

Oxford Policy Management

Evaluation of the Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Phase 2

Impact Evaluation
Qualitative Research Study - Round 1

Summary report
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All opinions expressed, and any mistakes, remain the responsibility of the authors.

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SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

This document presents a summary of the findings from the first round of the qualitative research for the independent impact evaluation the Hunger Safety Net Programme phase 2. The research provides information about the context in which the programme is operating as well as an assessment of the impact of both routine and emergency HSNP payments. It draws on the perceptions of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, as well as key informants in the four programme counties to describe how beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries perceive the impact of HSNP on different aspects on their lives. It provides a picture of how beneficiaries used their transfers and their thoughts on the changes that have resulted in their material and subjective wellbeing, ability to cope with risks, livelihoods, and the local economy at large. The report also reviews how the transfer is seen to affect social relationships, both between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in their communities and within beneficiary households themselves.

Data for the research was collected in between August and September 2015.

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The NSNP

There are four main cash transfer (CT) programmes in Kenya, which are implemented by two ministries: the Ministry of Labour, and East African Affairs⁷ (MLEAA; formerly the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services) and the Ministry of Devolution and Planning (MDP). The three programmes housed in the MLEAA are: the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programme (CT-OVC) in the Department of Children's Services; the Older Person Cash Transfer Programme (OPCT); and the Cash Transfer Programme for People with Severe Disability (CT-PWSD), both in the Department of Social Development. The HSNP sits in the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) within the MDP.

The three MLEAA CTs currently operate in 47 counties across Kenya, including the four HSNP counties. Within these four counties, there is currently not much overlap between the various programmes, though each of the MLEAA CTs have defined expansion plans that are due to be met in 2015/16 and 2016/17 .

Following the Kenya National Social Protection Strategy (2011) the government has established the National Safety Net Programme (NSNP.) The aim is to create a framework around which the four main cash transfer programmes (CT-OVC, OPCT, CT-PWSD and HSNP) will be increasingly coordinated and harmonised. The NSNP has three objectives that aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of safety net support to poor and vulnerable populations in Kenya:

- 1. create robust and transparent systems for targeting, registration, payments, case management and monitoring, and strengthen the overall governance of the programmes;**
- 2. harmonise the four CT programmes to improve the coherence of the sector; and**
- 3. expand the coverage of the four programmes in a coordinated manner to progressively realise the right to safety net support.**

The NSNP is thus the first step in a longer-term reform agenda that aims to establish a national safety net system as part of an integrated approach to delivering social protection services nationally. The Social Protection Secretariat, a body created by the National Social Protection Policy, provides sector-wide oversight and coordination.

The NSNP is supported by the World Bank's Programme for Results (P4R). Some of the indicators that trigger payments to the GoK under the P4R rely on data from the HSNP programme and its evaluation.





The Hunger Safety Net Programme

What is the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP)?

The HSNP is an unconditional cash transfer programme that focuses on households living in extreme poverty in four arid counties of Northern Kenya. It is currently in its second phase. The pilot phase took place between 2007-2013. Phase 2 will run from 2013-2017.

Who implements the HSNP?

HSNP is implemented by the Government of Kenya, with support from the UK Department for International Development. Within the government of Kenya, the National Drought Management Agency (NDMA) is responsible for leading on Phase 2 of HSNP.

Where does HSNP operate?

HSNP operates in Mandera, Marsabit, Turkana and Wajir.

