

Policy impact: **how evidence informed the evolution of social protection in Kenya**

Highlights

- Oxford Policy Management has been working in partnership with the Government of Kenya with the support of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) over the last 15 years to generate evidence for strengthening social assistance in the country.
- We carried out evaluations and bespoke studies and offered technical assistance for an extended period to support decision-making on Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) and the overarching National Safety Net Programme (NSNP).
- Over the past several years, evidence from our work has been used to inform decisions related to the scale up of the programme as well as its design, targeting and monitoring.
- Champions within the Kenyan government have played a crucial role in promoting evidence-informed decision-making.
- Several other factors also influenced the use of evidence – our deep engagement with a diverse set of stakeholders, ongoing support in terms of evidence translation and technical assistance, and a long term, trust-based partnership that aided efficiency and sustainability.
- This case study highlights the importance of sustained evaluation and evidence generation to address a diverse set of questions related to programmatic impact, efficiency, and institutional capacity.
- It underscores the importance of partnerships to build a long-term commitment to evidence-informed decision-making.



Context

Over the last quarter century, governments across Africa have used social protection and safety net programmes and policies to reduce poverty and vulnerability to shocks. Kenya has been no exception. The Government of Kenya has recognised the importance of social protection in responding to shocks, reducing poverty and promoting inclusive economic growth. The country has defined social protection as a “*set of policies, programmes, interventions, and legislative measures aimed at cushioning all Kenyans against poverty, vulnerability, exclusion, risks, contingencies, and shocks throughout their life cycles, and promoting the realisation of economic and social rights*” (Kenya National Social Protection Policy 2022). The life cycle approach is reflected in the different types of social protection available to poor and vulnerable households including those caring for orphans, older persons, and people with severe disabilities.

Oxford Policy Management has been funded by FCDO to work in partnership with the Government of Kenya over the last 15 years to generate evidence on social protection in the country. This has included evaluations as well as bespoke studies focussed on Kenya’s Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) and the overarching National Safety Net Programme (NSNP). We also provided support for operational monitoring of the national social protection systems, and technical assistance for designing, implementing and managing social protection programmes in the country.



There are several instances of evidence from our work being used to inform decision-making over the past several years. Research evidence was used to inform funder decisions to scale up the programme; implementers drew on the evidence to inform their targeting strategy, design, monitor and scale up social protection. These various instances of evidence use had however not been documented in adequate detail.

In this case study, we have used a rigorous approach for assessing the contribution of the evidence we generated in informing decision-making on social assistance in the form of cash transfers in Kenya. We draw on the inputs of key stakeholders to examine whether and how evidence informed policy and programmatic changes. We also analyse the multiple factors that have influenced or hindered evidence use.

Box 1: The scale up of Government of Kenya’s social protection programmes

The Government of Kenya implements four cash transfer programmes through the National Safety Net Programme, collectively called, *Inua Jamii*. These programmes are the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP), the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC), the Older Persons Cash Transfer Programme (OPCT) and the Cash Transfer for Persons With Severe Disabilities (PWSD-CT). Although our work primarily focussed on the HSNP, its support also extended to other components of the National Safety Net Programme.

