panel this morning.

Kristin O'Planick

Okay. Thank you. Three questions form in the room. Has the study looked into the application of the rule of law related to generational asset accumulation and inheritance to help escape poverty? And from Bronwyn Irwin in IRG, and please feel free to write your name, did the study look specifically at women's empowerment and the impact on sustainable escape from poverty? And with regard to livestock as a driver of sustained escapes, can't it also be a risk if the household stores too much of its wealth in livestock which may die or lose value in a draught? Did you find that a certain percentage of household assets stored as cash such as a savings account was important for resilience?

Vidya Diwakar:

To quickly respond to the women's empowerment question, it's somewhat difficult to define empowerment in different contexts and the definitions vary, but one way we did cover this is looking at the role of female headship and its effect on contributing to sustained poverty escapes, which we'll return to in the next set of slides.

Lucy Scott:

On the livestock question, yes that is a very important point. The more you put all your eggs in one basket if you like, the higher the risks there are to the eggs in that basket. In the qualitative we didn't actually come across anybody who had accumulated large numbers of livestock if you like. More it was a process whereby you're buying and selling livestock rather than kind of building up a large herd of livestock. But yes, that is important to remember to diversify to a certain extent to kind of hope to avoid catastrophic losses.

Andrew Shepherd:

And non-inheritance I don't think it's something that we've looked at for this study, but there was a pervious set of studies if you go to the Chronic Poverty Research Center website you'll find a whole raft of studies specifically on inheritance and on the application of inheritance laws, and I think there's a number of policy briefs there as

well. So it was a topic that we researched in a bit of an earlier generation of work and it certainly can be a very significant issue, but I would encourage the questioner to go back to that data source. I can't recall exactly what the highlights of that were.

Webinar Moderator: One more question from online. This is from Sunil Regmi. His question is "Households in the study may have different poverty ladders. In your study, how was falling back to poverty trap different with different levels of poverty? In other words, households lying just below the poverty line and households which are deeper in poverty; how was it different by resilience capacity of the households?"

Kristin O'Planick: And one last question from in the room for now. Can you please talk about sample size of the surveys, the panel data, as well as from the qualitative work, and how confident do you feel the findings are representative? Are there any limitations of the study that we should be aware of?

Vidya Diwakar: Yes. On sample size, the sample size is varied across country context. Keep in mind that in Bangladesh and in Ethiopia this is a rural survey, a rural panel, and in Bangladesh the survey itself came from a questionnaire design, which was designed to assess the interventions, and that being said it's just characterized more generally the role situation and agricultural conditions in rural Bangladesh. In terms of our samples of interest within the sample size, which range from around I believe there was 1,193 for example of the total sample in Bangladesh, but within that we focused on the sub samples of transitory escapers, sustained escapers, and impoverished.

So across country context these figures again vary greatly. I'd encourage you to look at the reports on Micro Links and other sources, but for example there was around – in Ethiopia this figure sticks out. It was the smallest number of sustained escapers. There were 51 such sustained escapers, but in Bangladesh there was a much higher in the hundreds of households of sustained escapers.

Lucy Scott: I'll just jump in there as well. They utilized quantitative panel data analysis. In terms of the qualitative life history collection, there are about kind of 20 life histories taken in each country across three communities in each country, so it was about five to eight life histories per community, three communities in the country. In terms of Bangladesh, we specifically went to Joshua district, which isn't a massively disaster prone district, so that would definitely have implications for the representative ____ if you like of the qualitative findings for across the country, so that's something to bear in mind there, but I mean Joshua still gets regular annual flooding as you do in Bangladesh, it's just less disaster prone.

Andrew Shepherd: What about that question about falling back into poverty from different levels?

Vidya Diwakar: So yes, we looked at that descriptively in Bangladesh, so we've actually found that quite a significant number of households in Bangladesh started off in extreme poverty, then escaped poverty, but then again slid back into extreme poverty, so it wasn't necessarily that it was just they were tottering around the poverty line. It was from a significant increase followed by a significant decrease again. Also just as a sort of robustness

check we've also looked at – we've created a 5 percent band around the poverty line to distinguish transitory escapers from potential turners.

In Ethiopia this reveals no differences in the number of households, so in all cases in Ethiopia and in most cases in the other two countries it was the case where households were in fact significantly below or above the poverty line, suggesting that these were in fact transitory escapers as opposed to just turners.

