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# **Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Component**

Qualitative Impact Evaluation Report: 2011–2012

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

This is the second follow-up qualitative study looking at the impact of the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP). Its main objective is to explore some of the issues and impact areas highlighted in the previous round of the evaluation as requiring more depth and exploration. This report thus focuses on the impact of the cash transfer on the local economy, on the educational attainment and nutritional status of children, and children's experience of schooling.

### Methodology

Qualitative fieldwork was conducted in two treatment sub-locations in each of the four HSNP counties (Mandera, Marsabit, Turkana and Wajir). These sub-locations were purposefully selected from the four sub-locations in each district where the qualitative evaluation fieldwork was conducted during the first follow-up survey. In each qualitative sub-location, a range of focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and household case studies were conducted.

The qualitative fieldwork was not designed to generate statistically representative results. Every effort was made to provide a broad sample of locations. Respondents were selected at random where possible and findings were triangulated between different respondents and the quantitative survey. These results should thus not be interpreted as conclusive or representative, but as providing detailed qualitative insight into key areas of interest.

### Impact findings

The qualitative research indicates that HSNP primarily serves as a safety net for beneficiary households, preventing distress sales of productive assets and safeguarding against the erosion of households' belongings. Transfers were predominantly spent on food. The HSNP enabled beneficiaries to consume more diverse food items, larger quantities of food, and increase the frequency of their meals.

Beneficiaries also spent the transfer on education. The research indicates that the HSNP is helping to remove some of the financial barriers to schooling by enabling households to meet primary education costs more easily. Children from beneficiary households claimed to be better equipped with school materials and clean uniforms as a result of the transfer, and were thus less likely to be sent home from school. Arriving at school better fed, more presentable, and adequately equipped with uniform and school supplies is reported to be improving children's psycho-social wellbeing and thus their confidence and capacity to concentrate. This, in turn, seems to be positively impacting their performance in school.

Respondents also report using the transfers to meet the costs of health care services, particularly those who are chronically ill, or when illness of family members coincided with disbursement dates.

While for most households the HSNP primarily provided a safety net function, relatively better-off households were also able to put transfers to productive use such as buying livestock or investing in businesses. However, the analysis shows that the impact on household livelihood activities

generally was not pronounced. There was some evidence of the elderly and chronically ill using the transfers to reduce the amount of casual labour they undertook (which is often physically demanding), and some used the money to hire younger people to help them with chores. The HSNP was also reported to aid households to retain or even increase their level of livestock by avoiding distress sales. However, given the value of the transfer, only a few households reported being able to start a new business or expand their existing business.

The qualitative research suggests that the HSNP may have contributed to a higher level of market dynamism in HSNP areas in recent years, as evidenced by an increase in the number of traders, variety of goods and services supplied in local markets. However, although there is some glowing testimony from community members about the role of the HSNP in this process, it is difficult to attribute the overall changes in market activity to HSNP because of the number of strong exogenous factors, such as increasing sedentarisation, fuelling market development in these areas.

It was found that HSNP areas were experiencing high inflation at the time of the research. This was driven by factors external to the HSNP, such as rising fuel prices and drought. Inflation presents a risk to the HSNP as it erodes the value of the transfer and therefore limits its impact. There were some reports of opportunistic practices by traders, hiking prices in response to the increased demand of beneficiaries, but these were not widespread.

Overall, the data collected under the qualitative research component of the HSNP impact evaluation shows that the transfer continues to function as a vital safety net for many of the beneficiaries, as well as having some further benefits to other aspects of wellbeing.

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## Abbreviations

ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
CBT	Community-Based Targeting
DFID	Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DR	Dependency Ratio
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
HSNP	Hunger Safety Net Programme
KII	Key Informant Interview
KES	Kenya Shillings
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MUAC	Mid-Upper Arm Circumference
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
QPS	Qualitative Panel Survey
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SP	Social Pension

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) delivers cash transfers of KES 3,500<sup>1</sup> every two months to selected beneficiaries and in Northern Kenya, with the overall goal of reducing extreme poverty. The programme began its operations in 2008, with first payments to beneficiaries in 2009.

OPM and the Institute of Development Studies have been contracted by the Department for International Development (DFID) to undertake a rigorous evaluation of the programme's impact. The impact evaluation is based on the collection of quantitative and qualitative information over three years on the potential impacts of the HSNP. The full final impact results can be found in Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Component Impact Evaluation Final Report: 2009 to 2012, March 2013.

This is the second follow-up qualitative study looking at the impact of the HSNP. This report is narrower in scope and its main objective is to explore some of the issues and impact areas highlighted in the previous round of the evaluation as requiring more depth and exploration.

Of particular interest to this study are the impacts of the cash transfer on the local economy, including decisions on casual labour, wage rates and other multiplier effects. Moreover, the study explores the impact of the transfer on educational attainment and nutritional status of children and their experience of schooling. The key evaluation questions of this study include:

### Local economy impact

- Whether HSNP has had an impact on the livelihoods options available.
- Whether the HSNP is having substantial impacts on casual labour markets, and whether beneficiaries reducing the amount of casual labour they do constitutes dependence on the HSNP.
- Whether any changes to local wage rates are caused by the HSNP or incidental to it.
- Whether there are clearly identifiable multiplier effects of the HSNP. What is the perception of community members (including non-beneficiaries) and local traders and businesses in terms of:
  - Increased opportunities for trade (higher purchases from beneficiary households and opportunities for business creation and/or expansion)?
  - Increased labour market opportunities?
  - Increased demand for variety of goods and services offered?
  - Increased credit-worthiness of customers?

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<sup>1</sup> The HSNP originally provided KES 2,150 to each beneficiary household (or individual in the case of the social pension) every two months. This was calculated as 75% of the value of the World Food Programme (WFP) food aid ration in 2006 when the value of the transfer was originally set. The value was increased from KES 2150 to KES 3000 with effect from payment cycle 16 (Sept/Oct 2011). It was subsequently increased to KES 3,500 with effect from cycle 19 (Mar/Apr 2012). A one off doubling of transfer occurred in Jul/Aug 2011 to support households coping with drought.

- o Changing habits?
- o Increased competition?
- o How these changes affect traders in terms of their strategies and profits?

### **Impact on education**

- Whether there are positive impacts on primary completion rates through HSNP payments, for example by them being used to cover exam costs.
- Whether there are positive impacts on children's education experience and outcomes through HSNP payments for education expenses.

### **Impact on nutritional status**

- What are the perceptions on a balanced diet? Has this changed in recent years? Are these currently being met? If not why not?
- Has the HSNP had an impact on the type and level of food households consume? How and why?

This report presents the results from the third year of qualitative fieldwork for the evaluation of the HSNP, undertaken in August 2012. At the time of research, the majority of the households (98%) covered by the evaluation had received around 8-11 bi-monthly transfers<sup>2</sup>.

## **1.2 Methodology**

### **1.2.1 Areas selected for research**

The qualitative fieldwork undertaken during the round of research looking at programme impact after one year was broad in scope, covering a large range of impact areas and closely mirroring the topics being covered by the quantitative survey, but without exploring any of these areas in greater depth. This was in order to provide explanatory data to complement the findings of the quantitative survey. The second round of follow-up research, however, is designed to be much more focused, examining a few key impact areas that arose from the first round of impact analysis in much more detail. It is consequently narrower in geographical coverage and scope of research. The fieldwork was conducted in two treatment sub-locations in each of the four greater districts in which the HSNP operates (Mandera, Marsabit, Turkana and Wajir). These sub-locations were purposefully selected from the four sub-locations in each district where the qualitative evaluation fieldwork was conducted during the first follow-up survey.

While the evaluation sub-locations overall were selected at random, the two qualitative sub-locations were selected so that the different targeting approaches and different livelihood types were included.

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<sup>2</sup> Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Component Impact Evaluation Final Report: 2009 to 2012, March 2013.

**Table 1.1 Selected sub-locations**

District	Sub-location	New district	Targeting mechanism			Livelihood zones							
			CBT	DR	SP	Agro-pastoral	Pastoral - all species	Pastoral - cattle	Irrigated cropping	Fisheries	Informal employment / business	Formal employment / business / trade	Formal employment / casual waged labour / business
Marsabit	Badasa	Marsabit	X			x							
Marsabit	Lonyoripi-chau	Laisamis		X			x						
Turkana	Kokiselei	Turkana North			x					x			
Turkana	Lorengelup	Turkana Central			X		x						
Wajir	Lafaley	Wajir East	x					x					
Wajir	Wajir Township	Wajir East		X							x		
Mandera	Mado	Mandera Central		x						x			
Mandera	Chirchir	Mandera Central			x	x							

## 1.2.2 Research activities

The fieldwork was conducted in July 2012 (the midpoint of the quantitative research, which was ongoing for 10 months between February and November 2012). A team of local researchers were trained for one week in Nairobi during the week beginning 2 July 2012. The training included discussions on the theory of change of the project, the research hypothesis, and the development of and practice with participatory research tools designed for answering the given research questions.

There were four teams, one for each of the districts under HSNP. Each team consisted of a team leader, a moderator and note taker. OPM staff accompanied research staff in Turkana and Marsabit where they supervised fieldwork and undertook numerous FGDs. It was not possible for OPM staff to accompany the research teams in Mandera and Wajir for security reasons.

In each sub-location, four FGDs and a minimum of five KIIs and two qualitative panel surveys (QPS) were conducted. The FGDs consisted of:

- Male beneficiaries;
- Female beneficiaries;
- Non-beneficiaries; and
- Beneficiary children.

The KIIs were conducted with community chiefs, teachers, health workers, traders and beneficiaries.

Participants were selected using snowball sampling within the village.

## 2 HSNP impact

### 2.1 Use of transfers

The HSNP is expected to increase beneficiary households' spending power, with poorer beneficiaries spending a larger proportion of their transfer on food consumption needs than less poor beneficiaries. However, the impact of the HSNP will also be affected by the value of the transfer in relation to the total consumption expenditure of beneficiary households. At baseline, the per adult equivalent value of the transfer was around 12% of total per adult equivalent consumption expenditure, rising to around 28% for the poorest households.