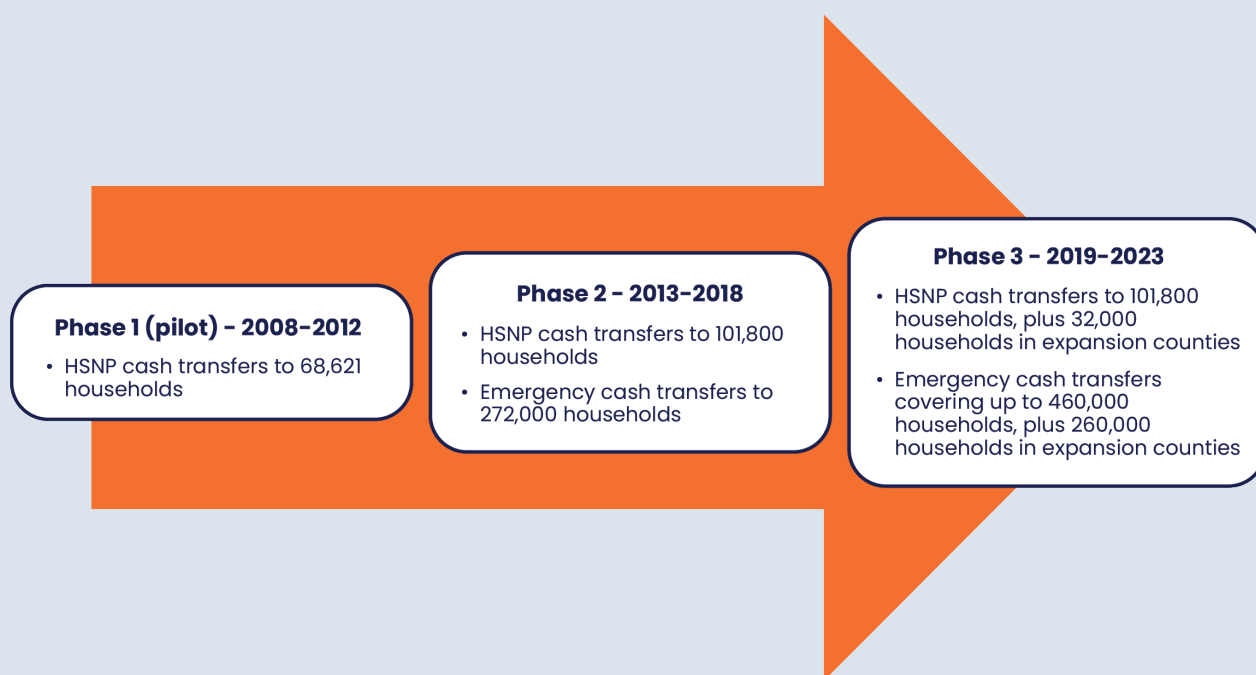
The HSNP is an unconditional cash transfer programme implemented under the NSNP. It aims to alleviate extreme poverty across arid and semi-arid areas in the country. The HSNP has been implemented in three phases (see Figure 1). The first phase (2007-2013) piloted cash transfers as an alternative to costly and often poorly targeted food aid provided to households during drought periods. The second phase (2013 to 2019) expanded the reach to over 100,000 households which received regular electronic cash transfers. Phase 2 also included a separate shock-responsive mechanism which enabled the programme to scale up its coverage during periods of drought to an additional 272,000 households. In the

third phase of the HSNP, cash transfers were scaled up to double the number of counties and reach 101,800 households, with and an additional 32,000 in expansion counties¹. The programme delivered Ksh 5,400 every two months to each eligible household¹.

Although specific government agencies may play the lead role in implementing the different social programmes, they also coordinate with each other to ensure efficient and effective management. The National Drought Management Authority, under the Ministry of East African Community, the Arid and Semi Arid Lands and Regional Development is responsible for managing the HSNP. The other social protection programmes are overseen by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The Directorate of Social Assistance carries out the targeting and registrations of beneficiaries, while the Directorate of Social Development leads on the implementation of these programmes and manages payments of the cash transfers. The National Social Protection Secretariat guides and facilitates the coordination and harmonisation of social protection programmes in Kenya.

¹ Court, J and Young, J, 2006. Bridging research and policy in international development: an analytical and practical framework. *Development in Practice*, 16(1), pp.85–90.

Figure 1: The scale up of HSNP from 2008–2023



Source: HSNP website

Method

We drew on the principles of contribution analysis and used the research and policy in development¹ (RAPID+)² conceptual framework to examine evidence use and the factors that influenced decision-making. The RAPID+ framework acknowledges that apart from the evidence that is generated, many factors may influence the use of evidence. It includes the political economy context, donor agendas, stakeholder relationships, engagement and communication. We also looked at how our role, including OPM's credibility and actions, influenced the change process.

