

Special Themes Report: Household Removal / Replacement Process

November 2016

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.

KEY FINDINGS

- Some 6,198 Group 1 households which could not be traced or lacked IDs have been replaced.
- Following this, 97,067 accounts under Group 1 have been paid in the November 2016 cycle.
- Households where the named recipient was under the age of 20 or older than 70 are more likely to have been replaced than those where the recipient was of working age. Moreover, slightly fewer of such households have been selected as replacements, so they now form a smaller proportion of total recipients than on the original list of Group 1 households for Phase 2.
- Turkana was the only county where the age profile of the new recipients was similar to the age profile of those that were replaced. The proportion of recipients in each county remains very similar after the replacement process because households were substituted with others in the same sublocation.
- Chiefs and others in authority tended to be aware that the removal and replacement process was going on; pay agents and households tended not to know.
- For those households that we contacted for interview, all but one of the replaced and new households heard about their change of status for the first time from our research teams even though the changeover date was three weeks previously and the November payment had been released. Naturally this was upsetting to the households who had been removed.
- Some chiefs still criticise the programme for sticking to the use of the proxy means test (PMT) criteria to replace households as they do not pick out the neediest.

Introduction

This payment cycle OPM undertook a study on the Group 1 'removal and replacement' process. The process attempted to remove households who had been on the original list of 100,000 Group 1 households entitled to the regular cash transfer under Phase 2 of the HSNP, but who had never been traced or whose registered household members could not get IDs to access payment. These

households were then to be replaced on the programme by alternative households who could access the payment. The objective of the exercise was for the programme to reach their target of paying 101,800 beneficiary households under Group 1 in the four HSNP counties.

The year-long process commenced in the last quarter of 2015. It entailed activities such as collaborating with the National Registration Bureau (NRB) to reach Group 1 recipients without IDs, working with Equity Bank to hold account-opening drives in certain locations and having HSNP programme officers routinely travel to the field for case management purposes, in an effort to track down the households who had not claimed their money and assist them to activate their accounts. Chiefs, Rights Committees (RCs) and community members were notified of this process and given time to share any information they had on the remaining households in an attempt to resolve their issues. On 15 October 2016, the replacement of households was done: households who still did not or could not access their money were removed from the list and replaced with new recipient households. Those replaced remain entitled to the transfers that accumulated until that date and have until February 2017 to collect their back payments if they are able to; new households become entitled to any payments issued after 15 October 2016.

In this special theme report we look at how the process was conducted across the four counties, the engagement of key stakeholders, the challenges they faced and, more importantly, the views of the replaced and new households.

The removal and replacement process

Several efforts have been made by PILU in the HSNP counties to resolve their ID and account issues in order to reach the 100,000 plus target. These include:

- Supporting ID registration campaigns of the NRB
- Running account-opening operations in the field to make it easier for HSNP recipients to open accounts
- Capturing ID information updates through a regular decentralised case management system on a day-to-day basis and through ad-hoc targeted operations
- Running an ad-hoc targeted operation to trace and identify households that were unable to get their IDs and fully functional bank accounts.

The replacement process entailed replacing Group 1 households that could not be traced or get IDs with the poorest Group 2 households from the same sublocation having valid IDs and active bank accounts. Poverty levels were determined from the HSNP's management information system (MIS) using the proxy means test scores from the previous programme-wide targeting exercise. This was the process agreed upon by the steering committee. Child-headed households and elderly households (those without a household member between ages 18-64 years) were given special consideration and not replaced. NDMA is considering ways to make payments to these households.

The removal and replacement process has taken over a year in planning and implementing. The final replacement list was shared by the field teams in September 2016 before the replacement was done in mid-October. A total of 6,198 Group 1 households were replaced. The November 2016 cycle payment was done on time. Thanks to the campaigns conducted to reach all Group 1 households, 97,067 households were reached with payments during this cycle, a considerable increase from the 89,329 households paid in the September payment cycle before the replacement

was done (Table 1). It is anticipated that the 101,800 target will be reached in the March 2017 payment cycle.