It is also expected that spending patterns will be heterogeneous across different beneficiary households. For example, for pastoralist households, the HSNP may help to increase livestock holdings. For such households, the transfer might mean they engaged significantly less in distress sale of their livestock when faced with a shock, or in the case of slightly wealthier households they may buy additional livestock. Settled households may have a greater tendency to spend on a wider variety of items (food and non-food) in comparison to mobile households. However, those households with poor access to markets are likely to spend on a narrower range of goods. Wealthy households, who have a higher asset base, are also more likely to put the HSNP into productive use in comparison to poorer beneficiary households who may use it for safety net purposes. Because the HSNP transfer value does not take into account the size of the household, its impact is likely to be diluted for larger households. This is particularly relevant in areas where polygamy is widely practiced. It is also possible that households who are more labour constrained will use the HSNP principally as a safety net, whereas households with higher labour capacity may use the HSNP for more productive purposes, assuming the market conditions are favourable.

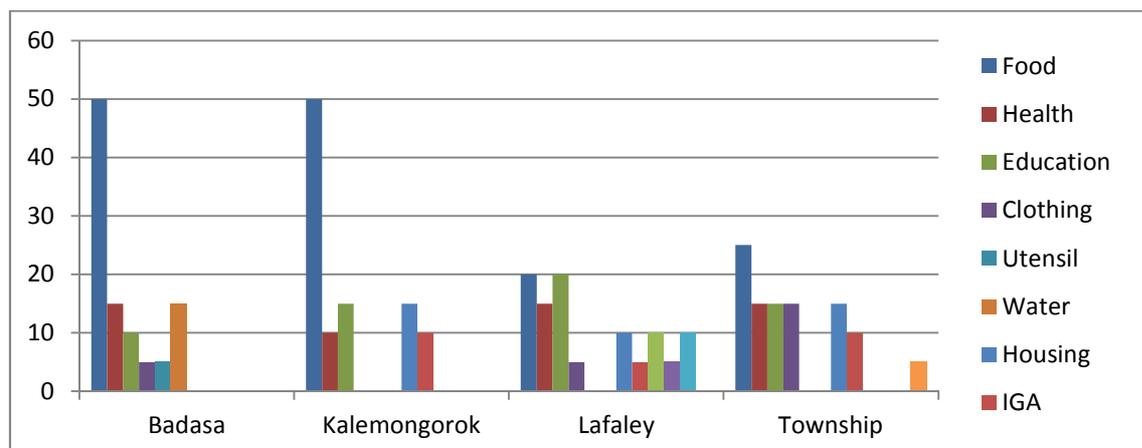
Figure 2.1 below presents outputs from a number of proportional piling exercises used to illustrate how different respondents spent their transfers.<sup>3</sup> For many households, food expenditure was a priority. It appears that this prioritised pattern of expenditure was the same before the HSNP, at least for the poorest households, who according to the baseline findings spent around 80% of household expenditure on food consumption. What has changed with HSNP transfers is perhaps the additional amount that is spent on food:

“I used to spend KES 200 in my household and now I spend almost KES 350” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]

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<sup>3</sup> The outputs shown are taken from exercises in four out of eight sub-locations during FGDs and KIIs.

**Figure 2.1 Proportional piling exercise showing use of HSNP transfer**



Beneficiaries typically reported spending up to half of their transfers on food. They also reported being able to consume a wider variety of food items than they normally would have, such as vegetables, fruits and milk, if not through cash purchases then through credit advances. However, the increased food diversity was temporary, as will be discussed in section 2.5.

“Before HSNP, we cooked only maize, but after HSNP started we were able to buy beans to add to our meals. We have also added kale, meat, and potatoes.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

“We are now able to eat more nutritious food ... we can get credit from the shop to buy vegetables.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Mado, Mandera]

Dietary diversity was perhaps more significant for households whose food needs were being partly met through food aid. These households received their staple food from this source and used the HSNP to buy other food items and as a result obtained a more balanced diet:

“It has enabled families to eat better food other than the usual maize every day. It supplements the food they get through the World Food Programme. They can buy green grams and beans, which are nutritious and prevents illness.” [KII with health worker, Chirchir, Mandera]

The HSNP also enabled households to increase the frequency, quantity and quality of food they consumed. This is particularly evident when comparing responses from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. For example, while beneficiaries were able to increase the frequency of food intake, non-beneficiaries “*eat breakfast, jump lunch and eat supper.*” [FGD with female non-beneficiaries, Mado, Mandera]

In Wajir, beneficiary households placed less emphasis on food spending as a priority compared to other districts. This is perhaps explained by there being fewer beneficiaries

from the poorest quintile compared to other districts, as shown in the baseline round of the quantitative study.<sup>4</sup>

Respondents were thankful for the transfer, but they stressed the inadequacy of the transfer amount in terms of satisfying their consumption needs, in spite of the fact that the value of the transfer had increased during the life of the programme to date from KES 2,150 to KES 3,500. This is plausible in the context of rising inflation and recent reduction of food aid beneficiary coverage. Anecdotal evidence from one of the relief agencies operating in Lonyoripichau suggested a reduction in food aid coverage of households from 70% to 30% because of recent rains in the region, which meant that it was no longer a “humanitarian” situation meriting large-scale interventions.

Sections 2.4 and 2.5 discuss the impact of improved food consumption and dietary diversity on nutritional status and educational outcomes of beneficiary households in more detail.

After food, education was the second most common item beneficiaries spent their HSNP transfers on. Despite primary education being free, households still have to bear the indirect costs of education such as paying for school uniforms, exam fees, textbooks, and other such expenses. For example, “*exam fees can cost up to KES 120 per child per term*” [FGD with children, Lafaley, Wajir], while “*payment for a voluntary teacher can cost up to KES 800 per child per term*” [KII with teacher, Basada, Marsabit]. Once children get to secondary school, these costs can increase substantially as parents start to pay fees: “*the fees for secondary school per child are about KES 9,000 per child per term*” [KII with chief, Chirchir, Mandera]. Compared to the value of the cash transfer, these costs are enormous, particularly for families with large numbers of children attending school.

With the high costs associated with education, many beneficiaries found it hard to keep up with payments. Many teachers noted how the inability of parents to meet these costs led to some children missing school, eventually dropping out in the longer term. Children are often sent home if they are unable to pay their school fees, disrupting their educational experience. Some parents who could not meet the cost of education adopted strategies to ensure their children continued attending school. For example, some parents who had multiple children of secondary level would often let children (particularly girls) repeat several years in primary school where the costs were comparatively lower until such a time as parents could afford to have both in secondary school. Others engaged in distress sales of livestock, or cut other household expenditure to help pay for secondary school. The cash transfer therefore did help families meet the cost of education, especially at the primary level. Section 2.4 discusses the impact of household spending on education in more detail, along with the impact of the HSNP on children’s experiences and performances at school.

The third most common use of the HSNP transfer was health, in a context where direct and indirect costs of access to health services are major constraints to seeking health care: “*The reason why people might not go for treatment when they need it is that people cannot afford to meet the hospital bills*” [QPS with male beneficiary, Wajir Township, Wajir]. Beneficiaries were therefore able to use part of their transfers to meet these costs. Spending on health, however, depended on whether disbursement coincided with a member of the household

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<sup>4</sup> Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Component Baseline Report, June 2011.

being sick or where a beneficiary suffered a chronic illness which required regular medication, as in the following instance:

“I spend the whole of my HSNP money on medication since I am disabled. I also have a kidney condition, so I spend my transfer on kidney drugs that costs KES 1,350 each month.  
[QPS with male beneficiary, Wajir Township]

In most case, the transfers were spent on more pressing needs such as food, as discussed above.

Overall, therefore, particularly for poorer households, the HSNP was used in a way which brought very little transformative impact given beneficiaries' prioritisation of food expenditure. However, for the few households with a wider asset base and better livelihood options, which enabled them to meet their basic food needs, the transfers were more likely to be put to productive use. This was very clear in Wajir, with a comparatively larger proportion of beneficiaries in the wealthiest quintile according to the baseline results.<sup>5</sup> Beneficiaries in Wajir Town mentioned using the cash transfer for a wider variety of things, including investing in petty trade. This is contrasted with the narrower, food-focused transfer expenditure of HSNP beneficiaries in Lorengelup in Turkana, with relatively higher poverty levels and poor market access. In addition to facilitating businesses, pastoral households were able to use the transfers to sustain and increase their livestock holdings. These households were able to sustain food consumption using the HSNP, therefore creating less need to sell livestock to smooth consumption. The HSNP thus allowed households to avoid distress sales and build on assets accordingly. Section 2.3 discusses the impacts on local markets in more depth.

Finally, a small number of respondents reported spending their transfer on ad hoc items which responded to their particular needs at the time. For example, those who lived in a grass-thatched house which needed repair used it for repairs and so on. Some households were able to use it for informal savings, i.e. 'merry-go-rounds'.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, in all such cases, these were households whose food and other needs had been satisfied.

In summary, the HSNP fulfilled a safety net function, with beneficiaries prioritising food and other basic household expenditure to meet education and health costs. However, the use of the transfer was heterogeneous, and impacts were relatively stronger for poorer households and diluted for larger ones. Only a few relatively better-off and smaller beneficiary households were able to put the HSNP to productive use. This is revealing in terms of the impacts to be expected within the local economy, as will be discussed in section 2.3.

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<sup>5</sup> Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Component Baseline Report, June 2011.

<sup>6</sup> This is an informal saving mechanism whereby members make regular contributions and then receive lump sum payments in turn.

## 2.2 Livelihoods

### 2.2.1 Overview

The sustainable livelihood framework, which uses a multidimensional approach to the analysis of livelihoods, identifies five categories of tangible and intangible assets that households draw upon to determine their livelihoods. Applying this framework to the context of the HSNP areas suggests the following asset groupings<sup>7</sup>:

- **Human capital:** labour, education, health;
- **Financial capital:** remittances, saving, credit, loans, livestock;
- **Physical capital:** land, roads and transport, communications;
- **Social capital:** family and clan-based reciprocity arrangements, religious-based networks (churches, mosques – including offerings such as zakat), and formal and informal livelihoods and borrowing and lending networks (for example, merry-go-rounds); and
- **Natural capital:** grazing land, water, vegetation.