With inputs from our staff members who had worked on social protection studies in Kenya, we put together a set of evidence use claims that we sought to investigate. We reviewed programme, policy and study documents, FCDO annual reviews, as well as other relevant documentation on social protection to collect any documentary proof we could find. We then interviewed eight key stakeholders that included government officials, and staff from FCDO, World Bank and other development partners to validate or corroborate the evidence use claims that were made. The interview tool that was developed drew on the RAPID+ framework to examine all the relevant dimensions related to evidence use.

How has evidence been used?

Over the last 15 years, our studies – from large evaluations to small studies – produced a lot of evidence and learning on the effectiveness, design and implementation of cash transfer programmes in Kenya (see Annex for list of studies). While the impact evaluations showed that 'cash transfers work', the other bespoke studies generated useful evidence on a range of questions related to programme targeting methods, mechanisms for scaling up, improving financial inclusion of households in the banking system, and effective communication with poor and illiterate households in remote areas³.

The shift from impact evaluations in the early phases to smaller studies addressing specific questions is reflected in FCDO's business case for HSNP Phase 3⁴. The business case proposed that there should be a focus on evidence collection through process evaluations and studies that looked at the design and implementation of graduation programming in Kenya.

The process reviews and the operational monitoring helped in improving efficiency and adapting the programme to beneficiary needs.

² Crichton, J and Theobald, S, 2011. Strategies and tensions in communicating research on sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS: a qualitative study of the experiences of researchers and communications staff. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 9(1), p.S4

³ FCDO Annual Review of the HSNP, Sept 2017 – Sept 2018: https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/36285766.odt

⁴ Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP Phase 3) [Business Case and Summary](https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/48446033.odt): https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/48446033.odt



Cost efficiency analysis, the study of fiscal space in social protection and institutional capacity assessments equipped the government with the information needed to prepare itself as it worked on moving away from donor reliance for funding social protection programmes. In responding to the changing needs and priorities of the government and donors, the body of evidence we produced was useful and relevant for taking decisions on funding specific programme components as well as making crucial design and implementation tweaks as the programme evolved.

In this section, we look at how the different kinds of evaluations and research informed changes through the multiple phases of social protection programming.

“Rigorous evidence allows decision makers to understand the pros and cons of social protection policy alternatives before launching a new programme or expanding an existing one.

James Oduor

FORMER CEO OF NDMA

Evidence as proof of concept: from a pilot to a scalable programme

Impact evaluation evidence provided the much-needed proof of concept to support the government's decision to make a strategic shift from food aid to cash transfers and ensure the scale up and sustainability of the HSNP. The evaluation of the first pilot phase of the HSNP showed that it was an effective safety net in helping people in remote areas lift themselves out of the poverty trap.

The impact evaluation showed that HSNP was scalable and helped build the business case for donors, such as the FCDO, to continue funding the programme. Similarly, the findings of the mixed-method impact evaluation of the second phase of the HSNP phase 2 clearly demonstrated that the programme's investments in safety nets had an impact on poverty reduction and improved the resilience

of vulnerable households⁵. It showed that the programme increased beneficiaries' food expenditure, ownership of livestock or other productive assets, and credit worthiness, which led to a moderate improvement in their overall food security⁶. The FCDO's annual review of 2017-18 said the impact evaluation demonstrated that 'the assumptions of the original theory of change were valid'.

“I think the phase one impact evaluation really shifted government of Kenya's needle in terms of shifting from food to cash.

Anthony Njage

FORMER FCDO TEAM LEADER

Another key finding of the impact evaluation was that the effect of the cash transfers extended beyond its immediate beneficiaries. The programme had a positive spill-over effect that helped stimulate the local economy. Our analysis found that for every £1 invested through the HSNP, income in the local economy increased, ranging from £1.38 to £1.93⁷. This evidence on the effect on the local economy helped in making a stronger case for cash transfers and building the programme's profile with a wider set of stakeholders by feeding into national policy debates. The evaluation was considered crucial for demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of the programme to funders as well as Kenyan tax payers.

“The findings of the Oxford Policy Management (OPM) evaluations have been very useful not only for the government of Kenya, but also for their development partners.

