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KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Targeting strategies in development policies and programmes

From design to practice

A literature review

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Acronyms

CBT	community-based targeting
CT	cash transfer
MPI	Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index
MT	means testing
NGO	non-governmental organization
PMT	proxy-means testing
PSI	poverty scorecard index
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	theory of change
UCT	unconditional cash transfer

Executive summary

The aim of this report is to unpack targeting in terms of processes of inclusion and exclusion, as well as to identify and elaborate on these processes outside of targeting systems. The use of 'targeting' as a term is contested but is generally used to signify various activities that organizations and institutions engage in related to formulating, identifying, selecting, and reaching populations that are intended to be included in policies or programmes. This report is guided by the following overarching research question: *How do political and human factors influence targeting systems and methods, from design to implementation?* This question is addressed from four different angles using four different sub-questions.

Targeting methods and systems

The first sub-question, corresponding to Chapter 2 of this report, concerns the different targeting methods and systems used: *What different targeting methods are in use and how are they defined, designed, and implemented?* Decisions regarding the targeting of policies and programmes are made on three levels: definition, design, and implementation. The definition level determines the principles, scope and range of the policy or programme, as well as the basic eligibility of beneficiaries. Decisions made at this level set the stage, as the vision and objectives of the policy or programme are designed to address an issue, and the scope and range set to a segment of the population or particular geographical location. At the design level, targeting decisions are made about eligibility and the methods that will be used to identify, select, and onboard beneficiaries, as well as for monitoring and retargeting. Although related to those made during the definition stage, these decisions further operationalize and contextualize targeting strategies. The basis for the identification and selection of beneficiaries is captured in the eligibility criteria, which consist of combinations of characteristics and indicators that feed into data collection. Identification and selection processes can be grouped into seven categories, depending on their use of indicators, the actors involved, and the identification and selection steps:

- **Means testing** (MT) uses census data on income and assets to determine eligibility by applying a threshold. This method is commonly used in policies and programmes targeting income or poverty when census data is available. However, the cost of using MT is high and it is at times outperformed by simpler methods.
- **Proxy-means testing** (PMT) is a similar method, but that relies on indicators derived from other surveys that relate to income and poverty. It is used when there is imperfect information in places where census data is not available and weighs a set of indicators that strongly correlate with the criteria for eligibility. Indicators are included and weighed according to their relative or assumed importance, and, eventually, a threshold for eligibility is calculated. The accuracy of this method depends on the validity of the indicators used and their weights, as well as the ability to collect the relevant data from potential beneficiaries.
- A simpler method of selection is **categorical targeting**, also referred to as statistical targeting, group targeting or tagging, which relies on demographic or other easily observable characteristics related to the objectives of the intervention.
- **Geographic targeting** is another simple method, in which geographic areas are singled out according to general characteristics, at times in combination with extra criteria. In practice, most programmes perform some form of geographic targeting.
- **Community-based targeting** (CBT) differs from the abovementioned methods, as it involves community actors in decision making or the implementation process. This is widely regarded as a less costly method of targeting that allows community knowledge to play a role in the identification and selection process, while increasing the community's acceptance and, therefore, the legitimacy of the intervention. However, CBT has limitations in urban areas, as community actors may not be able to identify and reach all, due to lack of social cohesion and the fluidity of urban populations; in rural areas CBT actors may have different notions of targeting concepts, such as poverty or entrepreneurship, which can lead to deviations from the official targeting indicators. Although CBT allows community actors to influence the targeting process, it is unusual for community actors to be involved in targeting systems beyond the application of indicators or the implementation of selection in committees.
- **Self-targeting** is useful when exclusion is factored into the design of the intervention (i.e., the value, nature, and cost of participation in a programme ensures that it is not worthwhile for people other than the target population). Challenges with this approach include communication and transparency about programme specifics and the need to cut back on the possible impacts and benefits.

- **Universal approaches** – which aim to include all people as beneficiaries – contrast with targeted approaches in terms of their ideology of inclusion. However, some form of inclusion management is always necessary in practice, as most programmes are geographically bound (e.g. universal basic income for specific communities) or follow a categorical targeting approach (e.g. social pension schemes targeting all individuals above 65 years).

Targeting systems go beyond merely identifying and selecting beneficiaries. Onboarding procedures are put in place to confirm the selection of beneficiaries following identification and selection procedures. When there is only a small difference between eligible and non-eligible people, or when community actors are involved in the processes, clear and transparent communication is necessary, as well as grievance redressal mechanisms. Upon entry into a policy or programme, beneficiaries are monitored for evaluation and reporting purposes, as well as for programme learning and grievance redressal. Grievance redressal can enable learning from the experiences of beneficiaries. In some policies and programmes, retargeting is carried out at a later stage to supplement the ex-ante targeting procedures.

None of the aforementioned targeting methods stand out as the most accurate, effective, or inclusive. In practice, they all produce different results and pose different challenges. The accuracy of targeting systems is greatly influenced by contextual factors, such as the implementers and their tasks, interactions with community actors, and the nature of the intervention itself. Hence, different methods are often combined in one targeting system to maximize the advantages of each; for example, a geographically targeted, CBT approach which uses a PMT-based survey and a selection committee of local actors and project staff presiding over the selection and onboarding of beneficiaries.

Unintended inclusion and exclusion

The second sub-question, elaborated on in Chapter 3, pertains to the factors and processes outside of deliberate targeting systems that influence inclusion and exclusion: *How do unintended effects and human factors shape the inclusion and exclusion processes of policies and programmes?* These factors are captured in the concept of targeting accuracy, which signifies the proportion of the population that has been rightly or wrongly included or excluded. Targeting accuracy is expressed as a combination of inclusion and exclusion errors – inclusion errors refer to the wrongly included population, while exclusion errors refer to the wrongly excluded population. While this assessment of targeting accuracy is widely used, in practice the inclusion and exclusion of people in a programme is difficult to gauge, as assumptions and knowledge gaps are at the base of targeting indicators, design, and implementation. In addition, measuring targeting errors diverts budget from the core activities of a programme and disturbs the balance between accuracy and efficiency. Exclusion errors, in particular, are often inevitable, as the programme budget and scope may not allow for the inclusion of all eligible members of a population.

Although the extent of inclusion and exclusion errors is routinely measured, the unintended exclusion and inclusion effects of targeting systems usually fall outside the scope of monitoring and evaluation. Eligible people can face challenges to accessing a programme leading to their exclusion, while beneficiaries may face challenges and hidden costs to participation, causing some to drop out. The unintended effects of targeting systems occur at all levels of decision making, from definition and design to implementation. Decisions made at the definition level regarding eligibility, range and scope are prone to blind spots, assumptions, and biases and, as such, can exacerbate exclusion and inclusion effects. If the design of targeting systems is not responsive to the context and conditions that exist within the target populations or locality, they can directly lead to inclusion and exclusion effects. Eligibility criteria may be expressed through indicators that show bias, identification procedures may reinforce vulnerability structures already present in target populations, and communication strategies may not reach all of an intended target population. In addition, administrative processes may pose obstacles in the form of time, travel, and information costs, as well as stigmatization and the reinforcement of marginalization and social hierarchies. These aspects of targeting systems play an unintended role in the exclusion and inclusion of people and could be addressed by a well-functioning grievance redressal system and dialogue with beneficiaries and other actors, among other things. At the implementation level, inaccuracies and unintended inclusion and exclusion effects can be confounded by pragmatic choices, implementation challenges, and the behaviour and interests of staff, beneficiaries, and others. These implementation aspects are seldom revealed in impact evaluations and need to be studied in further detail.

Monitoring and grievance redressal are common tools used to spot and address implementation challenges. Targeting systems are primarily assessed for accuracy in terms of the risk of perpetuating inherent biases,

however, their social costs and psychosocial effects are left out of the equation. Knowing these hidden costs, and their inclusion and exclusion effects should feed into the discussion on the accuracy and efficiency of targeting systems. Contextual factors that play a role in inclusion and exclusion include: vulnerabilities and intersectionality, whether it is a rural or urban setting, gender aspects, and the implicit functions of programme components. For targeting systems to be inclusive, it is important to adapt to the complexities of the target population and to take into account the interactions between stakeholders and the programme design and its implementation. In addition, other programme components can function as unintended selection mechanisms, such as in the case of blind spots in the implementation process that perpetuate vulnerabilities or the hidden costs of participation.

The political economy of targeting

The third sub-question, which is addressed in Chapter 4, sought to identify the political economy aspects of targeting in the literature: *How do the (political) interests of different actors affect targeting and inclusion in practice?* This chapter looks at the political interests of actors on various levels that affect targeting and inclusion in practice. Targeting is inherently a political activity, as it deals with 'who benefits' and 'who does not', as well as 'who decides' these things. The interests of powerful actors influence decisions regarding targeting systems, for example, in favour of a specific form of targeting, such as categorical targeting, instead of poverty targeting, in the case of social protection. Political interests may provoke a shift in policy goals through the identification of sub-categories within eligible populations to cater for a limited budget. Eventually these sub-categories may replace the original categories of eligibility; for example, when poverty targeting gets narrowed down to 'the deserving poor'. The process of targeting can be a point of contestation by actors that have a stake in the distribution of the benefits of a programme. Elite capture, fraud, stigmatization, and discrimination are some of the problems caused by political involvement in targeting processes.

Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sometimes use different, but overlapping, targeting approaches. Governments deal with national populations, sometimes divided into regional or categorical sub-groups. Legal frameworks play a significant role in determining government intervention, and the invocation of certain rights may become a reason for such intervention. An often-mentioned rationale for targeting is the budget constraints faced by governments, which can prompt an increased focus on efficiency. Although NGOs face similar constraints, their approach to targeting may differ in some respects. Where NGOs deal with the community and their donors directly as constituents, governments face their constituents in elections, during which political promises are made. Being generally smaller than national governments, NGOs justify targeting accuracy and efficiency through evaluations and reports to their donors. The focus on efficiency and impact may force NGOs to make pragmatic targeting choices, such as focusing on accessible geographic regions, which can distance poverty-targeted programmes from the people experience extreme deprivation. Coordination, common targeting, and communication between NGOs could make targeting efforts less costly and ensure more equitable coverage by programmes.

Targeting and scale

Making targeting systems less costly also relates to the scalability of programmes, which entails replication in other regions or countries, or extending coverage within a population. Chapter 5 looks at the fourth sub-question: *How do ambitions of scale play a role in targeting?* Scaling up operations requires additional efforts in terms of information systems, data collection and coordination. Targeting systems that work fine on a small scale may be difficult to scale up, particularly when the nature of the intervention requires proximity to the target population. Some projects need to be turned upside down and processes streamlined in order to operate at scale. Especially during the COVID-19 responses in 2020, the scaling up of cash transfers and other social protection interventions, as well as medical responses, was done, in many instances, by increasing coordination, freeing up emergency budgets, and extending existing social protection pilots and programmes. This strained the idea of poverty targeting in social protection programmes, as in a matter of weeks a large segment of the population dropped below the poverty line.

Targeting in debate

The debate between the proponents of targeting and the proponents of a universal approach to social programming has been long ongoing. Arguments for poverty targeting are mostly based on the allocation of limited budgets to those who need it most, making government or NGO spending more efficient, promoting increases in efficiency, and enhancing the impact of interventions. Universalists argue that targeting is, in many instances, the result of a lack of political commitment and used as a rationing mechanism for redistributive efforts that do not match the political interests of elites. They argue that the difference between

those included and those excluded by poverty-targeted programmes is often negligible, as cut-off points are at times arbitrarily implemented and anti-poverty goals shift downward. Given the role played by political economy in targeting, the varying interests of actors along the line from definition and design to implementation shape the processes on the ground.

Recommendations

Based on the literature review, the following recommendations are made:

- Recognize the importance of human factors and the political economy in the design and implementation of targeting systems.
- Address the a priori implications of programme objectives in terms of inclusion and exclusion.
- Recognize that targeting systems relate to efficiency and ambitions of scale from the outset of (pilot) programmes.
- Map and assess unintended/unexpected inclusion and exclusion effects and the social costs related to the design and implementation of targeting systems.
- (Scaling up to) universal coverage requires coordination between different programmes to ensure broader coverage and avoid duplication.

Chapter 1. Introduction

This report delves into the definition, design and implementation of targeting strategies in policies and programmes in terms of the processes of inclusion and exclusion. It identifies the human and political factors that push targeting outside the realm of the technological. In doing so, it reflects on questions of efficiency, appropriateness and accuracy.

Background

The term 'targeting' is used by development organizations and governments to describe those activities aimed at defining, identifying, and eventually reaching intended populations. It describes decision making about 'who to target' and 'why', as well as mechanisms to screen potential beneficiaries and identify those who are eligible (Sabates-Wheeler, Hurrell, & Devereux, 2014; Slater & Farrington, 2009). A useful general definition is given by Van Domelen:

> *Targeting method refers to the set of rules, criteria and other elements of program design that define beneficiary eligibility […] The broader term targeting mechanism is used to refer to the larger elements of program design, including the choice of intermediary agents, organizational design and processes*. (Van Domelen, 2007, p. 5)

Targeting has roughly four linear stages: identifying the social issue, identifying the resources available, designing the targeting mechanism, and registering recipients (Kidd & Athias, 2020b). The term targeting has a wide conceptual range, which has led some authors to avoid the term altogether; for example, the 2020 World Bank *Sourcebook on social protection delivery systems* states that:

> *In general, we try to avoid using the term "targeting" to refer to implementation for several reasons: (1) not all social protection benefits and services are "targeted," and even universal programs pass through similar phases along the delivery chain; (2) "targeting" can sound rather fierce to a layperson (as in, "we are here to target you for program x" versus "we are here to register you for potential inclusion in program x"); and (3) the term "targeting" is used to describe many concepts and its overuse can be confusing.* (Lindert et al., 2020, p. 12)

Rather than contesting the term, this report seeks to unpack inclusion and exclusion as a result of targeting systems. Targeting systems can produce unintended effects, which can impact broadly on interventions. Furthermore, inclusion and exclusion processes do not cease after targeting has finished. People can face obstacles and barriers that prevent them from participating in interventions fully, or at all, which are on paper intended for them. Non-compliance and dropping out are common symptoms of these processes, as are the hidden costs of participation (e.g., social stigma, time costs, etc.). Targeting happens both intentionally and unintentionally on many levels, from design through to implementation.

This report focuses on the implementation of targeting systems and how it can affect the quality of inclusion and the process of targeting. Inclusion and exclusion are not only measures of quantity (how many people are included) but can also be viewed as measures of the quality of inclusion and exclusion of the intervention (whether access equals meaningful participation and whether exclusion confounds certain patterns of marginalisation). This follows from an approach to inclusive development that has been championed by INCLUDE since its inception: "**Equality in access and opportunity are not sufficient**, as beneficiaries differ in their capacity to gain returns from new opportunities or access" (Reinders et al., 2019, p. 26). The inclusiveness of a policy or programme can be expressed in its outcomes, as well as in its processes. In this report, the inclusiveness of targeting systems is investigated, as well as other factors in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that may affect the qualitative side of access and participation.

Decision making regarding targeting happens at all stages of policies and programmes. In the definition stage, social issues are identified, for which interventions are deemed necessary, following certain principles, with a defined scope and range, and using some idea of eligibility. Thereafter, the intervention is designed and subsequently implemented, during which targeting decisions are made that shape inclusion and exclusion. In these stages, there is a distinction between explicit targeting and implicit targeting. Explicit targeting entails the different processes that are aimed at including or excluding intended populations. Implicit targeting alludes to those mechanisms and processes that influence the inclusion and exclusion of beneficiaries, without intentionally being part of the explicit targeting of the programme.

Methodology

This report is the result of a literature review of academic and grey literature performed from March to August 2020. The review was performed with the goal of identifying the targeting mechanisms and methods used in development interventions. Literature from various academic databases, policy research institutions, and development organizations were collected and reviewed. This is not a systematic review; it does not sum up and quantify all evidence on the subject. Rather, it is an explorative literature review that attempts to identify, summarize, and synthesise qualitative findings in a systematic way. More details on the methodology of the literature review can be found in Annex 1 of this report.

Research questions

The main research question that guides this report is: *How do political and human factors influence targeting systems and methods, from design to implementation?*

This research question is broken down into four sub-questions, each dealing with a different side of targeting.

- Q1. What different targeting methods are in use and how are they defined, designed, and implemented? (Chapter 2)
- Q2. *How do unintended effects and human factors shape the inclusion and exclusion processes of policies and programmes?* (Chapter 3)
- Q3. *How do the (political) interests of different actors affect targeting and inclusion in practice?* (Chapter 4)
- Q4. *How do ambitions of scale play a role in targeting?* (Chapter 5)

The results of the literature review are presented around these sub-questions. Chapter 2 addresses the various types of targeting methods and systems that are in use by governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Chapter 3 delves into the inclusion and exclusion effects of targeting systems, which can be directly linked to their design and implementation or to human factors that may have unintended effects on targeting processes and outcomes. Chapter 4 briefly focuses on the political economy aspects of targeting systems that feature in the literature. Chapter 5 contains a concise discussion of the role of scale in targeting systems. Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the findings in answer the research question, wraps up the debate on targeting, provides some preliminary recommendations, and identifies some knowledge gaps for future research.

Chapter 2. Targeting methods and systems: from design to practice

Targeting is described in the literature as a variety of technical processes and outcomes along the implementation chain of development interventions. In this chapter, the deliberate identification and selection of target populations and geographies is described as 'explicit targeting'. This comprises all of the designs and implementation processes concerned with identifying, selecting, reaching, and onboarding beneficiaries within the context of an intervention. The intended outcome of explicit targeting processes is the onboarding of beneficiaries. Targeting may signify one component or refer to the entire set of outreach and onboarding procedures. Some interventions include targeting as a core element of their approach, such as the Targeting the Ultra Poor Programme by BRAC (Hashemi & Montesquiou, 2011), while others employ targeting as a method to reach more general objectives. Whereas explicit targeting is often done a priori, with possible retargeting or continuous targeting at a later stage, the full timeline of the intervention is relevant.