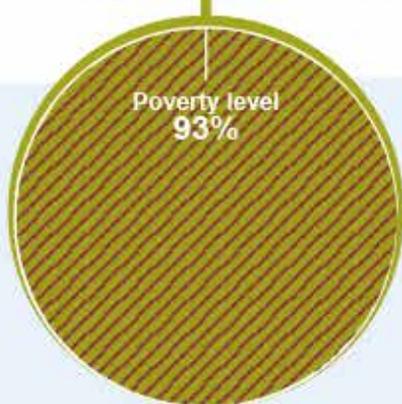
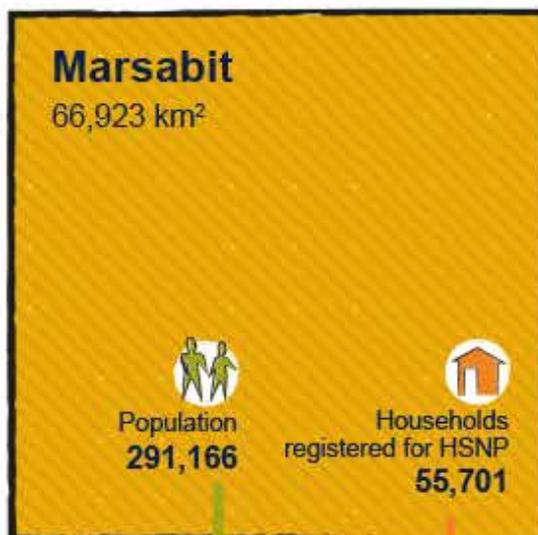
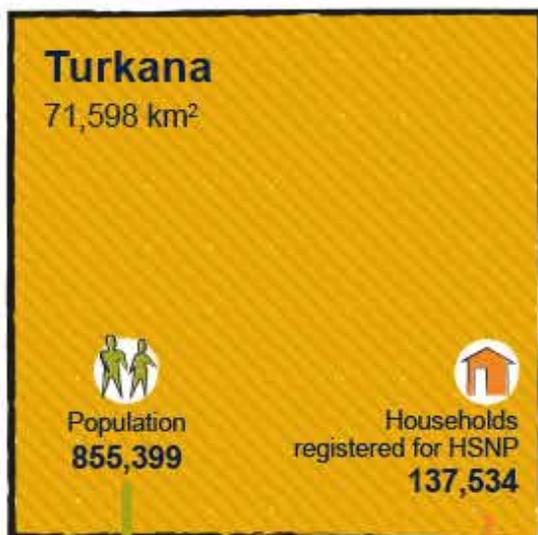
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Average regional temperature 28.3C°



Average regional rainfall 500mm per annum



How do people collect their money?

Recipients are issued bank cards. Transfers are paid straight into households' bank accounts on the fifth day of the first month of each payment cycle. To access the cash beneficiaries have three options:



1. Use their bank card at Equity payment agents based in local shops. This is by far the most common.



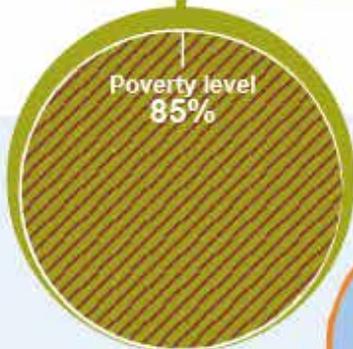
2. Use ATMs at any bank



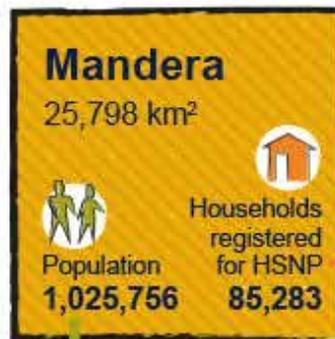
3. Collect their money over the counter at the nearest Equity branch

How does HSNP work?

All households in the four counties have been registered for bank accounts with Equity Bank. The HSNP provides regular cash transfers to 100,000 households, which represents about 25% of households in the region. The transfers are worth 5,100 Ksh and are paid every two months. NDMA monitors drought conditions by satellite. If these reach severe levels in any given month, an additional 25% of households in drought-affected areas receive a one-off 'emergency' payment. If conditions worsen to extreme levels, then coverage increases to 75% of all households.



Households targeted to receive routine HSNP payments **19,201**



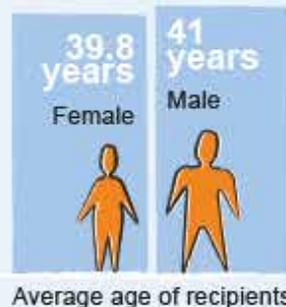
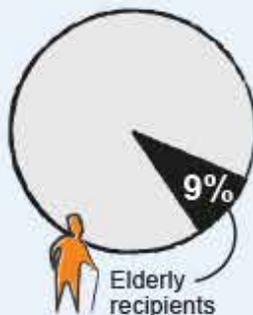
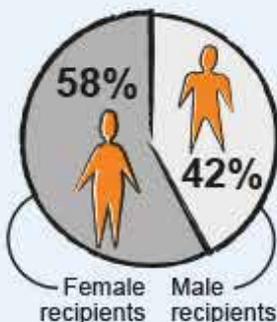
Households targeted to receive routine HSNP payments **22,231**



Currently, HSNP covers about 31% of the population in these counties, or around 620,000 people

Population figures from 2009 census. Poverty headcount from KIPPRA, 2013

Who are HSNP beneficiaries?



Average size of recipient households: **6.9 people**

Average size of households nationally: **3.9 people**

Source: HSNP MIS and Kenya DHS 2014]

Evaluation framework

Responding to the needs of a maturing programme, the evaluation of the HSNP 2 has been designed to feed into the programmes own routine M&E and policy development process while also fulfilling learning and accountability functions.