Kristin O'Planick:

Okay, and now we will hand it back to you guys to continue the presentation. For those in the room, feel free to write questions at any point and pass them to the end. We'll have people continuously looking for them.

Vidya Diwakar:

Thank you. In this set of slides I will begin by talking about household attributes, move on to household shocks, and then also consider some systemic drivers. So in terms of attributes, if you look at household education, the literature suggests that increasingly it recognizes education as a portable asset, one which is conducive to resilience even in post-conflict situations. In fact in our study we find that a more educated household head is more conducive to that household experiencing a sustained escape. Disentangling this finding of it we see that for example in Bangladesh it's not just education per se but the level of education which is also important.

So for example, a household head which has completed secondary education is more likely to experience a sustained escape relative to the primary education completion and similarly primary relative to no completion of education. In Ethiopia we see descriptively that there are very low secondary education rates of the household head, however on a positive note we have seen in the literature that there has been significant investments in education since the early 90's, which has narrowed the gap amongst the poorest, narrowed the gender gap as well as the gap between urban and rural which are poorer, more remote, food insecure pastoral areas and others.

However it's also worth keeping in mind in the sphere of education that we do see that improvements are not always uniform either within or across countries. So for example, in Uganda qualitative research also highlighted considerable female specific barriers frequently related to social norms, which girls face when trying to continue with or even complete education. So one of the life histories or several rather, I'll point to one from Ruth.

She was an individual in Uganda who we interviewed and she went to school until primary to second grade, and she enjoyed going to school, however at that point her father believed that it was a waste to keep spending money to send her to school so withdrew her from school, however her brothers continued to attend and receive education. So in summary, even though we do note that education is a portable asset conducive to sustained escapes, we must also keep in mind that there are many obstacles and potential caveats to this. In terms of obstacles, one is family size and composition as Ruth's stories somewhat indicate and we turn to this next.

So then we ask where is household size? What type of household composition is conducive to sustained escapes? In terms of household size, the results for the household size are shared. Specifically our results indicate that a smaller household size is in fact more conducive to the household experiencing a sustained escape, but the shares of children and dependents do not indicate similar findings across countries. So for example, a smaller share of children is beneficial in Ethiopia and Bangladesh but not necessarily so in Uganda.

Even so, our life histories in Uganda highlight how having a large number of children was often a driving factor in withdrawing them from school due to an inability often to afford school fees. Daniel's story illustrates this. So for example, Daniel went to school until senior four, however starting of senior five due to lack of money his father had to withdraw him from school. His father had used his pension to educate children, but he had seven children and so money became scarce.

So then in fact when our life history interviews show that girls may be at more of a disadvantage in Uganda when it comes to education, stories such as Daniel's highlight that boys too suffer in situations of large households or with a large heir of children. And in fact it's not just education expenses which may pose high costs of children to families. In other instances girls may also exert a cost of families through wedding expenses. While our qualitative interviews found that dowry wasn't officially practiced in Bangladesh for example, many families still continued to give gifts to the grooms in situations of weddings and Trafical's life history illustrates this.

So around four years ago he arranged the marriage of his only daughter and to do so he had to undertake several strategies to help pay for the wedding. So for example, he sold a cow, he received gifts from relatives, borrowed money from neighbors, from a money lender, and so on. Of course though this isn't to say that children are necessarily an unsustainable economic burden for a household. Rather it's a combination of one, the number of children; two, their timing with respect to a household's life cycle and income generation capacities, which influences poverty trajectories.

For example, many of the life histories revealed instances where women felt that they had no choice but to give up working upon the birth of a child as is the case of Charen in Ethiopia. So for example, she was originally working in a state flower farm. She was earning actually more than her husband but gave up her work upon the birth of her child because she believed that the long working hours were incompatible with child-rearing duties. And in fact what we found in life histories and focus group discussions as well was that when children grow up, sometimes their mothers would seek to go back to work and oftentimes also bring their children with them. However, in these situations they were likely to experience a drop in pay as a result.

And so far in the analysis it seems that there's actually little benefits in terms of poverty dynamics at least to female headship and to being a woman in a lot of these instances. So in our analysis then we also asked where is female headship actually conducive to sustained poverty escapes. Our results have indicated that it is conducive

in Bangladesh and Ethiopia but not necessarily so in Uganda. These findings should be contextualized accordingly.