John Gachigi

FORMER HEAD OF DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, KENYA

⁵ FCDO Annual Review of the HSNP, Sept 2017 – Sept 2018: https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/36285766.odt

⁶ [OPM impact evaluation report](#)

⁷ [OPM impact evaluation report](#) and FCDO Annual Review of the HSNP, Sept 2017 – Sept 2018: https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/36285766.odt

Evidence for strengthening the programme design

The pilot phase assessments and other studies we conducted, along with the operational monitoring system it established, provided crucial evidence for shaping the design of the HSNP's subsequent phases and the NSNP implemented across Kenya.

“OPM's evaluations and overall support helped in improving targeting, the registration systems and data quality on HSNP; it supported the development and operations of the single registry. We were able to maximise the value of the significant investment made in registration and targeting through the increased use of the system by other stakeholders.

James Oduor

FORMER CEO OF NDMA

The assessment of the targeting approach for selecting households that would be beneficiaries of the HSNP was an important component of the evaluation during the pilot phase of the programme. To determine the eligibility of households receiving the cash transfer from the programme, three different targeting mechanisms were used during the pilot phase: community-based validation, calculation of a dependency ratio and use of the social pension data. Our assessment showed that combining three methods was quite challenging and recommended using a consolidated community-based validation approach for the subsequent phases.

“The harmonised targeting methodology has been extremely useful to enhance the single registry. One thing I want to tell you: there was a lot of engagement as OPM and us developed the harmonised (targeting approach).

Cecilia Mbaka

FORMER HEAD OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SECRETARIAT

Based on the recommendations made by our independent review of the targeting methodology, a revised, 'harmonised' targeting method was piloted in a few sub-counties and subsequently scaled up⁸. Following the assessment of the targeting methodology in HSNP, an additional study on the National Safety Net Programme was carried out. This study informed the design and implementation of the new targeting approach that was to be used across the different social assistance programmes in the country.

“We borrowed a lot from what the OPM had done and the findings so that we can now design programmes which are able to respond to shocks.

John Gachigi

FORMER HEAD OF DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, KENYA

The evidence produced during the pilot phase was useful for informing the design of the first ever emergency payment system that was aimed at responding to shocks such as natural disasters or droughts. The studies carried out in the second phase of the HSNP also informed the government's decision to add components on nutrition and cash transfers, and for supporting the HSNP Phase 3.⁹

Evidence for informing the effective implementation of cash transfers

Along with assessing the impact of cash transfers, the work we carried out during the second phase of the HSNP focussed on strengthening implementation. The operational monitoring system we designed was taken up by the implementers to gather data on implementation quality, improve communication and coordination and make course corrections.

“OPM's work helped strengthen monitoring and communication at the local level as well as the broader social protection stakeholder groups. It improved HSNP's coordination at national and county-levels.

James Oduor

FORMER CEO OF NDMA

⁸ FCDO Annual Review of the HSNP, July 2014 (Summary Sheet): https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/5122852.odt

⁹ FCDO Annual Review of the HSNP, Sept 2017 – Sept 2018: https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/36285766.odt



Drawing on the insights from the ground, a major operational change was made by the government to modify the agency model used for distributing the cash transfers. The agents, who were typically based in the areas of the main bank branches, were deployed to get to the areas where HSNP's beneficiaries were based. This was done to address a major challenge that the operational monitoring had picked up on – collecting the cash transfers from banks was a tedious and time-consuming process for beneficiaries as it involved a long commute and a long wait in queues at the bank. With the change in the agency model, the compensation for agents was also altered as there was a need to compensate them for the additional costs incurred to reach out to beneficiaries. Evidence thus helped in developing a better understanding of the key considerations involved in targeting households and operationalising the delivery of cash transfers. These considerations were formalised by being laid out in HSNP's Operations Manual¹⁰.

“ There was an operational monitoring report [...] on the agency model and that was very instrumental in changing the implementation model for the agencies

Anthony Njage

FORMER FCDO TEAM LEADER

Evidence to inform policy direction and build global knowledge

The evaluations and other studies that were carried out over the last 15 years have contributed to building a body of evidence on cash transfers and more generally on social protection in Kenya. This evidence has fed into policy discussions and has been the foundation for evolving Kenya's new social protection policy.

