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Development

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Poverty in Rural Samoa: Reasons and Strategies

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Introduction

- ▣ Government-led economic development strategies in Samoa have tried to improve livelihoods of rural poor over last 40 years
- ▣ Samoa performs comparatively well in terms of some development indices but isolation makes it vulnerable
- ▣ Objective of this research to:
 - ▣ Determine why rural Samoans became poor
 - ▣ Strategies they used to manage their poverty
 - ▣ Constraints they faced in trying to move out of poverty

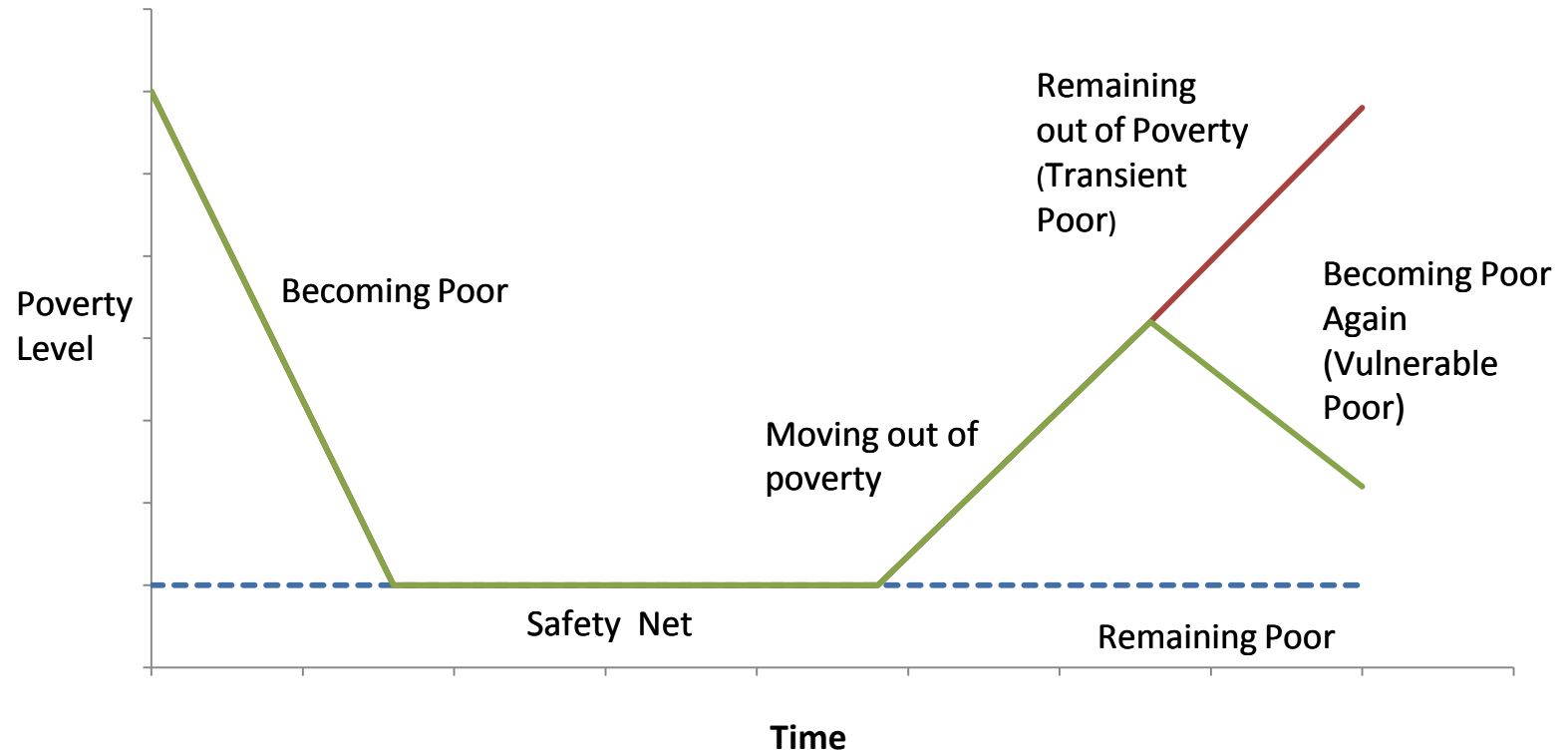
Methodology

- ▣ Classic grounded theory approach
- ▣ 25 respondents in four islands
- ▣ Entry to first site followed by theoretical sampling
- ▣ Customary approval, general check-list for interviews, self-debriefing, discussion with village
- ▣ Analysis after each batch, emerging themes developed, questions refined, and so on until saturation reached

Results: What is Poverty?

- ▣ Poverty is:
 - ▣ Not food poverty but can be times of temporary food shortage
 - ▣ Lack of household assets, particular consumer items, community facilities
 - ▣ Inability to meet social obligations
- ▣ Lack of income, income-earning ability and savings characteristic of rural poor

