

Public Policies to Empower Economically Vulnerable Populations: The Case of Gabon

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Submitted: 16 October 2023 Accepted: 24 October 2023 Published: 31 October 2023

doi <https://doi.org/10.63620/MKSSJER.2023.1015>

Citation: Citation: Nkoulou, J. L. N., Sima, S. L. D. (2023). Public Policies to Empower Economically Vulnerable Populations: The Case of Gabon. *Sci Set J of Economics Res*, 2(3), 01-17.

Abstract

Public social protection policies have long been considered an inappropriate instrument for countries in transition. The mixed results of structural adjustment programs, the Asian crisis of 1997, the subprime crisis of 2008, the Covid-19 health crisis and the geopolitical crisis in Russia and Ukraine, as well as the negative effects of poverty, have led to a redefinition of social protection, integrating the concept of poverty into the economic development model. Social protection has become an all-inclusive instrument for poverty reduction, aimed at mitigating the social risks and inequalities faced by the most vulnerable populations.

To this end, the aim of this paper is to show, on the basis of a situational analysis, that it is possible to define and implement social protection policies for Gabon, geared towards the empowerment of economically vulnerable populations. This necessarily involves the selection of empowerment actions and the creation of target areas of activity, on the one hand, and the implementation of compensatory financing mechanisms for social protection from development partners, primarily via social safety nets that would provide a safety cushion for the latter, on the other.

Keywords: Empowerment action, Income-Generating Activities, Target Areas, Economically Weak Gabonese (EWG), Public Development Policy, Social Protection, Focus Group, Social Risks, Social Safety Nets

Introduction

One of the major advances made by economic theories in the search for relevant solutions to the development problems of countries in transition is the establishment of public social protection policies as a fundamental investment in sustainable economic growth, while contributing to the empowerment of economically vulnerable agents (Adato, and Bassett, 2008).

While social protection is still primarily a tool for advanced economies, it is increasingly seen as a means of achieving broad-based, sustained growth in transition economies. Social protection then refers to public policies designed to give vulnerable groups more means of escaping destitution and coping with risks and shocks. It thus encompasses instruments designed to deal with chronic vulnerability (Sabates-Wheeler and Haddad, 2005). Its virtues are also illustrated by the opportunity it gives the poor to invest in income-generating activities, and by its capacity to strengthen the human capital of vulnerable people.

Recent developments focusing on anti-poverty strategies, with the added aim of improving the lot of the most vulnerable, revolve around two sets of proposals: firstly, the thesis that social protection policies are an unproductive cost that poor countries cannot afford; and secondly, the thesis that public social protec-

tion policies are an investment that generates high social and economic productivity.

In the first view, social protection is seen as a burden, and the proponents of this view will simply make the beneficiaries of this policy the only categories of economic agents whose activities are market oriented [1].

From this point of view, social security in developing countries only covers a very minimal portion of economic agents, since it only covers salaried workers. In order to meet their needs, populations outside the formal market can only rely on family and community support and informal work.

As a result, the only policy that generates social benefits is one focused on freeing up markets, the effects of which are supposed to bring about a resurgence in economic growth geared towards the poor. This is, moreover, the theoretical basis that justifies the implementation of structural adjustment plans in poor countries.

Unfortunately, this vision will lead to the emergence of unanticipated negative social and societal consequences, materializing in a dramatic rise in poverty, social inequality, lower life expectan-

cy and higher disease rates.

Faced with this disastrous situation in developing countries, the designers of this vision finally integrated the concept of poverty into their economic development model. The fight against this scourge will involve compensatory financing mechanisms, primarily from development partners, who see inclusive finance as the main way out of poverty.

The second thesis is that public social protection policies are an investment that generates high social and economic productivity. Indeed, the new consensus on the need to implement empowerment policies for low- and middle-income countries is based on the ability of a still vague concept to satisfy approaches in terms of economic efficiency. From this point of view, the new strategy of public empowerment policies is based on the protection of the subsistence minimum on the one hand, and the promotion of risk-taking on the other (Holzmann and Jorgensen, 2000; Holzmann et al., 2003). It includes both safety nets aimed at increasing available assets, microcredit and improving the employability of economically vulnerable populations. We're not talking about costs here, but about investments in social empowerment policies.

What's more, the new social policies now favored emphasize the activation of targeted individuals, who must become productive. This orientation means that social protection is no longer under fire from traditional critics, since it is justified insofar as it helps to develop human capital, encourage risk-taking among the poor, and promote mobility in the labor market.

To this end, two types of considerations carried by national and international players have fostered this paradigm shift: on the one hand, economic analyses of national experiences and, on the other hand and probably much more so, reflections on Cash Transfers experiences in countries that have implemented them on a large scale, with success (Merrien, 2014).

Literature Review

Essentially an empirical review, it has the advantage of critically analyzing all social public policies aimed at empowering economically vulnerable populations.

The Transformation Acceleration Plan (PAT 2021-2023)

The main objective of PAT is to support the Gabonese government in updating and accelerating its strategic plan to meet economic and social challenges, while considering the post-COVID-19 context.

Specifically in terms of the social pillar, the aim will be to create the conditions for a new social pact based on a greater contribution from the private sector, greater efficiency in public services, and the preservation of the main social safety nets.

These legitimize:

- develop employment in the private sector through a closer match between educational provision and job opportunities.
- improve the population's state of health by refocusing efforts on prevention and primary healthcare.
- guarantee the sustainability of a targeted and equitable social protection system.

The Gabonese Women's Decade and Action Plan (2015-2025)

The Decade for Women in Gabon embodies Gabon's ambition to remove the obstacles associated with all forms of discrimination

against women within ten years, and to ensure that women realize their full potential. In this way, the Decade promotes the financial empowerment of economically weaker social categories, notably: young people, women, single-parent families, widows, orphans, students, the disabled, etc.

In short, the Decade mentions the factors hindering the empowerment of the above-mentioned groups, such as: cultural and legal factors, poverty which affects women more than men, the increase in the number of single-parent families headed by women (FCM), and effective positive discrimination in the processing of cases. One of the aims of the Ten-Year Plan for the Decade for Women is therefore to step up the promotion and protection of women's rights, eliminate gender inequalities and gradually strengthen the legal arsenal against provisions that discriminate against women.

The Agricultural and Rural Development Project, 2^{ème} Phase (PDAR2)

This is a framework document for agricultural and rural development, 2nd phase (PDAR2). PDAR2 is an inclusive, participatory targeting strategy based on market needs and demand. It is based on geographic targeting of production basins to determine intervention zones, and on socio-economic targeting to direct the planned support towards priority targets and thus promote their empowerment.

It should be noted that the second phase of the agricultural and rural development project broadens the target components, including women and young people of both sexes. It is based, among other things, on the targeting of beneficiaries based on eligibility criteria established in a participatory and transparent manner, considering the poverty and degree of vulnerability of specific groups (smallholders, poor households, unemployed women and young people). Nevertheless, the economic dimension of empowerment was the only one retained. This is one of the weaknesses of PDAR2.

Gabon's Human Investment Strategy (SIHG)

The SIHG is the key mechanism for implementing the Social Pact, which implies a paradigm shift in the government's approach to social policy in Gabon.