The work done on shock responsive social protection, for example, has been quite influential. Kenya's national social protection policy 2022, which was approved recently, has moved from three pillars (social insurance, social

assistance, social health) to four pillars (income security, social health protection, shock responsive social protection, complementary programmes). The body of evidence we produced provided the basis for dedicating a pillar to shock responsive social protection.

“ OPM's evidence has been drawn on to build our case, and also maybe to have another narrative on what the policy should like. Initially the policy had the three pillars, but now the current new policy has got like 4 pillars. So, we have used the evidence.

John Gachigi

FORMER HEAD OF DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, KENYA

Research evidence has also been building global public knowledge, with our studies being included in the curriculum on social protection in international universities. The diverse set of studies on the impact, design and implementation of cash transfers have been shared, cited and discussed in the public domain. These mixed-method studies have also offered useful insights for others in the international community working on implementing cash transfers in developing countries. The work done in Kenya has also been a good illustration of what it takes for a development intervention to evolve from being a small pilot funded by donors to a scaled up, national programme managed and implemented by the government.

“ I can say that it [OPM's work] has been useful not only to Kenya but also in training other people around the world because it is used as an example. Because it is evidence which is credible.

John Gachigi

FORMER HEAD OF DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, KENYA

¹⁰ FCDO Annual Review of the HSNP, July 2014 (Summary Sheet): https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/5122852.odt

What were the factors that influenced evidence-informed decision-making?

The stakeholders we interviewed offered a range of perspectives on why they thought evidence was used in many ways. The common themes that emerged offer us lessons on what it takes for fostering the culture of evidence-informed decision-making within a government system.

Our deep and ongoing engagement with stakeholders over the last 15 years has ensured that evidence was relevant and useful for decision-making. Stakeholders' questions and priorities drove the choice of research and evaluation methods. We sought inputs from various government entities and implementation partners through the project life cycle - to design the studies, analyse the findings, disseminate it amongst relevant stakeholders and support them in implementing recommendations.

“When OPM has done any research, there is a lot of engagement. OPM would come collecting information from our officers and our stakeholders... Even when they are critiquing the data they have collected, they will have meetings where stakeholders are invited to have an input into that. And even when they publish the data, they will share it.

Cecilia Mbaka

FORMER HEAD OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SECRETARIAT

The long-term engagement with the government and donors also ensured that insights from earlier studies fed into subsequent phases of the programme and informed follow-up research questions. With every new study, we were building on a rapidly expanding knowledge base that was getting strengthened year after year.

There are champions in the Kenyan government who believe in the value of rigorous evidence and are committed to using it. The government's commitment to evidence informed decision-making is apparent in Kenya's national social protection policy (2022). Evidence is mentioned several times in the policy document. The policy states: 'The government will ensure that social protection policy and programmes are informed by the evidence generated through research, monitoring and evaluation conducted regularly by credible and independent national and international institutions.'

“A brick was being laid over another... It was not a case where firms were coming one after another and not knowing exactly where the previous brick was placed. So you know that sort of continued engagement (from OPM) really helped.

Anthony Njage

FORMER FCDO TEAM LEADER

The government stakeholders involved in implementing the HSNP have been committed to using evidence for ensuring its sustainability as a successful programme. Although funders have been at the forefront in terms of commissioning studies to support decision-making, the culture of embedding evidence use in decision-making was adopted by the government. Staff in NDMA, the Social Protection Secretariat and the Directorate of Social Assistance have been actively engaged in deliberating on the evidence and acting on it. There was a general belief that evidence was valuable for informing the design and delivery of a programme.

“Based on interactions with OPM and the assessments that we've seen, not only do we have the government embracing change in terms of the day-to-day operations, but these changes have been institutionalized... The country today is making government officers, more so in decision making, embrace the use of evidence. That's an opportunity.