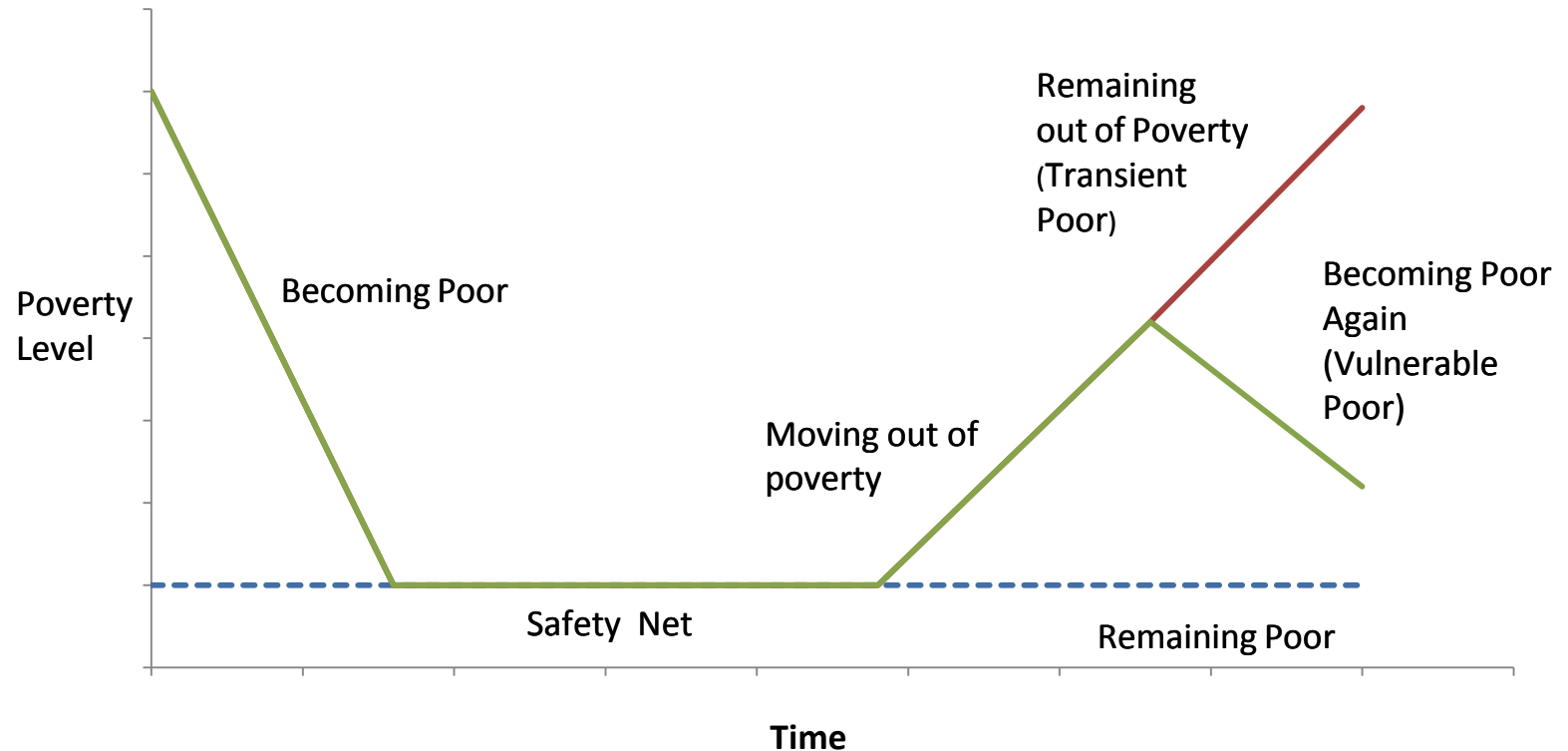
Results: The Process of Rural Poverty



Results: Becoming Poor?

- ▣ Three types of events associated with becoming poor
 - ▣ Personal circumstances
 - ▣ Social obligations
 - ▣ External events
 - ▣ Natural
 - ▣ Economic