The evaluation consists of four workstreams: impact evaluation, operational monitoring, policy analysis and communications and learning. This report is an output from the impact evaluation workstream.

The impact evaluation adopts a mixed methods approach designed to understand the effects produced by the HSNP on targeted households and individuals as well as communities and local markets. In order to assess these impacts a range of analytical methods are used:

- A Local Economy Wide Impact Evaluation (LEWIE) investigates the wider effects of the HSNP on the local economy. This approach allows an understanding of the local supply response to the anticipated increase in demand due to the injection of cash into local markets brought about by the transfers. It sheds light on the potential multiplier effects of HSNP by simulating HSNP impacts on the entire local economy and on groups of households and production activities.
- A quantitative impact evaluation based on a Regression Discontinuity Design provides a robust estimate of aggregate programme impacts on households across various dimensions of interest. The quantitative survey comprises a single round of post-treatment data collection.
- Three rounds of qualitative research complements the quantitative studies by providing an understanding of programme context and how this affects and is affected by the programme. The qualitative research also captures the experiences and processes that

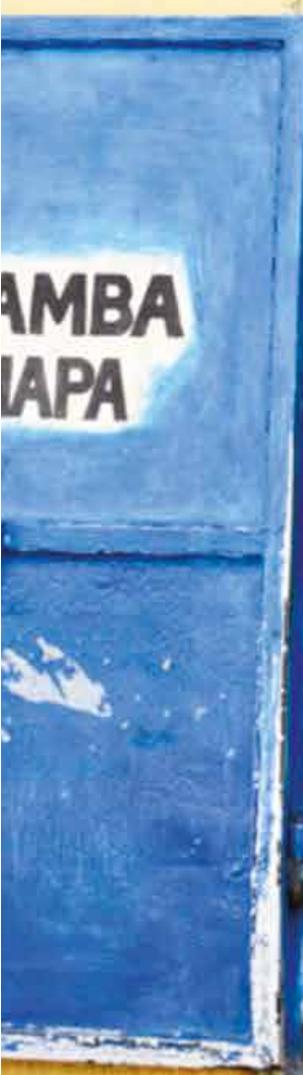
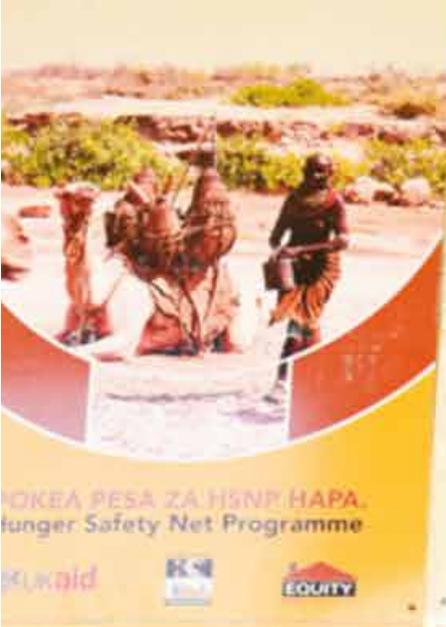
produce outcomes of interest, enables an assessment of impacts that are difficult to cover quantitatively, and provides complementary data on some of the topics covered by the quantitative survey to triangulate, validate and provide depth to the quantitative findings.

- A special study on the Arid Lands Support Programme looks at the interaction of the HSNP with a package of complementary activities to support livelihoods as well as provide an insight into the contribution the ASP makes to county planning and budgeting processes.

These research components have been designed to complement one another and deliver as full an understanding as possible of what impacts the HSNP2 programme has had, and the causal pathways for those impacts. The evaluation objectives, research questions and overall design are described in further detail in the evaluation inception report.

In addition to the standalone reports for each component of the impact evaluation, a final report will also be produced to synthesise the findings from the quantitative household impact evaluation, the LEWIE study and the qualitative research studies, so as to provide a comprehensive summary assessment of the impact of the HSNP2.

¹OPM, Hunger Safety Net Programme Evaluation of HSNP Phase 2 Inception Report, July 2015.



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HSNP impact evaluation qualitative research methodology

What is this study?

This is the qualitative component of a mixed methods evaluation. Its purpose is to build a picture of the impact of HSNP on key dimensions of people's lives in the 4 counties of Northern Kenya where the cash transfer is operating:



How did we build that picture?

We went to Kenya to talk to the people who are receiving the cash, the traders and shopkeepers, local leaders, and other people in their communities.

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What did we do with all the data?

Overall we did: 72 FGDs, 112 QPSs, and 53 KIIs. Our colleagues in Kenya took the audio recordings of all our activities back to Nairobi, and produced verbatim transcripts of all the FGDs, QPS, and KIIs. They sent these transcripts back to Oxford, where we used a software called NVivo to sort and analyse the content of the transcripts. We then wrote up our findings in this report!