So for example, in Bangladesh we found that female headship is more likely to be conducive and in the country there tends to be two groups of female headed households, one where the male head has migrated sometimes even internationally, and two where a woman has been abandoned, divorced, or widowed. So while this latter group tends to be amongst the most poorest households in rural Bangladesh and thus have limited prospects for sustaining poverty escapes given limited income generations capacities accessible to women, the former group that wherein the male has migrated are some of the better-off households in rural area due to oftentimes their receipt of remittances.

In fact when we interacted remittance received with female headship, we still found that these households were more likely to experience a sustained escape. And then also beyond this reason for becoming a female headship we also see another benefit, one which comes from working in partnership, which could still exist in a designated female headed household.

Rasheda's family illustrates this. Her father and mother were both involved in for example cultivating land, weeding, renting out a relative's tractor, masonry, and raising cattle. So this was the case in Bangladesh.

So moving to Ethiopia, we also see considerable differences exist by gender on a descriptive level. So for example, looking at one of them we see that female head of households tend to be smaller on average consisting of around four members compared to almost seven members in male-headed households. One possible reason for this is that it could be the case that in a struggling female headed household, only members who are not economically independent stay whereas others move away.

So for example, male adults could leave in search of a job, daughters could be married off, other children could be sent to live with and work with families that could take care of them. These practices however may be less accentuated in male-headed households wherein especially if the male head of household owns land, which would require in turn manpower of other family members. So then we also asked why then in Ethiopia for example are female-headed households more conducive to sustained escapes?

We explored the literature a lot and life histories as well and developed potential hypotheses for this. One potential rationale is that the survey data may be missing some sort of transfers or other interventions such as livelihood support, which aren't covered in the survey, but which prioritize female-headed households. So in this situation, these female targeted interventions are not accounted for in the analysis but could still explain then women's better poverty trajectories.

Another example could be that women are frequently cited as being more risk averse than men and often saving instead of investing in productive or potentially even riskier

measures. This then might provide them with an ability to withstand shocks, which might otherwise drive them back into poverty.

So in this slide we also note that female-headed households are more likely to have a person with disability relative to male-headed households, but then we also asked what's the effect of having a person with a disability itself on the likelihood of sustaining a poverty escape. So in our results we found that households with persons with disability are more likely to experience a sustained escape in Bangladesh and Uganda but not so in Ethiopia.

However, again we must in exploring the effect of disability, we also need to consider several other factors such as the policy environments do persons with disabilities face, social and environmental barriers, what are the policy and programming responses to this, do they receive assistance? We should also consider the interactions of disability with other factors such as for example gender. So in Uganda a caveat to the overall positive finding is that disability is still associated with an increased risk of transitory escape amongst female-headed households.

Lucy Scott:

less or more likely to experience a sustained escape relative to the reason why you were initially selected into that program. So from the quantitative data there wasn't really any significant kind of easily interpreted result related to NGO engagement or receipt of government, social protection transfers, and escape from poverty. In terms of the qualitative there were positive stories of engagement with NGOs whether it was with the Feed the Future and the kind of group marketing and things which were happening in the community or in neighboring communities.

It's quite a complicated kind of thing to disentangle I guess, and Bangladesh credit came up a lot, engagement with credit delivering NGOs, which was either positive or negative depending on whether the credit had been taken for productive investments or if the credit had actually been taken for consumption purposes, which tended to leave you in a cycle of taking a loan to repay another loan. I don't know if there's anything better to add there. I'll let Andrew add some specifics.

Andrew Shepherd:

I think the specialization issue is something that we need to look further at. We were talking yesterday about whether we could perhaps pin this down in terms of numbers, 'cause it's something that I think everybody is very interested in, and it could be that what the questioner is suggesting is correct, but it could also be that there are also implications of specializing, which contribute to the sustained escape. So I think it's something that we need to try and nail down a bit going ahead.

Webinar Moderator:

Two quick questions from online. The first one is from Stephen Angudubo. "What is the contribution of crop insurance specifically in Uganda?" I think a crop insurance question came up earlier as well and I'm not sure that we got to it. I know we talked about health insurance. So there's another question on crop insurance and then we have another question from Sunil Regmi. "Did the study include local wisdom as an attribute both respect to coping and dealing with shock?"

Andrew Shepherd: I would observe that there are lots of questions about specific interventions, whether its contraception or crop insurance or whatever, and it may be that these surveys that we've been using are not specifically designed to answer those questions. So quite often you'll find us saying well actually we haven't particularly got any findings on that issue. I think that would apply to crop insurance certainly, wouldn't they? Probably applies to contraception. I don't think any of the surveys that we've used have asked specific questions about access to contraception or am I wrong there?