In the literature in this review, several aspects and processes are referred to as targeting or part of targeting, a non-exhaustive list of which is as follows:

- Definition of target populations in vision, objectives, and theory of change
- Definition of scope and range
- Definition of geographic focus, budget, and size of target population
- Definition of eligibility based on categorical idea of beneficiaries and related to objectives
- Design of eligibility criteria
- Design of selection methods
- Design of onboarding methods
- Identification of relevant population group or area
- Gathering information – collecting data
- Selection of beneficiaries from target population, based on criteria and assessment of information
- Reaching and onboarding the selected beneficiaries
- Inclusion and exclusion of beneficiaries through retargeting and monitoring progress

The technical aspects of targeting can be divided into the three stages along the intervention timeline: definition, design and implementation. At the 'definition stage', targeting decisions are made at the onset of the intervention, in the definition of the strategic vision, objectives and theory of change. At this stage, the principles and beliefs underlying the intervention are framed. These framings are translated into systems and mechanisms during the 'design stage'. At this stage, systems are designed to identify and select target populations through methods of assessment, outreach, selection, communication, and data collection. Selection systems for eligible beneficiaries are based on the assessment of criteria, leading to an onboarding mechanism to communicate the selection and onboard beneficiaries. During the 'implementation stage', targeting methods are applied, leading to the inclusion or exclusion of individuals.

This chapter looks at explicit targeting in the definition, design, and implementation stages, guided by the first sub-question**: Q1. What different targeting methods are in use and how are they defined, designed, and implemented?** In answering this question, different implementation processes aimed at including or excluding intended beneficiaries are summarized. These activities and processes are forms of explicit targeting, as the common denominator is the explicit set of objectives of identifying, reaching, and selecting intended beneficiaries. In addition, inclusion and exclusion are explored as the unintentional results of targeting processes or other factors in the implementation processes. Lastly, this chapter looks at the 'targeting' processes involved in implementation, which may face hurdles and differ from the design, exacerbating or mitigating barriers to participation.

Definition stage

The principles that lie at the foundation of an intervention, which are based on those of the implementing organization or government, play a role in how targeting decisions are made and more broadly in the objectives of the intervention. These ideological aspects inform the scope, range, and eligibility criteria of a policy or programme. Scope and range are further moulded to fit (budget) constraints, which can limit the focus of an intervention to certain a geography and number of beneficiaries. A basic idea of eligibility is usually already formulated in the mission statement of the programme or organization, which reflects the

reality that not everybody can be included. Table 1 gives an overview of targeting at the definition level of an intervention, which consists of explicit targeting decisions.

Table 1. Overview of aspects of targeting at the definition level

Definition	Principles	Vision
		Objectives
		Theory of change
	Scope and range	Budget
		Geographic focus
		Number of beneficiaries
	Eligibility	Basic idea of eligibility
		Related to principles

Vision, objectives, theory of change

Targeting is always related to the objectives of a programme (Garcia & Moore, 2012; Kidd, 2013; Van Domelen, 2007). Development programmes target entities ranging from households and individuals to cooperatives, associations, NGOs, and civil society organizations, some programmes even target animals, plants, or toxic waste. Different principles and beliefs may underpin an intervention, such as adherence to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the principle of 'leave no-one behind', or an attempt to optimize the use of funds by singling out those who need help the most or who have the most 'potential'. Although policies and programmes may be aligned with assessments of local needs, and government policies must conform to legal frameworks and provide basic services, specific interventions follow set principles and beliefs. These principles and beliefs reflect the foundation or ideology of the organization implementing the intervention and are echoed in the objectives of the intervention.

Objectives are formulated to structure and evaluate the intervention. They reflect the priorities and goals of the implementing organization. An objective may be to alleviate poverty and vulnerability, or to improve the agricultural sector and livelihoods of farmers. These objectives guide the intervention's theory of change (ToC) or logical framework, which may describe vastly different pathways to arrive at similar objectives. These theoretical underpinnings of development pathways reflect a certain vision of the contribution of the intervention to society.

For example, Liverpool-Tasie and Salau (2013) studied a subsidy programme for subsistence farmers in Nigeria that aimed to increase farmers' livelihoods, shifting from direct aid to employment and entrepreneurship promotion. The ToC included the idea that farmers who were organized into groups have more bargaining power, which can overcome high transaction costs to individual farmers, combined with the idea that more modern agricultural practices produce better yields. Consequently, input support was aimed at farmers' associations and cooperatives and for the purpose of buying fertilizer, which was expected to increase agricultural productivity. The vision of this programme was to contribute to the food security of agricultural communities, as well as develop value chains and strengthen the agricultural sector (Liverpool-Tasie & Salau, 2013). In this case, the vision, ToC and objectives already reflected targeting decisions, as the intervention was aimed at the agricultural sector, focused on farmers associations, and foresaw the importance of agricultural production in the livelihoods of farmers and broader society.

Hence, it can be seen that explicit targeting decisions are made in the definition of principles and beliefs. In some cases these are more explicitly than in others; for example, in BRAC's Targeting the Ultra Poor Programme, the ultra-poor are explicitly mentioned as the target population in both the project title, objective and ToC (BRAC, 2019). Other examples of such targeting decisions in the definition stage include interventions explicitly targeting women entrepreneurs such as the Women's Income Generating Support (WINGS) programme in Uganda (Blattman et al., 2013), children with disabilities or malnutrition in case of Moderate Acute Malnutrition Out (MAM'Out) programme in Burkina Faso (Tonguet-Papucci et al., 2015), or elderly persons in the case of social pensions (Grosh & Leite, 2014). These decisions are invariably underpinned by political motivations and ideologies. The political dimensions of targeting, as well as other motivations, do not always align with the formal objectives of a programme – and the objectives, vision and ToCs may be adapted or deviated from along the implementation chain. This affects the process and outcome of targeting systems.

Budget, geographic area, number of beneficiaries

Interventions need to have geographical limits and a projection of what is feasible, which delineates its capacity to include a specific number of beneficiaries. This definition of scope and range depends on the budget, mandate, and nature of the implementing organization. The Nigerian farmers subsidy programme, from the example in the previous section, was implemented in 2009 in two Nigerian states, Kano and Taraba. It was introduced as a pilot programme by the Nigerian government, private sector suppliers, and the International Centre for Soil Fertility and Development. This gave it a broad mandate in the two states. Eventually, a total of 216,000 smallholder farmers were designed to receive input vouchers, which would give them a discount of up to 65% on fertilizer costs (Liverpool-Tasie & Salau, 2013).

Hence, decisions are made in the definition stage of an intervention that can limit its scope and range to certain geographic areas and cap the number of beneficiaries, due to budget constraints or other operational issues. While these decisions are often forced by technical constraints, they may also be political motivated, reflecting geographic preferences or budget decisions. One of the ways to deal with budget constraints is to declare an intervention a 'pilot', which subsequently justifies covering only a fraction of the total population (Kidd, 2013, 2015; Kidd & Athias, 2020a). Governments may be more interested in certain interventions if they consume only a small proportion of the government budget (Ellis, 2012). The budget of an intervention affects its scope and range. This is contingent on the projected cost-effectiveness of the intervention.

Categorical eligibility and limits related to objectives

The definition of eligibility typically relates to objectives, social norms, patterns of poverty, vulnerability, and, ultimately, fiscal and political feasibility (Dutta & Okamura, 2015a, 2015b). The adequate definition of eligibility is essential in interventions that seek to reduce inequalities and address the needs of the neediest first (Hurrell, Mertens, & Pellerano, 2011). The definition of eligibility also functions to align targeting efforts with the objectives of the intervention. Programmes must determining which demographic or social categories embody the central issues that relate to the objectives and why. In practice, interventions reconcile the need for efficiency with reaching the people who need the intervention most. In some cases, targeting involves a trade-off between reaching objectives and reaching those who are the neediest, but who may not be able to give great return on investment. This is the case when two objectives are combined, such as targeting people living in poverty and increasing income or productivity. People who are living in poverty may not be well placed to increase their income, while also usually being harder to reach. Following the logic of efficiency, it then makes sense for an intervention to target those who are slightly better off, which allows them to meet their objectives more easily.

In the example of the Nigerian farmers' subsidy programme, the basic idea of eligibility – being a smallholder farmer who is a member of a farmers' cooperation or association – is related to the idea that farmers' associations are beneficial to smallholder farmers and, subsequently, increase agricultural production. An overarching concern in this example is to define eligibility in such a way that the resulting target population strikes a balance between those who deserve and need the intervention's support the most and those who can provide some return on investment in terms of impact, while also being able to be reached efficiently. In other words, it is a trade-off between needs and potential, which reflects the political and social contexts in the countries concerned (Hurrell et al., 2011). In fact, some of the Nigerian smallholder farmers who are excluded from farmers' associations may be the neediest in terms of fertilizer subsidies, but due to the focus on farmers' associations they fall outside the eligibility criteria for this intervention. Those farmers may also be harder to reach through targeting mechanisms. This dilemma shows that decisions that assume a technical focus on targeting are in fact political in nature.

Design stage

Design and implementation are typically described jointly, as design sets the intention and structure of the implementation of a programme. Knowledge on explicit targeting largely follows this logic. Lindert et al. (2020), for example, identify the stages of the delivery mechanisms of social protection programming, from the assessment of needs and context to enrolment decisions, the implementation of the core programme elements and their management, including delivery, monitoring and exit. Within this framework, Lindert et al. (2020) argue that populations are reached through deliberate, tailored and pro-active forms of outreach, which occur in the 'assessment' and 'enrolment' stages of the implementation chain. While this is technically accurate from the standpoint of designing targeting systems, this report argues that there should be more emphasis on the differences between designing a process and the actual implementation of it. This section elaborates on designing targeting systems and the different designs of the most common targeting systems.

Decisions made in the design stage balance different variables that can determine the success of an intervention. Cost-effectiveness determines the amount of effort that can be put into a targeting system in terms of budget, time, and coverage. More accurate methods of identification and selection generally require more effort, while participatory targeting methods require more time and may not be aligned with the intervention's objectives or definition of eligibility. In the design stage, pragmatic choices are made to reflect the capacity of implementers to identify the target population, the adequateness of data, and the budget. The result is often a crude rule of thumb assessment of eligibility based on a certain cut-off point. An example of this is the so-called 10% rule (McCord, 2009, p. 2), which entails using data on household expenditure to identify households with a combination of ultra-poverty and a lack of productive labour (Ellis, 2012). This method is used to place a ceiling on the number of households that can be assisted by an intervention. For example, in a cash transfer pilot programme in Liberia, eligibility was based on families that are facing both labour constraints and extreme poverty, with participation capped at 10% of the population. This meant that a large proportion of eligible people living in poverty were unable to participate (Marston & Grady, 2014). Especially in low-inequality settings, this mode of targeting may be problematic, while a clear-cut alternative may not be attractive to policymakers: "Low budgets and high inequality make targeting attractive, but high poverty rates mean that targeting poverty implies targeting half the population, rending anti-poverty programmes extremely expensive" (Hurrell et al., 2011, p. 9). Table 2 gives an overview of targeting at the design level.

Table 2. Overview of aspects of targeting at the design level

Design	Eligibility criteria	Indicators
		Data weighting
	Identification and selection methods	Data collection
		Selection process
		Communication
	Onboarding methods	Communication
		Onboarding procedure
	Monitoring and retargeting	(Non-)compliance monitoring
		Retargeting

Targeting systems are designed as groups or combinations of one or more targeting methods to yield the intended inclusion and exclusion related to the objectives of the intervention. These designs revolve around three basic elements: the formulation and application of eligibility criteria, the design of the identification and selection methods, and the methods by which selected beneficiaries are onboarded. Monitoring procedures are put in place to assess the targeting outcomes in terms of accuracy and cost-effectiveness, and, in some cases, address deviations, grievances, and mistargeting or retargeting.

Targeting strategies for large organizations may span an entire district, country, or region. The first level of targeting is embodied in the allocation of funds, time or personnel to certain areas, villages, or communities. This allocation is established at the definition stage of the intervention and further operationalized through design decisions. The targeting system builds from the eligibility, scope and range that is defined, and narrows the inclusion of beneficiaries to a level that is considered both adequate and manageable. While this describes a technical process, design decisions can follow political interests or reflect other motivations of stakeholders.

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria form the foundation of selection processes and rationalize inclusion and exclusion practices. Such criteria also add an air of impartiality to the whole targeting system and provide a justification for inclusion and exclusion that can be communicated to stakeholders. Eligibility criteria feed into identification procedures. Identification procedures determine the characteristics of beneficiaries and provide ways to identify them from a larger population. These characteristics are operationalized into indicators that are observable and measurable through surveys, interviews, or other forms of data collection. Depending on the objectives and ToC, indicators are ranked or weighted so that they can be used to determine inclusion or exclusion. The nature of indicators also sets the requirements for data collection. In some cases, indicators are derived from national statistical or census data (Hillebrecht et al., 2020), but for many interventions some form of active outreach and data collection is necessary. Calculations are made to determine eligibility, based on a set of indicators that are assumed to approach the criteria as closely as

possible. One of the most common focuses of targeting efforts of government programmes and international development interventions is poverty alleviation at the household level.

Targeting based on household income is technically challenging, as income is seasonal, often irregular, and hard to capture accurately, and it ignores self-production (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014). Consumption expenditure is commonly used to measure poverty, because it focuses on the consumption pattern of individuals or households, however, it is time-consuming, which makes it inefficient and impractical (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014). Labour availability is another criterion often included in eligibility criteria, for example, in cash transfer programmes. Households that have able-bodied working-age individuals among them may be excluded from participating in a cash transfer programme, as it is assumed that the availability of such individuals equals actual labour in an adequate labour market. These assumptions imply that able-bodied working-age persons in a household logically provide sufficient income for their household, resulting in the exclusion of unemployed, underemployed and working people in poverty counts, for which the availability of labour does not always materialize into income (McCord, 2009). Hence, while labour restricted households may receive the support they need, households with labour available, but no work, may miss out on the support they desperately need.

Indicators can also be selected based on pragmatic considerations related to verification, manipulation, correlation with criteria, and cost-effectiveness (Del Ninno & Mills, 2015). However, as will be elaborated on in chapters 3 and 4, the use of indicators and the collection of data to assess them is also deeply political and is shaped by the stakeholders involved. For instance, cash transfers are aimed at labour-constrained households, in part due to the belief that cash transfers to households with available labour will make them dependent.

Identification and selection methods

The design of identification and selection methods entails the implementation of eligibility criteria and indicators, and is an essential aspect of targeting systems. This string of activities is based on methods of data collection, processes that determine selection based on data on the population, and communication regarding selection criteria and selection processes. It starts with an introduction to the locality and data collection based on the selection criteria and indicators. Data collection methods can vary from the use of existing data sets and registries to carrying out surveys and engaging with communities. The design of data collection methods informs targeting strategies and relates to the objectives of the intervention. Further down the line, the actual selection of individual recipients takes place, using different methodologies. In some cases, the choice and design of these identification and selection methods is influenced by the availability of resources (Gelders, 2018).

The methods discussed in this section focus on actively reaching out to beneficiaries prior to and during the intervention. They are administrative processes of defining and reaching a target population within a total population. There are roughly five popular identification and selection methods for poverty targeting: means testing (MT), proxy-means testing (PMT), geographic targeting, categorical targeting, and community-based targeting (CBT). MT, PMT, and categorical targeting are the most commonly used indicator-based targeting sets in poverty alleviation programming. A common aspect of these methods is the effort to deal with errors in the assessment of poverty, means, or income. In the absence of the ability to gauge the true material circumstances of populations, practitioners use proxy indicators, typically many at a time, to identify eligible households or individuals (Ellis, 2012). In addition, targeting can also be done through geographic targeting and CBT. Self-targeting is a passive form of targeting, and universal approaches aim for the broad inclusion of a population.

There are bodies of literature on each method of targeting (or combination of methods), their adequacy, the ethics of targeting, and the implementation challenges and modalities. The following sub-sections provide an overview of the most prevalent issues in relation to each method, how they are generally used, and the implementation aspects.

Means testing

Means testing (MT) is used to assess the income and assets of individuals and determine their eligibility for something, based on a threshold. This is a popular method of testing in societies with income data readily available, mostly formal economies with comprehensive tax systems that can provide the necessary data (Dutta & Okamura, 2015a, 2015b). One example of a standardized means test is the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS), which is performed periodically by governments, such as in

Ghana (Jehu-Appiah et al., 2010). The comprehensiveness and thoroughness of MT gives a full picture of the income and assets of respondents, but also carries high administrative costs (Slater & Farrington, 2009). MT is implemented predominantly by auditors, professional enumerators, and community members. In most cases it relies on self-reporting, and errors may occur due to under-reporting or misinterpretation. Besides incentives to underreport income and assets, these tests can also incentivize changes in behaviour to fall within the eligibility criteria. Hence, MT has mixed results and is sometimes outperformed in accuracy by simpler methods, such as self-targeting or even geographic targeting (Devereux, 2016; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014). The social costs of undergoing such a comprehensive test are also a factor.

In a comparative study of cash transfer programmes, Fultz and Francis (2013) argued that women in particular face disadvantages in a targeted approach that involves MT:

> *First, the need to produce documentation of family finances and be officially categorized as needy can be stigmatizing. Second, means testing gives local officials leverage that can magnify these effects. As shown, local officials may impose arbitrary requirements that discriminate against and demean women. Third, the inherent complexity of means testing leads many governments to use proxy means tests in their place. Yet, many proxy means tests are prone to exclusion errors which cause them either to wrongly deny eligible households or to fail to reach them*. (Fultz & Francis, 2013, p. 33).

The political economy of the targeting process may cause the women involved to engage with their local officials and community members, as they deal with the resulting inclusion and exclusion of targeting procedures.

Proxy-means testing

The absence of comprehensive registries and data systems on income, coupled with the high cost of means testing, means that, in practice, many interventions use a slimmer version to estimate the wellbeing, welfare or means of individuals and households in a population. Proxy-means testing (PMT) is a less expensive alternative to measuring means and its indicators can be derived from other surveys, or existing datasets (Hanna, Khan, & Olken, 2018). It is a popular testing method for poverty targeting in places where there is imperfect information (Brown, Ravaillon, & Van de Walle, 2016). PMT comprises several criteria in a weighted combination that indicate if members of the target population meet the eligibility criteria. PMT is also called ‘statistical targeting’, as it is based on the correlation of certain indicators with characteristics of the intended eligible population (Hillebrecht et al., 2020). This combination is usually more easily assessed and verified than income and assets, in the case of poverty (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014).