- 53 (KIIs)
- 72 (FGDs)
- 112 (QPSs)

Where did we go and why?

We went to **13 sub-locations** in the **4 HSNP counties**. Some of these sub-locations are urban, some rural. Some are very poor and some are less poor. We went to places where lots of people are getting HSNP and where not so many people are getting HSNP. We visited sub-locations with a mix of livelihood activities.

What did we do when we got there?

We organised ways to talk to a lot of people:



Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with people who could tell us about the communities, help us find HSNP recipients to talk to, and tell us about the impact of the transfer. We did the interviews with: 11 sub-location chiefs, 11 Rights Committee members, 17 traders and shopkeepers, and 14 others (teachers, religious leaders, health workers, social workers).



Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) We spoke with groups of 8-12 people (men and women separately) who receive the HSNP transfers, either as regularly beneficiaries or as recipients of emergency payments. We did: 11 FGDs with routine-beneficiary men; 14 FGDs with routine-beneficiary women; 7 FGDs with emergency-recipient men; and 9 FGDs with emergency-recipient women.

FGDs with with community leaders: we organised groups of 8-12 people who could help us understand the communities where recipients live. We did: 12 FGDs with male community leaders, 9 with female community leaders, and 5 with a mixed group of community leaders. During the FGDs we did some participatory exercises like social mapping.

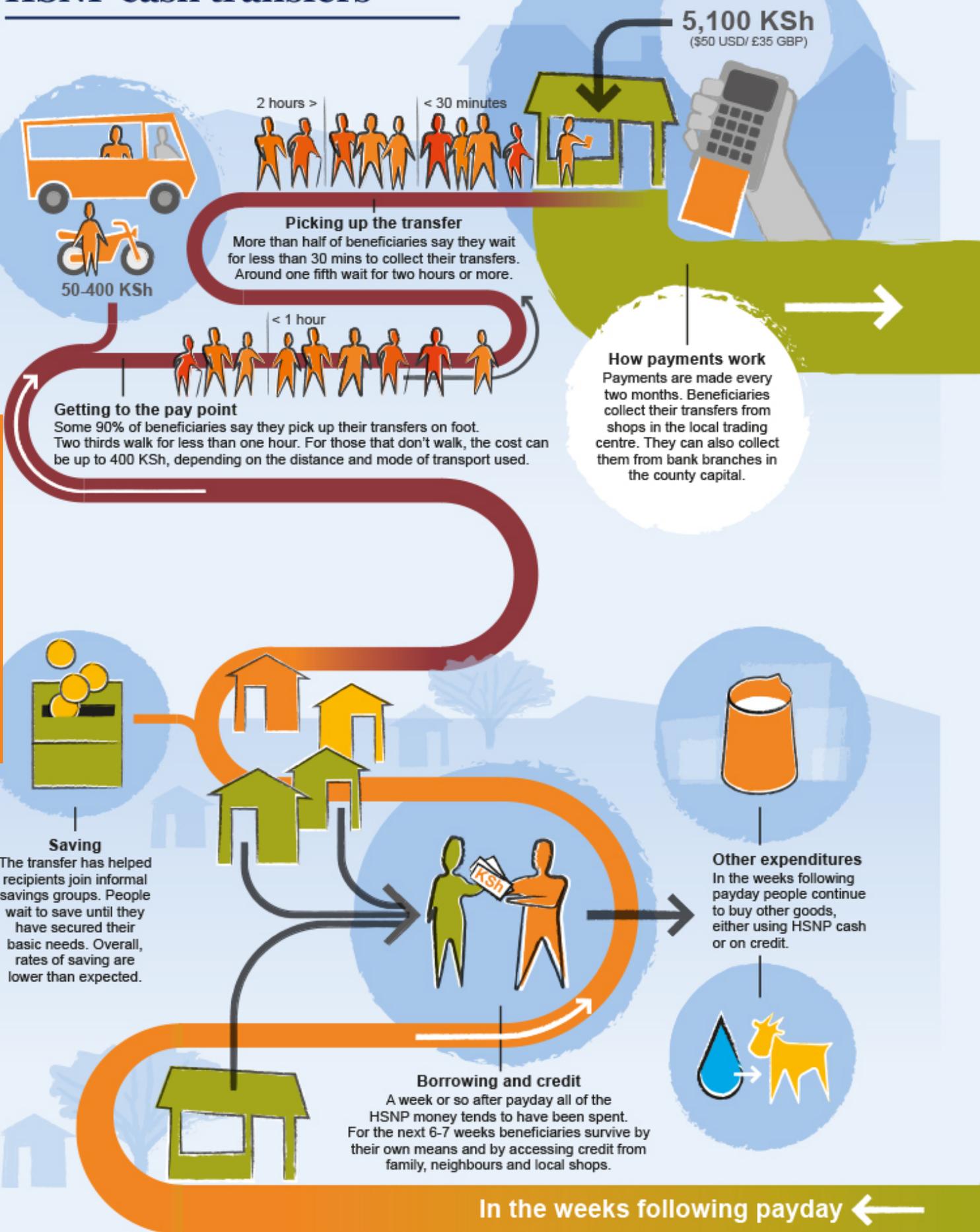
Qualitative Panel Studies (QPS):