Vidya Diwakar: From what I recall you're not wrong, but like some surveys like mix tend to ask questions more on that, but in the surveys we've looked at there hasn't been direct targeting of those.

Andrew Shepherd: If one was doing an evaluation of these issues you'd need to probably use multiple sources, multiple data sources. I mean one thing that we might do is to accumulate these kind of questions as we go around presenting this work and this can lead to a second round of analysis at some point.

Kristin O'Planick: Okay, back to questions from in the room. A couple on health. What about health, nutrition, and access to healthcare? Did you look at sustained escapes and presence of chronic disease such as HIV for example? Another health question from Kathy Samino at USAID, "In looking at the health risks were issues of household mental health at all significant?" And then we had two regarding time period. The number of instances of falling back into poverty naturally depends on your period of study. When investigating sustainable poverty escapes in our own work, do you have any guidance on time periods to consider? And from John Kurtz at Mercy Corps, "What time period during the panel were resilience capacities taken from? Did this allow for the lag time likely needed to see effects on poverty escape?"

Vidya Diwakar: In terms of time periods to consider, there's no hard and fast rule for this. Part of the times you're restricted by what the survey data tells you as well. So for example, is it three-period interval between survey waves? Is it sometimes even one year on year or so on. So ultimately I haven't come across many cities which look at periods shorter than a year, but in general in our case studies it varies from a year to around six years even between survey waves. We also have a methods document, which outlines this in a bit more detail as well, which is I believe on the Micro Links website.

Andrew Shepherd: I think that in some cases I know the World Bank has been supporting annual surveys in a number of countries over the last few years, and I think what you find then is you accumulate a huge amount of data, which nobody analyzes, and you run into all sorts of problems if you try and repeat your surveys too quickly. I would've said that as a rule of thumb, having a period of at least three years – if you wanted to track changes in outcomes, having a period of at least three years between surveys is probably not a bad thing, and that also gives you a chance to analyze the first survey before you're embroiled in the second survey.

I think looking at outcome changes over shorter periods of a sort of poverty nature if you like or household well-being nature doesn't really make sense. But then you do have the problem of course that many years are exceptional years and it becomes very difficult to, if it's an exceptional year it becomes very difficult to match that with the previous year that you've surveyed. So there are lots of great difficulties in doing this sort of longitudinal quantitative research. I didn't quite get the questions about resilience. Did you get the question about resilience and time periods? Is the question how long a time period?

Kristin O'Planick:

What time period during the panel were resilience capacities taken from?

Vidya Diwakar:

So across the different countries the survey period itself varied. So in Bangladesh this ranged from 1997 to 2010, in Uganda from 2005 to 2011, and in Ethiopia from 1997 to 2009. In terms of the variables, so for example this was aggregated for all the years in which survey data was available.

Andrew Shepherd:

And on the other question about mental health issues, it's not something that we particularly looked at in this study, but we have been doing some other work in Bangladesh again combining analysis of panel data with life histories, and there we've actually worked with a much larger sub sample of life histories. Mental health issues come up.

Again it's quite difficult because in the quantitative data it's really hard to distinguish mental health issues, but in the qualitative data mental health comes out as a very, very strong contributor to many downward trajectories, and it relates a little bit to what I was saying earlier about for example alcoholism and domestic violence. I mean these are the kind of things that you really need good qualitative information to track the impacts of. Certainly mental health in the Bangladesh context and I suspect from earlier work that we did in the Chronic Poverty Research Center in Uganda can be intimately banded up with downward trajectories and the chronic poverty.

Kristin O'Planick:

And the last one was any findings in regard to presence of chronic disease such as HIV?

Lucy Scott:

Unless it was picked up under disability I guess that was...

Vidya Diwakar:

Not at the moment we didn't specifically and it didn't come out in the life histories.

Lucy Scott:

No.

Andrew Shepherd:

But again from our work in disability in Bangladesh, in fact we began to question the international definition of disability because the effects of chronic disease in terms of poverty and well-being trajectories could be as great as having a physical impairment or a mental health problem. So I think chronic disease, chronic illness is again a very strong factor. I think this discussion illustrates the way that there are so many risk factors facing people who are either poor or vulnerable to poverty, which leads you on to the need for a suite of portfolio approach to managing those risk factors.