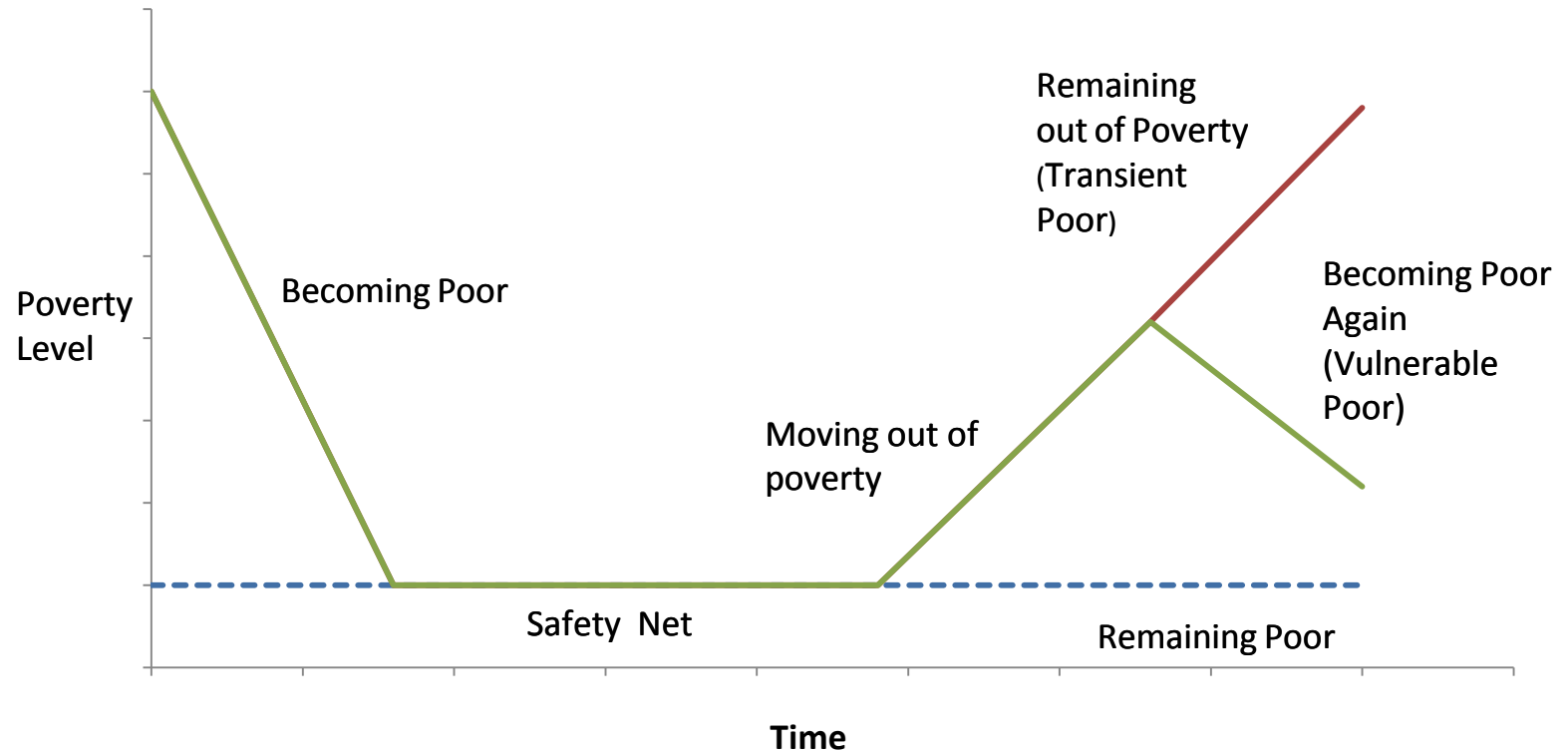
Results: The Process of Rural Poverty



Results: Safety Nets

- ▣ Safety nets arrest the fall into further poverty
 - ▣ Getting support from others
 - ▣ Semi-subsistence activities
 - ▣ Temporary employment