Boniface Naukot

HSNP OPERATIONS MANAGER

It also mattered that there were several individuals within government who were interested in understanding how scientific and rigorous evidence could support the choice of interventions and associated investments. Our research team was also committed to working in close partnership with government to strengthen their understanding of how evidence could support decision-making.

“ We commissioned studies and we took action on the recommendations of the studies. If it were not for that, with the huge amount that we have (invested) in the Hunger Safety Net Programme, in those areas with high poverty rates and high chronic food insecurity, and with all interest from these other people, the project would not have survived to date. It would have been closed a long time ago and to assure you those studies really helped us.

James Oduor
FORMER CEO OF NDMA

“ I think a factor that influenced the use of evidence here in Kenya is that within government, we do have some very good technical people, both in National Treasury and in the line ministries. They were really keen on the use of evidence and the scientific rigour in terms of how evidence in this area was generated to support the various interventions. Over a number of years, we got people who really believed in what the evidence was telling us, both from the government and the private sector such as yourself (OPM).

Anthony Njage
FORMER FCDO TEAM LEADER

The type of evidence influenced how it was used. In the first and second phase of programme implementation, it was clear that impact evaluation evidence was needed as ‘proof of concept’ for informing funding decisions. Impact evaluations were seen as generating the necessary high-quality evidence for making causal claims about the impact of the programme and building a business case for continued funding from donors.

“ The evidence that was generated throughout the various phases of the programme was central to making a case for subsequent intervention and for subsequent funding or continuation of the project.

Anthony Njage
FORMER FCDO SENIOR TEAM LEADER

In the early phase of the programme, evidence was also required for building the buy-in of stakeholders. As the programme was using certain eligibility criteria for targeting the most vulnerable and poor households, it was also a politically contentious issue for several stakeholders when certain regions in the country were chosen over others. Here again, the targeting studies offered rigorous evidence and a rationale for why these choices were made.

“ We said it (the targeting) can only be based on evidence because there are a lot of disputes, and people argue, and everyday people want to change things... A huge amount of resources were invested in the HSNP and there was a fear that if you don’t have proper evidence these resources might be misused and pose problems for us.

James Oduor
FORMER CEO OF NDMA

Evidence from the studies on programmatic design and implementation, such as the deep dive studies and the process reviews that looked at targeting, payment systems and cost efficiency were used in a more instrumental way to make changes to HSNP.

“ You could use evidence to advocate for changes to the design or implementation. If you needed extra resources to maybe improve the situation you could use that evidence to maybe negotiate with the donors or the funding agencies.

Naseer Khan
CONSULTANT, WORLD BANK



The monitoring system we designed helped in creating feedback loops. The monitoring information could flag challenges and the research could subsequently examine a few specific issues to generate the necessary evidence for making programmatic tweaks and course corrections.

“ To do the monitoring and to do these special studies to answer particular questions or look at particular programme challenges or issues that were coming up on an ad hoc basis throughout was a good design. I think it helped produce a lot of useful information that just helped inform and tweak the programme as it went along and answer questions which were helpful for the NDMA and for the HSNP.

Fred Merttens

FORMER PROJECT TEAM LEAD,
OXFORD POLICY MANAGEMENT

Our support in translating evidence helped make it accessible to and useful for decision-makers. Along with engaging frequently and closely with stakeholders, we also developed a range of research communication outputs to summarise and synthesise the findings as well as to outline a clear set of recommendations that could be implemented. We produced presentations, policy briefs and infographics to make study findings and implications accessible. All the study outputs were made available in the public domain via a project webpage and the impact evaluation data sets were made accessible via the World Bank microdata library. The data continues to be used by researchers working on social protection. We also undertook a range of dissemination activities – from closed-door workshops to larger events with external stakeholders – for fostering conversations on the emerging evidence and evolving feasible and actionable recommendations.

The key stakeholders thought that our research outputs were more than just academic publications. They showed a deep understanding of the local context and the political economy factors that influence whether or not actions can be taken to implement study recommendations. In some cases, offering government and donors, simple and clear

messages that were emerging from the evidence helped push the conversation forward on the actions that needed to be taken.

