GiveDirectly

Digital Development Dialogue

26 November 2020

Michael Cooke

GiveDirectly at a glance

> $500 million
total funding raised from public and private donors since 2011

> 500,000
Recipients have received cash transfers from GiveDirectly

15
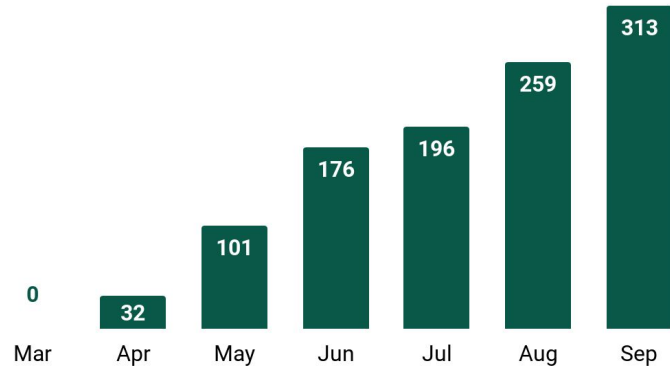randomized controlled trials in progress or complete

10
Countries where we operate (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Liberia, Malawi, DRC, Morocco, US, Bahamas, Togo)
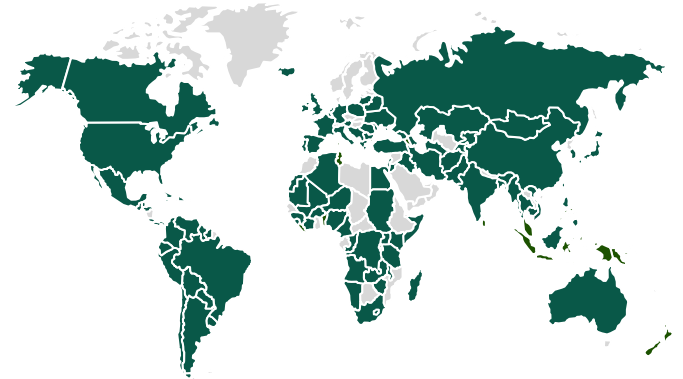
Cash transfers in the COVID-19 crisis

We're aiming to reach 500K recipients in 2020

Bar chart:
- Mar: 0
- Apr: 32
- May: 101
- Jun: 176
- Jul: 196
- Aug: 259
- Sep: 313

■ Cumulative # of people GD has delivered emergency COVID-19 cash transfers to (thousands)