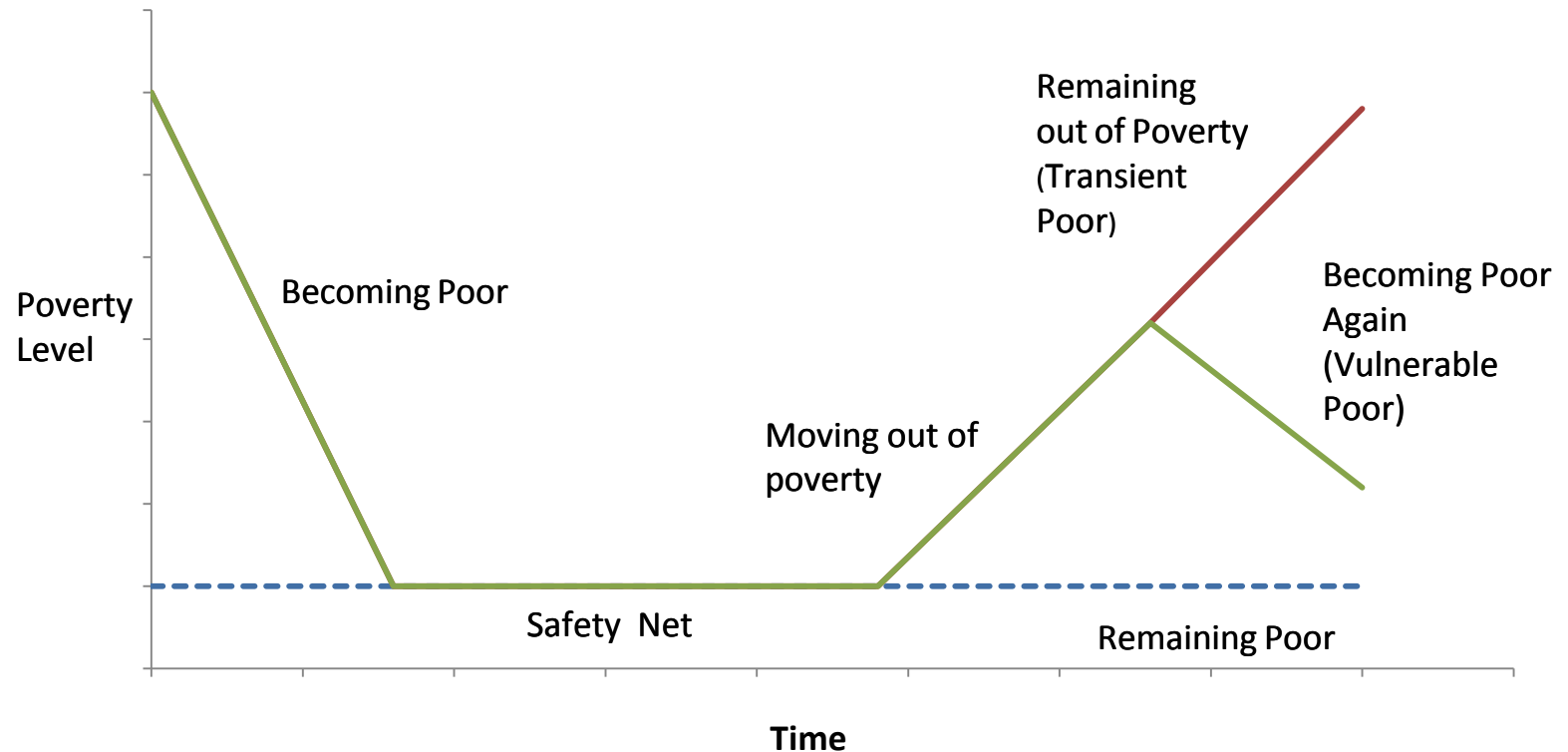
Results: The Process of Rural Poverty



Results: Remaining Poor

- ▣ Remaining Poor is the first poverty path
- ▣ Those on this path are:
 - ▣ Unable to get financial support from others
 - ▣ Inability to get a well-paying job
 - ▣ Unable to build up financial reserves through semi-subsistence activities
- ▣ Likely to lack voice and be isolated from decision-making and community facilities, credit and markets