For destitute and food-insecure households as described above the transfer will translate into higher food consumption, which will contribute to human capital through improvement in health and education outcomes. The transfer may also provide financial capital to enable recipients to take moderate risks. The reliability and predictability of the transfer may also increase a beneficiary's access to much-needed credit. Finally, the HSNP may also strengthen social capital, through sharing and facilitating participation in support groups.

A well-built asset portfolio will allow for more resilient livelihoods. It will enable households to avoid detrimental coping strategies when faced with a shock. As cash transfers enable beneficiaries to build and strengthen their individual asset base, there may be wider implications for community livelihoods if the cash is spent in the local economy, thus enabling non-beneficiaries to also benefit.

This section explores these potential linkages by summarising our findings on the impact of HSNP on households' livelihood options.

### 2.2.2 The HSNP and livelihoods

The HSNP continues to have only a limited direct impact on the livelihood strategy of beneficiaries. For many beneficiaries, the HSNP was an additional source of livelihood viewed as a salary, which brought improvements in living standards:

“They are giving us money so we are like government workers who are waiting for their salaries at the end of the month.”  
[FGD with female beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

There appears to be no immediate and direct impact. The general livelihood activities that beneficiaries undertake remained the same. In a context where the HSNP is spent on food,

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<sup>7</sup> For more details see: <http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0901/section2.pdf>

education and health as discussed above, such spending patterns could be considered as future investments to household livelihoods. For example, previous studies note how spending on education improves households' ability to diversify and improve their livelihood options. Similarly, the HSNP as described above helps to reduce negative coping strategies such as withdrawing children from school in order to meet basic household needs. This can have positive and long-lasting impact on human capital formation and therefore on future livelihood opportunities.

The importance and impact of the HSNP on livelihoods is again heterogeneous across the community<sup>8</sup>. For some segments of the population, especially amongst the elderly, the HSNP constitutes the main or only source of income. The HSNP thus provides much-needed income support to these households and sometimes results in them reducing the amount of casual labour they undertake, which is often physically challenging and tiring. In some instances, these households used the HSNP money to hire other labourers to undertake piecemeal work.

For pastoral households, they were able to spend HSNP transfers rather than engaging in distress sales to smooth their consumption. For relatively better-off households with less pressing consumption needs, the transfer could be used to buy additional animals, thus increasing their stock holding:

“We no longer sell our own livestock but rather embark on using this HSNP money to buy a goat or sheep to substitute the selling of our livestock. When we need money we resell them to get a profit.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

“Some members of the community are also buying livestock with the programme money, after the last stock was raided by cattle rustlers.” [QPS with female beneficiary, Lorengelup, Turkana]

For a very small number of beneficiaries who had existing businesses, the HSNP has enabled them to expand their existing livelihood activities by directly contributing to capital or improving credit-worthiness: “*I am a tailor. I buy needles, thread, and materials with this money. And sometimes I use it to repair my sewing machine*” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]. In general, the HSNP was perceived to be too small a sum to significantly increase opportunities to invest in productive activities.

Some people were, however, able to start new petty trade businesses, with the HSNP money providing start-up capital in a context in which access to capital is a major constraint. These businesses were typically small table-top stands selling items like paraffin and tobacco. Again, such beneficiaries were rare, probably better-off, smaller and in settled households, given the value of the HSNP transfer. Nonetheless, this ensured livelihood security through a constant supply of income which supplemented income from other livelihood sources.

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<sup>8</sup> The quantitative survey finds some evidence that the HSNP is reducing the need for older persons to engage in non-domestic work. See Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Component Impact Evaluation Final Report: 2009 to 2012, March 2013.

“Before, people in this community had no jobs, but after the introduction of the HSNP cash transfer there has been some changes. People are now engaged in petty trading.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

For non-beneficiaries the above was not possible without access to needed capital: “*We don’t have any capital to start or expand our business*” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Lafaley, Wajir]. However, a few non-beneficiaries in a male focus group in Wajir Town noted the following overall change to their livelihoods as an indirect impact from the HSNP:

“Non-beneficiaries’ livelihoods have changed in that whenever it is pay day we normally go to our brothers and sisters who are beneficiaries and they give us something small. We then use the amount given to settle our debts... When there are fundraising events for wedding ceremonies, beneficiaries help raise that money. So I can say we are benefiting in one way... Some have created groups with non-beneficiaries, like women’s groups, working together in different businesses. They have employed several people.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]

In summary, the HSNP has had limited direct and immediate impact on productive livelihoods for many households overall, although there is potential for longer-term productive impact. The HSNP’s impact on livelihoods is heterogeneous, however, with the more productive and transformative impacts occurring among better-off households.

## 2.3 Local economy

### 2.3.1 Overview

Cash transfers have the potential to have a wider spill-over effect in the rest of the local economy. The increased purchasing power of beneficiary households may result in increased demand for goods and services which, if responded to, can result in increased supply of goods and services and as a result increased economic activity. However, where markets are fragmented, or where there is limited competition, the increased demand may be responded to through opportunistic price increases rather than increased supply of good and services.

So, the extent to which cash transfers have an impact on the local economy depends on a number of factors, including the volume of the transfer and the structure of the markets and how well they are integrated. The larger the cash injection, the more significant the impact on the local economy is likely to be. The HSNP represents around 20% of consumption expenditure and covers close to half of households across the selected evaluation sub-locations; therefore, we would expect to see some local economy impact, even if it is only marginal.

Markets in selected sub-locations are made up of small shops who respond to local demand. They are highly dependent on trade inflows, importing most consumption goods apart from livestock. In addition, poor transport infrastructure means that they are poorly integrated, and

many traders incur large transaction costs. Within the selected sub-locations for this study, the structure and degree of market integration vary. In Wajir Township, Basada and Kalemongorok there is a great degree of market dynamism, which is reflected in the number of traders and the variety of goods on offer. These sub-locations are also relatively better integrated, with proximity to larger urban towns (for example, Marsabit Township in the case of Badasa). It is therefore likely that in these sub-locations supply will be relatively more responsive to the increased demand brought about by the HSNP. This should limit the propensity for opportunistic price increases compared to the less dynamic and poorly integrated sub-locations like Lonyoripichau, Chirchir, Lorengelup and Lafaley.

### 2.3.2 The HSNP and prices

Evidence from the previous round of qualitative research<sup>9</sup> showed that, although there were significant inflationary pressures across all study locations which were eroding the value of transfers, this was not attributable to the HSNP. Price increases were related to other exogenous factors including fuel price rises and the devaluation of the Kenyan Shilling, which increased the cost of imports. In general, markets appeared to be very responsive to beneficiaries' increased purchasing power, with large increases in supply and variety of goods. These findings were corroborated with findings from the quantitative research,<sup>10</sup> which found no statistical impact from the HSNP on prices, as well as other research outside of this evaluation.<sup>11</sup>

In this round of qualitative data collection, across all districts, respondents reported increases in prices:

“Things have become expensive, prices have gone up and it is very hard for people to buy stuff.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Lafaley, Wajir]

However, respondents were adamant that these price increases were not to be attributed to the HSNP. Indeed, although the HSNP led to increases in purchasing power respondents felt that the resulting price changes were mainly exogenous and related to the drought, high transportation costs, and the devaluation of the Kenyan Shilling:

“Because traders take prices from suppliers, when suppliers increase their prices, retailers also have to increase their prices. Prices increase because of the global crisis, fuel prices have gone up. Also, food prices have gone up because of transport costs. The rate of the Kenyan Shilling is also down in our country.” [KII with trader, Wajir Township, Wajir]

“Yes, prices have increased although this has not been attributed to the HSNP; traders normally increase prices due to high transportation costs...” [KII with chief, Badasa, Marsabit]

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<sup>9</sup> OPM (2012), Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Component Qualitative Impact Evaluation Report: 2009/10 to 2010/11, March 2012.

<sup>10</sup> OPM (2012), Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Component Quantitative Impact Evaluation Report: 2009/10 to 2010/11, May 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Ndoka C (2011), Case study report on coping with drought through HSNP cash transfer: A case study of Marsabit, HSNP Secretariat, July 2011.

In general, it was conveyed that local traders were able to respond to increased demand, sometimes encouraged by beneficiaries' increased purchasing power.

Evidence from other studies on the local economy impact of cash transfers show how traders temporarily increase their prices to benefit from beneficiaries 'windfall income', particularly on payment days.<sup>12</sup> In this round of research, there were a few responses from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries which pointed to traders increasing their prices around payment day with associated increases in profitability for the traders:

"When traders saw the HSNP coming in, they did not sympathise with us and sold goods at a higher price." [FGD with male beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

"I can say that there are times when food in the market becomes expensive, especially in the first week of payments. Because the demand becomes high, people in the business make more profit at that time than any other time." [KII with community leader, Lafaley, Wajir]

"The programme has also affected us in a way: during the payment time there is an increase in the price of some commodities at times." [FGD with non-beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

However, despite the above, traders themselves remained adamant that they had not increased prices, with prices simply responding to exogenous factors and seasonal variations:

"Prices have not changed much; they are the same because we don't want to take advantage of these poor people. There are no major changes in prices. It's only because of the economic difficulties, so manufacturers are forced to increase their prices." [KII with trader in Lafaley, Wajir]

"As I told you, prices have gone up as a result of the global crisis and production; we don't raise the prices of goods as a result of this [HSNP] money. It's only that when we buy expensively from the suppliers, as a retailer we also have to increase the amount by a minimal margin." [KII with trader, Wajir Township]

Traders also noted that competitiveness among themselves helped to regulate the prices of the commodities being sold. In Marsabit, a KII with a trader revealed how increasing prices makes traders uncompetitive, driving them out of business in the long run as customers simply purchase from elsewhere:

"There is a fixed price for goods. If you sell them for more, nobody purchases from you." [KII with trader, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

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<sup>12</sup> Devereux, S. and Jere, P. (2008) Choice, Dignity and Empowerment? Cash and Food Transfers in Swaziland. An evaluation of Save the Children's Emergency Drought Response, 2007/2008, July 2008.