Table 1 Group 1 account status after the replacement exercise

Account status	Number of households
In possession of valid ID?	
Valid ID	98,942
Invalid ID	1,732
No ID	1,079
Account activated?	
Active account	97,246
Inactive account	2,788
No account (estimate) ¹	1,719
Accounts paid, November 2016	97,067
Total households	101,753

Source: HSNP website. Note: (1) Data on ID status are available for 101,753 households. Data on account activation status are available for 100,034 households. The PILU advises that the difference refers to households with no account. (2) Data refer to November 2016 payment cycle, after the new households had been added to the payroll.

Analysis of replaced households

Our previous monitoring report, on the theme of the process for issuing ID cards, highlighted that the ability to get an ID card varied by age of the recipient and by county¹. We have therefore explored here whether this has had an impact on the types of people who are replaced and those who become new recipients.

As shown in Table 2 below, replacements cut across all age groups. Breaking down the population of recipients into five-year age groups we see that those between the ages of 25 and 39 formed the largest share of recipients in the original set of designated recipients for Group 1 households, each five-year cohort having more than 10% of the total beneficiary households; this remains true for the new list of Group 1 recipients after the replacement exercise. The groups of 20- to 39-year-olds see by far the largest number of added Group 1 recipients, with greater numbers being added than were removed: people of that age group therefore now constitute a slightly higher proportion of HSNP's recipients than they did previously.

Among original Group 1 households where the recipient was aged under 20, some 20% have been replaced, whilst a much smaller number of households in this age range are added. There is also a similar picture for elderly households, with larger proportions being replaced and smaller numbers being added. One in every 10 of the originally designated recipients who were aged 70 or older have been replaced, compared with only one in every 16 of original recipients aged between 20 and 39.

It is not possible to tell from the data available to the researchers whether older people or very young people are now less likely to be in households that are receiving support, or whether the newer households have been advised to designate a person of working age as the main recipient.

¹ OPM (2016), 'Special themes report: Identification card issue. September 2016 Hunger Safety Net Programme: Phase 2 evaluations', OPM.

Table 2 Recipients in replaced and new households, by age

Age of recipient	Number of recipients				Percentage of age cohort that were replaced (%)	Distribution of age groups (% of recipients)	
	Original Group 1	Replaced	Added	New total		Original Group 1	New total
Under 20	1,119	223	86	982	20	1.1	1.0
20-24	8,051	631	809	8,229	8	7.9	8.1
25-29	13,246	756	1158	13,648	6	13.0	13.4
30-34	10,167	694	741	10,214	7	10.0	10.0
35-39	12,014	561	725	12,178	5	11.8	12.0
40-44	8,947	535	459	8,871	6	8.8	8.7
45-49	7,857	492	404	7,769	6	7.7	7.6
50-54	8,697	472	447	8,672	5	8.5	8.5
55-59	7,100	384	322	7,038	5	6.9	6.9
60-64	6,926	448	293	6,771	6	6.8	6.6
65-69	4,516	312	199	4,403	7	4.4	4.3
70-74	3,119	317	149	2,951	10	3.1	2.9
75-79	1,760	138	52	1,674	8	1.7	1.6
80 plus	1,911	235	81	1,757	12	1.9	1.7
Not recorded ¹	6,731	-	-	6,731	-	-	-
Total	102,161	6,198	5,925	101,888	6	100	100

Source: OPM, from HSNP payroll and MIS data. Notes: (1) The age of recipients is recorded in the payroll data, and also on HSNP's list of replaced and new Group 1 households. Those whose age is 'not recorded' are therefore households that have never been paid—and presumably do not have an active account—but also that have not been replaced. (2) The total number of Group 1 households differs from the number in Table 1 as this table uses September 2016 payroll data supplemented with data from the MIS about replaced and added households, whereas Table 1 uses November payroll data.

Table 3 below shows the number of added and replaced households, disaggregated by county. The majority of the removed households are from Turkana and Mandera. In Turkana this reflects the fact that the county had a larger proportion of the original Group 1 recipients: the proportion of households replaced there is no higher than average, at around 6% of the original recipients. In Mandera, meanwhile, the proportion of households that have been replaced is higher than in the other three counties—and double the rate observed in Marsabit county. Looking at the distribution among the counties, both before and after the replacements, there is very little change because households were replaced by others in the same sublocation.