The design of PMT contains three sets of variables, which each represent choices: the set of indicators that are chosen to identify eligibility, the transformation or calculation of these indicators into a proxy-means variable, and the weights that are used for these variables to calculate the score (Hillebrecht et al., 2020). The particular combination of criterion used depends on the objectives of the intervention – in the case of poverty targeting it may combine housing conditions, nutrition uptake, access to water or other factors. PMT usually has two implementation steps. First, a formula is designed using national available and representative datasets to predict the different weights of household characteristics to be used as poverty predictors. This entails an analysis of the different dimensions of poverty, and how these resurface in easily visible and verifiable indicators. Secondly, this formula is expressed in a survey that is administered to potential beneficiaries to define their scores and determine their eligibility (Stoeffler, Mills, & Del Ninno, 2016). The accuracy of this method is highly contingent on the selection of proxies and their relative weight, in addition to the successful implementation of the test.

Within PMT, there are several general approaches, which each pay particular respect to sets of indicators: the econometric approach, asset index, poverty scorecard index (PSI), and Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (Hillebrecht et al., 2020). Among these approaches, the econometric approach and the asset index are fully data-driven in relation to the selection and transformation of indicators, whereas the PSI and MPI involve normative judgements. Within these general approaches, PMT can be welfare- or non-welfare driven, and employ absolute or relative cut-off points. A welfare-driven approach is based on income levels and a non-welfare approach takes other important aspects of wellbeing into account. Absolute cut-off points are based on a static definition of a poverty line, for example, while relative cut-off points are derived from generally accepted values within a society or population (Jehu-Appiah et al., 2010).

Econometric targeting through PMT uses observed covariates for household consumption and income to feed into regression coefficients. This function is calibrated from survey data to make out-of-sample predictions for the population. The resulting formula is usually based on well-established and generally accepted measures of economic welfare that are also used to measure poverty (Brown et al., 2016). The resulting predictions of income, wealth, or vulnerability are ranked, and inclusion achieved by applying a cut-off point that relates to the available budget.

Asset index, also called wealth index, is a method that makes up for a lack of data on income by listing the assets of a household to determine whether or not the members are living in poverty. Different asset types are scored and used to calculate a wealth index to predict the wealth of a household relative to other households in the sample. Often a selection is made from these households using a cut-off point, including the lowest quartile, quintile or decile of an indexed population, depending on the intervention's objectives and budget (Hillebrecht et al., 2020; Hussien & Park, 2019).

The PSI approach typically relies on a limited set of indicators of wealth, poverty or other factors. A popular PSI is the Progress out of Poverty Index being implemented by Innovations for Poverty Action in microfinance programmes. This approach uses scorecards to ascribe a score for each indicator, selected through statistics and using judgement, and based on a statistical calculation of consumption poverty (Hillebrecht et al., 2020). This makes it comparable to the econometric approach, with a smaller selection of indicators and partly based on judgement.

The MPI is a non-welfare approach to poverty targeting that is based on the idea that multiple dimensions of poverty are important for the assessment of the wellbeing and vulnerability of households. It goes beyond the reduction of poverty to income or assets, and considers the psycho-social, cultural, and contextual factors that feed into poverty and wellbeing. It also makes up for a lack of census data on income and assets, which are needed for means testing (Hussien & Park, 2019). The assessment of what constitutes poverty is typically carried out based on a combination of normative judgments and multidimensional definitions of poverty (Hillebrecht et al., 2020), resulting in a weighted deprivation score on a selection of dimensions.

The accuracy of PMT methods is contingent on the validity of the variables and calculations and the ability to reliably gather the necessary information (Coady, Grosh, & Hoddinott, 2004). In situations where there is widespread poverty, and little inequality at the bottom of the income distribution, it is difficult to find relevant and accurate indicators of poverty or other targeting criteria (ILO, 2016). Furthermore, PMT has major drawbacks in terms of its implementation costs and the necessity of in situ surveys and verification, as well as lack of transparency in relation to weighting and calculations (Brown et al., 2016; Jehu-Appiah et al., 2010).

Categorical targeting

Categorical targeting is based on simple, observable characteristics that are related to the objectives of the intervention. A typical application of this type of targeting is demographic targeting, which aims to include a specific age group (Coady et al., 2004). A common type of intervention that uses demographic targeting is pensions or support for disabled children (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014). In these cases, the characteristics used to target beneficiaries are age or the combination of age and disability. Although beneficiaries may lie about their age, and proof may be hard to come by in a context in which national registration or census data is not available, its simplicity and transparency make it a politically accepted method of targeting by national governments (ILO, 2016). Categorical targeting is also referred to as statistical targeting, group targeting, or tagging (Coady et al., 2004). In the case of tagging, a demographic characteristic is often combined with an observable (set of) characteristics, such as the number of dependents or disability (Conning & Kevane, 2002, p. 380). Categorical targeting is used in many social protection programmes in Africa; geographic targeting is the next most common method used (Cirillo & Tebaldi, 2016; Garcia & Moore, 2012).

Geographic targeting

Geographic targeting is simply the selection of a region, district, or community, based on characteristics; one example of this type of targeting method is a poverty map (Moreira & Gentilini, 2016). Poverty maps are geo-information databases that use household surveys and census data to distinguish the characteristics of different geographical units (Wodon, 2012, p. 42). Geographic targeting either covers all of the population in an area or applies extra eligibility criteria in an additional layer of targeting (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014).

This targeting method makes sense when there is an area in which certain characteristics seem to be more common than in other areas. Information that can support geographic targeting includes the occurrence of natural phenomena, such as droughts or floods; soil potential or (agricultural) production level; the availability of services (distance to health centres/clean drinking water); or business potential. Geographic targeting is always based on information or assumptions of geographic relevance. Including an entire population in a specific geography may be challenging when the distribution of the target population is uneven across regions (Del Ninno & Mills, 2015, p. 76).

In practice, geographic targeting typically constitutes one of the first levels of targeting of any intervention (Garcia & Moore, 2012). There are several typical ways of applying geographic targeting for different purposes: (1) identifying eligible zones or those that are a priority for intervention, (2) reflecting the national priorities of governments or other organizations, (3) developing resource allocation targets, and (4) orienting promotion and facilitation (Van Domelen, 2007).

Community-based targeting

Community-based targeting (CBT) is a group of targeting methods that relies to some extent on actors from the target community to provide input and information or to be involved in the implementation of the targeting system (Handa et al., 2012). CBT has been a popular method of targeting since the late 1990s for identifying and selecting households as beneficiaries in poverty-related or emergency interventions (Jaspars & Shoham, 1999). This method involves actors from the target community in decision making about the inclusion and exclusion of beneficiaries. Such involvement is broadly defined, ranging from the actual definition of criteria and strategies to fieldwork activities by community members. It typically entails contracting with community groups or intermediary agents to carry out one or more activity in relation to identifying recipients, monitoring the delivery of the intervention, or engaging in some part of the implementation process (Conning & Kevane, 2002, p. 376). In this sense, CBT is not a separate targeting method, but places certain activities in the care of actors from the participating community. This method, or aspects of it, are implemented in a growing number of interventions, especially in social protection and cash transfer programmes. In Africa, in 2015, at least 71% of conditional cash transfer programmes and 49% of unconditional cash transfer (UCT) programmes used CBT, or a combination of targeting including CBT (Del Ninno & Mills, 2015).

CBT is primarily used for its capacity to bring community knowledge into the targeting process and is recognized as having the potential to increase accountability, improve progressive targeting outcomes, and enhance legitimacy and community satisfaction with the outcomes (McCord, 2017; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014; Stoeffler et al., 2016; Valli, 2018b). Communities may be involved to different degrees in the formulation and weighting of criteria and even setting the objectives of the intervention, related to their perception of their own formulated objectives. However, CBT is typically heterogeneous and contingent on implementation choices, trust in the community, levels of autonomy, and the involvement of different community actors.

A common element of CBT is the use of so-called selection committees. These groups of elected or appointed local actors act as a proxy for the implementing organization to apply targeting methods and select beneficiaries. This is a very direct way of applying CBT. Other programmes may use the knowledge of social workers, or community health officials to identify and select beneficiaries, or partner with organizations that are involved with specific social groups locally to help reach them (Garcia & Moore, 2012, p. 88).

The local officials and community members involved in the targeting process from the inside have an interesting position. The ultimate question of ‘who decides who gets what’ is answered through collaborations in which community members are given various roles. This bestows on them a unique position of influence – which may reinforce, or compete with, existing structures of power. CBT has been found to create a new bureaucratic or organizational layer within interventions or states in cases of heavy community involvement. In other instances, the problem of devolution versus delegation and control by the centre over its satellite activities may cause principal-agent problems (Conning & Kevane, 2002). Studies also indicate that CBT is more prone to political issues such as elite capture or targeting bias. These biases can be mitigated by the use of checks and balances or other implementation features that increase transparency (Valli, 2018a). Nonetheless, political factors in all levels of the design and implementation of targeting systems cannot be neglected.

CBT methods can be rather circumstantial in nature, and the exact involvement of community actors may not always be formalized in targeting procedures. For example, it is a common idea that targeting female members of households results in the distribution of benefits throughout the household and especially to children. Interventions that are aimed at vulnerable children are found to categorically target female members of households, instead of directly identifying, selecting and reaching individual children, in order to improve children's health and education. In this sense, these are community members involved in a form of CBT (Conning & Kevane, 2002). This saves the cost of implementing an elaborate targeting system to reach children by applying a simpler categorical method. The women act as the programme's proxies, with the expectation that they will make sure that their children benefit.

One of the main concerns with implementing CBT is how to prevent and deal with nepotism, favouritism and elite capture (McCord, 2017; Platteau, 2004). Clear and transparent definitions of eligibility criteria and broad communication strategies about the process, objectives, and goals of the programmes, as well as proper monitoring and grievance redressal systems, can generate accountability and mitigate the possibility of elite capture (McCord, 2017; Valli, 2018b). The resulting transparency and community acceptance of the criteria, selection committee, and process of selection are considered to be a good way to ensure the security of programme activities and avoid fraud (Valli, 2018a). Instances of committee members serving themselves or engaging in favouritism and nepotism can also be avoided by adding rules of engagement. These rules should prevent committee members from acting out of self-interest and ensure that committee members that have no conflict of interest are selected (Schüring, 2014).

Tension between target communities and donors can urge donors to impose targeting criteria, revisit community-based recommendations, or overly verify and monitor community-based processes. These attempts to control the outcomes of CBT can have detrimental effects on transparency and community acceptance and ownership of the programme (McCord, 2017). Hillebrecht et al. (2020) found that CBT methods in 18 projects worked better in urban areas than in rural settings, because village actors often had differing views on what constituted poverty from those of policymakers. Rural communities put larger weight on morbidity and elderly household members as criteria for eligibility, which both positively correlate with per capita consumption, whereas policymakers tend to base their poverty criteria around consumption indicators. At the same time, it is more difficult for urban community actors to identify and reach all eligible members of their communities, due to the fluidity of household composition, migration, and the lower level of social cohesion in urban communities (Moreira & Gentilini, 2016).

CBT is used primarily in combination with other forms of targeting, often geographical or categorical approaches, or some form of wealth ranking or PMT (Hillebrecht et al., 2020, p. 277; McCord, 2017, p. 17). In this method, it is rare to have communities involved at a level higher than implementation; CBT is usually carried out through elected or selected committees, which rarely formulate or propose policy priorities or criteria themselves (Slater & Farrington, 2009, para. 17). CBT can be problematic when the groups targeted face some form of marginalization. For example, nomadic groups tend not to be officially or socially included in the communities they inhabit and, thus, may not meet community membership requirements for eligibility (Conning & Kevane, 2002). Hence, the failure of CBT methods can stem from differences in the perception of poverty and eligibility between communities and policymakers, as well as procedural issues of trust and verification, which are related to the context of the community.

Overall, CBT is regarded as a low-cost method of targeting, as local wages often are low and selection processes are done by community volunteers (Valli, 2018b). Community members involved in the targeting processes are not always fully compensated for the work they do and are regarded as volunteers or 'benevolent enthusiasts'. This results in hidden costs of process-related activities, which are born by these community actors, and which impact on the organization and implementation of selection committees (Handa et al., 2012, p. 5). Furthermore, the accuracy and effectiveness of this approach is largely contingent on implementation and raises ethical problems when communities are faced with limited scope/budget with which to address poverty, forcing them to choose a limited number of beneficiaries from a large eligible population (Hurrell et al., 2011).

Self-targeting

Self-targeting relies on the self-exclusion of non-eligible people from interventions, based on the value, nature and (social) costs of a programme. This usually means a lowering of the value of the intervention, or raising barriers to it, to ensure that it is not worthwhile for people other than those from the target population (Conning & Kevane, 2002; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014). Self-targeting is often used in public works

programmes, which provide temporary minimum wages in return for often physically taxing construction or infrastructure work (Devereux, 2016). In this case, the physical aspects of the work, combined its seasonality and low wages, usually prevent better-off individuals from participating. This method also requires the target population to reveal itself and does not give opportunities to people living in poverty to work for more than the minimum wage.

A big challenge with this approach is making the intervention known and accessible to the target population – especially when it is poverty targeted. This means knowing about the existence of a programme, as well as the specifics of the programme. Information and communication about the potential benefits and limits on participation in self-targeting programmes play a central role in the effectiveness of the targeting method. Furthermore, raising barriers to lower inclusion errors implies lower benefits for those who apply or creating barriers to prevent some people from the eligible population from participating (Kidd & Athias, 2020b). Self-targeting may produce good accuracy results due to lower inclusion errors, but these are partly offset by a reduction in the possible benefits and the impact it can have on its beneficiaries in terms of income generation or self-development (Macours, Premand, & Vakis, 2013).

Universal approaches

Universal approaches contrast with targeted approaches due to their willingness to widen the scope to include any given household or individual as a beneficiary of the intervention. In doing so, these approaches limit exclusion errors to nearly zero, but at the cost of inclusion errors. In theory, universal approaches reach everyone (Kidd & Athias, 2020b). In practice, however, some form of inclusion management will always occur, as most interventions are geographically bound from the get-go. Some universal approaches are contingent on categorical or demographic characteristics, for example, in the case of universal social pensions that target the elderly (Beegle, Coudouel, & Monsalve, 2018a). While everybody ages, targeting the elderly above a certain age is not strictly a universal approach, as reaching that age is, in part, the result of a mix of privilege and access to facilities. Some groups in society may not have the same probability of growing old enough to become eligible; in practice, universal elderly pensions may actually be best described as demogrants: grants aimed at certain demographic cohorts in society (Devereux, 2016).

One universal approach is the rights-based approach. This approach underlines the fact that all subjects under a specific law have certain rights that must be upheld. This is codified in various constitutions and laws and underpinned by the equality principle (Devereux, 2016). Although rights apply to all subjects, the enforcement of legal rights depends on access and positions of power. Furthermore, the nominal adoption of a rights-based approach does not always result in actual domestic legal changes that promote those rights (McCord, 2009). An example of a rights-based approach is a cash transfer programme targeted at orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) in Kenya, which started in 2004 (Hurrell et al., 2011).

A universal approach may be more appropriate than a targeted approach when targeting involves high costs and yields low accuracy (Oudendijk & Bos, 2017). Furthermore, in some cases targeting may be perceived as subjective and unfair, or may force decisions between equally eligible households or individuals (Ansell et al., 2019). Targeted approaches may result in high exclusion errors, but universal approaches may result in high inclusion errors. In practice, universal and targeted approaches both pass through similar phases in their design and implementation, in their efforts to identify and register beneficiaries, and in their attempts to reach them through information and communication strategies (Lindert et al., 2020). This is accentuated by the fact that universal approaches often employ some form of delimitation of beneficiaries.

Universal approaches are not free from the political factors that influence other targeting methods. Typically, in the decision to use a universal approach, some categorical limit is negotiated, before limiting the scope geographically. Subsequently, the implementation of the universal programme can greatly affect the manner and quality of the inclusion achieved.

Onboarding procedures

Onboarding methods are used to confirm decisions about identification and selection processes. In addition, when local actors are involved in implementation, these actors need some form of onboarding as well (Conning & Kevane, 2002). Onboarding decisions are shared with beneficiaries and other stakeholders as a programme or policy enters its operational phase. These procedures usually involve intensive communication and the notification of selection outcomes, registration, sensitizing, or training on the specifics of participation in the intervention, and, in some cases, pledges or investment by the beneficiaries. The goals of these activities are to prepare and orient beneficiaries for participation in the intervention, as

well as collect additional information about the beneficiaries (Lindert et al., 2020). When community members or a committee are active in the selection procedures, the selection outcome is officially announced before onboarding. This process ensures transparency and the increased acceptance of the selection outcomes by the broader community (Stoeffler et al., 2016).

Inclusion and exclusion is not confined to the eligible and ineligible, but also focuses on discerning the more eligible from the less eligible, as the eligible population is often greater than the scope of the intervention. The cut-off points mentioned above apply to a population that has low internal differences in terms of the eligibility criteria (Ellis, 2012), making the selection and onboarding procedures politically sensitive. In this case, it is not enough for interventions to have well defined and documented identification and selection procedures, but these also need to be adequately and transparently communicated to beneficiaries and any other stakeholders involved (Lindert et al., 2020).

Onboarding procedures should be sensitive to contextual factors that could influence the perceptions of local actors about the programme or policy, giving rise to grievances and misunderstandings in relation to the selection criteria and processes. These grievances may only become apparent during or after the onboarding procedures. As well as ensuring effective communication, redressing grievances can be important to generate acceptance of the outcomes of the targeting system by the target population and local community.

Monitoring and retargeting

The monitoring of beneficiaries is done for evaluation and reporting to ascertain a programme's effectiveness, assess its impact, and gather learning or feedback. The findings of monitoring exercises feature regularly in reports that flow upwards to responsible departments or officials, or to donors and potential sponsors of programmes. If made public, the findings can benefit communities of practice involved in the provision of services for people living in poverty (Mariotti, Ulrichs, & Harman, 2016). Contextual factors are important in evaluations and impact assessments, however, these are often overlooked, as it is assumed that the study's design isolates and excludes these factors (Mariotti et al., 2016; Samson, 2015). Apart from assessing and reporting on impact, monitoring can play an important role in the implementation of programmes to make them context specific and adaptive.

Monitoring can also ensure that fraud and mismanagement, either by beneficiaries or by the implementing actors or organizations, are addressed. In addition, many interventions operate a system that enables them to monitor progress, behaviour, and factors that affect the eligibility of beneficiaries during the implementation timeline. In the case of conditional cash transfers, participation is contingent on specific behaviour, which requires continuous monitoring and evaluation and entails higher costs (Oudendijk & Bos, 2017). Periodic retargeting during the implementation timeline requires the targeting process to be ongoing or parallel to the operational activities.