This incentivised traders to keep their prices stable. In less integrated markets with limited competition, prices were perceived to be higher:

“What brings the increase in price is the monopoly the few traders enjoy.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Lorengelup, Turkana]

This contrasted starkly with Kalemongorok, in which it was noted that:

“There is a lot of competition and this breaks the monopoly which is very good. At times it reduces the prices.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

Overall, the HSNP had a limited impact on prices, with traders responding to increased demand by increasing the supply of goods and prices mainly driven by exogenous factors. However, there was some evidence of local traders displaying opportunistic behaviour in some instances, particularly where competition was limited and markets more fragmented.

### **2.3.3 The HSNP and market activity**

Respondents across all sub-locations mentioned an increase in business activity in recent years. This was evident from the increased number of shops and business start-ups and expansion of existing traders. The increased trading activity could also be seen in the increased volume and quantities of commodities being traded.

However, the most obvious feature of this increased market activity could be seen in the increased variety of products being traded and new services that had emerged. In Wajir Township, for example, a new petrol station had been built and new services such as the *matatus* had emerged, which further facilitated market development:

“Now they sell a variety of goods. There are different types of soda that we didn’t know about before, like mango juice. Because people demand it, that’s why they bring a greater variety of goods.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

“These days we even have a *matatu* that operates between Lafaley and Wajir Township and is mostly used by business people who bring goods from Wajir.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Lafaley, Wajir]

“We have noted new commodities like phones and phone-banking services introduced in this area by people from other places.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

Respondents were asked to give their views on the possible reasons for the increased market activities described above. The increased market activity was mainly linked to an increasing process of sedentarisation.

Respondents were of the view that sedentarisation was a response to multiple factors such as loss of livestock (and therefore livelihood) due to drought and famine, increased competition for land due to population increases, fear of increasing violence between ethnic groups, etc. It also appears that programmes and policies of government and development agencies may also have encouraged sedentarisation as solutions to food insecurity and low levels of access to education and health services. As households have settled mostly around market towns, this has stimulated market activities to meet the needs of the now settled households. One male beneficiary in Badasa mentioned how, previously, needs were met by relying on farm produce and animals. However, recent droughts, in which harvests were low and many lost their animals, meant these needs had to be met through the market. In addition, pastoral households themselves diversify into non-pastoral activities once settled. Women in particular are perceived to diversify incomes by adopting new town-based activities such as setting up shops to sell vegetables, etc. This finding corroborates those of many previous studies.<sup>13</sup> In Mado, for example, female beneficiaries remarked that new businesses are necessary for people who no longer have animals or farms and as such attempt to diversify their livelihoods:

“We used to depend on our farm produce but now since there is no farm people start to buy things they need from the market.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

“Since the coming of the programme, things have changed. Beneficiaries are now getting into business because they are now settled around here... those who were herding and lost their livestock are now doing small business.” [KII with trader, Lafaley, Wajir]

In addition, as previously pastoral households settle in market towns and these towns develop, there is a parallel improvement in community infrastructure such as schools, health centres, fuel stations, etc. Most notable was the case in Lonyoripichau, where a new road had been created as the town centre developed. The new road was perceived to have facilitated market activities. In Badasa too, causal labourers working on a nearby dam increased demand for goods and services and shop keepers responded accordingly by bringing in additional stock and increasing variety:

“Before the construction of the Badasa dam there were few kiosks but since the construction of the dam started the shops have increased in number because there are lots of [construction] staff and they will be staying until the construction is complete.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

“There is an increase in the numbers of people within our area and this has led to an increase in the number of shops. This is because of the construction of the midrock dam.” [FGD with non-beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

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<sup>13</sup> Nduma I., Krisjanson P., and McPeack J. (2001), Diversity in income generating activities for sedentarized pastoral women in Northern Kenya, *Human Organization* Vol. 60 No. 4.

Nonetheless, there was some attribution made to the role of the HSNP in fuelling market activities, although this was secondary to the process described above. Respondents explained that beneficiaries' increased purchasing power resulted in increased demand and subsequent supply of a variety of goods and services by traders. New traders entered the market and existing traders, particularly HSNP pay agents, were able to expand and increase their stock levels and the variety of goods they sold, especially in the period immediately following the disbursement of the cash:

“This money also helps businessmen. Why? Beneficiaries buy food, clothes, and in this way they boost the traders within the area. They can buy from traders because they have the cash.”  
[KII with trader, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

“Yes, markets have developed mostly because of the purchasing power of beneficiaries. Without them there would be no business and without the HSNP things wouldn't have improved so much for this shop.” [KII with trader, Lafaley, Wajir]

There were only a few new entrants, and these were probably better-off HSNP beneficiaries, as the transfer was deemed too small to start a business for the average beneficiary:

“The money is not enough to start a business. They need to eat, buy transport with this money and so on, so the money cannot go far. And it comes after two months and not every month. The people who start something are those who don't have children in schools.” [KII with trader in Badasa, Marsabit]

Local traders reported positive changes in their businesses, directly attributing them to the HSNP. The changes were in the form of higher levels of demand, sales and profits. Furthermore, although many traders sold items on credit, the reliability of the HSNP transfers guaranteed their sales when payments finally arrived. In Lonyoripichau, a trader mentioned that the increased sales and profits from HSNP beneficiaries enabled him to service his debts to wholesalers and buy in larger quantities for retail, thus benefiting from lower prices, as well as increasing his own credit-worthiness with some of his suppliers. In this way, HSNP can be perceived as helping to reduce supply-side credit constraints for traders as well as demand-side credit constraints for consumers.

One community leader in Lafaley mentioned how in some cases temporary markets sprang up, with external traders coming in especially on payment days to sell at more competitive prices. Similarly, one trader in Wajir noted that there seem to be changes in the pattern of trade in markets. Whereas trading previously appeared to be seasonal, the HSNP enabled beneficiaries to smooth their consumption, with shops staying open to satisfy beneficiaries' demand throughout the year, although this was not widespread.

However, the extent of market development was not consistent across all sub-locations. In the case of Lorengelup, one female beneficiary noted that:

“No new commodities and services have been introduced to the market because money circulation is too low to trigger this.”  
[FGD with female beneficiaries, Lorengelup, Turkana]

Respondents in a male focus group also confirmed this point, attributing this to a lack of development and generalised poverty, which implied a relatively low level of demand from households:

“Businesses here don’t do well. Instead people go and invest in other locations like Lodwar Town. This is because money circulation here is too low, and there are no jobs being created and no expansion of businesses. Businesses do not prosper because the area is poor... we rely on charcoal burning.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lorengelup, Turkana]

This contrasts with Badasa, where respondents expressed a sense that the number of businesses had been rising, accompanied by increases in the variety and quantity of goods sold. A plausible explanation here is that these sub-locations are already quite well integrated, being closer to larger district markets. This validates the theoretical assertion that the potential local economy impact of a cash transfer relies on the structure and degree of the integration of markets.

In summary, the evidence points to a much more dynamic market situation in recent years, illustrated by the increase in the number of shops, variety of goods offered, increased sales and competition, and new trading and market structures. While it appears that the HSNP has contributed to this process, other factors outside the programme – particularly the process of sedenterisation – are more significant. Although there appears to be some glowing testimony from community members, it is difficult to objectively attribute a precise portion of this effect to the HSNP.

### **2.3.4 The HSNP and the labour market**

Across study locations there seem to be differences with respect to the opportunities available to engage in casual labour. While the opportunities for casual labour tended to be limited in remote, sparsely populated sub-locations like Lorengelup, Lonyoripichau and Lafaley, this contrasted with less remote or more urban sub-locations such as Badasa and Wajir Township. In the case of Badasa, the building of the Badasa dam created an increased demand for casual labour. Wajir Township has the advantage of being a relatively vibrant urban location. As in the previous round of fieldwork, casual labour was deemed the least desirable livelihood source and a measure of last resort. Casual labour is physically demanding, precarious, and poorly paid. It is often undertaken when there are no viable alternatives. Many respondents mentioned that they were able to do less casual labour as a result of receiving HSNP.

However, this did not lead to overall changes in labour supply or changes in wage rates. Some beneficiaries mentioned that the HSNP enabled beneficiaries to engage in more productive work or work for themselves. Where this happened, casual work was taken up by others. In some cases, community members mentioned that they were employed by HSNP beneficiaries to undertake certain jobs, thus creating income multipliers, although this was not very widespread. In general, it was more elderly households that were the ones employing others:

“When they get the money they call us and we build for them. We charge them about 300 shillings.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

“With the introduction of the HSNP some casual work is available for the non-beneficiaries, especially working on beneficiaries’ farms. Beneficiary households now give out money for people to work on their farms.” [KII with chief, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

It seems, therefore, that a new form of labour exchange has emerged that benefits non-beneficiaries by their earning income through casual labour paid for by HSNP transfers. Given the undesirable nature of casual labour, it is possible that beneficiaries’ social status could increase over time, as they become regarded as channels and sources of community livelihoods. At the same time, these changing social dynamics present the potential for resentments and antagonisms, which should be monitored.

All this said, once again for the majority of the beneficiaries the transfer was deemed inadequate to significantly affect local labour markets. This limitation constrained the ability of individuals to completely disengage from casual labour, even if they wished to do so. In fact, for the majority of beneficiaries there were no indications of being entirely dependent on the HSNP:

“We still perform the work activities. The money cannot satisfy all your needs; that is why they we still perform such activities... it can only buy food stuff, you cannot even extend it to your other needs; that is why people still do casual labour.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

In summary, the HSNP has led to reductions in casual labour for some beneficiaries, especially the elderly. However, this did not lead to changes in labour supply or wage rates. Finally, there was no evidence of the HSNP leading to dependency.