Table 3 Recipients in replaced and new households, by county

County	Number of recipients				Percentage of county that were replaced (%)	Distribution among counties (% of recipients)	
	Original Group 1	Replaced	Added	New total		Original Group 1	New total
Turkana	39,933	2,470	2,358	39,821	6	39.1	39.1
Marsabit	20,483	877	846	20,452	4	20.1	20.1
Mandera	22,228	1,856	1,735	22,107	8	21.8	21.7
Wajir	19,469	995	986	19,460	5	19.1	19.1
Total	102,113	6,198	5,925	101,840	6	100	100

Source: OPM, from HSNP data.

We noted above that the distribution of the age range of recipients in replaced households appears to differ slightly from that in new households, with added households tending to have younger recipients than the replaced households. Looking at this by county, the difference in distribution is noticeable in Marsabit, Mandera and Wajir (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Analysis of the age distribution of replaced vs. new households, by county



Source: OPM, from HSNP data.

In the diagram the yellow-bordered bars represent the distribution of ages of recipients in the households that were removed from the list while the black bars represent the distribution of ages of those that were newly added: we see the height of the black bars exceeding that of the yellow-bordered bars at lower age groups. Turkana differs from the other three in that the distribution of the added households is almost identical to replaced households. This may reflect the observations from our September thematic report on the ID process that it is less problematic for older people to get IDs in Turkana than in Wajir and Mandera, partly on account of security issues.

Communication about the process

Generally, most stakeholders in positions of authority such as chiefs, assistant chiefs, village elders and RCs had heard about the removal and replacement process. Communication about the process was done through the chiefs. In most cases the HSNP programme officers and managers went to each location to explain the process to the chiefs and assistant chiefs, who reported the training being easy to understand and essential to reach 100% of the target number of recipients. Although the chiefs were aware of the process, the final list of the replaced and new households was not shared with them prior to payment.

In contrast, the communication of the process to recipients, pay agents and the wider community was not widespread in the areas that we visited during the November operational monitoring round. In fact, the majority of the community members we approached had not heard about the process, as was the case with most of the pay agents interviewed². After much deliberation, PILU decided not to advertise the fact that people would be removed from the programme because of the risk of political and community blowback. PILU report that they focused the messaging on releasing the list of the new households and encouraging those who did not have IDs to obtain IDs and access their back payments. However, in the locations attended by our interviewers we did not find evidence of official communication to replaced and new households about the process³.

Of the dozen new or replaced households we spoke to, only one was aware of the new status before we informed them—even though the changeover of households had occurred three weeks previously and the first payment for the new Group 1 households was awaiting collection. The replaced households were very surprised to hear about their change. One expressed disappointment since they said they had made efforts to replace the designated recipient with an ID-holding household member; another had just received his ID before the set deadline and had to request the office not to be removed. They were generally displeased with the slow pace of the programme in updating their status especially given the fact that it could have cost them the chance to remain as regular beneficiaries.

Households that were newly transferred to Group 1 were, of course, pleased to learn from our team that they were now included. They were completely unaware that there was any possibility of getting into the programme as regular beneficiaries. Generally, we found that they were aware of the payment dates for the regular transfer. For most, the payment came in good time as they had to pay school fees and settle debts. A few cited things they would wish to do with the cash:

² Given the lack of awareness we were not able to analyse the community's reaction to the process.

³ It was difficult to track down households who had been replaced given the nomadic lifestyle of many.

'This money will enable me to pay school fees, I won't have to sell livestock as I normally do. It will help a lot.' New Group 1 recipient, Wajir.

'I just had a motorbike accident, now I can afford treatment. I will also use the funds to pay debts from traders.' New Group 1 recipient, Wajir.

The fact that the number of payments made by HSNP in November was much higher than in September means that the message about the new payment status must have eventually reached the households, though not in a timely fashion.

Feedback from stakeholders on the process

The common sentiment from the chiefs, RCs, pay agents and elders was that it was a very important process that needed to take place. It would give others a chance to get the much needed funds through replacing some households who could not be traced at all. Their major concern was for those who could not access their funds because of ID issues and they felt that most of these cases were lacking IDs because of the long and complicated process of ID issuance, which did not even guarantee an ID being issued once registered because of the many causes of rejection⁴.