A commonly held belief is that oversight by third parties creates accountability. In the case of CBT, monitoring of the targeting committee is done to avoid mistargeting, elite capture and other implementation errors. However, experimental evidence points out that this is in fact an inefficient way to address mistargeting. Besides the fact that aid agencies and governments often lack the capacity to effectively monitor an intervention, it is virtually impossible to impose sanctions; in addition, communities rarely use these channels to report targeting errors or incidents. Instead, transparency and involving communities in targeting instructions is considered to be more effective in controlling targeting outcomes (Strauss-Kahn, 2019).

Monitoring can also include mechanisms that facilitate beneficiaries to flag concerns or give feedback to the implementing organization, which, in turn, may help a programme to be responsive to context. These possibilities for grievance redressal can also improve accountability and mitigate elite capture and errors in the targeting system (Samuels & Jones, 2013). However, as mentioned above, these mechanisms should be adaptive to the context and build on the social relations in a community. This means that they are also contingent on the involvement of actors along the implementation timeline, trust relations and legitimacy.

Implementation stage

While many sources in this review allude to the importance of implementation in interventions (Handa et al., 2018; Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014), and variable deviations from designs that impact on targeting

outcomes (Gelders, 2018; Hypher & Veras Soares, 2012; Sedlmayr, Shah, & Sulaiman, 2018), the evidence base addressing this is small (Bastagli et al., 2016, p. 15). In addition, this review found that implementation issues are commonly confused with design aspects, leaving the 'human element' of the implementer out of the picture. This oversight is common in the literature dealing directly with targeting strategies and their efficiencies. While the importance of implementation is acknowledged in general terms, a more in-depth analysis of implementation and the implementers of targeting methods, and how these actors shape the overall process, would add greatly to our understanding of targeting systems in practice.

The link between design and implementation is quite specific in the literature on targeting. Table 3 shows aspects of implementation processes of targeting systems in which identification, selection and inclusion/exclusion follow in a linear way. This linearity is at the basis of many targeting system designs, however, in practice these designs may follow a more circular path. Inclusion and exclusion are the result of the implementation of the targeting system, while allowing for ex-post inclusion and exclusion through compliance mechanisms and retargeting. In practice, implementation is greatly affected by unintended effects and contextual factors, which can force organizations to deviate from linear and planned procedures.

Table 3. Overview of aspects of targeting at the implementation level

Implementation	Identification procedure	Identify and reach target area
		Survey procedure
		Train implementers
		Pre-selection for data collection
		Data collection
	Selection procedure	Communication regarding selection procedure
		Data production
		Apply calculation and weights
		Arrive at selection
		Decision making on selection
		Communication regarding outcomes of selection procedure
	Inclusion and exclusion (outreach, onboarding)	Communication regarding process of intervention
		Onboarding of beneficiaries
		Monitoring and ex-post exclusion
		Monitoring and retargeting

Linear models of implementing targeting systems usually show three distinct and related sets of procedures and activities, set around the goals of identifying, selecting, and including or excluding eligible beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. These implementation aspects are based on the operationalization of eligibility, range, scope, and objectives. Inclusion and exclusion on this level are pre-set by definitions of eligibility and the design of targeting methods, such as those described above.

Whereas one targeting method may seem to outperform others, this may be the result of the implementation process or modality (Sabates-Wheeler, Hurrell, & Devereux, 2015). The choice of targeting methods can be less important than the procedural quality of its implementation, in terms of accuracy and cost-effectiveness (Davis et al., 2010). Impact studies that investigate the effectiveness and accuracy of different targeting methods disagree on which method is most accurate. Community-based targeting is a notoriously variable targeting method, which depends on the capacity, involvement, and knowledge of local committee members. This issue is not limited to targeting methods, but applies to the entire approach used by a programme. Factors that impact on the implementation of targeting systems include the nature of the tasks of the implementers, the background of these implementers, the community in which identification and selection is to be done, the nature of the intervention itself, and the existence of accountability and monitoring systems (McCord, 2017, p. 19). Through the interplay of political factors, pragmatism and variability in implementation, even programmes that have a universal approach may turn out to be regressive in practice (Houssou et al., 2019).

Multiple or layered targeting criteria are common in government and NGO programmes and policies. This involves a cascade of targeting methods that hook into each other. Multiple layers zoom in on eligible beneficiaries by performing one method after the other or combining multiple methods in one (Yemtsov, Rodriguez, & Evans, 2013). For example, geographical selections are made based on national data, upon

which categorical selection singles out elderly citizens, which is followed up by PMT to exclude the more wealthy elderly from social pensions. Alternatively, a multi-layered approach may combine CBT and PMT or another survey-based method by having local committees perform the survey, or identify and pre-select beneficiaries for the survey, which subsequently determines inclusion.

In much of the literature in this review, however, targeting systems are thought of as specific methods such as PMT, categorical targeting, or CBT. This obscures their complexity and involvement and agency of different actors, inherently making the implementation of these methods a heterogeneous activity in practice (McCord, 2017). Targeting systems not only depend on a well-designed approach, but are also contingent on deviations from these designs forced by changing contexts or unforeseen factors. This makes these systems not merely technical, but also deeply political and dependent on contingencies in their performance. The following chapter goes into detail about the ways in which inclusion and exclusion are shaped regardless of, or despite, targeting systems.

Chapter 3. Unintended inclusion and exclusion

The unintended effects of targeting mechanisms influence the extent to which beneficiaries can be included, or include and exclude themselves. In practice, inclusion and exclusion are shaped by the contextual factors that influence or determine the ability of beneficiaries to participate – e.g. the obstacles to inclusion for eligible individuals or households (Holmes & Scott, 2016). Furthermore, targeting systems may be implemented differently than their designers intended, causing a gap in programme implementation fidelity (Tripathi et al., 2019). This also relates to the context of the intervention and the specific situations and interests of the stakeholders. Understanding how inclusion and exclusion occur – including the unintended effects of targeting systems – is important in the design of targeting systems and implementation processes, especially when working with marginalized groups (Jaspars & Shoham, 1999, p. 363).

In this report, unintended inclusion and exclusion refers to those processes outside of explicit targeting systems that may further define, narrow, expand, or impair intended target populations or organizations from fully participating in the policy or programme as intended. These mechanisms are found in all layers and at all stages of design and implementation and are related to the human factors in implementation. They are expressed in the principles and beliefs that are at the root of an intervention, and trickle down through design decisions into implementation practices. While targeting systems may be formulated quite clearly, the processes on the ground that decide who gets to participate, and to what extent, may play out differently.

This chapter elaborates on the common features of unintended inclusion and exclusion, and ways in which the academic and grey literature tackle issues that relate to this topic. It looks at the following sub-question: **Q2. How do unintended effects and human factors shape the inclusion and exclusion processes of policies and programmes?** This question is addressed in four parts. First, this chapter covers targeting accuracy, a concept that is expressed in terms of inclusion and exclusion errors. It then moves on to the unintended inclusion and exclusion side effects of targeting systems, before discussing blind spots in the design and implementation of interventions, which impact on inclusion and exclusion. Lastly, it looks at the unintended inclusion and exclusion processes and outcomes produced by implicit functions in programme components that commonly fall outside the scope of targeting assessments.

Targeting accuracy: inclusion and exclusion errors

The literature recognizes the inherent limitations on targeting, due to practical constraints, represented by inclusion errors and exclusion errors. Inclusion and exclusion errors commonly feature in the literature on targeting accuracy, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency. Inclusion errors refer to the wrongly included population (those who do not meet the eligibility criteria), whereas exclusion errors refer to the wrongly excluded population (despite being eligible for inclusion) (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2014). Errors are produced by decisions on budgets, scope and range, and cut-off points in relation to the maximum number of beneficiaries. They are calculated and weighed against each other in simulations to arrive at the optimal margins in the design of targeting systems. Trying to avoid errors of one type usually increases the risk of incurring errors of the other type. The administrative, private, social, and political costs of targeting differ according to the method, implementation and approach (Wodon, 2012). Mistargeting may occur when the assumptions underlying the criteria for eligibility are erroneous, too general, or too specific.

It is understood that targeting systems cannot be 100% accurate, and that improvements in accuracy will compete for budget with other programme components. Hence, acceptable margins of error are factored into the design and evaluation of targeting systems, and are used to estimate, model, and evaluate targeting effectiveness, i.e., accuracy. This way, inclusion and exclusion errors mark the fine line between intended and unintended inclusion and exclusion. Designing these errors brings unintended effects into the intentional design and renders them officially acceptable. Although, in principle, errors are to be avoided, it is realistic and pragmatic to accept a margin of error in the accuracy of a targeting system and determine how to minimize these errors with acceptable costs. In relation to this, the measurement of targeting errors becomes important, in addition to the criteria and design of the targeting system. The concept of ‘targeting accuracy’, which is ideally measured using objective, quantifiable and well-founded variables (Gelders, 2018), comes into play.

Targeting accuracy, simply put, is the number of rightly included beneficiaries and the number of wrongly included beneficiaries to arrive at the inclusion error (number of wrongly included beneficiaries as a fraction

of the total beneficiaries) and the number of rightly excluded and wrongly excluded beneficiaries for the exclusion error. Figure 1 shows a schematic of these errors, and the different fractions that matter in the determination of targeting accuracy.

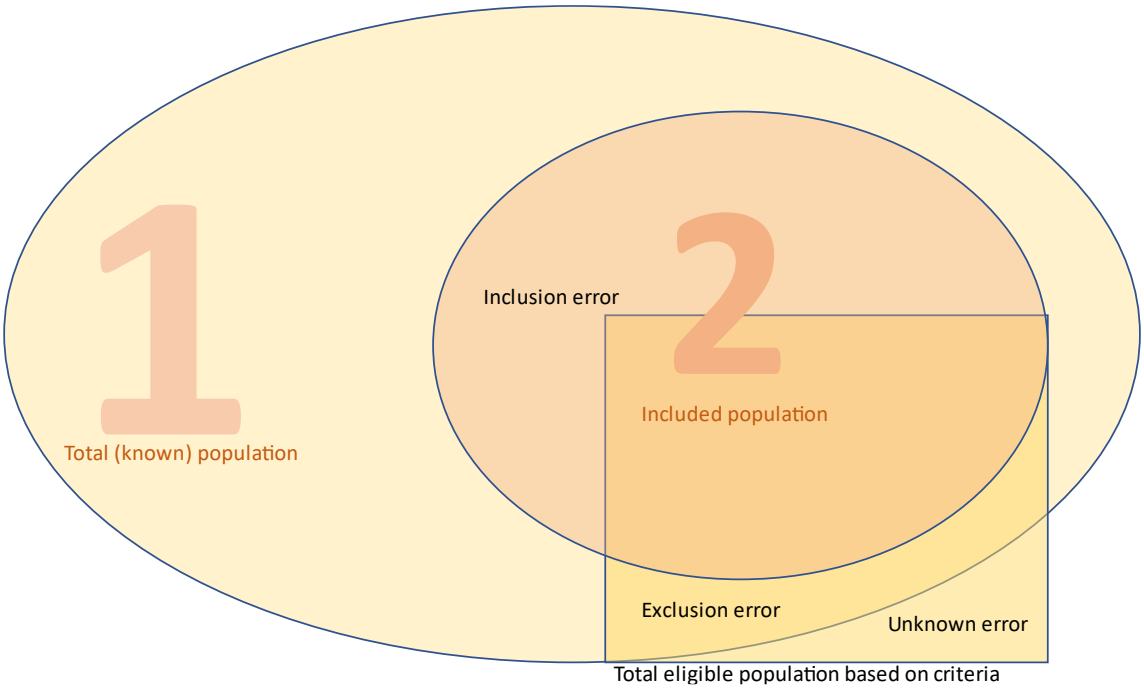

Figure 1. Inclusion and exclusion versus errors and total population (author's own creation)

The different shapes in Figure 1 represent the different factions of a population. The different groups may vary greatly in number, depending on the scope, budget, and accuracy of the intervention and its targeting system. The large circle numbered 1 represents the total officially known population, based on census or other available data. The officially available data on the total population may not always be correct, especially as marginalized groups (such as refugees, nomadic groups, and stateless people) are often under the radar. The darker circle, number 2, represents the targeting outcome of a programme, or the included population. As far as the official assessment is concerned, the included population consists of rightfully included and erroneously included beneficiaries. The latter category represents the inclusion error of the targeting system (also in the darker circle of Figure 1).

The square represents the framework that is used to define eligibility. Those included in the square are officially eligible to participate in the programme. Obviously, a part of the included population fits in the square, as well as some of the population that is eligible, but was not included in the programme. This latter fraction of the population embodies the exclusion error. These two categories are to some extent knowable, depending on the availability of population data. Those who for some reason failed to be included in the data on the total population might still have been eligible to participate, making up an unknown exclusion error. In practice, part of the inclusion error and the exclusion error are also unknowable due to imperfect information.

Monitoring or verifying the accuracy of targeting, like targeting itself, stresses the budget and takes money away from the actual intervention. In addition, inclusion errors may prove persistent when data is hard to verify. Monitoring follows similar pathways as the targeting procedure itself, causing similar inaccuracies or obstacles. Figure 1 shows that portions of the eligible population may not be known to the organization and form an unknown exclusion error. This is especially true if marginalized groups or individuals fall outside of official census information, or outside of the available data on the number and composition of the total population. Besides external and contextual factors (such as meddling or intermediation by elites) and obstacles to data collection, inclusion errors can be the result of the assumptions underlying targeting criteria and indicators (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2015).

Exclusion errors are of a different nature to inclusion errors. Exclusion is inevitable in most programme designs, as the budgeted number of beneficiaries rarely encompasses the total eligible population. Exclusion errors follow from budget constraints or quotas (Gelders, 2018), or by using an indicator that does not fit the population well, such as using labour constraints as a proxy for poverty, which excludes the 'working poor' (McCord, 2009). In other words, there is never enough. Some potentially eligible beneficiaries, by default, are excluded from participation upfront due to this fact. This makes exclusion errors hard to address in programme design without further narrowing down the targeting criteria – targeting within a targeting system. An alternative to this bureaucratic approach is to extend the budget and expand the programme to include those who fall outside the cut-off point.

Some scholars present ways to optimize targeting accuracy and control targeting errors. Devereux (2016), for example, points to reducing the administrative costs of targeting by selecting a relatively cheap targeting system and accepting a certain margin of inclusion error, while accepting that exclusion errors are inevitable in any programme that is not universal. The social costs of targeting, such as stigmatization, social exclusion and loss of dignity as a result of the singling out of specific groups, can be prevented by the sensitive implementation of targeting, or by choosing a less divisive method (Devereux, 2016). These costs are important aspects of any targeting system, besides the error margins, however, it is hard to find practical ways in which inclusion and exclusion errors can be reduced or properly dealt with in the design and implementation of targeting systems.

The use of errors and targeting accuracy does not fully capture the nature of inclusion and exclusion effects. While scholars have attempted to compare accuracy and arrive at the most efficient targeting systems, no clear winner has emerged from this attempt. The variations between and within targeting methods, the extent to which other factors impeded implementation, and the cost of achieving high targeting accuracy hinder the accurate comparison of targeting methods in different contexts (Bastagli et al., 2016). This highlights the difficulties involved in assessing how inclusion and exclusion errors are produced or reproduced from the design into the implementation of various programme components.

Despite the inevitability of errors, and the great variation in the design and implementation of (combinations of) targeting methods, PMT is generally favoured due to its perceived objectiveness. CBT, on the other hand, is heralded for its inclusion of local partners, which generates local acceptance of processes and outcomes. However, both of these claims are being continually challenged by new studies, which point to highly varying mechanisms that cause errors. Many studies identify targeting errors without going into detail about how they are caused (e.g. Mariotti et al., 2016), while others point out some of the key factors that contribute to errors. Gelders (2018), for example, identifies the use of quotas for recipients, community biases or discrimination, and weak communication and mobilization before the targeting process as key factors in the high number of exclusion errors in CBT in cash and food-based programmes by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Kenya. Ultimately, the discussion on targeting performance by systems is still undecided. This attests to the many contextual factors that inhibit or expedite targeting in practice, as well as the importance of implementation processes on the ground and the harmonization of targeting across programmes.

To illustrate the distinction between inclusion and exclusion errors by design and implementation, Figure 2, which is largely borrowed from Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2015, p. 1525), presents a hypothetical 'universal' (rather: categorically targeted) social pension scheme for all citizens over 55 years old, with the overarching purpose of alleviating poverty.