QPS are household case studies for which we visited people in their homes and talked with them about their lives. We asked them to do a number of participatory activities such as using drawings to explain their income sources and what they spend money on. We did QPS with routine beneficiaries, emergency recipients, and households who never receive the HSNP. We gave the beneficiaries cameras to capture for themselves how the transfer has affected their lives. We did QPS with: 59 beneficiary households; 28 emergency recipient households; and 25 households who never receive HSNP money.



How people use their HSNP cash transfers

SUMMARY REPORT



Luxury food

On payday people splash out on luxury foods, such as meat, vegetables, milk, sugar and rice. These are not bought in large quantities, just enough for the household to eat well that day.

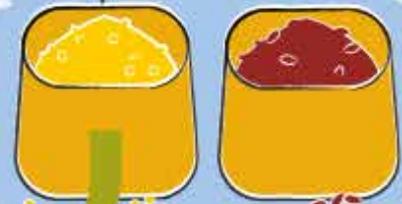


'We eat very nice food with the kids and everyone else at home. However, that doesn't last long because the following day the money is finished..'



Staples

People tend not to continue to buy meat after the first day. Subsequently, HSNP helps them with their purchases of staples (with cash and on credit), such as maize and beans, waiting until the next payday for those other luxury foods



→ Most spending occurs on payday

Debt

On payday people also pay off their debts to shops and other people in their community.



Other basic needs

HSNP beneficiaries commonly use the transfer to buy personal and household items such as clothes, pots and pans, stools to sit on and hygiene products.



Payday spending continued

Education expenditures

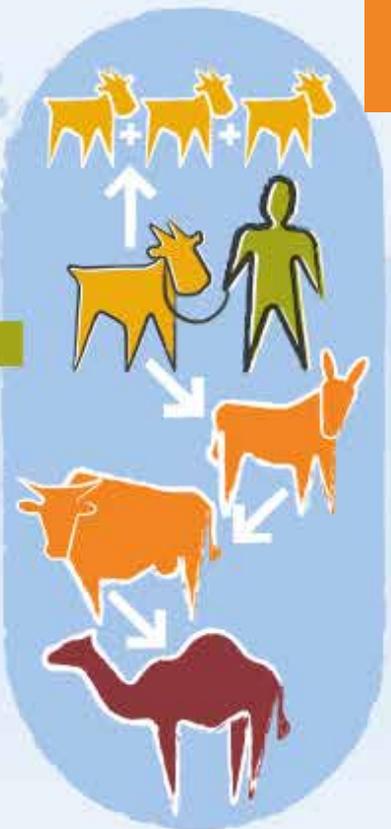
Nearly all the women we spoke to reported spending HSNP money on schooling for their children. This was much less frequently mentioned by men.



Livestock

When buying livestock with HSNP money, beneficiaries typically purchase goats or sheep. The cost of a single goat is around 2000-3000 KSh.

Over time the transfer can help people build up their herds, both through the purchase of more animals and breeding of animals bought. Households that have received larger 'lumpy' payments are enabled to make bigger productive investments in larger or more valuable animals.



Poverty and wellbeing in HSNP counties

There are 4 major wealth/wellbeing categories

Communities usually perceive four broad wealth categories, whose wellbeing can differ greatly across different dimensions: the very poor, the poor and needy, the middle class and the rich. The rich are a small, sometimes non-existent minority, who in some places have migrated away from villages completely.