Results: The Process of Rural Poverty



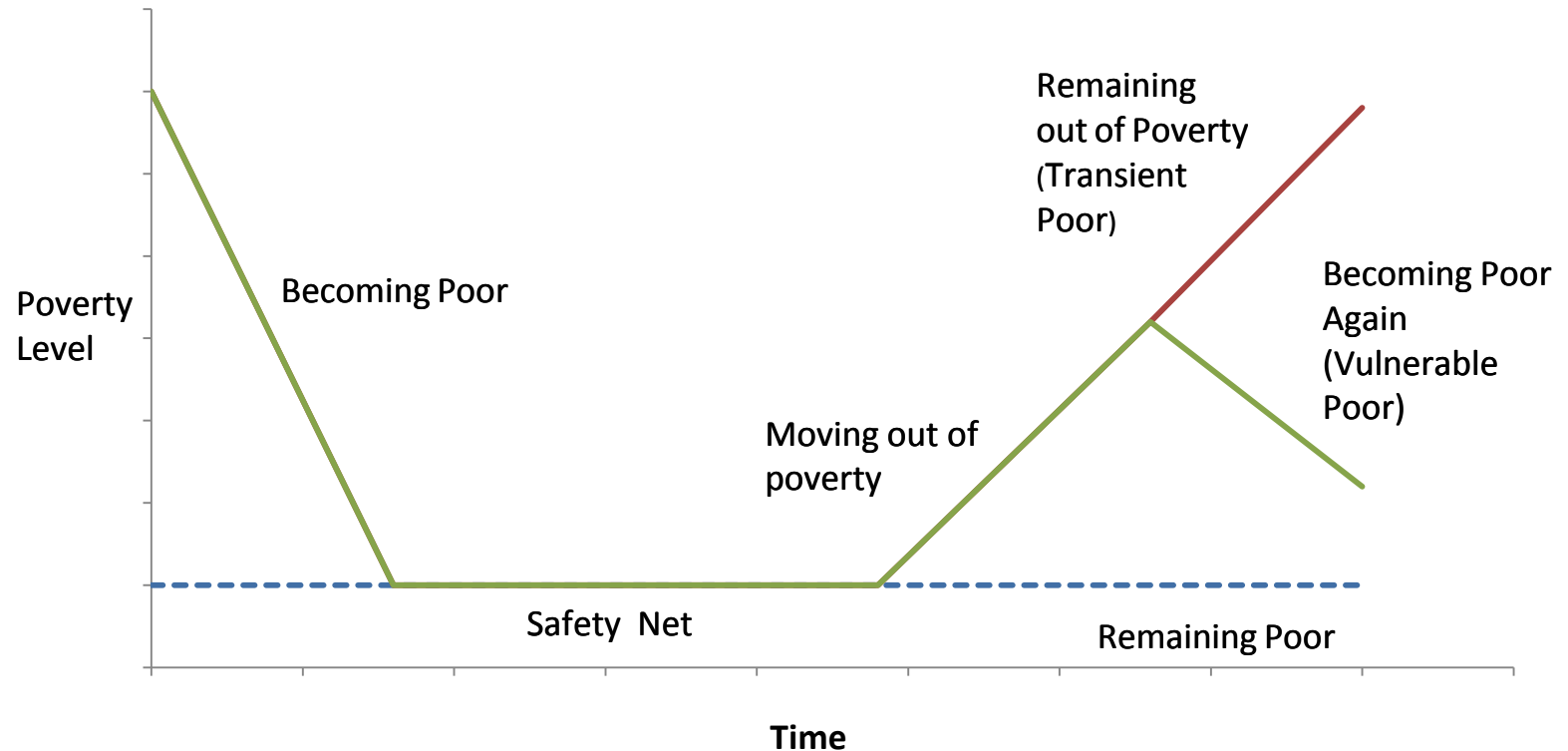
Results: Moving Out of Poverty

- ▣ On this path, able to employ short- and long-term strategies to emerge from poverty
 - ▣ Building up a business from semi-subsistence
 - ▣ Getting money from others and building up savings
 - ▣ Reducing social obligations
 - ▣ Using family resources strategically

Results: Moving Out of Poverty

- ▣ Transform from semi-subsistence to income-earning business through a series of steps
- ▣ Able to access micro-credit schemes or government grants and incentives
- ▣ Strong family networks, reducing social obligations, strategic management of expenditure
- ▣ Confidence with a proactive attitude – but what is cause and effect?