Its aim is to enable economically vulnerable women to develop viable income-generating activities (IGAs) that will make them economically self-sufficient. The SIHG is also based on a methodology for estimating and approaching the costs of IGAs, which include agricultural, fishing and livestock activities, handicrafts and tourism, services and small-scale processing.

Although the SIHG only aims to empower GEFs through IGAs, and therefore only focuses on the economic dimension, it does reveal a diversity of vulnerable target groups to be empowered. Indeed, the projects (individual and collective) recommended by the SIHG, anchored in the territories (targeted geographically, capitalizing on local know-how while taking into account the specificities of the territories), have as potential targets: families with children, single mothers, the elderly, widows, disabled people, isolated students, orphans and street children.

FNAS Activity Report (2016 to February 26, 2019)

The document assesses the amounts of IGAs that have been financed over three years (2016-2018), notably in the fields of: agriculture, fishing, livestock, services and small-scale processing. Thus, IGA funding was geographically targeted, and therefore

by province, to direct the support envisaged towards priority targets and thus foster their economic empowerment. Four provinces benefited most from IGA funding: Estuaire, Haut-Ogooué, Ngounié and Woleu-Ntem.

Admittedly, geographical targeting has involved identifying the country's poorest areas based on poverty statistics. But targeting the poorest provinces does not justify high levels of funding for IGAs. In other words, a province may be less poor and have more GEFs than a poor province.

In addition, empowerment can be achieved through other empowerment activities (employability, training, etc.). However, FNAS has focused more on IGAs through the economic empowerment of members belonging to associations (associations and groups, villagers, local NGOs, cooperatives, women, and youth groups). This is one of the shortcomings of the approach adopted.

Methodology

Our methodology, based exclusively on field surveys, involves defining the target population, administrative supervision of survey activities and techniques, presentation of data collection media, development, and validation of the methodological approach, and finally, data entry and processing.

Target Populations

The comprehensive situational analysis of the empowerment of economically vulnerable populations involved three types of population: (i) economically weak Gabonese and/or poor people aged 16-59 who may or may not have benefited from an empowerment action, who are surveyed using a questionnaire; (ii) GEFs aged 16-55 who have essentially benefited from empowerment actions are approached via focus groups; (iii) those in charge of programs and projects for empowering the poor across the different cities visited were subjected to individual interviews.

Sampling Overview

Our sample is made up of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of empowerment actions in the three representative cities with high poverty rates and three dropout cities, as well as focus groups from six provinces.

Survey of Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries of Empowerment Initiatives

Due to budget constraints, the sampling of the questionnaire

survey of beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries of empowerment actions considered geographical targeting to address GEFs or poor populations according to their location (1), i.e., towns with or without socio-economic dropouts. In fact, the choice of a probabilistic sample involves numerous times and/or financial constraints, which prevented us from using it in the present study.

For this purpose, the sampling of targets to be surveyed was of convenience (reasoned choice), i.e., non-probabilistic or empirical, to take into account, the budgetary constraints mentioned above. This will enable the present study to diagnose statistical trends and social representations on the AA initiated in favor of GEFs, with a view to drawing up the National GEF Empowerment Strategy.

In contrast, the selection of target units (or economically weak Gabonese aged 16-59 who may or may not have benefited from an empowerment action) was made at random, either from the CNAMGS GEF file, or from lists of empowerment action beneficiaries maintained by certain implementing structures. Finally, in towns in provinces with high poverty rates at EGEF 2017 (Libreville (21%), Franceville (44%) and Port-Gentil (22%)), the number of poor people or GEFs to be surveyed was set at 300. The survey covered, among others, towns in the provinces identified in the 2017 EGEF as being in socio-economic decline (Tchibanga, Makokou and Oyem), i.e., lagging in economic and social development. The number of GEFs to be surveyed is less than or equal to 150.

The sampling step was retained, i.e., the interval for selecting a target from the sampling frame (list of GEFs), which is the ratio between the total number of GEFs on the list and the number of GEFs to be retained in the sample (selected GEFs). Other GEFs, whether empowered or not, were selected using the "all-comers" method, i.e., every participant (GEF or poor person) encountered by the survey agents on the route taken was selected in the sample. To take account of refusals or non-responses, the GEFs or poor people to be surveyed in the towns mentioned are broken down as follows (tables 1 and 2):

Table 1: Number of poor people to survey in cities with more poor people

Cities	Sample	Refusal or no answer	Persons to be surveyed
Libreville	300	82	382
Franceville	300	81	381
Port-Gentil	300	77	377
Total	900	242	1140

Table 2: Number of poor people to be surveyed in dropout towns.

Cities	Sample	Refusal or no answer	Persons to be surveyed
Tchibanga	150	10	160
Makokou	150	4	154
Oyem	149	0	149
Total	449	14	463

In total, the survey is expected to interview 1603 GEFs or poor people who may or may not have benefited from empowerment actions.

Focus Groups with Empowered GEFs

To carry out the focus groups, participants were selected according to precise criteria (having been empowered, being available for interview, etc.). The number of focus groups to be carried out considers the provinces that have (or had) benefited most from empowerment projects and/or actions, as shown in table 3.

A total of fourteen (14) focus groups should be carried out as part of the situational analysis to complement the results of the quantitative survey.

Table 3: Number of focus groups and number of participants by province

	Sample	Refusal or no answer	Persons to be surveyed
Provinces / City	Number of focus groups	Number of participants per focus group	Total number of participants
Ogooué-Maritime (Port-Gentil)	2	8	16
Estuaire (Libreville)	6	8	48
Haut-Ogooué (Franceville)	2	8	16
Woleu-Ntem (Oyem)	2	8	16
Nyanga (Tchibanga)	1	8	8
Ogooué-Ivindo (Makokou)	1	8	8
Total	14	-	136

Interviews with People in Charge of Empowerment Initiatives

Interviews with the managers of empowerment programs or projects were carried out with associative bodies and public administrations (Services in charge of Agriculture, Services for the Fight against Poverty and the Social and Solidarity Economy, ONE). Six (6) managers were interviewed.

Technical Organization of Surveys

Organization of the Questionnaire Survey

At the time of the survey, the profiles of the potential targets (populations benefiting or not from empowerment actions) were diversified as much as possible to include the widest possible variety of cases.

The questionnaire was administered indirectly, which made it possible to collect the information needed to gain a better understanding of the situation of empowered and disempowered individuals among GEFs or the poorest populations living in the six towns in the target provinces.

Organization of Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

Collective interviews or focus groups were conducted with women and men who had only benefited from empowerment actions. These people were chosen to assess their opinions and perceptions of empowerment programs and actions (access constraints, financing methods, operating methods, etc.), and of programs to combat poverty and social exclusion.

In addition, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the structures implementing the empowerment actions. Admittedly, some of the information sought was available in the official written archives listed in the document review. However, it was useful to conduct interviews with various officials to identify other factors blocking or promoting AA in favor of GEFs or other marginalized people.

Presentation of Collection Media Used

Three types of media were developed for data collection in the field: the focus group interview guide, the individual interview guide with empowerment action leaders and the quantitative survey questionnaire (see appendix).