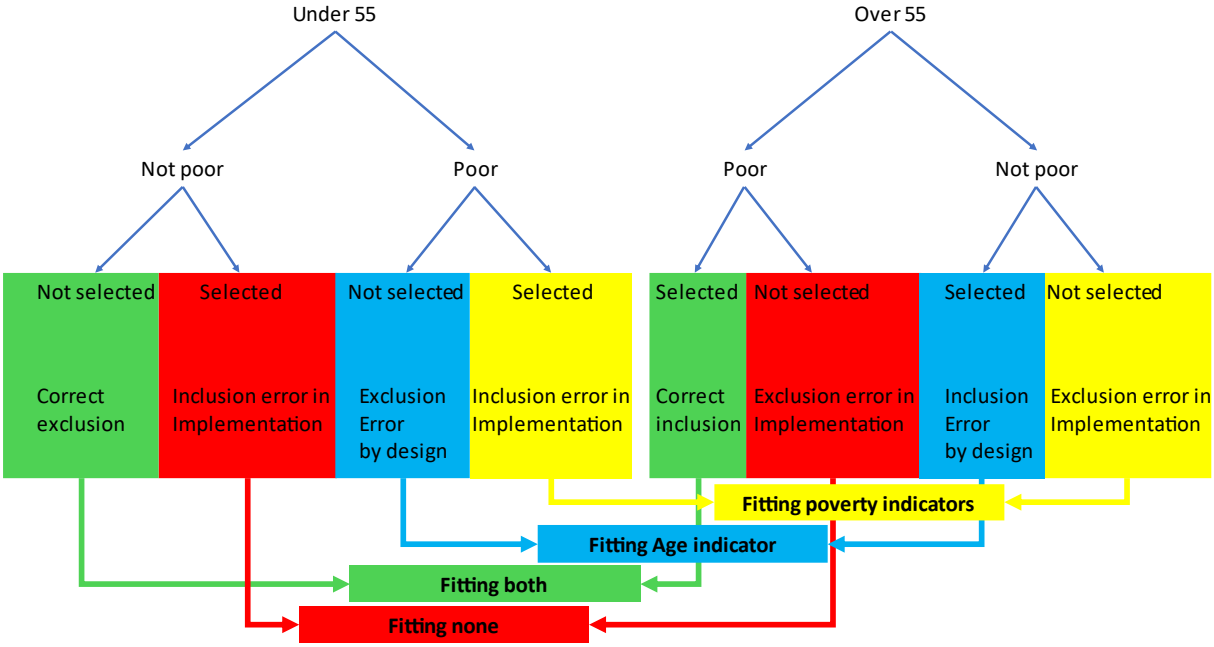

Figure 2. Inclusion and exclusion in hypothetical universal pension scheme (Source: Based on Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2015, p. 1525)

Figure 2 shows how targeting errors occur by design when the objective of poverty targeting is not perfectly aligned with the method of categorically targeted social pensions. Not all persons over 55 years of age are living in poverty, and not all people living in poverty are aged above 55. Inclusion errors by design occur as elderly persons not living below the poverty threshold are also eligible for a social pension merely due to their age. All the while, exclusion errors occur by design as non-elderly persons who are living below the poverty threshold are excluded due to their age. As shown by the green boxes in the figure, the social pension scheme may correctly exclude non-poor people under the age of 55 and correctly include people living in poverty above the age of 55. The other colours present some form of error by design or in implementation. This figure, however, is simplified, as in practice other factors, besides age and indicators of poverty, come into play in relation to social pensions, such as geographic targeting, inadequate data, and deviations from design during implementation. Furthermore, the political aspects of programmes and the interests of stakeholders can also shape inclusion and exclusion, while inclusion occurs on many levels – from access to the hidden costs of meaningful participation.

Unintended inclusion and exclusion effects

Whereas targeting systems are designed to produce inclusion and exclusion outcomes with an error margin, their composition and implementation may also produce unintended inclusion and exclusion effects. These unintended effects may be outside the scope of monitoring and evaluation, and range from levels of access to opportunities and hidden costs to participation, to beneficiaries dropping out during or after onboarding and the capture of benefits. Following the INCLUDE synthesis report on *Inclusive Development in Africa* (Reinders et al., 2019), inclusivity is conceived to be broader than the number of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries categorized as eligible and non-eligible. The concept of inclusivity describes the extent to which beneficiaries can participate and take advantage of opportunities. Inclusion and exclusion errors occur by design, or due to assumptions about the criteria or mechanisms of implementation, or simply due to lack of knowledge about target populations. Exclusion errors are the outcome of a programme's inability to tackle a widespread problem in its entirety, or due to limited budgets, leading to under-coverage and turning the targeting mechanism into a rationing mechanism. Assessing inclusion and exclusion accurately is difficult, as the same errors apply to the assessment as to the initial targeting exercise. Wodon notes that "[a] final complication in evaluating targeting outcomes stems from the fact that the program analyst faces many of the difficulties in correctly measuring welfare that the program official faces" (Wodon, 2012, p. 38). Unintended outcomes are part and parcel of a programme's definition, design and implementation. The following sub-sections refer to these levels in examining unintended inclusion and exclusion.

Definition stage

In the previous chapter, decisions on three aspects that shape explicit targeting on the definition level were discussed: principles and beliefs, scope and range, and eligibility. These decisions affect inclusion and exclusion, especially for those who cannot be clearly put in a predefined category or geography, or who are partly shrouded by informality. This is the case for example for migrants, nomadic households, and informal workers.

For instance, an objective of a national insurance scheme may be to provide social insurance for workers. The idea behind this objective is that social insurance schemes may provide workers with a safety net in case they lose their jobs, or when they face other idiosyncratic shocks that affect their livelihoods. The overarching goal is to provide stability for a general population. The programme is then designed with these principles in mind, a clear delineation of the scope and range, a budget capped at a percentage of GDP, and the prioritization of certain regions. Eligibility for social insurance schemes depends on the status of employment or the ability to pay the contribution fees. Then the definition of 'worker' comes into play – formal jobs being the most used definition of workers. Emphasis may be put on reaching the maximum number of citizens for the least cost, urging the programme to prioritize workers living in poverty. One of the results of this approach may be that informal workers who do not fit the poverty criteria are unable to participate in national social insurance, as they are excluded from formal insurance and not eligible for poverty-targeted support (Palacios & Robalino, 2020). The definition stage is determined by the realities of ministries and departments in charge of designing the programme, as well as policy researchers. Subsequently, decisions are made that may already define exclusion and inclusion further on in the chain of design and implementation.

Social insurance schemes are typically based on recipients having formal employment that ensures contributions either in the form of taxes or, in the case of some health insurance schemes, periodic premiums from beneficiaries (GSDRC, 2021; Kotoh & Van der Geest, 2016). In case of employer-based tax-allocation to social insurance schemes, this shapes exclusion based on the (in)formality of employment. Contrary to the general objective of reaching as many employed citizens as possible, such schemes end up excluding a large group of informal workers. This intersects with exclusion risks based on gender. In most countries, women are overrepresented in informal employment and face disparities in education, wages, networks, and care-related unpaid work. Hence, simply designing a programme without paying attention to women working in informal jobs may affect their inclusion greatly.

Contributory programmes made explicitly for, and targeted at, workers holding formal jobs, in which part of their wages are taxed or contributed, result in double exclusion for women workers. Although this is a hypothetical situation to make the point that the definition of objectives and their subsequent programme design may unwillingly lead to the exclusion of groups in society, social insurance schemes rarely take gender into account in their design (Holmes & Scott, 2016). Definition stage decisions ripple through to design and implementation, causing implicit targeting that can have exclusion and inclusion effects. Table 4 shows some general questions to open the discussion on implicit inclusion and exclusion at the definition level.

Table 4. Questions that address unintended inclusion and exclusion at the definition stage

Principles and beliefs	Vision	Does the vision pertain to a certain group within society?
	Theory of change	Do the processes in the ToC imply certain actors to be involved or excluded? How do involved stakeholders see the ToC?
	Objectives	Do the objectives preclude geographies, social groups, or other entities from participation? Do the objectives infer agency or empowerment among the target population?
Scope and range	Budget	Is the budget sufficient to reach the overall objectives?
	Geographic focus	What are the reasons for the geographic focus of the programme, is it efficiency, pragmatism, existing connections, reachability, or something else?
	Number of beneficiaries	Is there a fixed limit on the number of beneficiaries, and is the number exhaustive for the target group?
Eligibility	Basic idea of eligibility	Is the basic idea of eligibility representative of the context of the intervention? Whose definitions of relevant criteria count?

	Related to principles	How does the general idea of eligibility relate to the principles and beliefs of the intervention?

Design stage

The design of targeting systems builds on the definitions that are set at the strategic level. Factors inherent to design can have unintended effects on inclusion and exclusion, and erect barriers to participation. These barriers follow from, for example, registration and onboarding processes, when beneficiaries are required to have national ID cards or a fixed address of residency (Hurrell et al., 2011). The way targeting systems are designed contributes directly to inclusion and exclusion if designs are not responsive to specific conditions in target populations and localities. Some questions on each aspect of the design of targeting systems are given in the Table 5 to guide discussions on unintended inclusion and exclusion effects.

Table 5. Questions that address unintended inclusion and exclusion at the design stage

Eligibility criteria	Indicators	Do indicators make sense individually and as a set? Are they knowable or representative of the required conditions of eligibility? Do they represent the definitions of various stakeholders?
	Data weighing	Which indicators are more prominent and why? Is the weight skewed to one side?
Identification and selection methods	Data collection	(How) is broad coverage of data collection ensured? Are there barriers (distance, access to digital technology, literacy)? Do data points match with the eligibility criteria?
	Selection process	How are selection processes legitimized at the local level? Who is involved in the selection process?
	Communication	Is communication regarding the selection procedure stigmatizing? Are communications transparent and do they reach all relevant groups?
Onboarding methods	Communication	Does communication towards non-beneficiaries alleviate possible resentment or jealousy from those who were not selected?
	Onboarding procedure	What requirements surface at the onboarding stage and how can these pose barriers to participation?
Monitoring and retargeting	(Non-)compliance monitoring	How restrictive or intrusive is the monitoring of compliance? What forms of non-compliance can stem from barriers to participation? How can they be mitigated?
	Retargeting	Does retargeting follow the same procedure as the initial targeting method, or is it a simpler version? How are changes in the population (migration, economic changes, shocks) dealt with in the retargeting process?

The design of eligibility criteria allows the justified qualification, quantification, ranking, and selection of beneficiaries. Criteria and indicators can be too restrictive or guided by assumptions of eligibility that are scarcely met by the target groups. On the other hand, they can be too broad so that almost the entire population is eligible. Somewhere in between, they may be restrictive to a specific group among the population, which may face unfair exclusion as a result.

A national health insurance programme in Ghana in the early 2000s is an example of the restrictive use of eligibility criteria. This programme aimed to be inclusive of citizens living in poverty by exempting them from paying the premium. This exemption was intended to mitigate the inability of ultra-poor people to enrol in and periodically pay the premium of the health insurance scheme. However, exemptions were not reaching the poorest due to one of the eligibility criteria, which required a person to be homeless, which is “mostly a characteristic of mentally disturbed people who roam cities and towns” (Kotoh & Van der Geest, 2016, p. 7). In this example, a poverty indicator that does not match the reality of being poor in a certain place restricts the target group from participating in the programme. While this affects the effectiveness of the programme itself, Kotoh and Van der Geest (2016) hint that this might have been the intended result of policymakers, who sought to limit expenditure.

Administrative processes of counting and registering beneficiaries can entail extensive time and information costs (Telford, 1997), for both organizations and beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are required to travel to an office, to be able to read or interact with digital devices, sometimes in different languages, and, in some

cases, they also need to be a local resident (Hopkins, Bastagli, & Hagen-Zanker, 2016). Public interactions between beneficiaries and programmes may lead to stigmatization, shaming or even provocation when programmes are perceived to be remedies for a deficit, or related to a low status, such as being 'poor', 'vulnerable', or 'hungry'. Going through highly visible processes, such as registration, queuing, or being 'poverty-measured', are potentially stigmatizing experiences, which can affect beneficiaries' sense of self-efficacy and dignity (Roelen, 2020; Thomas et al., 2020). These activities can also bring to the surface tensions that may be latently in the target population, such as unstable relationships of power or the vested interests of various actors (Telford, 1997). However, this is primarily based on knowledge of social assistance programmes in high income countries (HICs), which can either signify a knowledge gap in relation to lower- and middle-income countries (LMICs), or it may mean that stigmatization does not play that great a role in the latter. Also, in the case of programmes that are less explicitly framed as social assistance, stigmatization may turn out differently.

These types of issues can be caught early by grievance and monitoring systems that are designed in such a way that beneficiaries are incentivized to come forward and share their experiences (Altaf & Pouw, 2017). Adapting the monitoring and supervision of the targeting system could mitigate stigma, administrative barriers, and other pressures. However, monitoring and grievance systems may further reinforce or exacerbate the barriers that are apparent in other steps of the targeting process. In some cases, monitoring, evaluation, and grievance redressal are delegated to community members, or to external agencies for large-scale programmes. Hence, the same personnel involved in monitoring or grievance redressal may be doing other tasks and duties within the programmes, which raises concerns about the safe voicing of issues and complaints by beneficiaries (Hurrell & MacAuslan, 2012). In many cases, maintaining good relationships with programme personnel and officials is vital for the livelihoods of beneficiaries, which makes voicing complaints or bringing up issues very risky behaviour.

Systems designed to monitor and evaluate progress work through indicators, which may prove restrictive themselves. Monitoring compliance or non-compliance with the procedural aspects of programmes, or with conditions and requirements, may be mixed in with the redressal of grievances, or done by the same people (Berhane et al., 2015). However, when designed with the redressal of grievances and feedback in mind, monitoring and evaluation processes can catch inclusion and exclusion effects or errors that occur after the targeting procedures. They can follow changes in contextual factors that may affect the performance of the programme, as well as participation, including beneficiaries dropping out of the programme or from eligibility.

Implementation stage

Whichever way the design of targeting systems is imagined and intended, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Implementation tends to differ from design, which can result in additional inclusion and exclusion effects that remain off the radar. This makes an accurate assessment of targeting systems problematic, as a single method can yield different results in different settings. While aspects of the design of a targeting system can produce unintended inclusion or exclusion effects, these effects can be subsequently confounded or partially mitigated by aspects of the implementation process. In this report, I argue that these human factors exert an important influence on the accuracy, validity, social costs, and effectiveness of targeting systems. Despite this, the practice of targeting on the ground remains a black box to some extent (Gelders, 2018).

Implementers face challenges in applying targeting methods when criteria are difficult to observe, where contextual factors affect the validity of criteria or where differences in the population are small, and when budgets are too limited for outreach to hard-to-reach locations and populations. Extension staff, field workers and implementing partners are often required to use pragmatic solutions, rather than follow the letter of the design of targeting procedures – targeting criteria and mechanisms are often determined by "practical considerations, such as the accessibility or convenience of different locations and whether implementing partners already have operations in place in prospective locations" (Phillips, Waddington, & White, 2015, p. 27). Implementers adapt designed methods to the context, scrapping parts or adding parts of their own. This can remain largely obscure to management and policymakers, and even to evaluators. Table 6 poses some questions that may start meaningful discussions on the unintended inclusion and exclusion effects of the different steps in the implementation process.

Table 6. Questions that address unintended inclusion and exclusion at the implementation stage

Identification procedure	Identify and reach target area	How to reach those within the target area that may be eligible for the intervention?
	Survey procedure	Do enumerators have sufficient means to reach distant populations? Do (parts of the) survey need extra translation, explanation, or mediation?
	Training of implementers	Do implementers have sufficient support and training to spot inclusion and exclusion effects? Do implementers have the possibility to address grievances?
	Pre-selection for data collection	Which groups risk exclusion due to pre-selection; what is the cut-off point? Is the pre-selection too broad, or does it raise sensitive/political issues?
	Data collection	Do implementers face issues collecting data – e.g. handling sensitive data?
Selection procedure	Communication regarding selection procedure	Do groups with limited literacy/access to (digital) means have sufficient information? Is the information available in the appropriate language(s)?
	Data production	Is data valid and applicable? Is it possible to select based on the data?
	Applying calculation and weights	How do eligible beneficiaries and local stakeholders view the calculation? Do the data and the weights match local perspectives on eligibility?
	Arriving at selection	Who is involved in the end-decision and in the process of selection?
	Decision making on selection	How are decisions made and shared by stakeholders? Are any criteria dropped, or added, in the selection process?
	Communication regarding outcomes of selection procedure	Do all stakeholders have access to communications and grievance redressal? Do local stakeholders have ways to find out more and address grievances about the selection procedures? Do communications about the selection outcomes pose risks for the selected?
Inclusion and exclusion (outreach, onboarding)	Communication regarding process of intervention	Do individuals and groups with limited literacy/access to (digital) means have sufficient information? Do all stakeholders have access to communications and grievance redressal?
	Onboarding of beneficiaries	How are barriers to participation considered in onboarding (e.g., travel costs, stigma, time costs, language, literacy, gender dynamics)?
	Monitoring and ex post exclusion	Is there sufficient oversight for monitoring, resulting in sufficient information and thorough decision-making regarding ex-post exclusion?
	Monitoring and retargeting	Is the retargeting process included in the budgets? How dynamic are the targeting processes (e.g., are the changing conditions of those who were previously deemed ineligible considered?)

Few studies have explicitly focused on the implementation side of targeting systems. A notable exception is the study by Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2015), which pays specific attention to implementation and unintended inclusion and exclusion effects. This study found that inclusion errors follow from the implementation of targeting systems, due to behaviour incentives for applicants and personnel and poor design choices, such as limited accuracy and verifiability of proxy variables. Exclusion errors occur if eligible applicants miss registration or are deliberately excluded by other actors (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2015, p. 1524). Whereas implementation errors could be caused by many things, the impacts are ambiguous, as those incorrectly included could be partly eligible, benefit from the programme, and contribute to the programme objectives (also see Figure 2 of this report).

Common ways of dealing with unintended inclusion and exclusion errors revolve around monitoring and grievance redressal during and after the implementation of targeting procedures. Exclusion errors during the identification process can be partly tackled by improving communication – in terms of language, accessibility, media (radio, pamphlets, posters, websites), and messaging – tailored to the setting of the intervention (Gelders, 2018; Gentilini, 2015). Inclusion errors are typically mitigated by more background

checks, monitoring implementation, and the prevention of favouritism or elite capture. Preventing inclusion errors is often more expensive than preventing exclusion errors, and preventing one can increase the other. In many social protection systems in African countries, governments are working with severe budget constraints and insufficient administrative capacity, which limits the accuracy and effectiveness of targeting systems (Hurrell et al., 2011; Slater & Farrington, 2009). Especially in cases where the difference between those eligible and ineligible is small, this poses questions as to the validity of using expensive targeting methods, which can sometimes result in heavy social costs (Ellis, 2012).

The question arises as to whether targeting systems should be assessed on the accuracy and cost-efficiency of their targeting outcomes alone, or also on their general contribution to the objectives of the interventions. In a study reviewing the evidence on cash transfers, Bastagli et al. (2016) point out that targeting systems are typically only evaluated to assess the effectiveness and accuracy of the targeting exercise, rather than its impact on the programme and its objectives as a whole. The effects of targeting systems include the social costs of frustration and misunderstandings, as well as the psychosocial costs of stigmatization when the targeting and registration by social protection programmes are public (Gelders, 2018). Especially in the case of targeting in which community members play a role, they may face hidden costs, including time spent without compensation and scrutiny by community members for being identified with the intervention, as well as other costs. The community as a whole may be put in a vulnerable position politically as well (McCord, 2017). Knowing the unintended inclusion and exclusion effects of implementation processes of targeting systems may further move the discussion about targeting towards merits related to objectives. Kidd (2013), an ardent proponent of a more universal approach, takes this further and argues that targeting systems should be assessed based on other factors, like the damage to community cohesion, the risk of manipulation, and the cost of implementation.

