

Special Themes Report: Identification Card Issue

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HUNGER SAFETY NET PROGRAMME: PHASE 2 EVALUATIONS

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The Special Themes series allows HSNP to explore topics of interest in a systematic way. The Programme Implementation and Learning Unit (PILU) determines the topic from questions or concerns raised through other monitoring tools, field observations or current policy issues. The findings are based on multiple open-ended interviews with recipients, implementing agencies and county and national staff. This allows observers to triangulate data and provide colourful insights. Reports are led by Oxford Policy Management (OPM), an independent consultancy firm.

Introduction

This payment cycle OPM undertook a study on identity cards (ID) issuance across the HSNP counties, with the aim of exploring the reasons for delay in ID issuance, where they occur, and the process and institutional challenges that are inherent within the issuing body, National Registration Bureau (NRB). This study is very relevant to HSNP, as a recipient requires an ID in order to open a bank account and access their HSNP payment. It has, however, been a major challenge and time-consuming process for recipients and HSNP county citizens to apply and receive their national IDs. Although there have been two mass campaigns on ID registration sponsored by NDMA, nearly 10,000 group 1 recipients still could not access funds at the time of writing because they lacked IDs and active bank accounts¹.

KEY FINDINGS

- NRB is succeeding in increasing the number of individuals with ID cards. We do not have the complete data but we understand that NRB has managed to produce 6,726 ID cards in the HSNP counties from the recent mass registration campaign. In the last financial year, NRB registered 22,121 IDs in Wajir county alone.
- According to chiefs in the HSNP counties, ID cards on average take 6 months or more to be issued to applicants. This is much more than the 35 days within which NRB is required to produce IDs for citizens.
- Instituting quality assurance procedures at NRB county level would drastically reduce the number of rejected cases.
- Reporting on HSNP recipients issued with IDs is a challenge as the applications were not disaggregated during the field registration process. This has made it quite difficult for PILU to track those who have been issued with IDs.
- Wajir and Mandera have been stricter on the processes and procedures of registration being followed fully which make it more difficult for individuals to obtain IDs. For example, individuals must produce their parent or uncle during registration, and medical professionals must be with the registration team to ascertain age for those without documentation.

¹ Some 6,000 were removed from HSNP's list and substituted with other households for the November payroll.

The ID issuance process

The process of registering and acquiring an ID in the HSNP counties is more stringent than most other counties because they are border counties. The average time taken to be issued with an ID after application should be 35 days. However, according to NRB the process in HSNP counties takes longer (on average 45 days) due to the remoteness of the areas and the additional vetting procedures for border counties.

Steps in ID registration and issuance

The steps outlined below are ID registration procedures for individuals applying for ID at any time in the NRB subcounty offices or the NRB county headquarters. The applicant should:

1. Gather the required documentation required for ID registration: Letter from the chief introducing the applicant to the ID registrar's office; age-supporting document (birth certificate, school leavers' certificate or baptism card); copy of parent's ID.
2. Go to the registrars' office for an appointment to be reviewed by the vetting committee (applicable in border areas only) and present themselves to the committee. The applicant must be accompanied by either a parent or in the case they are deceased come with an aunt or uncle. The vetting committees are in each subcounty and once a sufficient number of applications are registered they will convene to go through the applicants' documents. Typically they will review 70-100 applications per sitting. The primary objective of the committee is to establish citizenship and the conduct of the person applying for the ID. The vetting committee comprises:
 - the registrar, who is the secretary of the committee;
 - the office of the county commissioner, who is the chair of the committee
 - elders; and
 - the District Security Intelligence Office (DSIO).
3. For applicants over 25 years, a second vetting for the District Security Intelligence Committee (DSIC) is necessary.
4. Go to registrars' after vetting clearance to be photographed and have fingerprints taken. They are then required to complete their section on form 136A from the registrars' office and are then issued with a waiting card. The registrar then completes forms 136A, 101 and 136C which all have similar bio data information (name, residential details, details of parents). 136A is the main registration form, which can be produced as the original record of ID application in court; 101 form is used for fingerprint retrieval, filed at the NRB head quarters; 136C is the form that is used by officers to produce the ID. It also generates the serial number.
5. Complete application forms are then signed by the Assistant Chief, Chief, Assistant County Commissioner and Deputy County commissioner and finally the County registrar.
6. The county registrar then registers the forms in register 108. Once complete, it is sent by Expedited Mail Service (EMS) to Nairobi or delivered in person by NRB staff.
7. IDs are then placed in the national queue and the applications are processed for production. Once produced, typically after a couple of weeks, the ID cards are sent back to the counties through the post office EMS or collected by county NRB staff from Nairobi.