“ OPM when they do a study they produce a document, and sometimes a policy brief, and that is there for everybody to read. We are then able to put up a strong case on what is happening in social protection in Kenya. Once OPM puts its reports on its website, everyone including people in international agencies, are able to know what is happening in Kenya.

John Gachigi

FORMER HEAD OF DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL
ASSISTANCE

“ Evidence cannot operate in a vacuum. Understanding the local context and the political nature of the development intervention helped in ensuring that the evidence was contextualized and that really helped in its use within the Kenyan context.

Anthony Njage

FORMER FCDO TEAM LEADER

“ There was trust because they were not just doing things on their own. It was teamwork. (...) Whatever they were doing, it was not just OPM going to the field and doing their work. It was involving the stakeholders and getting consensus from the stakeholders.

James Oduor

FORMER CEO OF NDMA

Our long-term partnership with the government and other funders helped build its credibility and trust with them. We were not just a research producer in Kenya; we were also a technical assistance partner that helped navigate and coordinate across the complex institutional arrangements between funders and the multiple government entities involved in the programme's implementation. There was a crucial role that we played as a network builder, in linking stakeholders, promoting discussions and developing consensus.

We were credited with improving the coordination of HSNP at the national and county levels and improving communications with a broad set of stakeholders working on social protection.

What factors prevented the use of evidence?

A few stakeholders also discussed the factors that may have prevented evidence from being used to inform decision-making.

Politics and institutional capacity may not favour the implementation of evidence-informed recommendations.

As is the case with several development programmes, political and electoral interests may not be aligned with what the evidence has to say. Additionally, evidence-based recommendations may not be feasible to implement if the lack of fiscal and staff capacity are key constraints.

“Where a lot of resources were required to make some changes, we were not able to do it very fast. We were not able to do it 100%.

James Oduor

FORMER CEO OF NDMA

As the evaluations and other studies are funded by donors, government officials may not always feel like they own the evidence. The commissioners of evidence are often at the forefront of conversations on evidence for building a business case to justify further investments. This may mean that government officials may take a backseat and don't always feel involved in decision-making.

Insufficient effort to support the consumption and dissemination of evidence amongst a broad range of stakeholders can hinder evidence use. The project-based approach to funding research can often mean that once a study is completed, there may not be a lot of time or budget available for carrying out extensive dissemination activities. Research communication may also be focussed on an immediate set of stakeholders rather than a broad range of potential evidence users.

Final takeaways

Our work in Kenya shows **the value of sustained evaluation and evidence generation** for improving the effectiveness of social protection programmes in reducing poverty and strengthening the ability to respond to shocks and uncertainty. Evidence was useful in several different ways – for informing funding decisions, tweaking programme design and building the capacity of the government to take over the implementation of programmes.

Over an extended time frame, a series of studies employing various methodologies were undertaken to address a diverse set of relevant questions, that were aimed at establishing an effective social protection system in the country. This case study shows that for building an evidence base you need to look at what works for whom, why and how. You need to assess impact, understand the implementation process, and examine the fiscal considerations and institutional capacity for sustainable development. In all of this, questions need to drive the choice of methods and not the other way around.