Focus Group and Individual Interview Guides

Two completely different guides were used to conduct the group and individual interviews (see appendix).

The focus groups were based on a general guide designed to reference the main themes to be addressed by the related questions posed to AA beneficiaries, including knowledge of AA's financial and implementation partners, information canons on AA and the choice of AA, access to AA and financing modalities, the impact of AA, implementation difficulties, perception of empowerment programs and participants' suggestions.

As for the structured interviews conducted with those in charge of empowerment actions, they made it possible, thanks to a semi-directive approach, to obtain factual information on questions relating to the themes, such as: the presence and nature of economic, social and political empowerment objectives and commitments in the relevant programs; the budget envelopes planned (if applicable) at national level for the generalization of empowerment of target groups, etc.

It should be noted that the questions transcribed on the various interview guides were not used systematically, but merely served to guide and punctuate the discussions.

Quantitative Survey Questionnaire

To carry out the quantitative survey, the questionnaire was anonymous and composed of five (5) sections: Location, Identification, Motivation and choice of AA types, Knowledge of AA mechanisms, for beneficiaries or future beneficiaries of IGAs (see appendix).

Survey Design and Methodology

For proper data collection, we used a method for data elaboration and tool validation.

Method for Developing and Validating Collection Tools

Field surveys were carried out using data collection tools inspired by the World Bank's work on the economic and social empowerment of the poor, Oxfam International's conceptual framework on empowerment, and FNAS activities aimed at aiding in the form of microcredits or in-kind aid to support IGAs.

This enabled a number of combined characteristics to be taken into account. Thus, seven stages were considered in the development and validation of the collection tools: well-being, access to resources, participation and control (Flintan, 2008).

Furthermore, the key explanatory variables are inspired by the socio-economic empowerment dimensions of women and men, such as: AA decisions, AA impact, AA management capabilities, implementation difficulties, etc. The formulation of the questions was motivated by the principle that "empowerment must go beyond a socio-economic institutional perspective that assumes that individual [or socio-demographic] socio-economic characteristics such as education [...], force participation, income and access to resources will determine the ability [...] [of potential targets] to exercise control over adversarial forces, improve [...] [their] power relations with [...] [third parties]" (ibid., p.6).

Limitations, Difficulties Encountered and data Quality

Out of a total of 1603 GEF or poor people "sampled", i.e., men

and women who may or may not have benefited from empowerment actions, 1454 were interviewed, representing a response rate of 91%. Although satisfactory, statistical analysis was restricted to certain variables due to non-response exceeding the tolerated threshold, estimated at around 10% in the questionnaire survey.

Several errors due to non-response occurred, as several items of information concerning the empowerment actions from which the GEFs benefited were not provided, to the extent that some variables proved unusable. It should also be noted that the field staff's mastery of the tools, the adherence of the statistical units surveyed, and the covid-19 constraints weighing on the respondents all contributed to the non-response errors.

Finally, two key variables with a non-response rate of over 10%, presented in Table 4, did not allow us to carry out a regression analysis to understand the link between them and whether we had received AA.

Table 4: Non-response rates for key variables

Variable	Interest	Workforce	Number of non-responses	Non-response rate (%)
Time elapsed since AA implementation	Duration model	1445	1083	75,5
Amount of grant received for AA	Revenue model	1445	1083	74,5

Yet, the relationship between income distribution and the development process has been amply demonstrated. For example, the evolution of the subsidies received by GEFs for AA support is reflected in the improvement in their living conditions, which augurs a gradual exit from the state of poverty.

Another drawback is that the survey did not fully cover AA beneficiaries living in rural areas. This was mainly due to the inadequate budget allocated to the survey and to the fact that, according to the literature review, AA was promoted more in urban areas than in rural areas.

In addition, of the fourteen (14) focus groups planned, the verbatims obtained from two could not be properly exploited.

Survey data entry, Processing, and Analysis

The quantitative survey data were entered using CSPro software a few days after the end of field collection. A quality control program was used to detect the main collection errors. Data analysis was carried out using CSPro and SPSS software. It was essentially bivariate, i.e., studying the relationship between two variables. A tabulation plan was used to output the results, taking into account the non-response rate for variables deemed relevant or not. The focus group interviews were processed using an analysis grid, followed by a logical content analysis of the verbatims.

Study results

We have chosen to append the results of the literature review and those of the qualitative survey. The results of the qualitative survey are as follows.

Characteristics of the Survey Population

This sub-section presents some of the characteristics of the GEFs and/or poor people surveyed.

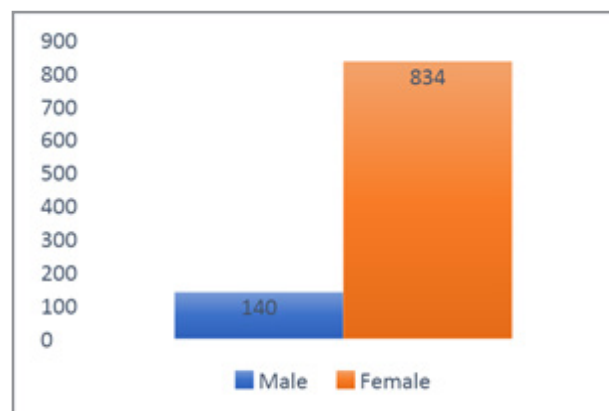
Respondents came from a wide range of backgrounds. Table 5 (in Appendix 2) shows that, in all the towns we visited, most of the poor were GEFs (85.8%). An overwhelming proportion of these respondents were women (84.4%).

More than half (58.4%) said they had a secondary education. 57.4% were single. More than half (51.7%) said they were aged between 35 and 39.

Beneficiaries of Empowerment Actions and Profiles Weight of AA Beneficiaries

According to graph 1 below, 80% of GEF or poor women reported having benefited from an empowerment action, compared with only 20% of men.

While these findings support the literature review, they also point to a gender disparity in the empowerment of the most vulnerable. Empowering men and boys in non-traditional areas is essential for gender equality (UN, 2007).



Graph 1: AA beneficiaries by gender
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Beneficiaries

Out of a total of 1,454 people surveyed, more than half of AA beneficiaries have GEF status (963), i.e., 66.23%. According to the geographical targeting of the poor, how are their socio-demographic characteristics distributed?

► In cities with a high Concentration of Poor People

Table 6 (appendix 3) shows that half and more than half of AA beneficiaries living in cities with more poor people respectively reported being aged between 35-39 (50%), having secondary education (57.3%) and being single (54%). Thus, the need for socio-economic empowerment is more pronounced among older, educated individuals with no marital commitment.

► In Cities in Socio-Economic Decline

The data in Table 7 (Appendix 4) show that more than half of AA recipients in dropout towns respectively reported being aged 35-39 (51.4%), having secondary education (57.1%) and single (57.1%). Contrary to the results in Table 5, AA recipients residing in dropout towns are in higher proportions, due to the lack of basic infrastructure.

c. AA recipients by gender

The socio-demographic characteristics of AA beneficiaries vary:

► In Cities with a High Concentration of Poor People

According to the results in Table 8 (in Appendix 5), overall, GEFs (72.5%), aged 35-39 (47.1%), single (54.6%) and with secondary education (56.9) were the most likely to have benefited from AA.

