

Explanations Pre-Analysis Plan

Abstract

Many cash transfer programs and other anti-poverty interventions target benefits at the individual or household level, with only a subset of community members – typically those identified to be poorest – receiving assistance. Perceptions of the targeting process among both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries are likely to play an important role in shaping program success, yet many programs do not disclose the criteria used to determine eligibility. This randomized controlled trial examines how providing information about eligibility criteria affects key community outcomes, including program satisfaction, perceived fairness and accuracy, perceived respect, and social cohesion. Using individual-level randomization of eligibility explanations in a GiveDirectly cash transfer program in Rwanda, this study evaluates the impact of both (i) the level of detail included in the explanation and (ii) the mode of communication through which it is delivered (phone call versus text message).

Intervention

Describe your intervention(s).

The intervention is the delivery of information about eligibility criteria for the cash transfer program. The information will be delivered after eligible households have been (1) visited by a GiveDirectly field officer to collect enrollment details and (2) provided with their first of two monthly cash transfers by GiveDirectly. Explanations will be delivered to both eligible and ineligible households in beneficiary villages. The randomization is individual-level, with a 2x2 design, so there are four versions of the intervention:

Phone vs. text:

- **Phone call:** The phone call is an outbound call from a GiveDirectly field officer to the phone number collected at enrollment (for eligible households) or provided by village leaders (for ineligible households)
- **Text message:** The text message is an outbound message from GiveDirectly to the phone number collected at enrollment (for eligible households) or provided by village leaders (for ineligible households)

Content variants:

- **Less information:** The “less information” version is a short script/message informing the household that they are (or are not) eligible for the GiveDirectly program, and stating that the households eligible for the program were the ones identified to be poorest in the community.
- **More information:** The “more information” version is a longer script/message informing the household that they are (or are not) eligible for the GiveDirectly program, stating that the households eligible for the program were the ones identified to be poorest in the community, and providing some of the criteria used for identifying whether a household is poor, such as the floor material of the household, the level of education of household members, and the primary fuel used for cooking.

666 households will be in the control group. 333 households will be in each of the four treatment arms (phone x less information, phone x more information, text x less information, text x more information).

Primary Outcomes (End Points) *

What are your key outcome variables (endpoints) of interest in this experiment?

The primary outcomes are:

1. Understanding of eligibility criteria
2. Satisfaction with program
3. Perceptions of fairness and accuracy of targeting
4. Perceived dignity
5. Social cohesion in community

Primary Outcomes (Explanation)

If some of your outcomes will be constructed (e.g. "women empowerment") please provide a description of how the outcome will be constructed from the main variables.

All five of the primary outcomes are constructed, as follows:

1. Understanding of eligibility criteria: This outcome will be constructed in two versions.
 - a. Using the question: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I know how GiveDirectly decided which households in my community would receive a cash transfer and which would not. ?" (-1 = Disagree, 0 = Neither agree nor disagree, 1 = Agree)
 - b. Using the open ended question "What were the eligibility criteria to receive a cash transfer from GiveDirectly?", and using either AI or human annotators to rank answers on a scale of 0-1 for consistency with the actual eligibility criteria.
2. Satisfaction: This outcome will be an index constructed from two variables, normalized to a 0-1 scale and equally weighted:
 - a. "To what extent are you satisfied with the process used to identify program beneficiaries?" (0 = unsatisfied, 0.5 = neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, 1 = satisfied)
 - b. "If there was a similar program, would you like GiveDirectly to use the same approach to identify program beneficiaries?" (0 = No, 1 = Yes)
3. Perception of fairness and accuracy of targeting: This outcome will be an index constructed from three variables, normalized to a 0-1 scale and equally weighted:
 - a. "In your opinion, was the process to receive a cash transfer fair?" (0 = no, 1 = yes)
 - b. "Were any nonpoor households included in the program?" (0 = no, 0.5 = yes, a few, 1 = yes, many)
 - c. "Were any poor households excluded from the program?" (0 = no, 0.5 = yes, a few, 1 = yes, many)
4. Dignity: This outcome will be an index constructed from five variables, normalized to a 0-1 scale and equally weighted. These questions are from the five-item dignity scale proposed by Wein et al. (2022).

- a. "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: GiveDirectly treated me with dignity." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
 - b. "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The representatives from GiveDirectly listened to my requests." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
 - c. "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I felt respected by GiveDirectly." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
 - d. "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I felt valued by GiveDirectly." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
 - e. "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I felt supported by GiveDirectly." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
5. Social cohesion: This outcome will be an index constructed from six variables, normalized to a 0-1 scale and equally weighted.
- a. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree with the following statement: The introduction of cash transfer created tensions between households in my community who will receive money and households in my community who will not receive money." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
 - b. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree with the following statement: The introduction of cash transfer created tensions between my household and households who [will/will not] receive money." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
 - c. "Would your household be able to lean on beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer program during difficult times?" (0 = no, 1 = yes)
 - d. "Would your household be able to lean on non-beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer program during difficult times?" (0 = no, 1 = yes)
 - e. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer programs are likely to take advantage of you." (0 = yes, 1 = no)
 - f. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: non-beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer programs are likely to take advantage of you." (0 = yes, 1 = no)

Secondary Outcomes (End Points)

There are three secondary outcomes which describe specific subsets of the social cohesion outcome:

1. Beneficiary-beneficiary social cohesion
2. Nonbeneficiary-nonbeneficiary social cohesion
3. Beneficiary-nonbeneficiary social cohesion: This outcome will be an index constructed from four variables, normalized to a 0-1 scale and equally weighted. It will be evaluated only for all households.