8. The county headquarters then dispatches the IDs to subcounty offices, where they are recorded and passed to the chiefs for distribution.

Huduma centres (one-stop shops for government services) are also available in the HSNP counties with the exception of Mandera. The centres are digitised and linked online with the NRB HQ database at the production centre, which speeds the process of replacing ID cards. Note that Huduma centres can only register / issue replaced cards but cannot facilitate the process for those who are applying IDs for the first time. Once applicants are issued with waiting cards they can check the status of their application by sending a text message to 20031. The feedback is general, for example the ID is registered, in process or rejected. It does not provide the detail of the reasons for rejection. However, this can be further confirmed at Huduma centre.

From the interviews conducted we found that the application process differs across the counties. In Turkana for example, the rules are relaxed at the field level. The subcounty registrars can accept applications from individuals without age identification documents or parents' ID copies, if the chiefs vouch for them in the application forms. The mobile teams can also use plain paper instead of the application form if they run out of application forms. In the document itself, the registrars allow the chief and assistant chief to sign for one another if the other happens to be out of office. This is the same, too, for the Assistant County Commissioner (ACC) and District County Commissioner (DCC).

In Wajir and Mandera, however, the process was found to be stricter as they require a lot of caution to ensure they do not register foreign citizens. They insist on the applicant presenting a blood relative during vetting (parent or if deceased, an aunt or uncle). Even for elder persons they must present the IDs of the parent or present the parent, which makes it even more difficult for them.

For applicants who are late to procure an ID (i.e. individuals over the age of 25), the application process is prolonged as they have to be referred to District security intelligence committee (DSIC) for a second vetting and this further check lengthens the overall process.

In Wajir and Mandera there are youth who apply several times in different locations and are therefore categorised as "suspected aliens". Most of these cases are, however, of young people who want to increase their chances of getting their IDs faster. These cases are flagged at NRB head quarters and the applicants have to travel to Nairobi Directorate of Criminal Investigation (CID) headquarters in Kiambu to clear their status. The process takes more than three months. An additional obstacle to this already logistically challenging requirement is that in order to pass through various police check points to Nairobi you require a national ID.

NRB / HSNP ID registration campaign

In the light of the tens of thousands of individuals applying for their ID card because of the HSNP, the NRB adjusted the process described earlier. Instead of requiring individuals to attend the registrars' office, they organised mass registration events in the field. This has happened on two occasions: Dec 2014 to Feb 2015 and Feb 2016 to Apr 2016.

During the latest mass registration the ID issuance process was simplified for the community members. There were mobile teams that were dispatched to 16 sublocations in the HSNP counties. These mobile teams consisted of both NRB registration teams and county vetting committee teams like the DSIO and the office of the county commissioner etc. There was pre-planning before the mass registration exercise and at least two workshops were held between NRB and NDMA.

At the headquarters, NRB had a group of officers identified to work on HSNP applications to expedite the process. However, it should be noted that all the applications do not translate to identification cards due to errors leading to rejections or delays as some required further checks. Out of the 9,631

applications sent to production in the most recent mass registration exercise, 6,726 IDs have been produced, 631 have been rejected and the remaining 2,274 are still pending in the system for final analysis or checks. In Wajir, 22,121 IDs were registered in the last financial year (1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016) and 2,600 from 1 July to 30 September 2016.

HSNP had a target of reaching 12,860 recipients from group 1 with IDs during the latest mass registration. Due to limited NRB staff, however, the applications for HSNP recipients were not separated from the entire county applications. This has made it very difficult to track HSNP ID applicants. PILU has to confirm recipients' ID issuance by tracking their serial numbers through the Huduma centre rather than getting status updates on ready cards from NRB.

The mass registration campaign was very instrumental in NRB reaching its own county's targets. In the subcounties targeted, county registrars confirmed they were able to meet their targets because of the exercise.

At the sublocation level, chiefs and rights committees report that the HSNP mass registration campaign not only helped most HSNP recipients from group 1 without IDs get IDs, but also community members (mostly youth) who were eligible to apply. It is their perception that the time taken to get the IDs after registration has reduced with the last campaign although it still takes longer than is ideal.

In Mandera, the registrar noted the need for more scrutiny at the border areas and the need for security assessment before travelling to insecure sublocations.