Contextual factors as blind spots

Inclusion and exclusion errors are caused by the assumptions underlying the design and implementation of targeting systems. These assumptions can show up in many forms, from assuming poverty targeting is best done by demographically targeting the elderly, to assuming that cash transfers are better spent by women in households or that people living in ultra-poverty in cities are all homeless or labour constrained (see the example of Ghana's health insurance mentioned earlier in this chapter). Common blind spots of programmes include gender-blindness or gender-insensitivity, failure to take into account informality, power structures and the political economy, or, more generally, blindness to the cultural or social context. All interventions have limits, and not all blind spots can be illuminated, but the lens of inclusion and exclusion can expose blind spots in programme design and implementation. Some of the most common blind spots in targeting systems are discussed below.

Vulnerabilities and intersectionality

Barriers to access for vulnerable groups depend on contextual factors, which can be social, environmental, economic, and cultural. These factors include climate, access to goods and markets, infrastructure, health, and education, but also matters of ethnicity and gender, among other things. While some of these contextual factors are broadly applicable to populations, some groups may face additional vulnerabilities that prevent them from accessing or participating in policies and programmes directed at them. Especially in times of crisis, these contextual factors can intersect for marginalized groups, limiting their access further.

Social protection programmes typically have targeting objectives that single out people living in chronic poverty, often based on PMT or other survey-based methods. This generates a snapshot of long-term poverty indicators which determine eligibility. These indicators may not be sufficient in times of crisis, as household surveys that are carried out at wide intervals do not capture the changing nature of vulnerability. Shock-responsive targeting systems need to be dynamic, regular in frequency and include indicators that can be used to predict vulnerability in the face of an imminent crisis that can cause rapid changes in the circumstances of households. Early-warning systems should include sources outside of household surveys, such as administrative registries, collaborations between grassroots movements and civil society, and crowd-sourcing (Bastagli, 2014).

In some cases, eligible beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries take part in their own exclusion, through processes that are described by Altaf (2019) as self-exclusion. Altaf shows that vulnerable social groups sometimes self-exclude themselves from participating in programmes due to shame, lack of trust, or fear of being rejected based on their position in society. Other forms of self-exclusion include reactions to the upfront

costs of participation, such as time and money spent on travelling or completing surveys. These costs of participation can occur before selection or after enrolment. For some, these activities entail too high a cost for them to participate. More emphasis on the inclusion and exclusion effects of different targeting systems and the instrument effects[1] (Ferguson, 1990) of other programme components can shed light on the mechanisms of self-exclusion.

Urban or rural settings

Targeting systems that are appropriate for rural situations may not yield similar results in urban areas, and vice versa. Differences in social dynamics and social cohesion may influence the process of targeting and monitoring interventions; for example, outreach activities, such as organizing a meeting or assembly, may take longer in urban areas (Moreira & Gentilini, 2016). Urban settlements often experience a fluid expansion and contraction over time. In rural populations, a census approach may be efficient, while in urban areas this can be too costly, partly due to this fluidity. The differences between rural and urban contexts is an important factor to consider in the accuracy and appropriateness of targeting systems.

Other ways of targeting are implemented in urban areas – like self-targeting by subscribing at an office by a certain time (Behrman et al., 2012). Infrastructure and social contexts in urban areas may be better suited for distribution and communication through radio, using billboards, brochures, and posters, or through the web and local community workers (Cuesta et al., 2020). However, due to challenges with communication, lack of community cohesion and problems with proper identification, it can be difficult to reach the more marginalized groups among urban residents. In rural areas, community meetings are a common tool for communication and participation. However, due to the social cost of attending public meetings, this can be another barrier to the participation of marginalized groups.

In relation to poverty targeting, urban contexts differ greatly from rural ones in terms of the mechanism of poverty, the specific vulnerabilities that need addressing, and the extent to which an intervention may be necessary. Urban households typically look different than rural ones. Extended family, as well as other individuals, may be present or resident at one address, and this may change over time. Poverty criteria that are useful in rural areas may not apply in urban areas – proxies and vulnerabilities are different (Gronbach, 2020). In general, urban poverty is characterized by dependency on vulnerable livelihoods and low income, combined with high market dependency. In rural villages, poverty can be defined using other dimensions, such as proximity and access to arable land, distance to markets, and access to inputs for livelihoods. These local definitions of poverty create differences in expectation between community actors and field staff. From a programme standpoint, and related to specific objectives, it can be problematic when local definitions diverge from preconceived programme ones. However, these differences matter in understanding what multi-dimensional poverty means, and this process can be eased by using a participatory poverty evaluation strategy (e.g., participatory assessment of development [PADev]). In urban areas definitions of poverty typically align better with the definitions of project staff (Hillebrecht et al., 2020).

Gender-blindness and gender-insensitivity

Gender dynamics play a complex role in targeting systems, and these dynamics are not always well-mapped or considered. Peterman et al. (2019) studied social safety nets in Africa through a gender lens and distinguished three types of programmes based on approaches to gendered issues: gender-blind, gender-neutral and gender-transformative. Design features with gender implications include gender-based targeting, conditionality and behavioural features, payments and transfer mechanisms, integrated approaches (e.g., adding components to the cash-transfer) and gender-aware operational features

[1] The term 'instrument effects', first coined by James Ferguson (1990), refers to the (unintended) side effects of an intervention that go beyond its initially intended purpose. He argues that instrument effects may have a more far-reaching and lasting impact than the original intervention envisioned. He describes these effects in Lesotho, where rural anti-poverty interventions expanded the bureaucratic reach of the state into regions previously unreached. These effects are twofold: alongside the institutional effects (as seen in Lesotho), there are ideological effects that depoliticize both development problems and their solutions, rendering them purely technical.

(Peterman et al., 2019). While not all programmes may aim to be gender-transformative, gendered issues play an important role, nevertheless.

Gender-blind programmes do not take into account the specific needs and differences of gender groups vis-à-vis various social and economic relationships, but rather exclude them from their scope (Holmes & Scott, 2016). These socio-economic relationships may vary from intra-household dynamics to work relations, informality, education disparities, dependency relationships within families, and differentiated care burdens. For example, social insurance programmes that depart from a model household in which a man is the breadwinner and a woman is dependent on his income can end up gender-blind – especially those that cover only certain risks based on this assumed household composition. Households may consist of multiple nuclear families, with role divisions that may not fit into assumed moulds.

The effects of gendered approaches on relationships between different members of households and communities should be considered in the design and implementation of targeting systems. However, Slater and Farrington (2009) observe that:

> *[e]vidence on the gender effects of different targeting mechanisms is limited for two reasons: first, it tends to only ask questions about whether targeting women makes the programme work better, rather than asking what the impacts on women are (in particular, their subordination/ empowerment). Secondly, it focuses almost exclusively on assessing programmes that do target women, rather than asking about the gender effects of programmes that do not*. (Slater & Farrington, 2009, para. 93)

Studies of targeting systems should include a focus on the effect of different targeting strategies on women, as well as on relationships between men and women, and how programmes align with existing inequalities and vulnerabilities due to gender disparities. In addition, gender typically takes a binary approach (men and women) – even in literature critiquing gender-blindness. This induces another form of gender-blindness in relation to gender groups that are non-binary. In general, targeting strategies and programme components could be studied for their effects on gender groups, rather than studying gender as an obstacle to effectiveness.

Implicit functions of programme components that affect access and participation

Elements of the design and implementation of programmes can cause barriers for some people and advantages for others and may function in similar ways as targeting. As with targeting systems, blind spots and assumptions can cause variations in the opportunities available for different groups to gain access and participate. In the World Bank *Sourcebook on the Foundations of Social Protection*, Lindert et al. (2020) point out that geographic remoteness, as well as the position of a social group among other groups, matter in relation to the ability of a social protection programme to reach them:

> *Ethnic minorities and migrants may face a variety of access barriers to social protection programs and delivery systems. Such barriers can include language and cultural barriers, discrimination, fears (particularly if residence status is not formalized), geographic and social isolation, lack of trust in public institutions, lack of awareness of programs, and low self-confidence in navigating bureaucratic processes.* (Lindert et al., 2020, p. 74)

These complexities should not only be addressed in the targeting systems and communications, but also in delivery systems, training and coaching, and other components of social protection programmes.

Inclusion and exclusion effects emerge during the process of participation in the intervention. Time may need to be investment, including physical visits to administration bureaus or the attendance of meetings in the village. In some cases, examination moments or evaluations may pose a barrier, if sensitive information is requested or progress in a programme is measured and evaluated. These moments can have psychological and social costs, as beneficiaries may be publicly confronted by a lack of skills or progress within the programme. This may deepen the marginalization or stigmatization of members of vulnerable groups, especially in the context of poverty-targeted programmes.

Stigmatization can occur when a programme is framed as the remedy for a ‘deficit’ (e.g., poverty, vulnerability, hunger). In a study on the dignity of beneficiaries in aid programmes, Thomas et al. (2020) studied the designs and implementation of aid programmes with a specific focus on dignity. They found that

many aid programmes employ narratives of hardship, vulnerability, and poverty as a deficit to secure funding, as well as in their communication and implementation of the programme. It is necessary to sensitize programme communication and narratives and make them more supportive and respectful of beneficiaries' dignity. A method of local forecasting could be used to identify ways in which aid can be represented as an opportunity, or as facilitating, instead of patronizing or remedying. Local forecasting means to collaborate with local actors to fine-tune a message or a communication to fit the understanding of those who will hear it. This sensitization would predominantly entail aligning programme language with local ideas of agency (Thomas et al., 2020, p. 15547).

Implementation hinges on contextual factors, unforeseen events, the formal and informal activities of implementers, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, and last-minute changes. Reality on the ground does not always mirror the way interventions are designed, and ad hoc problem solving often comes into play on the front line of policies and interventions. Programmes may be implemented differently from their designed intentions, due to practical difficulties with selecting a limited number of beneficiaries from a large pool of eligible and interested parties. Elite capture in the targeting process may also play a role in any discrepancy between design and implementation (Phillips et al., 2015). Programmes that were intended to be universally available may end up as targeted through the involvement of community actors, governments, or field staff. And, vice versa, inadequate or problematic targeting efforts may prompt community actors themselves to compensate for inequalities and perceived unfairness in the targeting system; for example, the benefits of a cash transfer scheme perceived as unfair were redistributed among members of rural communities in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (Strauss-Kahn, 2019).

While it is perhaps a redundant statement that practice on the ground invariably differs from the planned intervention, the mechanisms that cause these differences merit further study. Such study would inform better designs in the future, or at least a better understanding of the intervention and its context. Tripathi et al. (2019) argue that programme implementation fidelity – which is the extent to which programmes are implemented according to their original plans – should be tracked to better evaluate whether a programme worked or not. Factors that undermine implementation fidelity include communication about programme objectives, changes in costs and budgets, personnel transitions, and changes to procedural aspects of programme components, such as the frequency, duration, and value of interventions. These aspects are not commonly discussed in interpretations of findings. Moreover, evaluations face similar issues as the programmes they evaluate, such as budgetary constraints and changing context-specific factors, which can prevent original evaluation plans from materializing (Tripathi et al., 2019). Thus, it is inadvisable to take implementation for granted in the design and evaluation of targeting systems, or, indeed, of policies and programmes as a whole.

Chapter 4. The political economy of targeting

There is an inherently political side to targeting that is linked to general objectives and decision making about who is *in* and who is *out*. Targeting choices often betray the political and ideological background of the designers of interventions, rather than reflecting a thorough analysis of the context (Slater & Farrington, 2009). It is also argued that the targeting of social funds for the poor creates a paradox, in which there is little political interest in better targeting, as such funds exclude groups within society with political power, such as the middle class, from benefiting (Kidd, 2015; Van Domelen, 2007).

This chapter provides an overview of the political economy of targeting, as found in the literature in this review. It is guided by the following sub-question: **Q3. How do the (political) interests of different actors affect targeting and inclusion in practice?** It is addressed in two parts. First, an overview is given of the salient aspects of the political economy that are related to targeting systems and methods in the literature. Then the different actors that define, design, and implement targeting in their policies and programmes are discussed.

Political economy aspects

Targeting systems and methods seem to be rather technical elements, involving data, evidence, and knowledge about populations. This leads one to think that with the proper design, the desired result will be achieved, the intended populations will be reached, and they will benefit accordingly. Descriptions of methods and systems that are associated with targeting, as elaborated in the previous chapters, ostensibly render identification, selection and reaching the intended populations a technical aspect of design and implementation. However, in reality, targeting by policies and programmes is deeply political and boils down to 'who benefits from programmes?' and 'who gets to decide who benefits from programmes?', as well as 'what interests play a role in decisions about targeting?'. These interests can be directly linked to the benefits of the programmes, or they may be less obvious.

Although most of the literature in this review deals only with technical questions and the effectiveness and accuracy of targeting systems, many authors also bow their heads over the political economy of targeting systems and methods in development interventions. The political economy of having a targeted approach, instead of a universal approach, is a major topic of debate in this field. For example, Kidd (2013, 2015) uses political economy theory to navigate government interests and to come up with an inclusive social protection approach. He argues that poverty targeting eventually limits political support, as most members of constituencies will not profit from it; instead, a more categorical approach, such as a social pension may be more successful in securing budget funds, as it will benefit a larger segment of the constituency, while appealing to an idea of universal entitlement. This highlights that a targeting system is an expression of political interest, instead of merely technically zooming in on a population.

Political economy analyses of targeting, which revolve around the intersection between politics and economics, point to the fact that "decisions about targeting are often as much about public acceptability, ideology and political economy considerations as they are about economic logic, so a range of social and political indicators are also required" (Slater & Farrington, 2009, para. 24). These social and political indicators concern the process as well as the outcomes of targeting systems. In a review of political economy models for the targeting of social transfers, Schüring and Gassmann (2016) criticize the assumption that a universal/categorical approach would be better suited in low-income countries due to the support of the middle-income vote. Rather than promote a blanket position on universality or targeting, they point to the complexities of social spending budgets, which are assumed to be partly dependent on political support, instead of being fixed budgets. The budgets are based on reallocation, increased taxation, or increased funding, depending on political decisions. Where the budget comes from affects the political support of groups in society, which can be more nuanced and complex than low-, middle-, or high- income classes. Schüring and Gassmann (2016) argue that besides these macro-level characteristics:

> *Other factors, such as voters' attitudes towards the poor, their understanding of social justice, the level of cohesion in society, the degree to which a programme is perceived as procedurally fair and effective, as well as the fact that whether a programme is designed from scratch or has already been in existence, could have an equal bearing on voters' attitudes towards targeting*. (Schüring & Gassmann, 2016, p. 825)

Besides the reasons and interests behind using targeting methods per se, the practical aspects of targeting are also viewed through a political economy lens. For example, poverty reduction goal posts are being shifted downwards, as poverty is continually being redefined more narrowly, by deciles and quintiles that arbitrarily signify the 'poorest of the poor' in populations with only marginal differences (McCord, 2009, p. 2). This is also often driven by donor enthusiasm, rather than domestic policy priorities. Increasingly, it seems that the 'deserving poor' are distinguished from the rest of the population and prioritized as the intended recipients of the benefits of social programming – and the political economy of poverty definitions and cut-off points seems to be the cause of this (Chinsinga, 2009). A result of these trends, targeting systems could themselves be at risk of becoming self-fulfilling prophecies that cloud the distinction between them in terms of accuracy, justification, and legitimacy. As cut-off points for poverty become more arbitrarily defined, poverty targeting systems risk becoming more arbitrarily justified.

Definitions of poverty that are operationalized through indicators can also create such arbitrary divisions. The example of Ghana's national health insurance system (see Chapter 3 of this report) used indicators to identify the 'core poor', which included homelessness. However, homelessness was not correlated with poverty in a meaningful way, which resulted in the exclusion of most of the core poor due to this one indicator. Defining poverty in such restrictive manner can be a strategy by policymakers to limit the cost of a programme (Kotoh & Van der Geest, 2016). In this case, the rhetorical value of poverty targeting takes centre stage, as policymakers and politicians are able to 'market' the programme, while limiting the body of the programme and, therefore, the cost. Political worries, interests and opportunities shape the design and implementation of targeting systems, which is especially the case for those programmes that do not benefit politically significant social groups.

Some of the political concerns with cash transfers, in particular, are that they are seen as 'handouts' or related to elections, increase dependency, and can leak to the 'undeserving'. This is also observed by Habasonda (2009), who studied cash transfer programmes in Zambia, which were predominantly targeted at incapacitated households (i.e. households with little or no labour). This restricted targeting strategy was to mitigate the fears of the government and donors about creating dependency in households that were not labour constrained (Habasonda, 2009). Other worries include incurring high and increasing costs by committing fully to a programme, rather than investing in short-term and small-scale pilot programmes (Kidd, 2015). These factors come into play in the decision making about the inclusion of programmes, rather than poverty itself or the actual number of people who are 'objectively' eligible.

The process of targeting is another aspect of the political economy, as various groups have a stake in the outcomes. While transparency in communication and stakeholder negotiation is often officially at the heart of the identification and selection procedures, this may not always be how these procedures play out. Targeting and the delivery of programmes is "shaped by the interplay between the formally laid down rules and the informal rules, especially those governing local power and influence" (Chinsinga, 2009, p. 15). These local power holders can be responsible for inaccuracies and the capture of benefits, while they may also reinforce the targeting accuracy or distribute benefits among community members besides those who are targeted. Programme beneficiaries may experience adverse effects due to their participation in targeted programmes. They may experience tensions with others when cut-off points for inclusion do not seem justifiable, or when only a fraction of the eligible population are included in the benefits of a programme.

Targeting by governments versus NGOs

Regardless of critiques on the use of the term 'targeting', this term manages to capture the typically top-down character of the procedure. Hence, studying the ways in which the main actors approach targeting seems worthwhile. At the risk of being broad stroked, some arguments are presented below to characterize some of the common approaches to targeting by governments and NGOs.

Governments

The targeting of national governments inevitably distinguishes intended target populations from other citizens. Van Domelen (2007) provides the following overview of the reasons governments have to employ a targeted approach for their policies:

- Overall economic growth may be enhanced when the dragging effects of persistent inequalities are improved.

- Enhancing underserved areas will promote a more balanced growth and exchange between regions.
- Optimizing resource allocation may put less strain on budgets and taxes.
- Governments may transfer public resources to poorer groups to achieve equity objectives, or they may want to optimize their results for key development indicators.
- In some instances, targeting resources to hinterlands or minority groups may ease regional or intra-ethnic tensions.
- In the case of crises, some groups may be more vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters or more general shocks and require more support.
- Governments may engage in targeting resources to achieve political objectives or to keep promises made during elections.