Secondary Outcomes (Explanation)

1. Beneficiary-beneficiary social cohesion: This outcome will be an index constructed from two variables, normalized to a 0-1 scale and equally weighted. It will be evaluated only for beneficiary households.
 - a. "Would your household be able to lean on beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer program during difficult times?" (0 = no, 1 = yes)
 - b. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer programs are likely to take advantage of you." (0 = yes, 1 = no)
2. Nonbeneficiary-nonbeneficiary social cohesion: This outcome will be an index constructed from two variables, normalized to a 0-1 scale and equally weighted. It will be evaluated only for non-beneficiary households.
 - a. "Would your household be able to lean on non-beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer program during difficult times?" (0 = no, 1 = yes)
 - b. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: non-beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer programs are likely to take advantage of you." (0 = yes, 1 = no)
3. Beneficiary-nonbeneficiary social cohesion: This outcome will be an index constructed from four variables, normalized to a 0-1 scale and equally weighted. It will be evaluated only for all households.
 - a. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree with the following statement: The introduction of cash transfer created tensions between households in my community who will receive money and households in my community who will not receive money." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
 - b. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree with the following statement: The introduction of cash transfer created tensions between my household and households who [will/will not] receive money." (-1 = disagree, 0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = agree)
 - c. "Would your household be able to lean on beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer program during difficult times?" (0 = no, 1 = yes – only for non-beneficiaries) OR "Would your household be able to lean on non-beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer program during difficult times?" (0 = no, 1 = yes – only for beneficiaries)
 - d. "Please tell me the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer programs are likely to take advantage of you." (0 = yes, 1 = no – only for non-beneficiaries) OR "please tell me the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: non-beneficiaries of GiveDirectly's cash transfer programs are likely to take advantage of you." (0 = yes, 1 = no – only for beneficiaries)

Experimental Design (Public) *

Describe your experimental designs. The field will be public as soon as the trial is registered. Limit this description to those aspects of your trial that you want to have public before the trial is over.

This RCT is embedded in a GiveDirectly cash transfer program conducted in Rwanda. Eligibility for the program is determined by whether the household is on a pre-identified list provided by the government (and eligibility for this list is based on a proxy means test). The activities in the program (flagged as GD operational activities or research activities) are as follows, in each eligible village:

1. [GD operational activity] GiveDirectly field officers visit the village and meet with community leaders to sensitize them to the program. During this meeting, they will also collect contact information (names and phone numbers) for households that will not be eligible (households not on the list provided by the government).
2. [GD operational activity] GiveDirectly field officers visit all households in the village that are on the eligibility list. They collect contact information (names and phone numbers) from these households as well as other information necessary for the standard GiveDirectly enrollment process. This door-to-door enrollment takes 2-5 days per village.
3. [GD operational activity] Within a week of enrollment, eligible households receive their first cash transfer.
4. [Research activity] Within a week of payments being delivered to eligible households, the explanation intervention occurs for all eligible or ineligible households with contact information collected by GiveDirectly (intervention details included in "intervention" above).
5. [Research activity] Within a week of the intervention, all eligible or ineligible households with contact information collected by GiveDirectly receive a phone call from a GiveDirectly field officer with the invitation to conduct a 30 minute phone survey about their impressions of the program. If respondents consent to participating, they proceed with the survey. Respondents will be surveyed in a random order.

Dimensions of heterogeneity

We will assess heterogeneity in treatment effects across the following dimensions:

1. Beneficiaries vs. non-beneficiaries
 - a. This will be measured in two ways: First based on eligibility status according to GiveDirectly, and second based on eligibility status reported by the respondent
2. Education level
 - a. This will be measured with the following question: "What is the highest level of education you have achieved?" (1 = ECD, 2 = Nursery, 3 = Primary, 4 = INGOBOKA/Vocational training, 5 = Lower secondary, 6 = Upper secondary, 7 = Tertiary).
3. Literacy
 - a. This will be measured with the response to the following question: "Can you read a short text in Kinyarwanda?" (1 = Yes, 0 = No)
4. Digital literacy
 - a. This will be measured by the number of skills (0-5) the respondent select in the following question: "Which of the following actions are you able to do on a mobile phone without help? Select all that apply." (1 = Place a phone call, 2 = Receive a phone call, 3 = Place a text message, 4 = Read a text message, 5 = Make a mobile money transaction)

5. Age
 - a. This will be measured by the response to the following question: “What is your age?”
6. Time between enrollment and explanation
 - a. This will be measured from GiveDirectly administrative data as the number of days between when a village was enrolled in the program and when the household received their explanation
7. Time between explanation and survey
 - a. This will be measured as the number of days between when we deliver the call or text message explanation and when the survey is conducted