“The borders require much attention when conducting the exercise and if needed the vetting could be done even twice just to be sure and avoid any alien issues. The same areas have insecurity, and not all will go to work in such places comfortably so you find that we are compelled to attend to such areas based on security situation. There are those areas that are so far from the head quarters and we experience logistical challenges to reach such places.” NRB County registrar, Mandera

Communication

NRB use the chiefs and assistant county commissioners to communicate details of their own mobile ID registration which is usually conducted annually. They are usually given one week's notice to do the sensitisation and mobilisation. For the HSNP registration, mobilisation was also done through the chiefs but directed by NDMA. A common request from most of the interviewed chiefs and rights committee members was that a week was not sufficient time for mobilisation and sensitisation and this time should be extended to 2-3 weeks.

According to the registrars, in order to communicate the services NRB offer, there are posters in all chiefs' offices displaying the available NRB services.

Best practices

The flexibility of the rules with regard to applications as discussed above, such as in Turkana where officers are allowed to sign for one another and flexibility in use of plain paper, is good practice which if implemented can reduce the number of days taken in acquiring of IDs.

In Wajir, for the mass registration, the two vetting committees were fast tracked and normally held within a week of each other. This helped fast track the process.

In Marsabit, the NRB and HSNP teams came up with an efficient separation of HSNP applications from others. They also had separate queues for HSNP applicants and sent HSNP application forms in separate envelopes. Furthermore, the HSNP team also copied serial numbers and forwarded to the Nairobi office to fast-track the follow-up process.

Challenges in the process

Listed below are the common reasons for delays or rejections of ID cards in relation to the steps taken to get IDs.

Step 1: Gathering required documentation.

Lack of age supporting documents or any other supporting document for ID registration can cause a rejection of application on the first step by the chief or rejected at subsequent steps when identified. However, where the chief and or NRB registrar know the applicants well, the NRB registrar can make comments on the 136A form, after which exceptions can be made.

Step 2 and 3: Primary and secondary vetting processes

Lack of vetting committee minutes attached to applicants' forms can cause IDs to be rejected at the headquarters. According to Huduma centre officer in Turkana, this is a common case of rejection.

Step 4: Photograph, fingerprint and completing forms 136A, 101 and 136C.

The most common cases of rejection are due to mistakes made in this step. According to the Nairobi county registrar, rejections in Nairobi are due to the following reasons:-

1. Alteration on the forms or where the particulars in the various forms 136A, 101 or 136C do not match.
2. Incorrect ID number of the applicants' parents. These also undergo a left thumbprint and ID number check and when they don't match it can cause delay.
3. Lack of parents' thumbprint. Another cause for rejection is when the parents' left thumbprint is not recorded on the application form for comparison with the thumbprint on file. This can cause a form to be rejected as this is a new policy requirement for the border areas where vetting is done.

Step 5: Complete application forms are then signed by all the administrators.

From those interviewed we did not come across any cases of rejection due to lack of administrators signatures.

Step 6: Forms registered and dispatched to Nairobi.

Delays are also common due to NRB's limited resources. It was mentioned that during the mass registration exercise, some areas took weeks to dispatch completed registration forms for lack of NRB vehicles.

"The logistics of distances covered by the application form to the county headquarters and then to Nairobi HQ is challenging sometimes, especially in some areas where we do not have vehicles. In some areas we have problems of staff, we have the staff but sometimes they are overwhelmed." NRB National Coordinator

Applications are also rejected due to incompleteness. At the county level, there is no set system of ensuring the forms are checked for completeness or a field / mobile field process checklist, which would ensure forms are completed well.

Step 7: IDs processed in Nairobi.

There are several system checks in Nairobi where IDs can be rejected or delayed if they do not meet the standard requirements. Such as,

1. Double ID registration. When an individual applies twice for an ID (usually because they have waited a long time for the ID to be issued), meaning there is another card that has been produced for that individual. This can cause a delay as NRB will issue a rejection statement for the second application. This is the most common cause of delays in applications received by NRB in Nairobi.
2. Duplicate ID numbers i.e. one number is shared by two people. In this instance the first to apply retains the number and the other applicant is given a modified number (which begins with either 16, 7 or 8).
3. Age of applicant. The age written on application differs greatly with physical appearance on the photograph. These go through the research unit at NRB headquarters who determine whether it is true or false.
4. Delays due to NRB system challenges such as a delay in sharing ID information with IPRS.