*People in the middle class are sometimes known locally as:

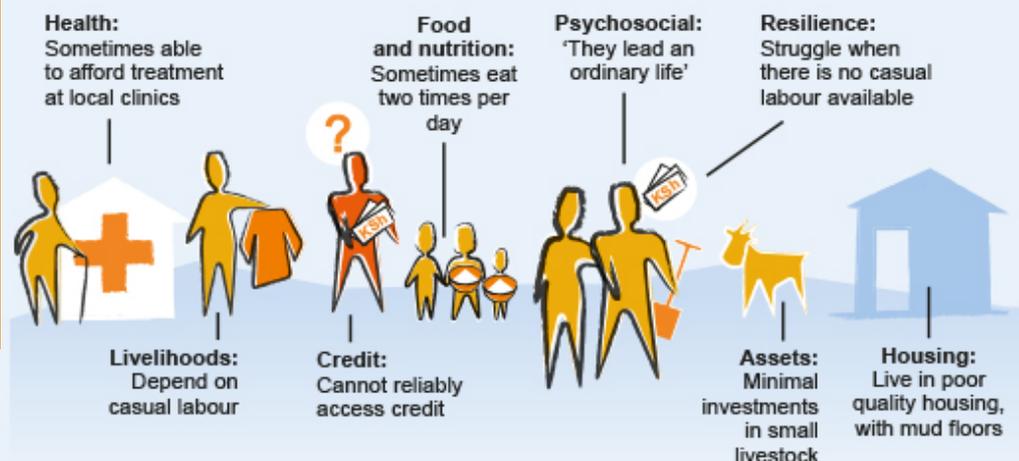
The middle class (around a quarter of the population, including HSNP recipients) ‘Those who shine’



HSNP seen to help recipients improve their wellbeing status

The transfer is felt to enable recipients to achieve a standard of living more comparable to what they described as middle class: more frequent and diverse meals, diversified livelihood options, resilience to shocks, investing in and starting small businesses, and improved creditworthiness.

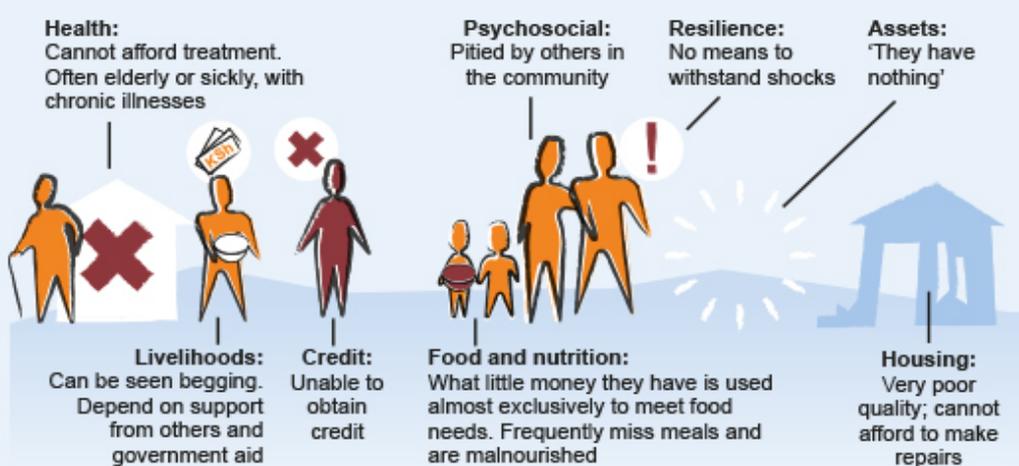
The poor/needy (the majority of people, including HSNP recipients)



The transfer has improved recipients’ psychosocial wellbeing

Poverty negatively affects people in non-material ways. HSNP appears to be reducing those types of negative experiences, improving what we call ‘psychosocial wellbeing’.

The very poor (a small but visible minority, including HSNP recipients)



SUMMARY REPORT



Risk and vulnerability in HSNP counties

Shocks that effect the whole population

Coping mechanisms	Migration	Using malaria nets and diverting the flow of water		
	Diversification of livelihood activities	Migration to higher ground		
	Borrowing money and buying on credit			Establishing peace committees to resolve conflicts
	Asking relatives or friends for help	Appealing to government, NGOs or external "well-wishers"		Migration to safe places
SHOCKS				
	Drought	Flooding	Conflict	Inflation
	Distress sale of livestock		Using violence to defend properties during conflict	Taking out loans
	Drawing upon savings (wealthier households only)		Distress sale of livestock to fund money to rebuild properties	Reducing food consumption, or shifting consumption towards cheaper foods

Emergency HSNP transfer

Those who receive the transfer in the event of severe drought report positive effects on meeting short-term basic needs such as retaining children in school, maintaining food consumption, and spending on healthcare. However, emergency recipients also feel that the small value and unpredictable nature of these transfers limits their effectiveness in building resilience to shocks.

Non-recipients

Non-recipients were more likely than routine and emergency beneficiaries to have to sell livestock in response to shocks. But we also found evidence that they sometimes access credit from HSNP beneficiaries when facing shocks.