Broken down by gender, GEF women (72.7%) said they had benefited more from AA than GEF men (71.8%), but much more than those aged 35-39 (49.5%). Single men (57.7%) said they had benefited from AA almost as much as women (53.8%).

► In Socio-Economically Depressed Towns

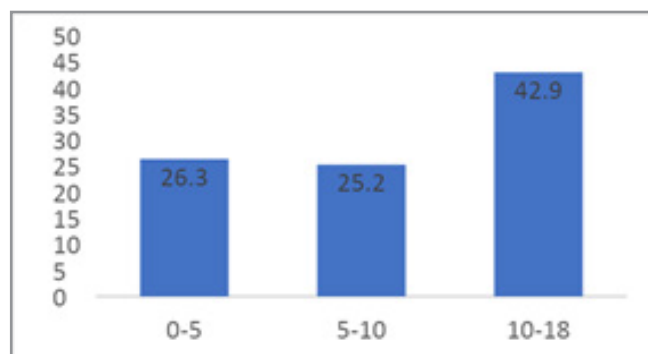
However, the trends observed earlier are reversed. Indeed, the data in table 9 (appendix 6) show that GEF women were the most numerous to have declared themselves as AA beneficiaries (100%). They are aged 35-39 (58.8%), single (61.3%) and have secondary education (51.6%).

A breakdown by age shows that in cities lacking basic social services, the need for socio-economic empowerment is greatest among women who are older (54.8%), single (61.3%) and moderately educated (51.6%).

AA Recipients by Number of Dependent Schoolchildren

In general, empowerment is linked to the number of children in school. Especially among women, it is associated with the ideal number of children they wish to have and their ability to control births, to limit their fertility to this ideal number in the sub-Saharan context (Ushma et al., 2013). This situation therefore invites the question of whether greater economic empowerment of GEFs or poor people would help them to adequately meet the burdens associated with their children's schooling.

In the context of this study, the survey sought to answer this question. The results in graph 2 below confirm the influence of the empowerment of GEFs or poor people on their children's schooling. Indeed, as the number of children attending school increases, more GEFs declare that they have benefited from AA, i.e., 26.3% (0-5 children), 25.2% (5-10 children) and 42.9% (10-18 children) respectively.



Graphics 2: AA recipients by number of children in school

Reasons for Receiving AA.

The choices leading to empowerment depend on three dimensions: resources, action and performance of the person concerned [2]. Living conditions encompass all the means (material and immaterial) essential to maintaining life, well-being and so on.

The literature review shows that these dimensions are enhanced and strengthened by empowerment and, therefore, increased assets (World Bank, 2004). And this is an indispensable condition for access to resources, as shown by the results of the survey on the use of AA by GEFs or poor people.

Generally speaking, the results in table 10 (appendix 7) show that 44.8% of GEFs who had benefited from AA said they had applied for it to ensure access to basic services. On the other hand, more of them sought AA to improve their living conditions (66.9%). By gender, 31.5% of women said they had sought AA to use basic social services (BSS), including nutrition, access to health, education, housing, etc., versus 50.7% of men. The same trends can be observed in the use of AA in response to living conditions. This can be explained by the fact that women are still confronted with the glass ceiling.

Profitability of Beneficiary AAs

The data in Table 11 below show that almost all GEFs or poor people who benefited from an AA declared that it was followed by production (79.5%) and an increase in income (78.4%). This is in line with the group interviews, where key informants gave the same answer. However, these results must be treated with great caution. If the implementation of an AA has been followed by an increase in productivity and/or profits, these factors tend to diminish over time if the outputs (products, services, etc.) are misused. However, to return to the data analysis in Table 10, it was the women who were relatively in the majority in recognizing the positive impact of AA.

Table 5: Breakdown of AA beneficiaries by gender and profitability

AA profitability	Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
Followed by productivity						
Yes	56	77,5	236	80,0	291	79,5
No	16	22,5	59	20,0	75	20,5
Total	71	100,0	295	100,0	336	100,0
Followed by an increase in revenues/profits						
Yes	53	74,6	234	79,3	287	78,4
No	18	25,4	61	20,7	79	21,6
Total	71	100,0	295	100,0	336	100,0

Type of AA of Beneficiaries and those Requested for AA

Table 12 confirms that economic empowerment was achieved more through IGAs (88.0%) than employment (7.2%), and even less through employability (4.7%). In fact, women GEFs (88.4%) were almost as likely as men (86.6%) to say that their chosen type of AA was an IGA. Indeed, empowerment through IGAs is more attractive than other empowerment actions. This is because IGAs enable people to concentrate on higher value-add-

ed tasks (production, sale, transformation of a good, etc.). It is therefore the resources generated by IGAs that are the keystone that GEFs or the poor place as the crowning achievement of empowerment. Indeed, interest in IGAs is still strong today. In 2022, the Ministry in charge of Youth launched a call for projects for income-generating activities for 30 to 50 young people aged 15 to 35, with projects or project ideas, as part of the fight against unemployment by empowering young people.

Table 6: Distribution of AA beneficiaries and AA applicants by gender and type of AA

AA type	Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
AGR	58	86,6	258	88,4	316	88,0
Jobs	7	10,4	19	6,5	26	7,2
Employability	2	3,0	15	5,1	17	4,7
Total	67	100,0	292	100,0	359	100,0

AA Implementation Structures

According to the data in Table 13 below, third parties or secondary sociability networks (relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc.) were more frequently cited by AA beneficiaries for having implemented them, i.e., GEFs who declared having benefited from an AA and having been asked again for an AA. It should be noted that these same networks were cited more by women (74.3%) than by male GEFs (67.2%).

On the other hand, the State or sectoral administrations (Social Affairs, Employment, etc.) were cited less often by women

GEFs (19.5%) than by men GEFs (22.4%) as implementing bodies. These results support the EGEP 2017 analysis that "limited access to financing for income-generating activities has reinforced the tendency to resort to informal financing mechanisms, such as tontines" (World Bank, 2020, p. 20). Thus, informal support, i.e., help from family and friends, proves to be the main source of support for GEFs or poor people who have benefited or wish to benefit from an AA. On the other hand, other structures, such as associations, United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, etc.) and development partners were less frequently cited in the implementation of AA.

Table 6: Distribution of AA beneficiaries and AA applicants by gender and type of AA

Implementation structures	Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
Status	15	22,4	57	19,5	72	20,1
Organe Associatif	2	3,4	6	2,1	8	2,2
UN	0	0,0	4	1,4	4	1,1
Development Partners	5	7,5	8	2,7	13	3,6
Third parties or social networks	45	67,2	217	74,3	262	73,0
Total	67	100,0	292	100,0	359	100

Beneficiaries' IGA Activities

The results of table 14 (appendix 8) show that the majority of IGA beneficiaries are involved in trade and services (79%). However, there was a marked gender disparity in terms of empowerment through IGAs, which tends to support the findings of the literature review.

Indeed, among those empowered by an IGA, many GEF women declared that empowerment was found in all key sectors of economic activity: agriculture (74%), livestock (80%), trade/service (83.1%), crafts (84.6%), fishing (77.8%) and processing (84.8%). On the other hand, a small proportion of GEF men declared that they had been empowered by an IGA in areas such as agriculture (26%), fishing (22.2%) and livestock breeding (20%).