Webinar Moderator: We have a question from online from Emmanuel Olson. He thanks the panel and also wants to know whether the qualitative work illuminated any sort of findings around the influence of cultural norms with respect to risk or resilience.

Vidya Diwakar: Well I mean I think as mentioned it was just also around the female specific barriers that oftentimes emerge. So for example, a lot of families withdrawing their daughters from primary education because it was considered a waste of resources or they didn't have sufficient resources to expend to continue educating their daughters.

Lucy Scott: I guess some kind of things around risk aversion, which aren't necessarily cultural norms if you like but risk averse behavior in anticipation of say an environmental shock or in anticipation that you're going to have to hold some money aside in order to be able to marry your daughter in the future. They would be kind of instances, which came out in the life history.

Andrew Shepherd: And I think perhaps I mean it didn't maybe come out particularly strongly in this research, but I think from the story of Bangladesh, and maybe this is something we'll come back to in the second panel, we know that the ability of women to go out in public and join groups and migrate and get employment and so on is absolutely critical, and that's very much a factor in the sustained escapes from poverty of many households in Bangladesh. Changes in norms can also be very beneficial and of course can be quite fragile too.

Kristin O'Planick: Okay. Questions from in the room related to what you were just saying. From Justin Fugel, "It's very interesting to see the higher level of sustained escape in Bangladesh. What made that possible?" He had a second question about policy and program implications, but the next panel will get at that. "Did the study touch on issues of social capital? People's level of trust in family members, neighbors, community leaders" from Kevin at World Vision. And "What were the impacts of women's land ownership in poverty reduction?"

Andrew Shepherd: I think the first one there are probably other people better placed to talk about the successes in Bangladesh in the room, and I think Syed Hashemi is going to be on the panel in the second session. I mean I guess it has to do with I think the employment in the garments industry was mentioned as a factor. It has markedly to do with that and the way that that has been sustained over years. Financial services, access to financial services I think is at a very different level to either Uganda or Ethiopia.

I think probably the women's empowerment, economic empowerment related to those two points may be part of the story. Do you want to contribute any other factors? I think perhaps also just Bangladesh's excellent record in controlling for at least some of the shocks and in particular flooding and the very successful disaster management and relief programs in Bangladesh. We could probably go on with a longer list, but those are some of the factors.

Lucy Scott: Yeah. I think with their increasing agricultural weight and growing farm economy there's a lot more opportunities within Bangladesh to sustain your escape and same in Ethiopia and Uganda potentially.

Andrew Shepherd: It's no magic bullet, but it encompasses the factors there.

Lucy Scott: Yeah, I mean just drawing on the social capital question, so that's something which did come out in the life history particularly how you can manage and cope in response to your expose on different shocks. Being able to say take loans of food, shop loans, and access to that type of coping strategy on better terms than these people who don't have that social capital. Again migration is linked as well with say knowing somebody at the other end who says all the jobs going here, if you want to come to parlor. Social capital I think is a social network inherently built in a lot of both the coping strategies and also the more positive strategies and stories of sustained escapes as well.

Andrew Shepherd: Women's land ownership.

Lucy Scott: I think women's land ownership might be another one that's beyond what this study was able to look into partly.

Kristin O'Planick: Okay, a couple more questions from in the room. "To what extent were the effects of climate change reflected in shocks and stressors or in coping responses?" from John Williamson at USAID. "Was there any indication of the importance of access and availability of information such as climate or market information to sustainable escape?" from Josh at Food for the Hungry, and "Can a household living below the poverty line ever be considered resilience, or are the two ideas by definition the same?"

Andrew Shepherd: The last one is a little bit philosophical, but my intuitive answer to that would be probably not. Here I guess you also need to fall back on a bit of discussion about language. What do people mean by resilience? In work that we did in Tanzania, qualitative again life history work, we used the participatory approach to defining different levels of well-being, and as I remember it out of six levels that seemed to work in most communities in Tanzania, the fifth one was the resilient level, and that was based on people's discussions and focus group discussions and so on.

Then if you tried to correlate those levels of well-being with the poverty line, the Tanzanian poverty line was roughly speaking between the third and the fourth levels. So resilience in that context seemed to be significantly above the poverty line at least in the consideration of community members that we worked with. That was across quite a large number of, for a qualitative piece of work, across quite a large number of communities. So I would intuitively say no to that one, but I don't know.