## **2.4 Education**

### **2.4.1 Overview**

Access to education is affected by both demand- and supply-side barriers. Demand-side barriers relate to households’ capacity to afford to access education services as well as the perceived value of education in terms of its benefit to livelihood opportunities and economic wellbeing. Supply-side barriers relate to the availability and accessibility of education facilities, teachers and supplies. This section reviews the evidence in relation to each of these barriers in turn.

## 2.4.2 Barriers to education

### Education and livelihoods

The dominant livelihood strategy of people living in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) of Northern Kenya is livestock rearing. This revolves around a nomadic or semi-nomadic life that entails travelling long distances in search of pastures for the animals. Children in many of these households are expected to participate in this livelihood and thus are unable to attend school. This remains one of the key reasons why children lack schooling:

“Our main livelihood activity is livestock keeping and therefore some children drop out of school to go and look after the animals.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

The economic necessity of children tending to animals is reinforced by the ambivalent attitudes of these households towards the importance and necessity of education (see the section below on attitudes).

In addition to livestock herding, children, and especially girls, are expected to support the household with domestic chores, and in some cases participate in casual work as well to supplement the household’s income:

“Those families who are poor tell their daughters to go and work as house girls in order to get some money or do domestic work like washing clothes for people. Each and every house for the rich has a girl as a house help and you cannot get boys there”. [KII with teacher, Township, Wajir]

The recent drought has also affected the livelihoods of many households who, due to severe loss of livestock, have now settled around town centres. This has improved children’s ability to access education:

“Before the drought killed the animals and people lived in the bush, the children used to look after the animals. But now people have come to settle in the towns and they have taken their children to school.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lafaley, Wajir]

### Attitudes

Community attitudes and cultural norms towards education are gradually shifting but still remain negative or ambivalent. At a broader level, parents’ own lack of education often affects their perceptions of the necessity or value of education for their children:

“Actually one barrier is the level of poverty and also illiteracy among the parents. Most of the parents are illiterate so they don’t know the value of education...” [KII with teacher, Badasa, Marsabit]

“As a teacher I can also say ignorance [is a barrier to education] since most parents do not know the value of

education, so they send their children to graze the livestock instead of going to school.” [KII teacher, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

“The reason for children not going to school could be that their parents are lacking education, which is very important, you see, so their parents cannot take them there.” [KII teacher, Lafaly, Wajir]

This ‘ignorance’ is gradually changing due to wider socio-economic changes. Primary education has been compulsory since 2004 and Government actors and traditional authorities have been sensitising communities and enforcing the law ever since. Community members are well aware that it is ‘illegal’ not to send their children to school and that if they do so they will be fined. This has been complimented with civil society engagement to generally encourage school and education, particularly for girls. This has resulted in more children enrolling in schools:

“The difference [in enrolment] is because when you are not taking your child to school you will be arrested by the government since the primary level is free and it’s the right of the child to be in school.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

“It is also a government policy never to retain a child – especially one of school age – at home. It is an offence.” [FGD with non-beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

“The increase in attendance is remarkable after many campaigns by the chief, teachers and parents.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lorengelup, Turkana]

“Yes, compared to the last five years enrolment has increased for both boys and girls. This has come following the government’s policy that education should be free and compulsory to all Kenyan children.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Township, Wajir]

The recent severe famine and resultant loss of livestock has also led to a questioning of the wisdom of herding livestock as the sole means of current and future income, and a concomitant realisation of the need for diversification away from this livelihood strategy. The emphasis on children’s education as a pathway to more secure livelihoods has therefore increased. This has been further cemented by people directly witnessing the benefits of education to some of their fellow community members in the form of better jobs working for the government and NGOs:

“Parents are happy with us going to school because other households are leading a better life because their children went to school and are now working in NGOs and as civil servants.” [FGD with children, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

“A long time ago we would not take the children [to school]. Maybe they would look after the animals and farm. But now

since there is no animals and farm because of the prolonged drought there is no reason why we should not take them to school.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

## Gender and education

Beneath the general attitudes towards education that are formed based on individuals’ experiences (or lack) of education, are more entrenched cultural norms and beliefs that form a bigger barrier to female education. In the districts under study, the traditional role of women is seen to be supporting the household with domestic chores, taking care of other family members, rearing livestock and preparing for marriage:

“There is no major reason [for more boys going to school]. I only attribute it to traditions. We normally do not educate girls because girls look after the animals and they also have more domestic duties. It has no relation with religion but it is just culture. A culture we need to eradicate.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

“In this community girls are married when they are young and therefore they drop out of school for marriage.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

Understanding the meaning and role of marriage is central to understanding why it so strongly affects girls’ access to education. Marriage has a large economic value and can be viewed as an economic transaction between the bridal family and the groom’s household. The transaction is a negotiated bridal price (dowry) given to the family of the daughter based on certain social, economic and cultural expectations (such as standing in community, household wealth, chastity, etc.). Once the transaction has taken place, the future benefits of the marriage accrue to the husband’s household. In this context, therefore, girls’ education is seen as a threat to the value of the bride due to the girl’s exposure to other males and the consequent risk of dishonouring the family, for example through unwanted pregnancies:

“Mostly they would like to bring the boys to school and keep girls at home. Maybe they see that the girls are more marketable in their homes. When they are married in a good place they get good bride price.” [KII with teacher, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

“The reason why girls do not go to school is related to early marriages or even pregnancy. Some girls get pregnant then drop out of school. I can remember there was a girl who was 15 in class four and she is now pregnant. Most of these boys impregnate them so they are forced to drop out of school due to pregnancy and they don’t even bother to go back as they fear others.” [KII with teacher, Township, Wajir]

“Some children like girls drop out of school because of early marriages. This is as a result of poverty, as parents cannot afford to provide for their education needs.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

Education also results in better developed and skilled individuals that open the possibility of better future economic returns, but not to the family of the daughter since the level of girls' education is not positively correlated to the bridal price. Therefore, the education of the girl is not seen as a positive investment (low returns to education), which puts an increased emphasis on the education of boys. Moreover, the future economic opportunities of women are perceived as more limited and entrenched in stereotyped gender roles in the communities:

“In this community girls are believed to be for other people, in that they get married to other families and leave their original home.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

These cultural norms are gradually being challenged and the education of girls is being increasingly valued and understood:

“Early marriages especially have reduced compared to three years ago due to modernisation and the harsh penalties to individuals who are doing this.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

“Previously, girls used to drop out of school because of early marriages. This was as a result of poor conditions. Parents used to see girls as a sign of wealth as they attract a bride price. But this has improved as most people in the community have come to realise the importance of education.” [FGD with non-beneficiaries, Lorengelup, Turkana]

The above cultural barriers to education are unlikely to be addressed through the HSNP, especially in the short term. However, wider societal changes seem to be bringing about some change in this regard.

## **Cost**

Households face direct and indirect costs in relation to education. Direct costs include school fees, examination fees and expenditures on books, stationery and other school supplies and events. Indirect costs include the opportunity cost of attending school and forgoing contributions to domestic chores (fetching water, collecting firewood, etc.) or a household's livelihood, such as herding livestock, petty trading or other casual work that the children may engage in.

Both of these costs act as barriers to education in terms of enrolment but also in terms of attendance. Primary education has been free since 2004, thus reducing some of the direct costs of education. However, there are additional costs of primary education that many households are unable to afford. These include the costs of uniform (KES 600), examination fees (KES 50), contributions to the salary of volunteer teachers (KES 70–100 per month), textbook fees (KES 150 per term), and other related costs (mock exams, prize money, school events, maintenance, etc.) Some of those who cannot pay for their educational expenses may not attend school or drop out of education all together:

“Some children also drop out of school due to lack of money to pay fees or buy uniforms or textbooks.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

“Sometimes a parent can’t afford [certain education expenses]. For example, now we have free primary education across the whole country. But some parents still cannot afford to buy their children uniforms. This means the child will remain at home.” [KII with teacher, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

There are many who also believe that, following the introduction of primary education and also other NGO support, including support from the HSNP, the financial costs of education enrolment are less severe:

“Can parents afford to take their children to school these days? Yes, because the government has made primary education free and they are getting the HSNP cash as well. So I think they can afford to pay the school fees for their children.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]

“Previously, they missed or dropped out of school because of a lack of uniforms, books, pens. This has changed since the HSNP cash transfer. At the moment it is not as pressing as before when the programme was not there.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lorengelup, Turkana]

In general, children are told that they will be sent away if they do not have examination fees but teachers usually allow the children to take the examination even if they have not managed to pay:

“Of course we tell them everybody must pay but, in the end, not everybody pays... when it comes to exams everybody sits for the exams. I have not seen a situation where we have stopped a pupil from sitting the exam.” [KII with teacher, Mado, Mandera]

Nevertheless, the threat of disallowing children to set exams and sending children home to find examination fees disrupts children’s attendance and educational experience. Moreover, some children may remain out of school for extended periods of time until they can manage to pay their school fees or buy uniforms or books.

The costs of education significantly increase at the secondary school level where students are required to pay school fees ranging between KES 5,000 and KES 7,500 per term. At this level, the financial barriers to access become more binding and many children as a result drop out:

“I stopped [sending my children to school] because the one in the secondary school needs fees and the two in the primary school were chased for uniform fees.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Mado, Mandera]

“Last year two of my children completed class eight, a boy and a girl, and I didn’t have money. I decided to send just the boy to secondary school.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

Some schools support children in the form of scholarships and sponsorships from charitable organisations, but this is often targeted at a small segment of the population within the schools:

“We need scholarships because most children normally don’t continue with education due to school fees, especially those from poor families.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

Finally, there are also indirect costs involved in education. These relate to the livelihood options of the households, which in turn are dictated by their economic status. As highlighted above, in many households children are expected to herd livestock, undertake domestic household chores or engage in other economic activity. There are instances where a household improves its standard of living and hires casual labourers to undertake some of the household chores that were otherwise delegated to children. In such cases, households are able to send children to school. In general, however, these instances are relatively rare.