Globally, cash is a leading COVID-19 response

■ Countries with COVID-19 cash-based social assistance

GiveDirectly **enrolls all recipients** directly, end-to-end

Community meeting held

Eligible households identified

Recipient details collected*

Recipients offered the opportunity to buy a cell phone at cost

Transfers sent via mobile money

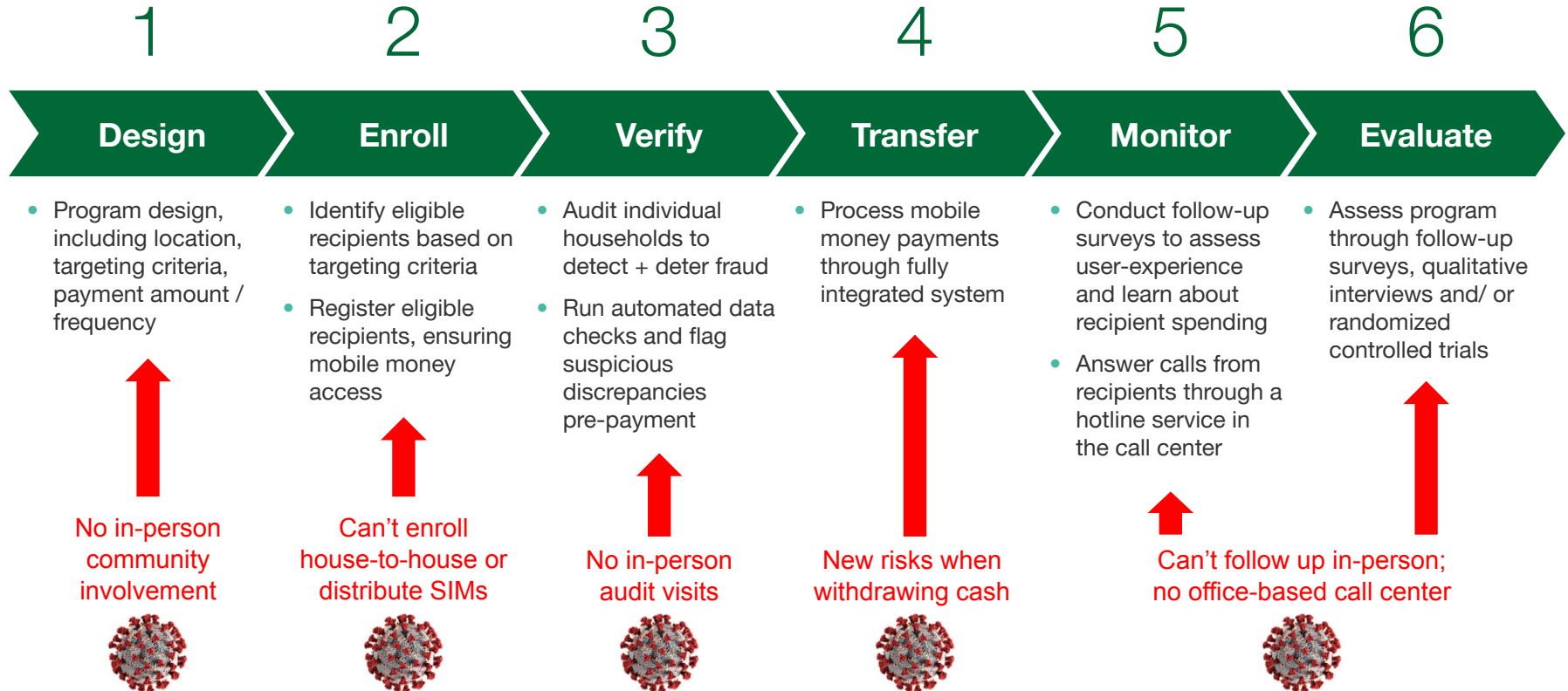Recipients cash out with mobile money agents

Call center follows up with all recipients*

*We run audit processes at these points to check for fraud, theft and bribery.

End-to-end design and execution of cash programs
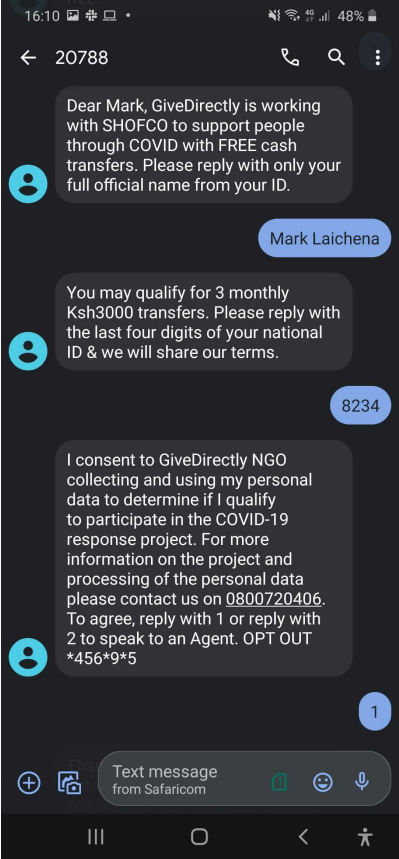
...that we had to totally redesign due to COVID-19

1	2	3	4	5	6
Design	**Enroll**	**Verify**	**Transfer**	**Monitor**	**Evaluate**

- **Design**
  - Program design, including location, targeting criteria, payment amount / frequency