Vidya Diwakar: And a slightly tangential note I guess as well is across countries. So for example, the Ugandan national poverty line is often compared to an extreme or lower poverty line when you compare it to other country contexts, so then it's also worth keeping that in mind. So for example, if you look at other neighboring countries their poverty line might be higher, so in that sense if you would compare that to the Ugandan context it

might by definition then be above the poverty line in Uganda but not necessarily in another country depending on where the poverty line has been set.

Vidya Diwakar:

And that's where the whole multidimensional work has often been coming in now. In terms of climate change I guess we didn't look at the effect of climate change. That's also something that wasn't descriptively covered in the surveys, however it was one of the responses in the shock module that did emerge. So for example, has the household experienced a draught, or regular floods and rain and so on, and so that was captured in the shocks variable.

Lucy Scott:

Yeah and I think the best we can get out of the qualitative wasn't necessarily around climate change but more around shifting seasons and increasing variability, less kind of understanding of when the rains might come, which that did emerge. Not necessarily as a driver of transit to escape but something that was really worrying people, they were changing their kind of normal behaviors if you like. Access to information is a really interesting question. That wasn't something we analyzed in the quantitative surveys. I'm not sure if the appropriate questions were there.

In terms of the qualitative, the idea Andrew was raising about these market-oriented farmers and being a real kind of more likely to sustain their escapes. They weren't necessarily getting information from kind of formal sources, it was more they were quite mobile individuals. They were going to the market, getting a sense of kind of what was going on, what was selling for a high price, looking at what farmers in neighboring districts whose maybe seasonal calendar was slightly ahead of where they were living. So it wasn't necessarily formal access to information, it was more kind of gaining market intelligence around prices I guess, which emerged as important.

Webinar Moderator:

We have a series of questions from our online participants that all have to do with different flavors of the influence of government and policies. So one, "Did you find anything around government policy and how that affects the trends that emerged? Do you know of whether any government ministries are tracking this type of information, and if so, is that disaggregated by gendered household type?" Another version of the question is, "How are governments, local, national, regional supporting citizens through these types of shocks?"

Andrew Shepherd:

Well we will come on to some of these issues in the second panel. I think it's an interesting one about whether government ministries are tracking this sort of information. I think a lot more could be done in many countries on that score, but I think countries are in a better position now with data at least, more regular national surveys are being done, some of these surveys are panel surveys. There's probably twice the number of countries that have panel surveys now as had them ten years ago. So I think there is more data available. Hopefully that data will be analyzed and well used.

I think one of the programs that we have some reflection on in the studies is the Ethiopian productive safety net program. One of the things about this sort of study is that it's not designed in most cases to capture specific programs, so you might not

have an adequate sample of people within the survey that have benefitted from that program or had some involvement with the program. But in Ethiopia I think, was that the case in the quantitative work? The PSNP did feature, didn't it?

Vidya Diwakar: Yes, so they had the public works component.

Andrew Shepherd: So we were able to do some analysis of that, and I think the conclusion coming from that was that it's a little bit tentative and I think it needs more work and probably using multiple data sources in Ethiopia, is that the kinds of shocks and stresses that vulnerable households in Ethiopia are experiencing suggest that what the PSNP is able to do is good, but it's not enough.

It's not adequate to the challenge, and I think particularly there are different aspects of this. It doesn't cover all areas in Ethiopia although it has been expanding. There seem to be incentives built into the program for people to be discontinued from the program perhaps slightly arbitrarily without really having achieved that level of resilience that you might hope for, and so on and so forth. So I think there are some reflections on the PSNP in there. Any other government programs stand out?

Vidya Diwakar: I guess education.

Andrew Shepherd: Education services, health service, yeah, and agricultural programs. You've mentioned Feed the Future here and there for example. The districts for the qualitative work were partly selected because they were Feed the Future. Some of them were Feed the Future districts. So did anything stand out there?

Lucy Scott: Not in terms of government agricultural programs so much.

Andrew Shepherd: Again these are questions that we can perhaps go back to the data with and have a look at, a second look at.

Kristin O'Planick: Okay. Thank you. With that, we're going to close this panel out and go to our break. For those that are here with us in the room, if you don't know the restroom is down the hall to the left through the double doors and then on your right. You've found a survey on your chair. If you can, please go ahead and fill that out. You can at the end either leave it on your chair at the end of the second panel or you can leave it at the sign-in table as well, and we will commence the second panel at 11:15. Thank you.

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