Preference for IGAs

We used one of the discrete choice models to analyze the individual behavior of GEFs in their choice of IGA. The aim was to determine the chances (a posteriori) that a GEF man or woman, taken at random in relation to the type of AA desired, would have chosen an IGA given its characteristics.

Although the introduction of variables linked to the choice of type of AA does not significantly improve the regression model (see model in Table 15), we note from the results of the logit model that the choice of an IGA is significantly affected at the 10% threshold by the socio-demographic characteristics of the GEF, notably gender and age, living conditions and place of residence [3].

On the other hand, socio-cultural characteristics, including the GEF's level of education, have a highly significant effect on the choice of an IGA, at the 5% threshold. Thus, according to the regression model obtained (model 1), the additional risk or chance ratio is around 4. With a confidence interval of 95%, the additional risk of choosing an IGA can vary from 2 to 5.

In other words, when the educational level of a GEF woman or man increases, i.e., from primary to higher education, the risk of choosing an ARG from among the AAs is multiplied by 4.

We can also say that it increases by 400%, since it is quadrupled. So, there is indeed an association between a high level of education and the risk of choosing an IGA among the AAs. This is confirmed by the significance level of less than 5%.

Table 8: Variables in equation (model 1) and logistic regression equation

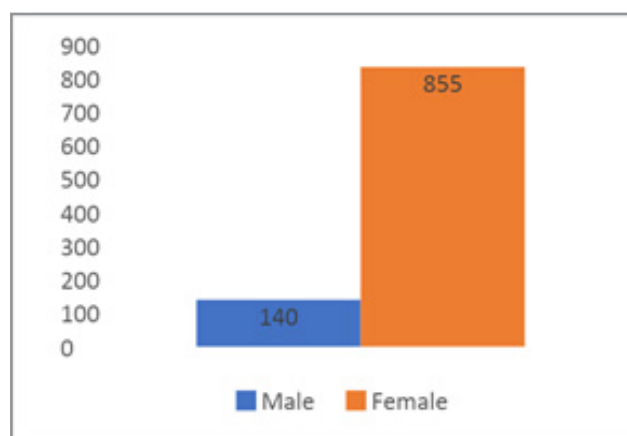
Model 1	A	E.S.	Wald	Ddl	Sig.	Exp(B)	Exp(B) 95% CI	
							Lower	Superior
Variables								
Q16A1(1): gender-related	-0,537	0,24	4,993	1	0,025	0,585	0,365	0,936
Q16A2(1): age-related	-0,382	0,21	3,311	1	0,069	0,682	0,452	1,03
Q16A3(1): linked to cost of living	-0,385	0,18	4,578	1	0,032	0,68	0,478	0,968
Q16A4(1): linked to place of residence	-1,403	0,431	10,597	1	0,001	0,246	0,106	0,572
Q16A5(1): related to level of education	1,257	0,18	48,569	1	0,000	3,514	2,468	5,003
Constant	3,023	0,575	27,68	1	0,000	20,561		
Equation								
Logit (AGR choice) = 3.023 - 0.537*Q16A1(1) - 0.382*Q16A2(1) - 0.385*Q16A3(1) - 1.403*Q16A4(1) + 1.257*Q16A5(1)								

In addition, SPSS calculated for each person surveyed, whether or not they were GFs or AA beneficiaries, high probabilities of choosing an IGA from among the AAs.

GEF Wishing to Benefit from an AA and the type Required.

GEF Wishing to Benefit from an AA

Graph 3 below shows that 85.8% of GEF women wish to benefit from AA, compared with only 14.2% of GEF men. The latter believe that empowerment will change their lives and give them access to essential services. There could be several reasons for this: the unfavorable socio-economic conditions in which women and girls live in Gabon, and which the glass ceiling prevents from accessing basic services (EGEP, 2017); women's entrepreneurship. Indeed, women are more confronted with problems of access to factors of production (information, credit, natural resources, etc.), hence the need to seek to escape poverty and social exclusion through empowerment [5].



Graphics 3: Desire to benefit from AA, by gender.

Furthermore, the results in Table 16 show that 52.8% of GEF or poor people aged 35-39, 59.4% of single people and 58.9% with secondary education wish to benefit from AA. By gender,

women aged 35-39 (53.3%), with secondary education (58.7%) and no marital commitment (59.3%) are the most likely to want AA. These figures show just how important it is to invest in the

socio-economic empowerment of women. For, according to UN Women, it is the best route to gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth.

Table 9: Breakdown of the population by gender wishing to benefit from AA, according to certain characteristics.

Features	Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
Age group						
16-24	15	10,3	40	4,7	55	5,5
25-29	29	20, 0	106	12,4	135	13,5
30-34	18	12,4	134	15,7	152	15,2
35-39	68	46,9	460	53,8	528	52,8
40-44	7	4,8	42	4,9	49	4,9
45-49	5	3,4	31	3,6	36	3,6
50-59	3	2,1	42	4,9	45	4,5
Total	145	100,0	855	100,0	1000	100,0
Marital status						
Single	87	60,0	507	59,3	594	59,4
Common-law union	35	24,1	169	19,8	204	20,4
Married monogamous	15	10,3	96	11,2	111	11,1
Married polygamist	2	1,4	18	2,1	20	2,0
Widow/widower	6	4,1	60	7,0	66	6,6
Divorced/separated	0	0,0	5	0,6	5	0,5
Total	145	100,0	855	100,0	1000	100,0
Education level						
No	4	2,8	57	6,7	61	6,1
Primary	27	18,6	245	28,7	272	27,2
Secondary	87	60,0	502	58,7	589	58,9
Superior	27	18,6	51	6,0	78	7,8
Total	145	100	855	100,0	1000	100,0

Type of AA Desired by GEFs

In Gabon, interest in income-generating activities (IGAs) is unprecedented, as shown by the literature review and the logit regression carried out on individual SA choice behaviors. Indeed, the results in Table 5 below show that 82.8% of GEFs wish to be empowered through this type of AA. Similarly, women GEFs (84.5%) were relatively more likely than men (72.9%) to opt for IGAs.

It's worth noting that socio-economic empowerment activities are diverse and varied: IGAs, personal services, etc. However, it has to be said that over the past 10 years, IGAs carried out

by girls and women have grown considerably, mainly thanks to the actions of the Fonds national d'aide social (FNAS), which has made them its main activity through indirect financing and training activities [6].

Added to this are other programs devoted exclusively to IGAs (ART GOLD Gabon Program, SIH ...) through the involvement of several other organizations (IGAD, ADAG ...). Consequently, the national interest in IGAs leads us to understand the reasons why the majority of GEFs wish to benefit from them, regardless of the provincial towns visited [7].

Table 10: Breakdown of the population by gender wishing to benefit from AA, according to the type chosen.

AA type	Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
AGR	102	72,9	712	84,5	814	82,8
Jobs	26	18,6	73	8,7	99	10,1
Employability	12	8,6	58	6,9	70	7,1
Total	140	100,0	843	100,0	983	100,0

Interpretation of Results

There are two important points to emphasize here: firstly, the creation of target areas of activity, and secondly, the mechanisms for financing social protection.