### **Supply-side constraints**

In addition to demand-side constraints there are also supply-side constraints. Some of the households interviewed noted the physical distances and availability of teachers as major barriers to accessing education services for their children:

“One of the barriers to education here is the fact that there are few schools close to the settlement. The only school in this area is situated about 20 kilometres away.” [KII with teacher, Lorengelup, Turkana]

Added to the distance of schools there are also reported problems with the size of the classrooms and other facilities, including dormitories. Boarding schools were felt by some to perhaps be more amenable to the pastoral population:

“Children in the school should be provided with clean drinking water, good sanitation and spacious classrooms. The teacher–pupil ratio should also be improved.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]

“We would like to have a boarding school because the people who live here mostly lead a nomadic life so when the family wants to migrate to somewhere else or go to the bush they can’t leave their children here.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Lafaley, Wajir]

## Security constraints

In addition to some of the constraints highlighted above, there are some areas that face insecurity due to cattle rustling and raids by neighbouring tribes. This is particularly acute in certain areas of Turkana:

“Yes [we miss school] when there is tension and insecurity in the area.” [FGD with children, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

“The issue in this community is insecurity; the government has really failed to provide security in this area, affecting people’s ability to work productively to improve their living standards in fear of being attacked by the neighbouring Pokot community.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

### 2.4.3 Impact of the HSNP

This section highlights the impact of the HSNP on education and how it has interacted with the barriers identified above.

#### Enrolment and school attendance

Most households, teachers and other community members interviewed cited increases in enrolment and attendance in their communities in recent years. There are a number of factors that have resulted in increases in school enrolment and attendance. For example, the school feeding programmes seem to be an essential factor in determining school attendance. Many parents emphasised the food being provided in schools as an important factor in their decision to send children to school, while a teacher in Turkana noted:

“The attendance is always high when there is food (being provided) during the school feeding programme. But when the ration we are given is finished the children tend to stay at home until it starts again.” [KII with teacher, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

However, children often noted that the food served in schools was inadequate and monotonous – maize and beans every day – and did not taste as good as food at home: “Yes, we get enough food at school but it is little and less delicious” [FGD with children, Mado, Mandera]. Some respondents even reported children going home for lunch instead of eating at school.

There are additional factors which have led to an increase in school enrolment. These include:

- Sending of children to school due to loss of livestock for two reasons:
  - The realisation of a need to diversify away from livestock given its inherent risks; and
  - Children not having anything to do since the livestock died;
- A push by the Government and local chieftainship to ensure that children are going to school as required by law;
- The wider system of support and assistance to primary education from donors, NGOs and churches.

These are illustrated through the following quotes:

“Before we did not have free primary education and children used to stay at home. But in the last four years enrolment has really increased because of the government’s free primary education and because of the programmes coming in.” [KII with teacher, Lafaley, Wajir]

“It [primary school attendance] has improved. If the children get uniforms and books and the school is free, why else would they not go to school? The school was short of teachers before but the parent and teacher association have hired two extra teachers and we pay KES 100 per pupil so that the school can have enough teachers.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Lafaley, Wajir]

The HSNP has also been one of the factors contributing to improved school attendance. Many households cited HSNP expenditures on schooling needs including uniform, exam fees and other requirements such as books, pens, etc. Households also reported being more credit-worthy and able to commit to future payments of school fees based on their status as beneficiaries:

“The HSNP cash transfer is very important to us because it helps our parents to pay our fees, unlike those from non-beneficiary families. This money also helps us to buy school uniforms and other school requirements.” [FGD with children, Lorengelup, Turkana]

“Our parents pay the money [for mock exam fees] when they receive the HSNP cash transfer.” [FGD with children, Wajir Township, Wajir]

“Before, children were chased from school when their shirts were dirty. Since the shirt is no longer dirty because there is soap for washing uniforms, children are taken to school.” [FGD with children, Chirchir, Mandera]

While the HSNP may have improved schooling attendance, it is not clear that it has directly had an impact on school enrolment:

“The money is very little and we can’t afford to buy new uniforms for new pupils. However, for those that were in school before, the money helps to maintain them in the school.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

Some parents claim the HSNP transfers have helped them to send their children to secondary school. Although the HSNP amount is not sufficient for the entire school fee it can contribute to a down payment towards the fees. It is also claimed that teachers are more likely to accept students from HSNP households because they are deemed as being more credit-worthy:

“Fees, especially for secondary school children, were a big problem previously, with increasing numbers of dropouts from school. But now, since HSNP beneficiaries are credit-worthy, they can borrow some cash for this and pay in instalments.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

“I have been able to take some of my children to school. In fact, at the moment I have a boy at Lodwar Secondary School in Form Two. But the money is not enough. I also have to sell some of my cattle and goats to add to the HSNP money.” [QPS with male beneficiary, Lorengelup, Turkana]

“Parents used to sell their livestock, such as camels, cattle or even goats, just to settle their children’s school fees. They do this because they only have these assets (livestock) to pay for the school fees. It is difficult to stop this happening unless the HSNP money is increased” [QPS with male beneficiary, Township, Wajir].

### **Improved performance and psycho-social wellbeing**

School attendance and enrolment are not necessarily synonymous with better educational attainment, especially if there are other important supply constraints such as availability of qualified and motivated teachers. Nevertheless, increased attendance and less disruption to lessons would be expected to result in better performance of children at schools. Children who pay their fees and come properly equipped to class may also elicit more favourable treatment by teachers, which could also contribute to improved performance. In addition, the psychological and social impacts of owning fit and proper education materials and being well presented in school could also boost children’s confidence, again potentially leading to improved performance:

“These children who are coming from homes receiving this money, there is a difference. They look smart and they are smiling because they can automatically tell the teacher that they have the money and have bought this and this. In fact, they enjoy it very much.” [KII with teacher, Mado, Mandera]

“They have improved in performance because they are fully equipped with learning materials and they are doing more assessment exams. They also feel confident because they have uniforms.” [KII with teacher, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

“Where parents are able to buy their children school materials, their performance increases. The child with an essential textbook required by the school will improve his or her performance. I think, as a teacher, that I can also contribute to a child’s happiness.” [KII with teacher, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

The school feeding programmes, coupled with the potential HSNP impact on increased food intake and dietary diversity, helps children better concentrate in schools:

“You see when the money is paid, a child becomes motivated and then there is improvement. When he has those basic needs, and for example has eaten lunch and is not hungry, he is then motivated to learn and therefore there is improvement in terms of the mean scores in exams.” [KII, teacher, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

In summary, there are a number of barriers to children’s access to education in ASAL areas. The livelihood opportunities and predominance of livestock rearing, ambivalent attitudes towards education, traditional beliefs and culture, and direct and indirect costs of education are all barriers to households demanding education. Access to education is also affected by the availability of schools, teachers, facilities and equipment and a safe and secure environment.

The HSNP is helping in removing some of these barriers while others are too deeply rooted in the socio-cultural environment of the targeted areas to be affected by the HSNP intervention. The cash transfer enables households to meet their food and educational costs at the primary level more easily. Beneficiary children are able to buy books and stationery, pay for examination fees and wear clean uniforms. As a result they are less likely to be sent home and have a more positive experience of education. Access to schooling material improves the psycho-social wellbeing of the children. Moreover, children are better able to concentrate at school with fuller stomachs as a result of the school feeding programme and increased food intake and dietary diversity attributed to the HSNP. These factors together result in better attendance levels among children, and may lead to improved performance in schools. We conclude this section with a quote which encapsulates the various avenues through which the HSNP may have contributed to the education of children:

“Children are going to school at ease, they are not being sent home because of school fees as parents sometimes save to pay their fee, and enrolment has also improved because most of the beneficiaries moved from the bush and settled around here or within the township, meaning children are able to be enrolled in the nearest primary school. Parents are never stressed about meeting the fees and can even go to the head teacher and pledge to pay at a given time when they get the money. Thus, performance now depends on the hard work and discipline of the child. And when they are satisfied at home and have eaten enough food, they are able to perform well. Children also concentrate better on their studies, unlike before this programme when children were also involved in looking for food. Attendance is also high but mostly because the child has been able to get breakfast at home, is probably given lunch at school and is also assured of supper at home in the evening.” [KII with community leader, Township, Wajir]

## 2.5 Food security and nutrition

### 2.5.1 Overview

Food security exists “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”<sup>14</sup>. This implies that: a) sufficient quantities of food are available on a consistent basis (food availability); b) households have sufficient resources available to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet (food access); and c) that food is consumed appropriately, based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.

The HSNP was initiated in 2007 and increased food security was one of its key intended impacts. The programme aims to improve food security by increasing food expenditure, reducing reliance on food aid and reducing malnutrition rates.

Data from the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) (2008–09) and other nutrition surveys reveal high rates of malnutrition in Kenya: 35.3% of children under five are stunted, 16.1% are underweight and 6.7% are wasted. The table below presents anthropometric data from the provinces where HSNP-targeted districts are located (in bold). It shows a rise in stunting rates from 2003 to 2008–09 for the Eastern and North Eastern provinces and, more importantly, a rise in wasting rates for the Eastern province, which indicates short-term food insecurity. Wasting rates in the Eastern, North Eastern provinces and Rift Valley are also higher than all other provinces (barring coastal regions).

**Table 2.1 Nutrition indicators by province**

	Stunting			Wasting			Underweight		
	2000	2003	2008–09	2000	2003	2008–09	2000	2003	2008–09
Nairobi	29.6	18.7	22.7	3.1	4.5	2.6	12.4	6.3	10
Central	27.4	27	25.7	4.6	4.4	4.5	15.4	14.6	16.7
Coast	33.7	34.9	34	6.4	5.7	11.2	21.1	25.4	28.5
<b>Eastern</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>25.2</b>
Nyanza	35.9	31.1	26.9	5.2	2.3	3.2	19.9	15.6	13.7
<b>Rift Valley</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23.7</b>
Western	38.1	30.2	28.4	5.5	4.5	2.6	21.5	19	14.8
<b>North Eastern</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>31.1</b>

Source: DHS (2008–09).