Planning

HSNP county-level staff were involved in the 'removal and replacement' process for the full year, except for the final stage of selection of the replacement households, which was done using the MIS at central level. While this might appear to be appropriate for impartial selection, a delay in sharing the final list with HSNP county staff meant they were not given the opportunity to share their recommendations on the changes:

'We should have been involved in the replacement because when people in Nairobi replace they might choose a replacement beneficiary who is already in a recipient household or a household with an ongoing case. They should share the list first so that we can check if they have active accounts and the right documentations'. Key informant, HSNP.

Some also expressed disappointment that even though the deadline was known to them in advance, certain teams were in the midst of resolving some of the outstanding ID issues when the cut-off date arrived:

'I think this exercise should have waited till we do the ID mop-up exercise that we are preparing to do soon. Then after we can now be sure of the households without IDs and move forward with the replacements.' Key informant, HSNP.

Some other areas for possible future efficiency improvements in planning the process were identified. In particular, the teams were instructed first to trace households with ID issues; then mid-campaign they were instructed to pay special attention to trace households that consist only of people aged under 20 or over 65, which meant that some areas had to be visited twice.

⁴ See September 2016 Special theme on ID Issuance for more details on the processes of ID registration and challenges faced by HSNP communities when it comes to ID registration.

Impact on pay agents

The process had not affected most pay agents at the time of the interviews as the replaced households and new households had not heard about the process. The change of status of some households from Group 2 to Group 1 also risks encouraging many households to check whether they, too, may now start receiving money regularly:

'For now people don't know about the new households. After the three I have just paid, I expect more people to come checking and it will disrupt my business'. Pay agent, Wajir

Perceptions on areas of improvement

The chiefs felt that communication about the final list of replaced and new households could have been improved but otherwise viewed the process as having gone well. Although the majority of the RCs we spoke to had not been involved in the process, a few mentioned that changing and updating information was taking too long.

Challenges in the process

Below are some of the bottlenecks mentioned that have hindered progress in getting to the targeted 100,000 households. These relate to many of the challenges identified in our earlier special themed reports on ID issuance (September 2016 report) and account opening and activation (November 2015 report).

- Delays in getting data synchronised between PILU and Equity Bank. This is typically due to delays in getting IPRS checks done after IDs have been issued as well as delays in getting changes in the systems reflected, such as information updates. The issue of data synchronisation is, however, being revised by PILU and from December 2016 there will be weekly county stakeholder meetings between Equity Bank and HSNP to share the changes.

'Change of recipient is taking too long. We have cases where NDMA have even written to Equity Bank to open account for next of kin but Equity Bank is dragging their feet. Is the delay from Nairobi?' Assistant chief, Wajir East.

- Account opening is slow once people get their IDs because they have to organise themselves to get to Equity Bank branches to open their accounts and get the 'know your customer' procedure done.
- Account activation also slowed down the process as smart agents are not evenly distributed and most beneficiaries have to travel a long distance to get this done.
- Once accounts have been opened and activated, the beneficiaries still have to wait for the accounts to be credited. This is not done automatically but after data synchronisation which has left many beneficiaries confused by the delay:

'The community complained about the update process. Many beneficiaries have used money to go and give the change of info. When they check their accounts it is not updated.' RC member, Wajir West.

- The continued use of the PMT scores and community wealth-based ranking system to select replacement households will not necessarily pick the most vulnerable households. This was, however, the agreement of the steering committee (NDMA, DFID, FSD):

'Targeting challenges still come to haunt us, people even across the border were registered. The list doesn't necessarily reflect people in the same location due to the nomadic nature of the people'. Key informant, HSNP.

Research methods

OPM field teams and RGA team supervisors conducted interviews with HSNP programme managers, chiefs, rights committee members, pay agents, HSNP new and replaced recipients, PILU team leader and operations manager at the national level.

Table 4 Summary of fieldwork, November 2016

Stakeholder	Turkana	Marsabit	Mandera	Wajir	TOTAL
Chiefs	3	3	4	4	14
HSNP programme manager	1	1	1	1	4
RCs	2	3	3	1	9
Pay agents	3	6	4	3	16
New households	0	0	3	3	6
Replaced households	1	1	2	3	7
PILU team leader and operations manager					2
Total					58

Note: Interviews with households in Turkana and Marsabit were limited once the team became aware that information about new and replaced households had not been communicated to those affected.