Creating Target Business Areas

Based on the results of the situational analysis, it is possible to highlight six (6) main Target business areas.

These are, in turn, agriculture, livestock breeding, trade/service, crafts, fishing and, finally, processing.

Farming

In Gabon, poverty is more prevalent in rural areas, with 45% of households in a situation of economic vulnerability, compared with 20% in urban areas. Between 2005 and 2013, data show that poverty dropped from 33% to 30% (2014 Human Investment Strategy).

The agricultural sector is one of the levers that can contribute to the support mechanisms for the empowerment of the economically disadvantaged Gabonese through the policies and programs developed.

Support in the agricultural sector covers almost all of Gabon's nine (9) provinces. In this sense, the said provinces and/or localities are conducive to the practice of agriculture by setting up a product specialization based on soil structure, type of farming and farmers' experience.

Two types of farms have been identified:

- Farming operations within large areas.
- Farming in small areas.

Empowerment policies need to be implemented according to the type of farm. Indeed, although the main problems in this area of activity concern production techniques, in particular: mechanization of techniques, mainly for large surfaces, exploitation of cultivated areas and product conservation, it should be noted that a breakdown by type of farm is necessary.

Fishing

Fishing is a target activity for which support should focus on improving fishing techniques and preserving fish products. This activity mainly concerns men and women with experience and those wishing to enter the sector under supervision.

Fishing is only available in provinces that are bathed by the sea or by large rivers and have experience in this field. Support is provided according to the type of fishing, which can be:

- Industrialized fishing (deep-sea fishing).
- Artisanal fishing (river fishing).
- Freshwater fishing.

Only men and women in excellent physical condition will be selected for deep-sea fishing.

Breeding

Breeding is an activity that requires special attention. It can be carried out by the entire target population (young people, men and women) in average physical condition. Three types of activity should be integrated into the support program:

- Urban breeding;
- Peri-urban livestock farming;
- Rural breeding.

Pilot farms should be set up for both types of livestock to develop the sector and provide a framework for the projects financed.

Trade/service

Trade and service are target areas that concern all nine (9) provinces without exception in terms of age and/or gender. However, a distinction is made between :

- Urban services and commercial activities ;
- Peri-urban services and commercial activities;
- Rural services and commercial activities.

Commercial activities will be targeted at the regions in question. The services will be provided in partnership with private companies (Airtel, Moov Africa, SEEG, Canal+, etc.) to ensure the sustainability of the projects.

A private-public partnership will have the advantage of limiting the presence of stowaways in the selected programs.

Craftsmanship

Craftsmanship is an activity practiced by people with a certain amount of experience, and its support must be based on a distinction between three types of activity:

- Urban crafts ;
- Peri-urban crafts ;
- Rural craftsmanship.

The sector's main difficulty remains product distribution. We therefore need to consider improving product flow chains and production techniques. The best people to work with are those with a certain experience in the field, who can accompany others wishing to concentrate on the sector.

The Transformation

Processing is an activity that requires a certain level of education, and mainly concerns the processing of agricultural, livestock and fishing products. We therefore distinguish between two types of eligible persons.

- People with a higher level of education and training in the field.
- People with the ability to adapt to different processing techniques.

The processing sector covers investments in both urban and rural areas.

In addition to the distinctions made in each area of activity with a view to financing them, it is important to consider private supervision to ensure the effectiveness of the policies implemented.

Means of Financing Empowerment Initiatives Gabonese Regional Development Fund (FGDR)

With the aim of boosting local development, such a fund is intended to cover the following financing:

- 1°) Financing investments to create and maintain jobs.
- 2°) Financing infrastructure investments.
- 3°) Financing investments in research and development.
- 4°) Financing the economic activity of regional production units.
- 5°) Investment financing to be used as collateral.

Gabonese Social Fund (FSG)

This fund is devoted entirely to education and continuing training, to help employees adapt to the move from a declining production unit to a new sector of activity.

Limits of the Study

A number of limitations were listed, including:

- The exclusion of men from the projects, as the majority of economic empowerment projects in their *modus operandi* were aimed at women or women's associations.
- The conditionality of being in associations to benefit from funding (FNAS, ARTGOLD ...).
- In some cases, the projects have led to internal crises and/or power struggles within the associations.
- Some women felt a strong obligation to make contributions to the association (RESOFIM-EPIBOX FNAS case).
- Women have had to dedicate more time to attending project activities.
- The burden of heavy work on women.
- The exclusion of other women who would like to improve their income but are not interested in associations.
- Late or partial disbursement of funds intended for setting up the AA (EPIBOX).
- The gap between working capital (WC) and working capital requirements (WCR).
- Failure to take promoters' opinions into account when choosing technical equipment and supply stocks (as in the case of EPIBOX).
- A.A. imposed rather than chosen by the beneficiaries (as in the case of certain IGAs).
- Lack of supervision, monitoring, and evaluation by implementing bodies.

Lessons learned and Recommendations

Some lessons learned emerge from this qualitative survey. We note the following points in turn:

- AA is a powerful lever for improving access to basic social services, promoting family well-being, improving access to health care and helping children stay in school and succeed.
- The current form of AA funding, based on subsidies, is questionable and should be reviewed.
- The implementation of IGAs leads to an improvement in family well-being, particularly for the beneficiaries, and in the community in general.
- AAs have emerged as an ideal framework for promoting gender equality through women's economic empowerment.
- A.A. is a community-based tool that facilitates dialogue within communities and households and helps to give women a greater say in decisions affecting their households and children.

Conclusion

This reflection has led to the following key conclusions:

- 1°) Social protection policies geared towards empowering economically vulnerable populations are an undeniable support to public development policies, so as to more specifically target the growth of locomotive actors on empowerment actions as well as target areas of activity to be developed in each region of our country.
- 2°) If initiatives to empower economically vulnerable populations are to become widespread, the State and its partners

need to put in place conditions for self-sufficiency and operation, to make them truly autonomous and sustainable structures.

- 3°) The identification and selection of target areas of activity and the implementation of social protection financing mechanisms contribute to improving the well-being of poor populations.
- 4°) The need to coordinate and strengthen networking, cooperation and collaboration between the various players on issues relating to the sustainable implementation, monitoring and evaluation of empowerment policies.
- 5°) Federating beneficiaries and empowerment stakeholders around target areas of activity and local champions.
- 6°) Building and promoting the portfolio of products and services offered by companies in the region.
- 7°) Cooperation and collaboration with local, regional and international partners, including governments, the private sector, civil society, NGOs and regional and international bodies, to advance the cause of poverty reduction and alleviation.

The fact remains that, while social protection is undoubtedly an effective policy for combating poverty and strengthening social ties, it is by no means a magic wand, and cannot take the place of employment or growth policies.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Individual interview guide

Interview guide n°...

Heads of empowerment bodies

I. Identification

Company name:
Title of empowerment initiative:
Target :
Persons responsible (titles and names):
Start-up year of empowerment action:
Scope of action (province/department/commune/borough/canton
AA beneficiaries (gender, age):
Sources of financing (specify):

II. Institutional anchoring

1. Does your empowerment initiative have a legal framework?
2. If so, which one ?
3. If not, why not ?
4. Does your action have a specific steering body?
5. If so, which one (name and type)?
6. If not, why not ?