District-level data on nutrition are also provided in recent nutrition surveys and again demonstrate high levels of acute malnutrition (wasting).

<sup>14</sup> [http://ftp.fao.org/es/ESA/policybriefs/pb\\_02.pdf](http://ftp.fao.org/es/ESA/policybriefs/pb_02.pdf)

**Table 2.2 Acute malnutrition rates by district**

		<b>GAM</b>	<b>SAM</b>	<b>GAM (MUAC)</b>
		%	%	%
Mandera Central	April–May 2012	17.9	3.5	10.1
Wajir East	Nov-11	30.6	7.6	5.1
Wajir North and Wajir West	Nov-11	27.9	5.6	7.6
Wajir South	Jan-12	23.1	4.6	9.4
Turkana Central	Dec-11	16.9	3.1	10.7
Turkana South	Dec-11	15.5	2.2	10.6
Turkana North East	Dec-11	13.7	3.2	18.4
Turkana North West	Dec-11	9.7	2.6	14.3

Source: Various surveys published on the OCHA Kenya page.<sup>15</sup> Note: Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) is Weight-for-Height <-2 and/or Oedema. Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) is Weight-for-Height <-3 and/or Oedema. Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) GAM is <= 125mm.

### 2.5.2 The HSNP and food security

Inadequate access to food is a demand-side problem resulting from poor purchasing power due to low incomes and poor access to credit. A common indicator of poor access to food is a reduction in the quantity or frequency of meals consumed by households. Our research indicated that skipping meals is still a prevalent practice amongst households, indicating that despite many interventions providing food or cash in Northern Kenya, the problem of food insecurity persists in the region:

“Sometimes when the food prepared at home seems to be scarce, we normally eat breakfast and lunch and forget about dinner, or sometimes we don’t have any food at all during the day and take dinner.” [FGD with children, Wajir Township, Wajir]

Intra-household allocation of food was not a focus of this evaluation, although several respondents were probed to gain more knowledge on this issue. However, it was unclear whether there was any existing bias towards favouring male children over female children. In general, the (male) head of the household ate more than everyone else. Most respondents, however, did note that in times of food scarcity parents ate less than children, and even the elders refused meals to save food for children:

“The children eat a lot. They are growing so they cannot go hungry. Also, they go to school; they are sent to the shops and get hungry when they come so it’s the children that eat a lot. The father and mother eat less. The father eats a lot more than the mother. The mother eats the least in the household.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

<sup>15</sup> See <http://ochaonline.un.org/kenya/FieldCoordination/tabid/6428/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

In times of food scarcity, another common coping strategy identified by respondents in most locations was ‘eating from the same bowl’. This implied that each household member ate less than usual instead of disproportionately favouring one member over the other:

“Because the food is scarce, everybody is hungry and you cannot dive into the food. So what you do is to satisfy everybody by using the method of putting the food in one place and sharing.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]

“When food is scarce at home it is shared equally amongst members of the family regardless of age and gender.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

As reported in the earlier evaluation rounds, households often borrowed from neighbours and family or get credit to pay for food. Shopkeepers seemed to be the first point of call for most beneficiaries for acquiring food or goods on credit. This meant that a large amount was deducted from the HSNP transfer on the day of disbursement as shopkeepers deducted the amount they owed (if they were pay agents too) or were paid back by the beneficiaries usually on the same day.

Food security in Northern Kenya is highly seasonal. The rainy season means greater availability of food for communities which are still largely dependent on livestock. Although the amount of food aid provided by the government and other NGOs has been reduced,<sup>16</sup> a large number of households in all four districts still depend on food aid to ensure adequate food consumption. Whereas most respondents seemed to prefer the fungibility of the HSNP cash transfer in comparison to food aid,<sup>17</sup> they also insisted that food aid was crucial in maintaining an adequate level of food intake:

“Yes there is a change because the government has really supported us through NGOs. We are now getting relief food; elders no longer travel for long distances looking for food.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

This also holds true for most HSNP beneficiaries:

“Our families mostly rely on food aid. The food is distributed by non-governmental organisations like ALDEF and CARITAS.” [FGD with children, Lafaley, Wajir]

However, all beneficiary respondents noted that money from the HSNP cash transfer allowed them to pay for food and enabled them to eat more food than before:

“Food insecurity has been reduced by a great margin. We no longer borrow as much from our neighbours. We are sure of our own safety in terms of hunger.” [QPS with female beneficiary, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

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<sup>16</sup> According to field research in Marsabit, the coverage has been reduced from 75% to 35% of the population.

<sup>17</sup> In fact, there is some evidence from Wajir Township that suggested that food aid was being traded within fairly well-developed market networks.

Some households also used the HSNP money to convert coarse cereals received as food aid into maize or wheat flour:

“We don’t have a grinding machine to grind the maize and wheat that we receive from food aid to use as maize flour. So, when we receive HSNP money, we take the maize or wheat to grinding machines.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

Receiving HSNP cash transfers also improved the credit-worthiness of beneficiaries and, as noted earlier, allowed them to smooth food consumption. This again is similar to findings from last year:

“It is easier because even though you don’t have the cash and you want to cook for that day then you will just ask for credit and you will be given it.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]

It seems, though, that in some cases the cash transfer was not enough to ensure complete food security, despite the end of the drought:

“The number of time one eats in a day depends on the family’s financial status. There are those who eat once, twice and three times a day. [FGD with female beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]

The following quote demonstrates how varied the impact of the HSNP on food security has been in beneficiary households:

“The food we eat from home is sometimes not enough. We are content with what we eat now, although it is not enough. I can say though that it is better than before the HSNP started. This is because our parents can now buy things for us using the HSNP money when the relief food is finished.” [FGD with children, Lafaley, Wajir]

A similar conversation was recorded in another focus group with children and demonstrated that even beneficiary households relied on food aid or other aid programmes to sustain themselves. Overall, these results seem to coincide with the findings from last year:<sup>18</sup>

“We mainly get food from livestock products – e.g. milk – and also sometimes our parents sell livestock like goats in order to buy food. We mainly rely on the HSNP because our parents get this money and purchase food. Some organisations offer programmes like food for work and cash for work and this helps in giving us food.” [FGD with children, Lorengelup, Turkana]

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<sup>18</sup> 71% of HSNP households reported that since receiving the cash transfers they had been able to have more and/or larger meals. This said, it should also be noted that the study found the HSNP had not increased household consumption. Rather, it had helped cushion the impact of drought and inflation (OPM, 2011). This means that consumption expenditure did not increase significantly for treatment households but fell significantly for control households.

In many cases, non-beneficiaries also reported the positive impact of the HSNP on their food consumption, as beneficiaries tended to share either the food or the cash received from HSNP:

“There are people who always wait for us at the gate of the agent’s shop on the day of payment. They always expect us to give them something.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lafaley, Wajir]

“People who benefit from this money may assist others with some amount... maybe by buying the daily bread or buying a kilogramme of sugar for that day.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

“All I would say is nowadays nobody goes to sleep hungry because even those who are not beneficiaries can borrow some food from the beneficiaries and get some.” [KII with health worker, Mado, Mandera]

A common theme emerging from our research was that the majority of respondents cited spending most of the HSNP cash on food and school expenses (see section 2.1 for further discussion). The use of the HSNP transfer also depended on the number of dependents. Larger households typically spend more money on food. For instance, one respondent in Mado in Mandera noted that her priority was food, so if there was not enough food and someone fell ill they would still not be taken to hospital.

Many respondents attributed the improvement in food availability and choice to general ‘development’ (or ‘*mandelo*’). Attribution of improved food access and availability to the HSNP or any other specific intervention is, therefore, somewhat challenging. Food availability has increased overall due to a general improvement in travel infrastructure and greater development and integration of markets (see section 2.3):

“It takes less time because we used to buy some food from Wajir. But these days we don’t travel to Wajir. We buy everything from here.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Lafaley, Wajir]

“The shops used to sell maize only but now a variety of food has been introduced and people buy things like rice, spaghetti, *posho* (maize flour), wheat and biscuits.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

### 2.5.3 The HSNP and nutrition

In general, people’s eating habits have changed over time, mainly due to the severe drought in 2010 and also the general trend of settling and depending less on livestock keeping:

“Three years ago we had animals and we used to use camel milk and goat milk. We also used to eat meat.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

Respondents often noted that, given the prevailing high levels of food insecurity, nutrition or food quality was not a primary concern for most households. As one respondent aptly put it:

“When food is scarce one thing that we normally forget about is the issue of food quality, because the issue is how to alleviate hunger at that time. The issue of quality comes after having quantity first.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Wajir Township, Wajir]

And also:

“You are forced to take the cheap and affordable food, not seeing the quality.” [FGD with male non-beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

Nevertheless, perceptions of what constitutes nutritious food or a balanced diet varied greatly. Some respondents perceived sweeter foods to have more vitamins and minerals while others thought that meat and milk were nutritious foods because they contain vitamins. In some areas, health workers insisted that local dietary practices and perceptions made it difficult to convince households to consume a balanced diet:

“We think of animal products such as milk and meat as a balanced diet, though we don’t get these all the time.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

“If you tell them to eat something like *ugali* (maize) and *sukuma wiki* (kale) they will tell you that it is goat’s food; in fact, it’s difficult to convince them that they need to eat a balanced diet. They will agree to that but they will tell you to give them pasta and tea. So, they will never eat vegetables. A balanced diet will never be a reality. [KII with health worker, Badasa, Marsabit]

Even where a general awareness of a balanced diet existed, the sheer unavailability and inaccessibility of varied ingredients like meat, milk or fresh vegetables meant that people relied mostly on a diet of beans, maize and rice to sustain them:

“I have tea in the morning; I have maize and beans for lunch and the same for supper.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Mado, Mandera]

“That kind of (nutritious) food like vegetables is not available locally. We don’t have them here.” [KII with health worker, Mado, Mandera]

“Well, even cash is a problem because, if they had cash, this means they could have bought meat and you find here meat is very expensive and they don’t have money to buy it. They don’t even have the money to buy milk.” [KII with health worker, Badasa, Marsabit]