Shocks that affect individuals



Asking relatives or neighbours for help

Asking relatives or neighbours for help

Buying on credit



Sickness



Unemployment

Continue working even though they are sick

Children dropping out of school and engaging in child labour



Distress sale of livestock

Take out loans

Taking herbal medicine



Reducing food consumption, or shifting consumption towards cheaper foods

Coping mechanisms

Adverse response

Effect of routine HSNP on coping mechanisms:

For routine recipients who receive regular payments every two months, HSNP is considerably strengthening their ability to cope with shocks.

Some have started businesses which diversify their livelihoods away from climate-sensitive livelihoods, others have used the transfer to increase livestock assets.

HSNP has allowed recipients to purchase on credit, as traders know that they will be paid back on payday.

A few wealthier households had saved, stocked up on food, or had bought water tanks to cope during droughts.



Effect of routine HSNP on adverse responses:

HSNP has decreased the likelihood that routine recipients sell livestock in distress, in order to satisfy immediate cash needs.

Many routine recipients report using the cash on school fees and are thereby less likely to remove their children from school as a way to lower household costs.

HSNP helps prevent people from skipping meals as a strategy for lowering household costs.

Impact on household resilience has been greater for poorer routine beneficiaries, including female-headed households and looking after orphans, the elderly and the sick.



HSNP livelihood impacts

Pastoralism is the predominant livelihood activity in HSNP counties



Households with livestock often keep a few small animals at their dwelling



But larger herds and bigger animals are kept away from the dwelling and follow the pasture. Men and older boys tend to be the ones who stay with the herds



There are a number of other associated livelihood activities that pastoralism gives rise to, such as sale of animal produce like meat, milk and skins

Different livelihood activities are prevalent depending on location



In rural locations and remote villages these include small shops and kiosks, petty roadside trade, petty production (mats/baskets), charcoal burning, and collecting firewood or other bush products.



In urban locations there are larger markets and more established shops (permanent structures), as well as services such as mechanics, tailors, and barbers.

HSNP is considered an important source of income



Recipients consider HSNP one of their main sources of income because it feeds into and supports their income generating activities, for example livestock production, casual labour and petty trade.



Those who have received emergency payments also consider HSNP a valuable addition to their income, alongside their regular livelihood activities.



The HSNP impacts livelihoods as a complementary income and source for further investment. The transfer enables some households to invest in livelihoods such as livestock, from which further income can be generated. HSNP is also reported to increase recipient's access to borrowing and credit, enabling recipients to smooth consumption throughout the payment period.

HSNP enables households to purchase and retain livestock



Livestock functions as a productive asset, a type of saving, and a mechanism for coping with shocks, so by supporting pastoralist livelihoods HSNP potentially makes a big contribution to improving recipients' resilience

HSNP has helped some households to diversify livelihoods



HSNP has helped some recipients expand their existing income generating activities, and some even establish new ones. Such livelihood diversification is important for mitigating the many risks that households are vulnerable to, such as drought, which affects whole communities, or health shocks, which effect individuals



The diversification of livelihoods by and within households sometimes indicates a greater involvement of women in income generating activities. As households report to undertake more livelihood activities, women may increasingly become joint breadwinners.

HSNP local economy impacts

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HSNP has produced spill-over effects for businesses near pay points

Traders and shopkeepers say that they have larger profits due to the big increase in customer traffic on pay days. Business owners also point out, however, that these positive spill-overs can be tempered by regional and global economic trends, as well as climatic events such as drought, which increase the cost of doing business.



HSNP has spill-overs for established businesses in villages, too

Village traders tell us that people are buying more goods from their local shops than before HSNP, purchasing either with cash or on credit, which they pay off on pay days. The spill-over for local shopkeepers is more limited than that experienced by business owners in the towns and trading centres in which pay points are located.



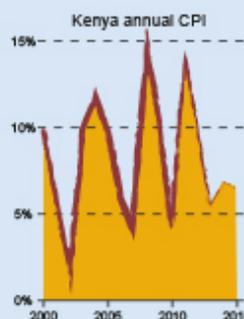
HSNP has helped women to enter the local economy, albeit at a small scale

Many HSNP recipients claim to have started up micro businesses, mainly in the form of petty sales enterprises such as selling vegetables or homemade goods by the side of the road. For example, a beneficiary may use the transfer to buy bundles of grass which are then woven into mats and sold.



Local prices are determined by factors other than HSNP

Local food prices, for example, are influenced by regional or global trends such as fuel prices. Inflation in the region can be more or less volatile depending on events. For instance, the consumer price index (CPI) was relatively stable over the last couple of years, ranging between 5-8%, whereas there were big spikes in 2011-12 (20%) and 2008-09 (+30%) caused by extreme droughts in the region.