III. Mechanisms and procedures

7. Have you set up an AA mechanism?
8. If so, which one ?
9. If not, why not ?
10. What difficulties have been encountered in implementing the mechanism?
11. What are the solutions for current actions?
12. What was the projected budget for the project?
13. What was the actual amount disbursed?
14. Share of subsidy from various providers
15. What was the execution rate?

IV. Impact of AA

16. What were the success factors?
17. Does your empowerment initiative have a monitoring and evaluation framework?
18. What do you think of the various empowerment initiatives?
19. In your opinion, do empowerment initiatives contribute to poverty reduction?
20. What suggestions do you have for improving or perpetuating your entity's empowerment initiatives?

Thank you for your collaboration!

Appendix 2: Group interview guide

A- Participant identification

N°	Name and surname	Age	Empowerment program/project/action	Qualification	Contact
P1					
P2					
P3					
P4					
P5					
P6					
P7					
P8					

Appendix 3

Table 11: Distribution of the population surveyed in some provincial towns according to certain socio-demographic characteristics.

Features	Estuaire (Libreville)		Estuaire (Libreville)		Nyanga (Tchibanga)		Ogooue-Ivindo (Makokou)		Ogooue-maritime (Port-Gentil)		Woleu-Ntem (Oyem)		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
GEF														
Yes	360	85,9	276	97,2	160	100,0	145	94,2	160	55,6	146	98,0	1247	85,8
No	59	14,1	8	2,8	0	0,0	9	5,8	128	44,4	3	2,0	207	14,2
Total	419	100,0	284	100,0	160	100,0	154	100,0	288	100,0	149	100,0	1454	100,0
Gender														
Male	88	21,0	47	16,5	17	10,6	16	10,4	46	16,0	13	8,7	227	15,6
Female	331	79,0	237	83,5	143	89,4	138	89,6	242	84,0	136	91,3	1227	84,4
Total	419	100,0	284	100,0	160	100,0	154	100,0	288	100,0	149	100,0	1454	100,0
Education level														
No	19	4,5	27	9,5	10	6,3	12	7,8	5	1,7	9	6,0	82	5,6
Primary	103	24,6	87	30,6	48	30,0	44	28,6	88	30,6	32	21,5	402	27,6
Secondary	248	59,2	143	50,4	97	60,6	87	56,5	173	60,1	101	67,8	849	58,4
Superior	49	11,7	27	9,5	5	3,1	11	7,1	22	7,6	7	4,7	121	8,3
Total	419	100,0	284	100,0	160	100,0	154	100,0	288	100,0	149	100,0	1454	100,0
Marital status														
Single	212	50,6	200	70,4	102	63,7	76	49,4	162	56,3	82	55	834	57,4
Common law union	97	23,2	41	14,4	30	18,8	59	38,3	78	27,1	20	13,4	325	22,4
Married monogamous	69	16,5	21	7,4	23	14,4	11	7,1	35	12,2	17	11,4	176	12,1
Married polygamist	4	1,0	4	1,4	1	0,6	1	0,6	2	0,7	10	6,7	22	1,5

Source : Author from SPSS software

Table 12: Characteristics of GEFs or not, AA beneficiaries or not, according to cities with more poor people

Features	GEF						No GEF					
	Beneficiary		No beneficiary		Set		Beneficiary		No beneficiary		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
Age group												
16-24	11	4,4	16	2,9	27	3,4	9	9,4	11	11,1	20	10,3
25-29	35	14,1	72	13,2	107	13,5	12	12,5	13	13,1	25	12,8
30-34	35	14,1	85	15,5	120	15,1	14	14,6	20	20,2	34	17,4
35-39	124	50,0	310	56,7	434	54,6	41	42,7	48	48,5	89	45,6
40-44	21	8,5	21	3,8	42	5,3	9	9,4	3	3,0	12	6,2
45-49	7	2,8	18	3,3	25	3,1	8	8,3	3	3,0	11	5,6
50-59	15	6,0	25	4,6	40	5,0	3	3,1	1	1,0	4	2,1
Total	248	100,0	547	100,0	795	100,0	96	100,0	99	100,0	195	100,0
Education level												
No	12	4,8	35	6,4	47	5,9	2	2,1	2	2,0	4	2,1
Primary	63	25,4	154	28,2	217	27,3	35	36,5	25	25,3	60	30,8
Secondary	142	57,3	308	56,3	450	56,6	53	55,2	61	61,6	114	58,5
Superior	31	12,5	50	9,1	81	10,2	6	6,3	11	11,1	17	8,7
Total	248	100	547	100,0	795	100,0	96	100,0	99	100,0	195	100,0
Marital status												
Single	134	54,0	323	59	457	57,5	53	55,2	63	63,6	116	59,5
Common-law union	68	27,4	107	19,6	175	22,0	22	22,9	19	19,2	41	21,0
Married monogamous	32	12,9	64	11,7	96	12,1	15	15,6	14	14,1	29	14,9
Married polygamist	2	0,8	6	1,1	8	1,0	1	1,0	1	1,0	2	1,0
Widow/widower	9	3,6	42	7,7	51	6,4	5	5,2	2	2,0	7	3,6
Divorced/separated	3	1,2	5	0,9	8	1,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Total	248	100,0	547	100,0	795	100,0	96	100,0	99	100,0	195	100,0

Source: Authors based on CPro software

Table 13: Characteristics of GEFs or not, AA beneficiaries or not, according to socio-economic dropout cities

Features	GEF						No GEF					
	Beneficiary		No beneficiary		Set		Beneficiary		No beneficiary		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
Age group												
16-24	0	0,0	27	6,5	27	6,0	0	0,0	1	9,1	1	8,3
25-29	3	8,6	52	12,5	55	12,2	0	0,0	4	36,4	4	33,3
30-34	7	20	60	14,4	67	14,9	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
35-39	18	51,4	202	48,6	220	48,8	1	100,0	6	54,5	7	58,3
40-44	1	2,9	28	6,7	29	6,4	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
45-49	2	5,7	22	5,3	24	5,3	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
50-59	4	11,4	25	6,0	29	6,4	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Total	35	100,0	416	100,0	451	100,0	1	100,0	11	100,0	12	100,0
Education level												
No	2	5,7	29	7	31	6,9	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Primary	11	31,4	111	26,7	122	27,1	0	0,0	2	18,2	2	16,7
Secondary	20	57,1	257	61,8	277	61,4	1	100	7	63,6	8	66,7
Superior	2	5,7	19	4,6	21	4,7	0	0,0	2	18,2	2	16,7
Total	35	100,0	416	100	451	100,0	1	100,0	11	100,0	12	100,0
Marital status												

Single	20	57,1	236	56,7	256	56,8	0	0,0	4	36,4	4	33,3
Common-law union	6	17,1	97	23,3	103	22,8	1	100,0	5	45,5	6	50,0
Married monogamous	5	14,3	44	10,6	49	10,9	0	0,0	2	18,2	2	16,7
Married polygamist	0	0,0	12	2,9	12	2,7	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Widow/widower	3	8,6	25	6,0	28	6,2	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Divorced/separated	1	2,9	2	0,5	3	0,7	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Total	35	100,0	416	100,0	451	100,0	1	100,0	11	100,0	12	100,0