  No in-person community involvement

- **Enroll**
  - Identify eligible recipients based on targeting criteria
  - Register eligible recipients, ensuring mobile money access

  Can't enroll house-to-house or distribute SIMs

- **Verify**
  - Audit individual households to detect + deter fraud
  - Run automated data checks and flag suspicious discrepancies pre-payment

  No in-person audit visits

- **Transfer**
  - Process mobile money payments through fully integrated system

  New risks when withdrawing cash

- **Monitor**
  - Conduct follow-up surveys to assess user-experience and learn about recipient spending
  - Answer calls from recipients through a hotline service in the call center

  Can't follow up in-person; no office-based call center

- **Evaluate**
  - Assess program through follow-up surveys, qualitative interviews and/ or randomized controlled trials

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Response: an adapted GD program, minimizing person-to-person interaction
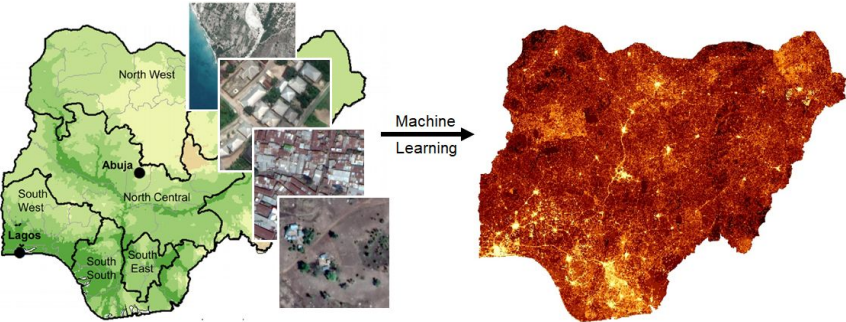

Mass-scale SMS enrollment

Pivot to home-based call center

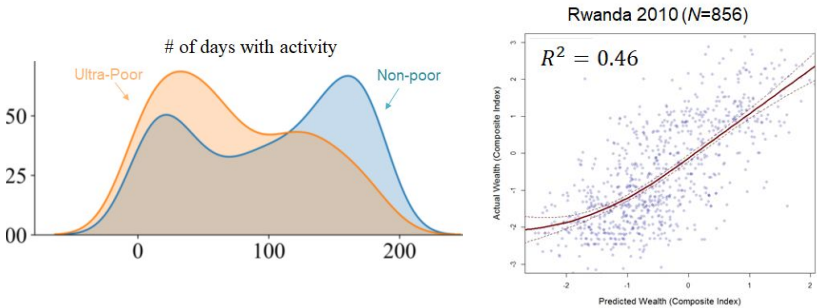**Generate recipient rosters using geolocated telco subscriber data and government / NGO beneficiary lists**

AI + Satellite imagery → identify poorest areas

AI + phone usage data → identify poorest recipients within given areas

Chi, Fang, and Blumenstock (2020). "Micro-estimates of poverty for the developing world". *Revise and Resubmit, Nature.*
Head, Manguin, and Blumenstock (2017). "Can Human Development be Measured with Satellite Imagery?" *IEEE/ACM Conference on ICTD.*

Adapting research to COVID: a qualitative fieldwork example

	Pre-COVID plan	Adapted plan
01	Face-to-face depth interviews with 44 refugees + hosts by highly trained enumerators	• Retain enumerators while figuring out what to do, collect informal feedback while deciding • Pivot to phone-based interviews (but very worried about call connectivity + engagement waning)
02	Interview each qual study household for 90 mins every 5 weeks, covering rotating topics	• Pivot to weekly interviews, shorten to 30 mins • Add COVID impact topics • Re-submit study protocol for ethical review
03	Concentrate all qual resources on 90 min depth interviews	• Diversify to add RCT baseline enumerator pool (ex-IDinsight employees) as key informants • Trial of WhatsApp qualitative data collection

Questions?