Some respondents noted that pastoralist households were able to consume a more balanced diet through a mix of protein from their own livestock and staples provided in the form of food aid:

“People in the bush have animals; they have animal products like milk every day to supplement what they get from relief rations. It is hard to get this in town; it’s just *Royco* (meat flavouring) and potatoes in town.” [KII with health worker, Chirchir, Mandera]

HSNP beneficiaries also noted that the cash transfer allowed them to buy more varieties of food. This is consistent with the findings from the first round of the impact evaluation, which detected a statistically significant increase in the dietary diversity score.<sup>19</sup> In particular, the HSNP was seen as a positive addition to food aid as beneficiaries could now buy food other than maize and beans:

“Those who take money are better off since they can afford a variety of food with the money they get. Because they get money and are able to buy food that is not given as relief (food).” [FGD with children, Mado, Mandera]

From a dietary diversity perspective, the HSNP, taken together with food aid and support from other NGOs, has affected the mix of foods consumed by households in both the dry and rainy seasons:

“Before the HSNP we cooked only maize, but since the HSNP started we are able to buy beans, kale, potatoes, meat and oil.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Badasa, Marsabit]

“Yes, we can now get a variety of foods from the local traders like potatoes, rice, wheat flour, etc. and we can now afford to buy because we have money.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

However, many respondents noted that the increase in food consumption and quality (especially of foods such as meat) lasted only for a few days after the disbursement of the cash transfer:

“We take the money, for the first week, and we buy nutritious food like little vegetables, meat and porridge that we cook for this week. So there is a great change nutritionally. During this week, when we have the HSNP money in hand, we make sure we cook ourselves the best quality food in our town.” [FGD with female beneficiaries, Chirchir, Mandera]

“There is improved quality [of food] and now we can eat a variety of foods. Now, in a family of five, you can have meat in a week, which was not possible three years ago. Notably there is improvement in the quality and quantity of the food we have on a daily basis, but again it is only some three to four days after the payment time, unless you subject yourself to credit.” [FGD with male beneficiaries, Kalemongorok, Turkana]

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<sup>19</sup> The dietary diversity index is a count of the number of 12 food groups that the household consumed in the past week. The 12 food groups are: cereals; eggs; fish; fruits; meat; milk and milk products; oils and fats; pulses, legumes and nuts; roots and tubers; salt and spices; sugar; and vegetables.

HSNP cash transfers allowed those who lived in areas with underdeveloped markets to spend less time buying food. For instance, in Lonyoripichau respondents noted that before the HSNP they had to travel a long distance to sell livestock in order to get money for grinding the coarse cereal they received as food aid. However, beneficiaries now describe themselves as spending less time looking for food and as being able to use the cash transfer to buy directly from nearby shops:

“I no longer leave my young children to go and look for food from far-away areas.” (QPS with female beneficiary, Lonyoripichau, Marsabit]

An increase in the amount of time available for childcare could have a positive effect on nutrition outcomes for children, as mothers have more time to devote to breastfeeding, hygiene, health care and food preparation.

However, assessing the direct impact of the HSNP on the nutritional status of children is hard as there are several plausible routes through which cash transfers could affect short-term or long-term nutrition status. While there was substantial evidence to indicate that the quantity of food consumed by beneficiaries had increased, it was hard to ascertain if the cash transfer had any effect on feeding or hygiene practices. In our sample locations, health workers noted that malnutrition was highly seasonal in nature and severe cases of malnutrition were being treated under programmes run by the government and NGOs in various locations. Supplementary feeding in health centres (using Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods) and in schools (porridge provided to younger children), as well as medical treatment of children with SAM, was recorded in all sample areas. Programmes on nutrition behaviour change and WASH were also being run in several locations. These additional aid programmes, targeted specifically at reducing malnutrition, complicate the attribution of changes in nutrition status directly to the HSNP.

## 3 Conclusion

This section summarises the impact findings and presents some recommendations for the programme and for subsequent research.

### 3.1 Impact findings

The qualitative research indicates that the HSNP primarily serves a safety net function, enabling households to reduce distress sale of assets and safeguard against erosion of households' belongings and productive assets. Beneficiary households used their transfer in many different ways but food, education and health were prioritised by most recipients. HSNP beneficiaries spent a large proportion of their transfers on food items. This resulted in beneficiaries consuming more diversified food items (during payment days), in larger quantities and more frequently.

After food, education was a common area of expenditure. The HSNP is helping in removing some of the financial barriers to schooling. The cash transfer enables households to meet their food and educational costs at the primary level more easily. Beneficiary children were able to buy books and stationery, pay for examination fees and wear clean uniforms. As a result, they were less likely to be sent home and had a more positive experience of education. Access to schooling material improves the psycho-social wellbeing of the children. Moreover, children are better able to concentrate at school with fuller stomachs as a result of the school feeding programme and the increased food intake and dietary diversity attributed to the HSNP. These factors all resulted in better attendance rates among children and may have led to improved performance in schools.

The HSNP was also used towards the direct and indirect costs of health care services as and when they arose, particularly where beneficiaries were chronically ill or if illness among family members coincided with disbursement dates.

Whereas the safety net function was particularly relevant for very poor households, comparatively better-off households were able to put the HSNP to more productive use buying livestock or starting businesses. Although this was not widespread, it was more prevalent in Wajir, which has comparatively fewer households in the poorest quintile.

Overall, the HSNP transfers had limited direct impact on household livelihood activities. For the elderly and chronically ill, the HSNP enabled them to reduce the amount of – often physically demanding – casual labour they undertook and for some it enabled them to hire younger people to help them with important chores. Moreover, the HSNP helps many households to retain their level of livestock or increase it, also enabling households to reduce negative distress sale of assets. Only a few households were able to start new businesses or expand their existing business, given the value of the transfer.

The HSNP may have contributed to a higher level of market dynamism in HSNP areas in recent years, which is evidenced by an increase in the number of traders, variety of goods and services supplied, etc. Although there is some glowing testimony from community members about the role of the HSNP in this process, however, it is difficult to attribute the overall changes in market activity to the HSNP. There seem to be stronger exogenous

factors such as the increasing sedentarisation which has fuelled market development in HSNP areas.

HSNP areas experienced inflationary pressures driven by factors outside the HSNP such as transport costs, rising fuel prices and drought. There is some evidence of opportunistic practices by some traders, with them hiking the prices of goods in response to the increased beneficiary purchasing power. This has the potential to erode the value of the HSNP and therefore limit its expected impacts.

Overall, the data collected under the qualitative research component of the HSNP impact evaluation shows continued improvements in the lives of beneficiaries, and the transfer is certainly functioning as an important safety net for many of the beneficiaries. Table 3.1 below presents a concise summary of the impact findings in key areas.

**Table 3.1 Summary of impact findings**

Impact area	Finding
Consumption	HSNP beneficiaries spent the transfer on a variety of items, but principally food followed by education and health. Beneficiary households were able to consume a wider variety of food items and in greater quantities. Overall, and especially for the poorest households, the HSNP operated as a safety net with limited transformative effects. A small number of households better able to meet more of their food requirements were able to use the transfer to invest in their livelihood strategies, in particular in petty trading.
Livelihoods	HSNP transfers seemed to enable more elderly beneficiaries to reduce the amount of casual labour they undertook, substituting it with self-employment and in some cases hiring other workers. Some beneficiary households were also able to reduce distress sale of assets, in particular livestock. A few beneficiary households were able to expand their existing businesses.
Local economy	The HSNP has probably contributed to dynamism and growth in the local markets, although these were also driven by other exogenous factors including the increased sedenterisation in HSNP areas.
Education	A large part of the HSNP transfers were spent on school expenses and this was enabling beneficiary households to overcome the financial barriers to education. Households were able to buy books and stationery, pay for examination fees and wear clean uniforms. This means less disruption to the education of children and improved psycho-social wellbeing, which have resulted in better attendance rates and may have led to improved performance in schools.
Prices	The HSNP has also contributed to some opportunistic price hikes in a few cases around payment days, although the main inflationary pressures stem from exogenous factors beyond the control of the HSNP.

### 3.2 Policy implications

The HSNP has been operating for almost two years and a number of lessons have been learnt during this time. A few implications for policy were highlighted through the impact evaluation which could enable improvements in the programme's value for money and impact to be made. Many of the policy implications emphasised in the previous round remain valid and are restated here. These observations follow from the qualitative data only, and should be read in tandem with policy implications noted by the final impact report:

- The HSNP seems to be working as a viable alternative to non-emergency food aid but monitoring the continued availability of food in markets, particularly if food aid is scaled down, is vital.
- Indexing the value of the transfer to household size in some way would help to ensure that the HSNP transfers represent a similar fraction of consumption needs for all beneficiary households. There are various methods to achieve this, such as sliding scales of transfer value per beneficiary household member or banding households into different groups, but whatever the method it would need to be carefully designed and simulated to assess its outcome on programme impact and the propensity for people to 'game' the system by adding people to their household. Any change in the system would also have to be carefully communicated to beneficiaries.
- Loading payments into beneficiaries' accounts without them having to visit pay-point agents would encourage saving and reduce negative impacts on mobility and, in some instances, reduce opportunistic behaviour on the part of agents.
- Clearer communications around the rules governing where and when beneficiaries are able to receive payments are required in order not to hinder mobility patterns for pastoral households.
- Some further investments are required to ensure that payments are flexible (i.e. people can pick them up from any location at any time) and that beneficiaries know this.
- Some further communication is needed to ensure that beneficiaries are aware that they are not obligated to withdraw all their money in one go or purchase commodities from pay agents.
- Some further investment in payment facilities and equipment is needed to ensure that any malfunctions affecting the fingerprint technology do not create barriers or increase transaction costs for beneficiaries accessing their money.
- Consideration could be given to changing the payment frequency to one month and testing the impact of this with further research.
- The more reliable payments are the more beneficiaries are able to plan around them in terms of reducing transaction costs to accessing payments and utilising those payments for productive purposes. Ensuring that payments are as reliable as possible therefore maximises the potential for the programme to have a positive impact.

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