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Changing social norms and relations in HSNP counties



Gender Relations

Patriarchal cultural and social norms prevail in the four counties. However, HSNP is contributing to emerging notions of women's empowerment.

There is a clear division of labour in northern Kenya. Women are in charge of household chores and perform much of the unpaid work, while men are mainly responsible for income generation and decision-making.

Awareness of women's rights is growing, encouraged by NGOs. HSNP contributes to women's empowerment by increasing women's purchasing power and improving their status within their household.

Many men feel threatened by new forms of female empowerment.

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"Women are busy with family issues, like taking care of the kids. Men have been mandated to be our leaders by our religion"
– Female HSNP beneficiary, Wajir

"A long time ago we made our own decisions, women followed instructions. But nowadays we share decisions with them"
– Male HSNP beneficiary, Marsabit

"Women are concerned with decision making because they have heard of these so-called 'women's rights'. They even want to rule us now!"
– Male HSNP beneficiary, Wajir

"The husband decides how money is spent. We women just follow and agree on what they say"
– Female HSNP beneficiaries, Turkana

"People believe that single women like me cannot survive. But we can survive"
– Female HSNP beneficiary, Mandera

"My wife is just at home mostly. She holds no leadership position anywhere"
– Male Routine Recipient, Turkana



Community

By easing some of the negative effects of poverty, HSNP strengthens the social support networks that exist in communities.

Most HSNP beneficiaries share the transfer with their neighbours and relatives, often supporting those that previously supported them.

"The relationship between me and my friends has changed since this money began. They now respect me. They know that I can help them"

– Male HSNP beneficiary, Mandera

"Everyone is happy about this programme because even if you are not a beneficiary your neighbour assists you"

– Female HSNP beneficiary, Mandera

"I give support to others when they face problems because I might require assistance one day"

– Female emergency payments recipient, Mandera



Households

HSNP has created more peace and unity within the household

With less pressing need to earn money, there is generally less stress in the household

"My wife and I love each other more and more because we get this HSNP money"

– Male HSNP Beneficiary, Mandera

"HSNP has installed happiness in the family, as we are now able to meet needs that we couldn't before"

– Male Emergency Recipient, Mandera

"All is well. Because of the money people receive from HSNP, there are no more conflicts due to inadequate food in the home"

– Sub-location chief, Marsabit

Conclusions and implications of our findings

The qualitative research has provided information about the context within which HSNP is operating and the perceptions of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries about the impact of the programme.

The general perception of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries was that the impact of the HSNP was largely positive. The majority of beneficiaries used the transfers for food and meeting basic needs, with some making modest investments in livestock and businesses.

Beneficiaries identified four categories of wellbeing: rich, middle class, poor and very poor. While the majority of respondents in this study identify themselves as being in the poor category, their testimonies show that the cash transfers have enabled poorer routine beneficiaries to move to a standard of living that shares more characteristics with those they describe as middle class. The middle class were characterised as those with livestock assets, resilient to economic shocks, considered credit worthy and owning small businesses.

The transfers also improved beneficiaries' psychosocial wellbeing by increasing the respect that beneficiaries are given by members of their community.

Beneficiaries were also able to cope with shocks, with the transfers increasing their capacity to purchase items on credit and buy productive assets. For emergency beneficiaries the infrequency and lower monetary value of emergency payments meant that transfers tended to be used much more exclusively to cover basic needs rather than investing in productive assets that may enhance resilience.

HSNP was considered an important source of income for both routine and emergency beneficiaries. For some respondents, HSNP allowed them to invest in petty trade or small-scale production. While the transfers were perceived to have had no impact on local prices, they were considered to have produced some positive spill-over effects for local businesses, particularly on payday.

We found that the HSNP had a positive effects on social relations by strengthening reciprocal social networks in communities and contributing to emerging notions of empowerment. Relationships within households were also positively influenced, as the transfers relieved some of the stresses of poverty and thereby helped create more peace and unity within households.

These findings, combined with those of the quantitative studies, will provide a robust assessment of HSNP impacts. They can be used to improve programme design and operations and support advocacy for continued and increased support for the programme by both the government of Kenya and its donor partners. More broadly, results from the HSNP evaluation can be leveraged to support the wider National Safety Net Programme, of which the HSNP is a part. The insight they give into beneficiary behaviours and effects on the local economy should inform the evolution of all NSNP cash transfer programmes, as well as complimentary programming in the country.

SUMMARY REPORT

¹OPM, Hunger Safety Net Programme Evaluation of HSNP Phase 2 Inception Report, July 2015.



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