Most of the above reasons seem to hold objective merit for effective policy making, and the argument for targeting can be made based on these reasons. The way targeting systems for government play out in practice, however, can still divert targeting from following the reasons in this list. Governments have at their disposal several ways to structure their policies and interventions, including legal frameworks, enforcement and formulating new national or local policies, as well as appointing officials.

A unique driver for targeting decisions by governments can be legal frameworks. Legal definitions and the extension of rights to include certain groups to specify certain (universal) rights can be a reason for governments to include groups of citizens in social policies (Holmes & Scott, 2016). Of course, this is contingent on the enforcement of these legal definitions, which may be problematic in the case of marginalized population groups.

The definition, design, and implementation stages may operate with some distance between them, as the national government may provide a framework, backed by international sponsors or funding, and implemented by local government actors or NGOs. The design of programmes may be devolved to local governments or implementing organizations, which will give a more practical shape to the framework. On the ground, several actors may cooperate to implement the policy or intervention, including community actors, government officials, civil society actors, and NGOs.

Budget constraints are often cited as a rationale for targeting by governments. In the case of social protection schemes, categorical and geographic targeting are used to ration budgets and to keep government spending in certain areas or sectors limited. Another way of limiting budgets is to focus an intervention on the ultra-poor and install a cut-off point in terms of the absolute number of beneficiaries, as has been observed with national social protection programmes. Alternatively, installing a pilot programme with limited geographic scope to test the effectiveness of an intervention before rolling it out nationwide limits the budget while still allowing the government to keep its promises. This pathway speaks to the need for cost-effectiveness in government-funded programmes, as they are funded by taxpayers' money. Although budget constraints infuse a sense of technicality into the intervention logic, this logic closely reflects the political will and interests of the government (Kidd, 2013, p. 8). It can be argued that pilot programmes that could have been scaled up in the past have not yet reached that point, notwithstanding their benefits or effectiveness.

Governments shape their targeting systems to align with the political interests of powerful elites. In the case of social protection systems, governments often broadly introduce old age pensions, while narrowly targeting social cash transfers to people living in ultra-poverty. The first type of social protection benefits all individuals above a certain age, including middle class voters, who are a powerful electoral constituency. On the other hand, spending on ultra-poor groups in society is limited, reflecting their limited electoral and political power. Van Domelen points out that:

> *The literature on the political economy of public spending highlights many reasons why spending decisions are made not on the basis of technocratic criteria but on calculations of political power, patronage and favoritism. Power is consolidated by controlling the levers of public spending*. (Van Domelen, 2007, p. 9)

The targeting mechanisms used by governments for social protection are woefully inaccurate and reflect, above all else, a lack of political will to spend sufficiently on social protection (Kidd & Athias, 2020b). Viewed

from this angle, the reasons why governments use targeting systems become obscure, as they are based on the purely political reasoning of the actors controlling the levers of public spending.

NGOs

It does not do justice to the wide variety of NGOs working in development to bunch them into one section. What sets them apart as a group, for the purpose of this report, is that they employ targeting mechanisms in similar ways to governments, sometimes with similar goals. For NGOs, targeting ranges from census and survey-based targeting to community targeting, and even to what is perhaps best described as snowballing and networking. Like governments, NGOs have constituencies; however, these do not consist of voting citizens, but of donors and governments. Besides these supply-side actors, the targeting procedures are often tailored for acceptance by the target communities. NGOs target their resources due to budget constraints, as well as considerations of efficiency and effectiveness, and simply because their funding is finite and often project based.

Hence, the targeting systems of NGOs typically differ from those of governments, not so much in their design, methods, or implementation structures, as in their relationship to the organization's vision, mission, and objectives. NGOs with a clear poverty alleviation mission employ poverty targeting in various ways, whereas more structural development organizations may use a sectoral/value chain approach, and small-scale basic service NGOs (such as those supporting one hospital or one school) may not be concerned with targeting beyond the location of their intervention. The former target households and individuals, communities, or villages, while the latter target economic entities or occupational associations. Like governments, the organizations that ultimately pay for the interventions are to some extent in control of the procedures for the identification and selection of beneficiaries – and these procedures are shaped according to their interests and objectives. The toolbox of targeting systems and methods used by NGOs is largely the same as that used by governments, although the interests of the implementing organizations may differ. Several issues play a part in these decisions.

Important considerations in targeting are limiting costs and efficiently allocating funds. Targeting systems for NGOs are about cost-effectiveness if anything. NGOs must justify their budget and there is no room for large overhead costs going into the design and implementation of targeting systems. In practice, this means that CBT methods are popular, as they have the advantage of being cheaper and are only marginally less accurate, depending on implementation, and they generate traction and accountability with the community. Some extent of community involvement in the targeting system of NGOs is common, be it in outreach, extension or execution, or a deeper involvement in setting the parameters and criteria of selection.

The geographic scope of an NGO project can depend on the NGO's contacts and partners, as well as pragmatic choices such as travelling and language requirements. It may also be the result of strategic decisions made by project staff so as to ensure project approval (Briggs, 2021). As opposed to governments, NGOs are usually not accountable for the gaps in their coverage, and NGOs may have competing activities in multiple areas. This can lead to caveats in the provision of essential services, as well as areas that become a beaten track for development interventions. Some countries' governments rely partly on NGOs to support the provision of basic services such as health care and social protection. These NGOs – together with other actors – form a patchwork of programmes, projects and interventions that cover, and sometimes overlap across, regions and countries. Single NGOs may have pragmatic reasons for focusing on specific areas – due to their network, partner organizations, historic attachment, or mission statement. As with the political interests of actors in governments, these pragmatic considerations may differ greatly from the official objectives and rationales of NGO projects and programmes.

Briggs (2018) studied the geographical concentrations of development aid in Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda and found that a general pattern emerges – aid is not specifically targeted to where extreme poverty is situated geographically, but actually reversely correlates with distance to these areas (Briggs, 2018). In other words, poverty-targeted programmes are generally further away from people experiencing more extreme deprivation (Briggs, 2018, p. 906). This paradoxical finding cannot be reconciled with the official objective of poverty targeting and should be explained by political economy factors. One such factor is the personal and career interests of workers in the NGO sector. Briggs found that project managers' decisions to approve projects hinge on their analysis of feasibility, as well as their expectation of whether or not the project will be approved at a higher level. Programmes with more operational difficulties (which tend to be the ones that try to reach the hardest-to-reach) have less expected chance of being granted approval, hence, the bias towards less complex programming (Briggs, 2021).

Coordination of and communication between NGOs within sectors of development could make targeting efforts less costly and address issues of aid concentration, providing more spatial equity. An example of this approach is the establishment of Cash Working Groups in various countries, which provide a platform for exchange between various actors engaged in social protection and humanitarian aid responses that use cash transfers as a method. These Cash Working Groups have the potential to harmonize and extend identification systems for organizations seeking to implement cash transfer programmes.

Regardless of which poverty indicators are used, the number of people living in poverty is invariably too great for NGOs to be able to serve each individual or household. This fact requires NGOs to make decisions about whom to include and exclude, often in situations where the differences are marginal at best. In these contexts, the selection mechanisms are better viewed as rationing mechanisms, rather than targeting mechanisms (Gelders, 2018). A problematic aspect of this exercise is that the selection outcomes should, in one way or another, be justifiable to their constituencies, as well as the communities they work with.

The decisions of NGOs regarding selection procedures are linked to the evaluation indicators of the programme. In this way, the inputs and outcomes of programmes can be aligned and harmonized, not only for the benefit of consistency, but in some cases also to ensure the effectiveness of the programme itself. Certain qualities are sought in the target population to enhance the likelihood of them achieving the programme objectives, such as personal or entrepreneurial development. These indicators may be income, assets, productivity, or other indicators evaluated at the end, which are included in baseline surveys and find their way into the selection criteria in the form of terms like ‘entrepreneurial mindset’, ‘pro-activeness’, or ‘potential’. This is an effort towards more ‘effective spending’, which in the process creates a division between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ among members of a population who may be only marginally different in indicators (Hurrell & MacAuslan, 2012; McCord, 2009). This poses questions regarding the overall objective of a programme, and its relationship to scope and range. It also creates tension between the goals of reaching as many as possible, those who need it the most, and those who are expected to show the best results. Furthermore, those who are deemed to have the most potential have a higher chance of already being targeted by other programmes (Hollander & Bolling, 2015).

Within communities, not all eligible individuals and households can be served by individual NGO programmes. This means that hard decisions must be made in the selection of beneficiaries, and these decisions need to be justifiable to other members of communities. Despite communication strategies and the transparency of the selection procedures, this can lead to issues. In a study of cash transfer programmes in Northern Uganda, Blattman et al. (2016) reported instances of jealousy between beneficiaries and members of their community, which can lead to unpleasant situations and even ostracization.

Chapter 5. Scale and targeting

This chapter briefly covers a subject that is alive in many policies and projects. It looks at the fourth sub-question**: Q4. How do ambitions of scale play a role in targeting?** Scale relates to the political economy, as an implicit objective of many policies and programmes is to attain a certain scale. This ambition of scaling up feeds into the discussion on cost-effectiveness. Especially in pilot programmes, issues of scalability play a significant role in the design and implementation of interventions. Scaling up can have different bearings on policies and programmes; it can mean expanding on the successful (elements of) programmes, as well as the addition of functions and components following from a spatial, fiscal or temporal expansion (Costa, Gyoeri, & Veras Soares, 2016).

Social protection systems

In scaling up social protection systems, in particular, increasing coverage requires adequate information systems, data collection and registries that span several programmes that make up the national social protection system (Schnitzer, 2018). Ambitions of scale infuse targeting systems with a focus on the cost-effectiveness of the targeting method itself, relating the accuracy of methods to costs and weighing inclusion and exclusion errors to arrive at the optimal targeting system to roll out at scale. This places extra tension on the balance between reaching the hard-to-reach or leaving no-one behind and considerations of cost-effectiveness.

Pilot programmes explore the possibility of expanding a certain formula to a larger scale. However, they may be more focused on experimenting with the applicability of technologies or innovative modalities of development aid, than exploring how targeting can be done at scale. Scaling up micro-level programmes to reach a general population is not straight forward, as it can generate unexpected macro-effects (Samson, 2015). It can also mean that a lot of the implementation structures and organization will have to be transformed, which requires a high level of administrative capacity and adequate human resources, possibly changing the entire nature of the operation (Mariotti et al., 2016). Many of the project components and their implementation structures may need to be turned upside down, and may not be recognisable after scaling up (Mariotti et al., 2016, pp. 51–53).

Scaling up from a small-scale NGO operation to large-scale operation has other implications. It means turning around the use of relatively large numbers of resources in a small geographic scale, into allocating resources in different or larger geographies. NGOs that face capacity constraints due to budget, size and capacity of local partners, or other factors, can compound their implementation issues by scaling up. Targeting issues also increase when scaling up small-scale programmes nationally or regionally, while differences between targeting strategies and methods of various NGOs can cause confusion and gaps in coverage (Handa et al., 2012). As with other programme components and technologies, targeting systems that work on a small scale are not automatically effective on a larger scale.

Obtaining scale means allocating budget, and that requires coordination, political will and opportunity from government actors, donors, or political elites. Furthermore, the existence of many separate and unconnected pilot programmes of a similar hue may prevent an actual effort to scale up from being achieved, as competition crowds out potential learning and coordination efforts (Glassman, 2020). Coordination is required by national governments, associations, and international organizations to prevent this crowding out from happening. Social protection – for example, cash transfer graduation programmes that target the ultra-poor – can be scaled up by forming alliances between those organizations that form the community of practice, albeit across different geographies. Trickle Up is a notable example that follows this approach (Marston & Grady, 2014).

Another way to increase coordination is to align with supranational level goals, such as the SDGs, or to tap into the resilience agenda or the post-COVID-19 push for more resilience and disaster-readiness – the humanitarian-development assistance nexus. These moves can promote scale being reached, not only for individual projects or programmes, but in a sector. As mentioned in the previous chapter, however, political elites often have incentives not to promote social policies, further complicating efforts for social policies to reach scale.

A different approach for social protection programmes to reach scale is through national registries of populations that are, or may become, eligible for social programmes. Lucian Bucur Pop studied the

Ghanaian safety net programmes and identified key opportunities to establish a common targeting approach, with a single entry for all safety net programmes. In doing so, coordination can be enhanced and targeting errors diminished, while each safety net programme identifies eligible populations from the same data set. In this way the targeting processes need not be duplicated, in theory freeing up budget for actual implementation and allowing for programmes to be scaled up horizontally (Pop, 2015). In his proposal of a common targeting method, one of the programmes with the most advanced targeting method in Ghana, the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), would be scaled up and expanded to be applicable to other targeted safety net programmes. This targeting method is a combination of geographic targeting, categorical targeting, CBT and PMT. In this case, PMT is used for the selection of beneficiaries from the CBT, matching a pre-defined quota that is much lower than the proportion of eligible individuals or households. A shared single registry for social safety net programmes and other local or national government interventions can be a key element in coordinating among ministries or layers of government and, thus, be instrumental in scaling up (Beegle, et al., 2018a).

COVID-19 responses

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many governments around the world to rapidly expand the coverage of social protection programmes over the course of the year 2020. Social protection response to shocks or emergencies can be done in two ways: by providing additional benefits to targeted beneficiaries of social policies and interventions that are already widespread; or by expanding coverage to those who were not previously included. Leite (2015, p. 121) argues for the rapid expansion of existing programmes with an already targeted population, of which the distinction between eligible and non-eligible has previously been made using PMT. By extending the cut-off point in the formula, a larger portion of the population is added to the beneficiary pool. However, this is contingent on the quality and coverage of data on possible vulnerable populations after the emergency. Furthermore, limited funding and poor coordination can seriously impede the scaling up of existing programmes for more expansive inclusion (Cnobloch & Subbarao, 2015). A single registry for social safety net programmes is indispensable in emergency responses: “Key building blocks of social safety net delivery systems – especially targeting mechanisms, social registries, and payment systems – are also critical to the development of shock responsive programs” (Beegle, et al., 2018a, p. 73).

It is argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has put strain on the idea of targeting a limited group of people for poverty alleviation programmes, as within a few weeks a large portion of the general population joined the ranks of people living in poverty. As a result, where governments used to apply targeting mechanisms to target the poor for poverty relief, in response to COVID-19 they have been seen to take a more universal approach (Kidd & Athias, 2020a). It could be argued that for large co-variate shocks, a universal programme, rather than a targeted approach, would be more politically acceptable.

Chapter 6. Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

Targeting is seen as one way of making aid more effective and efficient, ensuring that aid money is spent on those who need it. This report examined several targeting systems that are designed to meet these objectives, including means testing, proxy-means testing, categorical testing, geographic testing, community-based testing, and self-targeting. However, none of these methods stand out as the most accurate, effective, or inclusive and, hence, are often used in combination to maximize the advantages of each. Even universal approaches use some form of inclusion management, usually by geographic targeting (e.g. social protections programmes that cover a region or country) or categorical targeting (e.g. old age pensions).

Apart from the more technical aspects of targeting systems, the human factors and unintended consequences of targeting systems play an important role in their accuracy. These factors are found at the definition, design and implementation stages and result in inclusion and exclusion errors. This report argues that the focus should be shifted from the accuracy of a targeting system, towards its social ramifications and unintended side effects. This calls for critical reflection on the indicators used for targeting, as well as the extent to which unintended inclusion and exclusion play a role in the definition of the programme's mission, vision and objectives, the design of the various elements of the targeting method and other programme components, and the actual implementation of these components. Programme components, especially targeting systems, may inadvertently feed inherent biases, create blind spots, and reinforce vulnerability and marginalization. These side effects can be addressed by assessing the inherent biases of policies and programmes, being aware of the hidden costs and side effects of targeting systems like stigmatisation or time costs, and ensure that there is an adequate grievance redressal system in place.

Targeting a specific subset of the population, as well as the assessment of targeting systems in terms of accuracy and errors, appears to be highly technical. These technicalities are, however, always embedded in a political context. Political interests heavily influence decision making in development policies and programmes, and this is also true in targeting. Political will is one of the determinants of national policies and programmes receiving budget funds, sometimes seemingly regardless of effectiveness, targeting accuracy and other factors. Governments often use targeting or pilot programmes to limit budgetary spending on an issue that does not resonate with their constituency. At the same time, NGOs use targeted approaches to increase efficiency and produce better justifications for their constituency of donors and community actors, given their limited budgets. The rationale for targeting governs the design of the targeting system, reflecting the political and ideological background of the designers of interventions, not necessarily the context.

Ambitions of scale also play a role in targeting. To scale up an intervention, systems need to be efficient and applicable for use on a larger scale. This applies to pilots that are successful and scaled up, as well as the initial stages of programmes. In practice, however, targeting systems that work well in small-scale programmes may not work equally well on a larger scale, especially when close proximity to target populations is required. In addition, achieving scale implies greater costs. The scalability of targeted programmes became particularly relevant in the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when existing social protection systems were used as a base from which to provide COVID-19 relief.

Some critics go as far as to argue that targeting, per se, is a symptom of political interests at work. While all programmes and policies need to employ some form of outreach or targeting, there are arguments opposing the rationality of targeting. Before making some recommendations and suggestions for further research, the following section provides a brief note on the debate on targeting.

Debate on targeting

A prominent critic of the targeted approach to development aid, and in particular social protection, Kidd (2013) asserts that, in general, targeting mechanisms are all inaccurate. In many ways, targeting is used as a way of limiting or cutting the budget that is used for social programming by governments, or of delegating responsibility to civil society actors and NGOs (Kidd, 2015). An important aspect of this discussion is the 'paradox of targeting', which reasons that better targeting may actually undercut broader political support for a programme (Van Domelen, 2007). As few groups within society stand to benefit from a programme

that is effectively targeted, these groups will be less likely to support such a programme, as it does not benefit them directly. This results in lower budgets for those programmes that do end up with a targeting approach, which results in narrower targeting, and so on. In social protection programming by governments, this issue is particularly salient, as the budgets for these types of programmes generally rely on political will.

Ultimately, the choice of whether or not to target (poverty) is a political one, rather than a technical one (Van Domelen, 2007), and it results in one of two outcomes: a per capita allocation within a geographically bound area, in which resources are more intensely targeted to localities with increased marginality and poverty, or an allocation to demographic, social or, in some cases, ethnic groups with increased marginality or poverty. The decision to use a targeting system is not free from political interests, neither are the implementation processes that accompany targeting as an exercise. Hence, it is not an apolitical exercise; it can uproot or shake up households and communities at the receiving end and reinforce inequalities or power structures along the way.