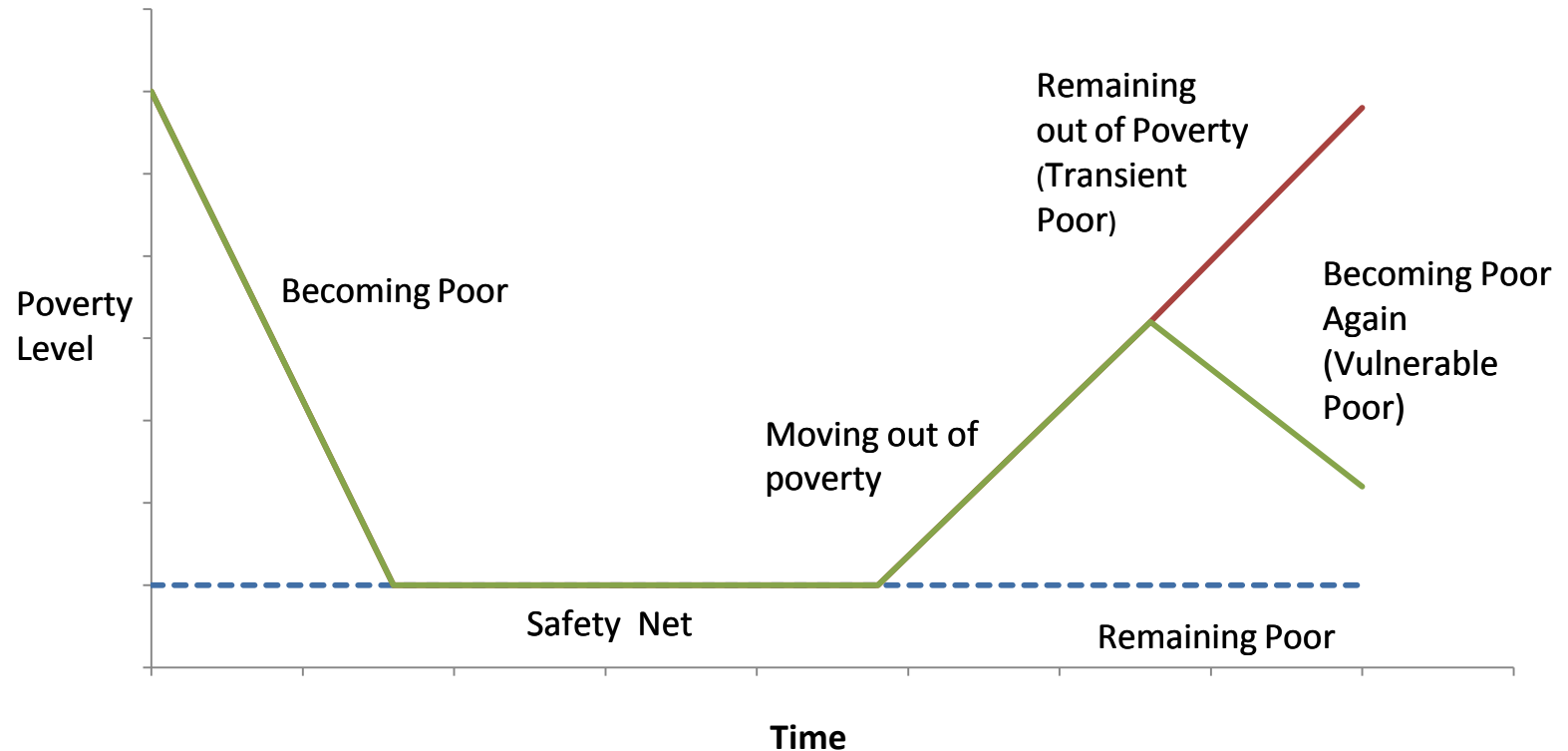
Results: The Process of Rural Poverty



Results: Remaining out of Poverty

- ▣ Able to amass savings, income-earning assets and earn a good income
- ▣ Gives them a buffer so that
 - ▣ Social obligations do not become a financial drain
 - ▣ Can withstand external shocks

Results: The Process of Rural Poverty



Results: Falling Back into Poverty

- ▣ Able to begin the process of amassing savings, income-earning assets and earn a good income
- ▣ At a vulnerable stage of their recovery pushed back into poverty by
 - ▣ Social obligations
 - ▣ External events
- ▣ Don't have quite the same access to resources, family networks and strategic approach as those who manage to remain out of poverty

Discussion and Conclusion

- ▣ Three paths to rural poverty, each with their own characteristics
 - ▣ Long-term poor
 - ▣ Transitory poor
 - ▣ Vulnerable poor
- ▣ What does this imply for villages, communities and government?

Discussion and Conclusion

- ▣ Long-term poor
 - ▣ Communities and villages could provide
 - ▣ Greater social support
 - ▣ Recognition of the powerlessness and isolation of most vulnerable members
 - ▣ Greater support for small business, improved access to credit and markets, support for projects and initiatives that provide employment or build business

Discussion and Conclusion

- ▣ Long-term poor
 - ▣ Government can provide
 - ▣ Macroeconomic environment that is conducive to small business and encourages opportunities for employment
 - ▣ Better access to health and education
 - ▣ Better rural infrastructure to reduce isolation and market access
 - ▣ Better targeted credit provision and access to resources
 - ▣ Targeted pension support for sick and elderly

Discussion and Conclusion

- ▣ Transitory poor
 - ▣ Well positioned and most likely to have become poor because of external events
 - ▣ Assistance for disaster relief and insurance
 - ▣ Access to credit once the process of emerging from poverty has begun

Discussion and Conclusion

- ▣ Vulnerable poor
 - ▣ Require policies that can
 - ▣ Enhance employment opportunities
 - ▣ Viability of small businesses
 - ▣ Reducing social obligations when trying to move out of poverty could allow them to build buffers against future poverty-inducing events

Discussion and Conclusion

- ▣ The research implies that
 - ▣ Government measures could be most effective if targeted to the requirements of those on the different paths
 - ▣ A focussed response by villages and communities could assist their more vulnerable and poorest members



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