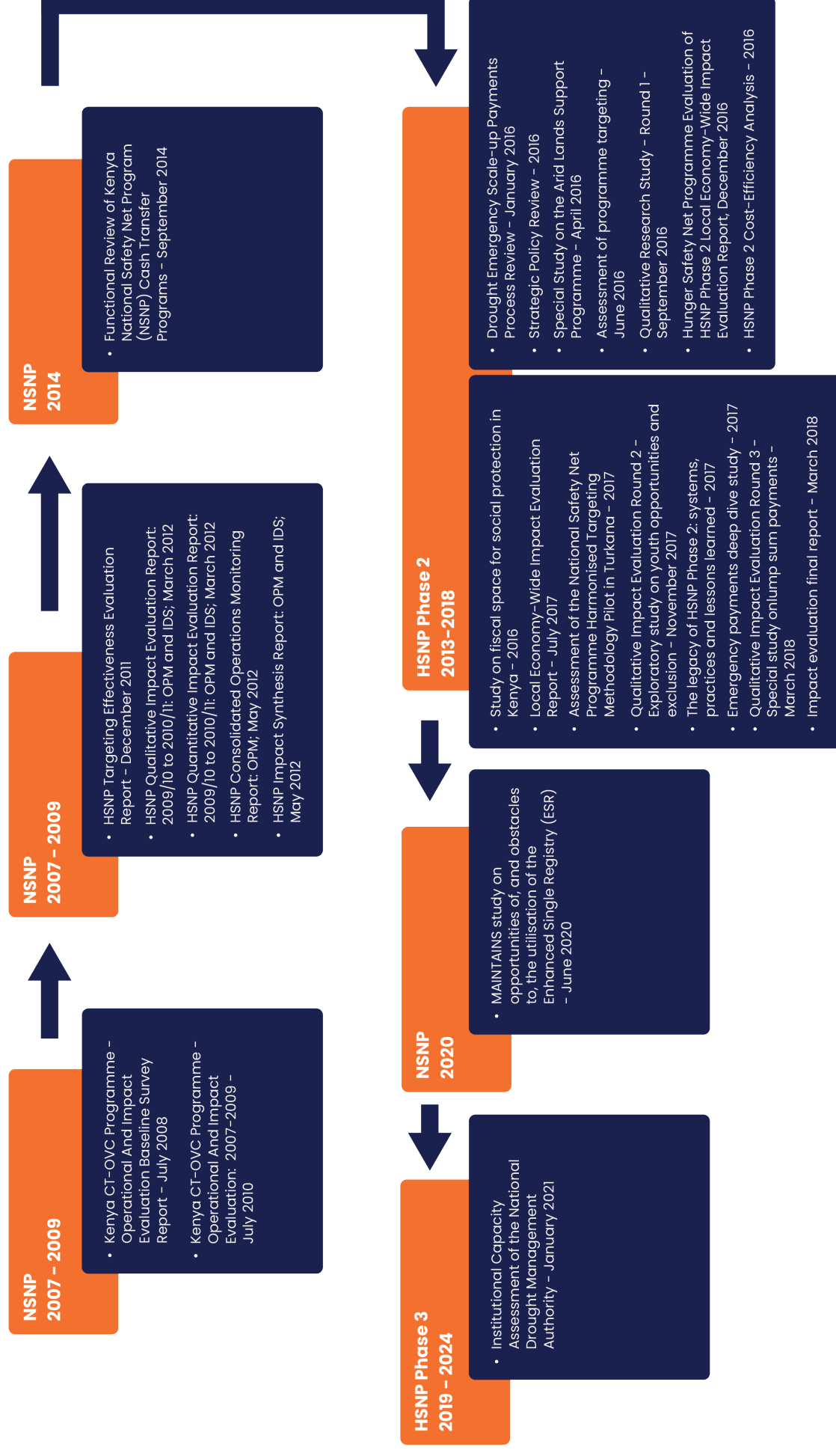
Stakeholder engagement is crucial for designing policy relevant studies that are useful for decision-making. This kind of engagement needs to be ongoing through the lifecycle of projects. In the case of social protection, the complex institutional arrangements made it necessary for us to go beyond evidence generation and provide technical assistance, coordinate between diverse actors and build networks.

Finally, **long term partnerships based on trust are crucial for ensuring success and sustainability.** The long-term engagement with stakeholders has helped in developing a comprehensive understanding of the political economy at both the macro and micro levels, which in turn has been crucial for understanding the implications of research findings and proposing feasible recommendations for action. A partnership that spans several years also highlights the commitment to working together as a team to tackle both the urgent problems as well as the long-term challenges. This commitment builds credibility and trust which is the foundation for building the culture of evidence-informed decision making.

Citation:

Menon, R., Odindo, J., Galinié, A. (2024). *Policy Impact: How evidence informed the evolution of social protection in Kenya*, Oxford: Oxford Policy Management.

Annex: List of the studies undertaken by OPM





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