This political dimension can play out on multiple levels. Intra-household dynamics may shift when certain members become the focus of an intervention, for example, in cash transfers targeted at female members of households. Disruptions can follow from targeting specific members of a community, especially when the differences between members of the communities are small, or when minorities or marginalized groups are prioritized over other groups. This is ubiquitous in many poverty-targeted programmes, as poverty rates are higher than coverage rates in most countries – so even if all existing safety nets were perfectly targeted to the poor, they would not reach all poor households (Beegle, Honorati, & Monsalve, 2018b). Targeting in these contexts can be seen as a rationing mechanism, rather than a targeting method (Kidd, 2013).

In contexts where differences in income or consumption measures are very small for a large part of the population, the difference between extreme poverty, poverty and just above the poverty line can be negligible. A risk of targeting approaches in these contexts is that the goal posts of poverty reduction are shifted downwards, as poverty is redefined in arbitrary ways in terms of poorest quintiles or deciles (McCord, 2009). Poverty targeting in these contexts separates the exercise on the ground from the nominally ascribed or attributed function of it – in a sense poverty targeting is no longer targeting those in poverty, but rather singles out a select few for the sake of programme continuity in a budget-constrained situation.

This disconnect between targeting on paper and in practice can also be observed in the problematic ways in which politically charged programmes are targeted. Nominal targeting strategies are observed when programmes attempt to take gender into account in their implementation. Often the gendered dimensions of poverty are recognized and defined on a strategical level, but in actual programme processes these strategies may lack precision and specificity, and sometimes priority (Gbedemah, Jones, & Pereznieto, 2010). This points to the sometimes-rhetorical value of including a specific element in the targeting strategy on paper, which is hard to implement on the ground, based on the interests of the stakeholders involved in these programmes on the political level.

Hence, as can be seen, arguments can be made both for and against targeting, in general, and poverty targeting, in particular. Arguments range from technical/managerial ones to political and ethical ones, opposing or promoting targeting as a practice in development aid and government policies and programming. In the end, as highlighted in this report, an important factor in targeting is the interest, budget, and political will of key stakeholders involved in social programming – which largely depends on and, sometimes translates directly into, their relationship with and interest in the inclusion of the targeted population itself.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the literature review:

Recommendation 1. Targeting is not merely a technical and methodical issue: its practice depends heavily on human interactions and the political economy, from design to implementation. Hence, the following should be considered:

- Ensure safe and confidential feedback mechanisms for staff and grievance redressal systems for target groups.

- Learn from deviations from targeting design in the implementation phase, as targeting does not take place in a vacuum and is context dependent.
- Balance the efficiency of targeting with the social costs of efficient targeting, both for implementers and target groups.

Recommendation 2. Understanding the a priori inclusion and exclusion implications of a programme's vision and objectives is crucial. In relation to this, the following should be considered:

- Multiple or synergetic objectives can cause friction in relation to inclusion and exclusion. For example, ultra-poverty interventions require different targeting than entrepreneurial or productive employment interventions in terms of indicators, objectives, and mechanisms; when the two are combined into an entrepreneurial programme for the ultra-poor, these objectives can cause friction in relation to the targeting approach.
- Assumptions and blind spots in the definition and formulation of programmes can be confounded when they form the basis for design and implementation decisions.
- Targeting systems should be assessed based on their social impact, in addition to their accuracy and cost-effectiveness.

Recommendation 3. Targeting systems relate to efficiency and ambitions of scale from the outset of the (pilot) programme. Hence, the following should be considered:

- Strike a balance between deep targeting and broad targeting related to cost-efficiency and budget.
- Recognize that small-scale programmes need different targeting approaches than large-scale programmes.
- Understand that what works on a small-scale may not work when scaling up, in terms of administration, data collection, and other practical aspects.

Recommendation 4. Unintended/unexpected inclusion and exclusion in design and implementation should be mapped, in relation to which the following should be considered:

- Unintended exclusion effects can occur in communication strategies, distribution and delivery mechanisms, language, communication mechanisms and technologies, and programme components.
- The organizational and administrative aspects of implementation affect inclusion and pose barriers to participation.
- The social costs and impacts of targeting methods on target communities could be addressed through grievance redressal processes.

Recommendation 5. (Scaling up to) universal coverage requires coordination between different programmes to ensure broad coverage and avoid duplication. Toward this, the following needs to be considered:

- A single registry could help achieve full coverage of eligibility data and complete population mapping.
- A single system can be used for targeting, payments, monitoring and evaluation that integrates the elderly and poor into poverty-targeted programme, while also catering for non-poor elderly.

Further research

The following areas of interest require further research:

- More research is needed into the 'black box' between design and outcomes, including implementers' pragmatic choices and the contextual factors that hinder implementation and influence inclusion, exclusion, and participation. More study is also needed into the roles and actual activities of implementers, especially of last mile workers such as intermediates, brokers, and translators. Whereas implementation is cited as one of the determining factors in the accuracy and efficiency of targeting, the actual dynamics that implementers face are not well understood in literature.

- Another area of interest is experiences with and the implications of technological (and digital) innovation in the sphere of targeting in relation to the inclusion of various social groups. There has been a digital turn in many development programmes, which implies a growing need for beneficiaries and implementers to engage with digital technologies. These technologies rely on infrastructure, such as power, Internet coverage and the availability of mobile phones, as well as (digital) literacy and skills. Vulnerable groups may face additional barriers to access and participation in these digital programmes (e.g. persons with visual impairments or hearing impairments, rural groups with less digital literacy, or those without access to electricity, Internet connectivity, or a mobile phone).
- It is also important to look at exclusion and inclusion effects that arise from the instruments, procedures, and technologies used by government and non-government development interventions. While inclusion and exclusion errors in targeting are a common field of study, the inclusion and exclusion effects of programme components such as workshops, obligatory attendance, and periodical monitoring merit further study.

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Annex 1. Methodology of literature review

Overview

This report is the result of a literature review of academic and grey literature performed from March 2020 to August 2020. The literature review was inspired by an exploratory visit to the 100WEEKS' cash transfer graduation programme in Uganda. The objective of the literature review was to gain an overview of the implementation aspects of cash transfers and the targeting of aid.

The cash transfer programme 100WEEKS targets 'active rural poor women' who can graduate out of poverty after 100WEEKS of unconditional cash. First implemented in Rwanda in 2015, the programme was extended to Uganda, Ivory Coast and Ghana. The approach has grown from its design throughout a five-year period of 'building the plane while flying it' in Rwanda to entail mobile money transfers, weekly group sessions and trainings, and a data gathering infrastructure including phone surveys and financial diaries. The most salient questions that emerged from the exploratory phase of the case study in Uganda in February-March 2020 formed the basis for this literature review.

Research topics

This literature review is not a systematic review; it does not sum up and quantify all evidence on the subjects, although it does identify and summarize qualitative findings in a systematic way. The following topics were operationalized in search terms:

- Unconditional cash transfers and the graduation approach
- Targeting and selection strategies and procedures in inclusive development
- Scaling up from pilot programme and replicating in other contexts – challenges and opportunities for standardization

Literature search methods

The first two topics are prioritized and dealt with sequentially. The third topic was regarded as an important note in the other two topics. The table below shows which key words were used for the literature review for the different topics and which data sources were included, as well as the initial search results by topic.

Topic	Key words	Data sources
1. CT and graduation approach	Cash transfer (CT); unconditional cash transfer (UCT); universal basic income (UBI); basic income grant (BIG); cash and voucher assistance (CVA); graduation approach; BRAC model; cash-based approach (CBA); cash-based interventions; social protection; entrepreneurship	CaLP network; J-PAL; Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Sussex; 3IE; ODI; World Bank; INCLUDE; socialprotection.org; GiveDirectly; Cash Working Group (CWG) Uganda; BRAC; Scopus, Google Scholar
2. Targeting and selection in inclusive development	Targeting (the poor); inclusive development; poverty indicators; selection criteria; target population; beneficiary mapping; stakeholder analysis; targeting AND development intervention	Scopus; IDS Sussex; 3IE; ODI; Oxfam; INCLUDE; Campbell Collaboration; WIEGO
3. Replication and scaling up	Replication; scaling up; implementation; action research; cost-efficiency (in combination with key words regarding international development interventions)	3IE

The general search on academic databases, knowledge and research institutes listed in the table above yielded a massive number of sources, which were filtered for relevance and relationship to the topics during two rounds: (1) for direct mention or relationship to cash transfers and/or targeting in title and abstract, and (2) skimming introduction and content for application to African countries, theoretical focus and more narrow applicability to the topics. These two filter rounds yielded a priority list of 122 documents (comprising reports, policy briefs, presentations, webinars, podcasts, journal articles and books), which were used for this report. Priority was given to sources that focused on implementation, that combined a focus on cash transfers and targeting issues, and gave an overview of the body of knowledge, as well as INCLUDE resources. The following table shows the number of results for each round of filtering and breaks the sources down according to the different topics, using labels that were given to them in the reference manager. The red rows at the end of the table show those publications that were excluded.

Results after filter 1	498				
Results after filter 2	309				
Priority list	122				
Main header	**Sub header 1**	**Sub header 2**	**Number of sources in bibliography**	**Filter**	**Priority**
Cash			**151 (some overlap)**	**133**	**32**
Cash	Africa		110	106	19
Cash	Africa	Overview	5	4	4
Cash	Africa	INCLUDE	14	13	8
Cash	Africa	Combine	15	14	5
Cash	Theory		24	24	1
Cash	Theory	Overview	1	1	0
Cash	Theory	INCLUDE	0	0	0
Cash	Theory	Combine	1	1	0
Cash	N.O.D[2].		2	2	1
Cash	Impact	Comparative	1	1	1
Cash	Impact	Approach	0	0	0
Targeting			**149**	**147**	**79**
Targeting	Africa		105	105	55
Targeting	Africa	Overview	0	0	0
Targeting	Africa	INCLUDE	8	8	4
Targeting	Africa	Combine	19	19	16
Targeting	Theory		38	38	19
Targeting	Theory	Overview	2	2	1
Targeting	Theory	INCLUDE	0	0	0
Targeting	Theory	Combine	4	4	4
Impact			101	34	12
Impact	**Relevant**		**35**	**34**	**12**
Impact	Comparative		22	21	5
Impact	Implementation		5	5	5
Impact	Approach		8	8	2
Impact	Not relevant		66	0	0
Not relevant	Conceptual		55	0	0
Not relevant	Geographic		45	5	3
Not accessible			8	8	7
Duplicate			9	9	0

Snowballing, inspired by bibliographies or topics coming up in the analysis, yielded additional sources, which were used and referred to in the final report. The following section details the search strategy according to date and search engine, including findings, estimates of hits and remarks. At times, due to an overload of results, additional exclusion filters were used to narrow down the results or a ranking method was used that focused on the first pages yielding search results.

[2] This relates to concepts or issues that are not discussed in literature on cash transfers in African countries but pop up in literature on cash transfers somewhere else in the world.

Literature search results

The table below shows a log of the results by source and the key words used, including preliminary remarks.

Date	Research question	Data source	Keyword	Number of references/total	Filters/exclusion criteria	Remarks
06-05-2020	1	IDS Sussex	(Exploratory search of publications)	3/37	Governance, power and participation; Sustainability	Exploratory search yielded varied results.
06-05-2020	1	IDS Sussex	(Exploratory search of publications)	1/87		'Small for some' was something interesting that came up in this search – related to targeting.
11-05-2020	1 & 2	SP.org	(Exploratory search)	91/376 (SP1:62)	Evaluation studies	An exploratory search on SP.org yielded many sources specific to targeting and social protection; 'labelled cash' as a way of cash-based approach.
11-05-2020	2	CaLP Network	(Exploratory search) Africa; targeting	8/10		Humanitarian and refugee settings are prevalent in the CaLP network – currently, in COVID-19, there is bridging and scaling up, as well as spreading of learning from humanitarian implementation of CVA to social protection.
11-05-2020	1	CaLP Network	(Exploratory search) Africa; enterprise	3/6		
11-05-2020	1	GiveDirectly	(Exploratory search)	1		GiveDirectly predominantly has evaluations and impact studies on their model of UBI/UCT combined with RCT.
12-05-2020		Cash Working Group Uganda	(Exploratory search)	-		Certain countries with refugee settlements have cash working groups, such as: Greece, Iraq, Uganda, Turkey.
13-05-2020	1 & 2	BRAC	(Exploratory search: graduation approach)	11		The BRAC graduation approach is one of the spearhead models for cash transfer implementation and is often quoted and much researched.
13-05-2020	2	INCLUDE	Targeting	0		No sources on targeting – other wording may apply: reaching, inclusion, ultra-poor, extreme poor

Date	Research question	Data source	Keyword	Number of references/total	Filters/exclusion criteria	Remarks
13-05-2020	2	INCLUDE	Reach	5/8		
13-05-2020	2	INCLUDE	Inclusion	10/211	Filter: publications	Inclusion is too broad; almost all publications included inclusive development – so a browse of recent publications was done with a focus on reports of INCLUDE.
13-05-2020	2	INCLUDE	(Exploratory search of recent publications)	13		Recent publications browsed for specific mention of issues related to targeting, inclusion of extreme poor, reaching target populations or other (RQ2)
13-05-2020	2	INCLUDE	Cash transfer	29/38		Recent publications browsed for specific mention of issues related to targeting, inclusion of extreme poor, reaching target populations or other (RQ2) and cash transfers or social protection (RQ1)
13-05-2020		Oxfam	(Exploratory search)	4		See what Oxfam publishes regarding targeting the poor.
14-05-2020	1	3IE	Cash transfer	8/126	-	3IE does impact evaluations mostly, systematic reviews on cash transfers. Searching 'cash' yielded results for both conditional and unconditional approaches.
14-05-2020	1	3IE	Graduation	0/24		
14-05-2020	1	3IE	Universal basic income; basic income grant (BIG);	0		
14-05-2020	1	3IE	BRAC model;	0/5		
25-05-2020	1	ODI	Cash (in blogs); cash (in publications)	3/118 28/733	- Sub-Saharan Africa	ODI blogs with 'cash' in their search results were very diverse – skimmed through the list. Publication results were many; filtered on Sub-Saharan Africa to limit.
25-05-2020	1	ODI	'Graduation programme'	1/8		Graduation means different things at ODI – countries graduate from foreign direct investment (FDI).

Date	Research question	Data source	Keyword	Number of references/total	Filters/exclusion criteria	Remarks
25-05-2020	1	ODI	'Unconditional cash'	4/34	Sub-Saharan Africa	Using quotation marks works well with ODI search engine.
25-05-2020	1	ODI	Universal basic income (UBI); basic income grant (BIG);	1/9		
25-05-2020	1	J-PAL	'Cash transfer'	34/192	-	No filter used in results focused on African countries – unless general lesson was mentioned in the title/introduction.
25-05-2020	1	J-PAL	Graduation; graduating	3/255		Overlap with cash search
25-05-2020	1	LU Library website	'Cash transfer'	514	Africa; Articles	Focused on topics relating to cash transfers, targeting, politics, etc.; articles on impact mostly excluded
25-05-2020	1	Web of Science	'Cash transfer'	1244	Articles	Many off-topic articles
25-05-2020	1	Web of Science	'Cash transfer' AND 'Urban'	84	Articles	
25-05-2020	1	Web of Science	'Cash transfer' AND 'Rural'	228	Articles	
26-05-2020	1	Google Scholar	'Unconditional cash'	81; 8,000	No filter, but first 11 pages with results reviewed – later sorted on date	Too many results; first unsorted first 11 pages of 8,000+ results, then sorted as to date – yielded 81 results
26-05-2020	1	Google Scholar;	Universal basic income (UBI); basic income grant (BIG);	261	No filter	Many ideological pieces; theoretical pieces; not many pieces on implementation of universal basic income
26-05-2020	1	Web of Science	'Basic income'	745	No filter	Many ideological pieces; theoretical pieces; not many pieces on implementation of universal basic income or results – mostly theoretical

Date	Research question	Data source	Keyword	Number of references/total	Filters/exclusion criteria	Remarks
27-05-2020	1	Google Scholar	Graduation approach	367		
27-05-2020	1	Web of Science	Graduation approach	5	-	Alternative search combination might be 'graduation programme'
06-05-2020	2	IDS Sussex	(Exploratory search of publications)	1/37	Governance, Power and participation; Sustainability	'Last mile' to signify reaching the poorest – often used in financial inclusion literature and practice
27-05-2020	2	Leiden University Library Catalogue	'Targeting the poor'	247	-	
27-05-2020	2	Google Scholar	Targeting (the poor)	9,000+		Filtered on date yielding 12 results; after that went through first 11 pages sorted on relevance
27-05-2020	2	Web of Science	Targeting (the poor)	79		
28-05-2020	2	UN SDGs	Exploratory search	-		See how SDGs are targeting specific groups – specific to African countries and the poor – major groups and other stakeholders shows how groups are included in the discussion; per SDG there is a target population, especially for 1 and 2 (extreme poor)
28-05-2020	2	(Altaf, 2019)	Snowball in section of targeting	5		
28-05-2020	2	Web of Science	Target AND poor	3/101	Irrelevant academic fields filtered out; then selected highly cited	Many irrelevant results and duplicates from previous searches
28-05-2020	2	World Bank	Targeting the poor			A lot of reports and sources on targeting and reaching the poor
28-05-2020	2	Google Scholar	'Targeting systems' AND 'poor'	10/6,000+	The first 11 pages of results	Many non-relevant and duplicate results from previous searches

Date	Research question	Data source	Keyword	Number of references/total	Filters/exclusion criteria	Remarks
28-05-2020	2	Leiden University Library	'Targeting systems' AND 'poor'	1,670	-	Many non-relevant sources and duplicates
28-05-2020	2	ODI	'Targeting the poor'	11/124	Publications	
28-05-2020	2	IDS	Exploratory search of research themes	1/84	Evidence into policy and practice; governance, power and participation, inclusive economies, inequalities and poverty, Africa	When searching for targeting and targeting the poor or target the poor, no results were shown.
28-05-2020	2	3IE	Targeting the poor; targeting	1/5 ; 4/116		The keyword 'targeting' was tried and yielded more results, but only 4 useful ones.