Source: Authors based on CSPro software

Table 14: Cities with more poor people, by selected socio-demographic characteristics Distribution of AA and non-AA beneficiaries by gender, surveyed in

Features	AA beneficiary						No AA beneficiary					
	Male		Female		Set		Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
GEF												
Yes	51	71,8	200	72,7	251	72,5	83	75,5	462	86,4	545	84,5
No	20	28,2	75	27,3	95	27,5	27	24,5	73	13,6	100	15,5
Total	71	100,0	275	100,0	346	100,0	110	100,0	535	100,0	645	100,0
Age group												
16-24	10	14,1	9	3,3	19	5,5	12	10,9	16	3,0	28	4,3
25-29	13	18,3	35	12,7	48	13,9	23	20,9	61	11,4	84	13,0
30-34	7	9,9	43	15,6	50	14,5	13	11,8	91	17,0	104	16,1
35-39	27	38,0	136	49,5	163	47,1	55	50,0	306	57,2	361	56
40-44	8	11,3	24	8,7	32	9,2	3	2,7	19	3,6	22	3,4
45-49	1	1,4	15	5,5	16	4,6	3	2,7	17	3,2	20	3,1
50-59	5	7,0	13	4,7	18	5,2	1	0,9	25	4,7	26	4,0
Total	71	100,0	275	100,0	346	100,0	110	100,0	535	100,0	645	100,0
Marital status												
Single	41	57,7	148	53,8	189	54,6	70	63,6	315	58,9	385	59,7
Common-law union	20	28,2	68	24,7	88	25,4	21	19,1	107	20,0	128	19,8
Married monogamous	8	11,3	37	13,5	45	13,0	15	13,6	65	12,1	80	12,4
Married polygamist	0	0,0	4	1,5	4	1,2	1	0,9	5	0,9	6	0,9
Widow/widower	2	2,8	14	5,1	16	4,6	3	2,7	39	7,3	42	6,5
Divorced/separated	0	0,0	4	1,5	4	1,2	0	0,0	4	0,7	4	0,6
Total	71	100,0	275	100,0	346	100,0	110	100,0	535	100,0	645	100,0
Education level												
No	3	4,2	11	4,0	14	4,0	6	5,5	31	5,8	37	5,7
Primary	11	15,5	87	31,6	98	28,3	23	20,9	157	29,3	180	27,9
Secondary	43	60,6	154	56,0	197	56,9	67	60,9	300	56,1	367	56,9
Superior	14	19,7	23	8,4	37	10,7	14	12,7	47	8,8	61	9,5
Total	71	100,0	275	100,0	346	100,0	110	100,0	535	100,0	645	100,0

Source: Authors based on CSPro software

Table 15: Breakdown of AA and non-AA beneficiaries by gender, surveyed in towns in socio-economic decline, by selected socio-demographic characteristics

Features	AA beneficiary						No AA beneficiary					
	Male		Female		Set		Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
GEF												
Yes	4	80,0	31	100,0	35	97,2	37	90,2	379	98,2	416	97,4

No	1	20,0	0	0,0	1	2,8	4	9,8	7	1,8	11	2,6
Total	5	100,0	31	100,0	36	100,0	41	100,0	386	100,0	427	100,0
Age group												
16-24	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	4,9	26	6,7	28	6,6
25-29	0	0,0	3	9,7	3	8,3	5	12,2	51	13,2	56	13,1
30-34	0	0,0	7	22,6	7	19,4	6	14,6	54	14,0	60	14,1
35-39	2	40,0	17	54,8	19	52,8	19	46,3	189	49,0	208	48,7
40-44	1	20,0	0	0,0	1	2,8	4	9,8	24	6,2	28	6,6
45-49	0	0,0	2	6,5	2	5,6	2	4,9	20	5,2	22	5,2
50-59	2	40,0	2	6,5	4	11,1	3	7,3	22	5,7	25	5,9
Total	5	100,0	31	100,0	36	100,0	41	100,0	386	100,0	427	100,0
Marital status												
Single	1	20,0	19	61,3	20	55,6	17	41,5	223	57,8	240	56,2
Common-law union	1	20,0	6	19,4	7	19,4	18	43,9	84	21,8	102	23,9
Married monogamous	2	40,0	3	9,7	5	13,9	3	7,3	43	11,1	46	10,8
Married polygamist	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	2,4	11	2,8	12	2,8
Widow/widower	0	0,0	3	9,7	3	8,3	2	4,9	23	6,0	25	5,9
Divorced/separated	1	20,0	0	0,0	1	2,8	0	0,0	2	0,5	2	0,5
Total	5	100,0	31	100,0	36	100,0	41	100,0	386	100,0	427	100,0
Education level												
No	0	0,0	2	6,5	2	5,6	1	2,4	28	7,3	29	6,8
Primary	0	0,0	11	35,5	11	30,6	8	19,5	105	27,2	113	26,5
Secondary	5	100,0	16	51,6	21	58,3	21	51,2	243	63,0	264	61,8
Superior	0	0,0	2	6,5	2	5,6	11	26,8	10	2,6	21	4,9
Total	5	100,0	31	100,0	36	100,0	41	100,0	386	100,0	427	100,0

Source: Authors based on CSPro software

Table 16: Breakdown of SA beneficiaries by gender according to the main reasons for applying for SA.

Reason for receiving AA	Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
Need to use basic social services						
Yes	23	50,7	93	31,5	116	44,8
No	48	49,3	202	68,5	250	55,2
Total	71	100,0	295	100,0	336	100,0
Improve your living conditions						
Yes	52	73,2	193	65,4	245	66,9
No	19	26,8	102	34,6	121	33,1
Total	71	100,0	295	100,0	336	100,0

Source: Authors based on CSPro software

Table 17: Distribution of IGA beneficiaries by gender and area of activity

ARG domain	Male		Female		Set	
	Eff	%	Eff	%	Eff	%
Agriculture						
Yes	13	26,0	38	74,0	51	100,0
No	44	17,0	218	83	262	100,0
Total	57	18,0	256	82,0	313	100,0
Breeding						
Yes	2	20,0	8	80,0	10	100,0

No	55	18,2	248	81,8	303	100,0
Total	57	18,2	256	81,8	313	100,0
Trade/service						
Yes	42	16,9	206	83,1	248	100,0
No	16	24,2	50	75,8	66	100,0
Total	58	18,5	256	81,5	314	100,0
Crafts						
Yes	2	15,4	11	84,6	13	100,0
No	56	18,6	245	81,4	301	100,0
Total	58	18,5	256	81,5	314	100,0
Fishing						
Yes	2	22,2	7	77,8	9	100,0
No	56	18,4	249	81,6	305	100,0
Total	58	18,5	256	81,5	314	100,0
Transformation						
Yes	5	15,2	28	84,8	33	100,0
No	53	18,9	228	81,1	281	100,0
Total	58	18,5	256	81,5	314	100,0

Source : Authors using SPSS software

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