“NRB had a big maintenance of their system at the national level due to this exercise which also stalled the process for a while. It took more than two weeks where they were not doing anything at the national level.” Operations Manager, HSNP

“There have been significant delays in data sharing between NRB and IPRS. So if you get your ID today even after a month your information will not be in IPRS. So when somebody reports his/her ID number to us through the case management process our system also checks in the IPRS and we don't get that information in the IPRS.” Operations Manager, HSNP

Step 8: Dispatch and distribution of IDs

All the HSNP counties mentioned a lot of cases where ID cards were sent to wrong locations. It is normally identified at the Chief's level just before distribution to the applicants. Some chiefs mentioned that they would find a way to get the IDs to locations which were closer to them but for areas where it was far they would normally wait to return the IDs to the NRB offices.

As noted in step 6, the logistics of getting the cards from the NRB county headquarters to the subcounties and finally locations is limited by their lack of sufficient transportation.

Other challenges specific to the HSNP mass registration campaign

Insecurity in Wajir and Mandera: In Wajir and Mandera, the issue of security was the most pressing as it required security clearance for officers to conduct registration in some areas.

“The whole process of acquiring ID cards is very challenging in this area. First, we are given limited time to carry out mobilisation and as you can see this area is very vast, our people are spread up to Moyale

and Ethiopia border, then vetting takes a lot of time because we have elders vetting to verify if they know an individual and the National Intelligence Service vetting. It also takes up to 6 months for the IDs to be processed to submitted to the sublocation.” Chief, Wajir North

The limited planning at the county level: Most of the planning was done at the national level with little consultation with the county NRB or PILU teams. This is said to have precipitated the communication challenges the field teams had e.g. some NRB teams not being aware to separate the HSNP applications, or registration teams arriving at certain sublocations later than the communicated date during mobilisation.

“Each county has different challenges so the registrar in the field would be able to flag out what his requirements are instead of us maybe having to do for them things from the top, they should be able to give us their budget and justify why.” National registrar

Lack of enforceable directive between NDMA and NRB: Although there was a memorandum of understanding between NRB and NDMA it was difficult for PILU to follow up on progress as they are completely different agencies and it was difficult for the liaison officer to press for improvements in the NRB system on the basis of requests arising from her discussions with NDMA. Furthermore, due to organisation policies, it has not been easy for NRB to be receptive to some of the assistance HSNP can give like setting up a system to separate the HSNP applicants or a system to track serial numbers.

Lack of clear reporting:

“The reporting format from NRB is also not always consistent and easily understood. They do not report specifically for HSNP but combine the numbers leaving it impossible to tell if targets have been reached.” Operations Manager, HSNP

Feedback from a few recipients who are facing challenges in getting IDs

“I have applied for ID two times, now this is the third time I want to apply. The first time I applied, I was informed by the chief after six months of waiting that my application was rejected in Nairobi during the second vetting. I hear even after we are vetted here, Nairobi officers have to do the same thing. I was not given any reason though the chief suspected that it was a fingerprint issue. The second time I was required to produce documents verifying my age which I didn't have and that's because during our time we were not issued with birth certificates. Right now I am waiting for the day registration will be done.” Group 1 beneficiary, Wajir North

“He applied for the ID in two different locations with different names just to increase his chances. He has never gotten any feedback from the two attempts. He is told he has to clear with Nairobi.” Group two beneficiary, Mandera West

“I have old generation ID card I have applied twice for the new generations it has been two years and I am still waiting for my ID.” HSNP beneficiary, North Horr

“I registered for an ID in January 2015 and got a waiting card. I had the old generation ID but I had to apply for the new one to access the HSNP Payment.” Group 1 beneficiary, Turkana North

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, we recommend the following:

- The introduction of some form of quality assurance checks at the field level in order to reduce the number of applications rejected at the national level.
- For future ID registration campaigns between HSNP and NRB, involve county staff more at the planning stages, ensure proper briefing of the field level staff on special requirements and increase the days of mobilisation.
- Suggestion for chiefs or other authorities at local level to help in checking the status of IDs from the waiting cards' serial number. This will reduce the inconveniences applicants face in having to travel to subcounty headquarters or the county's Huduma centre to check on the status of application
- Advice to remaining applicants not to apply repeatedly as it will slow down rather than speed up the application process.

Research methods

OPM field teams and RGA team supervisors conducted interviews with HSNP programme managers, chiefs, rights committee members, HSNP recipients, NRB county officials at the county level and PILU operations manager and NRB Coordinator at the national level.

Table 3 Summary of fieldwork, July 2016

Stakeholder	Turkana	Marsabit	Mandera	Wajir	TOTAL
Chiefs	3	1	3	3	10
HSNP PM	1	1	1	1	4
RCs	3	2	2	2	9
HHs	2	1	2	2	7
County Registrar	1	0	1	2	4
PILU Operations Manager					1
NRB Nairobi Registrar					1
Total					36