Supporting effective access to social protection

The role of the Kenya Red Cross Society in supporting people to access social protection via the Enhanced Single Registry in Taita Taveta County, Kenya

May 2023

This case study introduces the Enhanced Single Registry (ESR) for social protection in Kenya and describes its rollout in Taita Taveta County, focusing on the role played by the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) in partnership with the Government of Kenya and other stakeholders.

Social protection[1] landscape in Kenya

The right to social protection is recognised in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and Kenya Vision 2030 places emphasis on the value of social protection in achieving an equitable society. Social protection interventions are guided by the National Social Protection Policy (2011), with a revised version due to be released in 2023. The social protection sector is strategically coordinated by a Social Protection Secretariat, housed under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

1 Social protection is defined by the ILO as "the set of policies and programs designed to reduce and prevent poverty or vulnerability throughout the life cycle". This includes contributory schemes (social insurance), labour market policies, and non-contributory benefits such as social assistance (social safety nets), that provide support to people based on a specific need or risk.

Inua Jamii

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Inua Jamii is the Government of Kenya's flagship National Safety Net Program. It consists of four social assistance programs that provide cash transfers to over 1.2 million recipients:[2]

01. **Older Persons Cash Transfer (OPCT):** KSh 4,000 paid bi-monthly to those aged 70 years and above, who are not receiving a pension.

02. **Persons with Severe Disabilities Cash Transfer (PWSD-CT):** KSh 4,000 paid bi-monthly to extremely poor households with a member who has a severe disability.

03. **Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC):** KSh 4,000 paid bi-monthly to households with one or more OVCs as a permanent member.

04. **Hunger Safety Net Program (HSNP):** KSh 5,400 paid bi-monthly to vulnerable and poor households residing in eight arid counties. The program also provides shock-responsive payments of KSh 2,700 to additional households during climate-related disasters such as drought. It is implemented by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA).

Single Registry

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The Single Registry is a software platform, launched in 2016, containing information on who is receiving what type of assistance, where, when, and under which social assistance program(s) in Kenya. It brings together the management information systems (MISs) of the four Inua Jamii programs, plus the WFP Cash for Asset Program, providing a single point of reference for **existing** recipients of social assistance cash transfer-based programs.

The Single Registry demonstrated many benefits, including:

Increased coordination and harmonisation between social assistance programs, including the use of common mechanisms e.g., payment.

Enhanced transparency and data sharing across programs.

Improved monitoring and reporting, allowing for in-depth analysis of social assistance provision.

Reduced registration errors and fraud as beneficiary details are verified against the National Population Registry, the database of Kenyan ID cards.

Reduced duplication in the provision of assistance within and across programs.
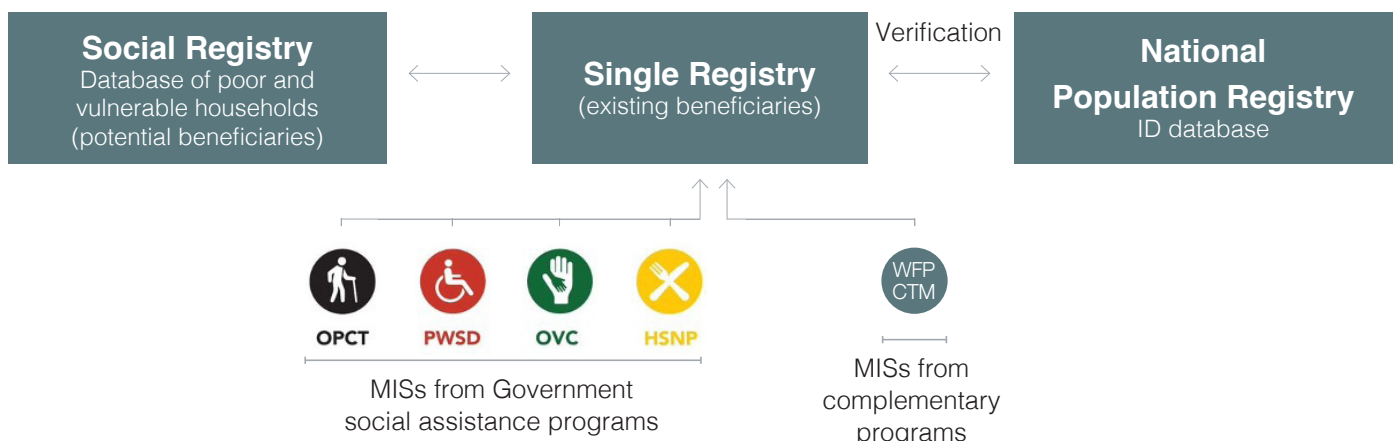
More informed planning of social assistance programs and budgets.

Enhanced Single Registry

The Enhanced Single Registry (ESR) expands the Single Registry to also include information on **potential** recipients of social assistance, by including a socioeconomic database (the Social Registry Module) of poor and vulnerable households in Kenya. As a management system, the ESR also contains mechanisms for payment, reporting, two-way data sharing with stakeholders, and data protection.

Below is a simplified representation of the ESR.

Social Registry Database of poor and vulnerable households (potential beneficiaries)	⟷	**Single Registry** (existing beneficiaries)	Verification ⟷	**National Population Registry** ID database

OPCT   PWSD   OVC   HSNP

WFP CTM

MISs from Government social assistance programs

MISs from complementary programs

The use of the Enhanced Single Registry is an innovative approach that brings the following benefits:

Social protection system

People

Gaps in coverage and unmet needs can be identified to inform the expansion of social assistance.

Improved access to social assistance as eligible individuals can be enrolled into government programs or complementary programs by non-state actors.

More efficient targeting and enrolment, as data can be shared with government ministries and external organisations for use in their programs.

Reduced registration fatigue and associated challenges for community members.

Increased shock-responsiveness as ESR data can be used to rapidly identify and verify impacted households.

Provided with more timely assistance, enabling families to mitigate their losses and recover in a more dignified way.

Comprehensive monitoring of social protection, with the potential to integrate other social protection programs (e.g. the Universal Health Coverage scheme) and assistance provided by non-state actors.

Link recipients and service providers, informing about positive and negative impact and allowing for adaptations to ensure intended outcomes are achieved.

The ESR is being rolled out nationwide and will collect socioeconomic data for poor and vulnerable households in 39 counties between 2021 and 2023[3]. The remaining 8 counties are served by the Hunger Safety Net program which will feed the information into the system. Different partners provide resources and/or operational support to the rollout in each county.

Target timeline of ESR data collection

2021

June: ESR data collection piloted in Makueni and Vihiga counties

November-December: data collected in Taita Taveta and Kisumu

TOTAL

4 counties in ESR

2022

ESR data collected in 12 further counties

4 HSNP counties integrated into ESR

20 counties in ESR

Ambition

ESR data collected in 23 remaining counties

4 remaining HSNP counties integrated

47 counties in ESR

3 Implemented under the Kenya Social and Economic Inclusion Project (KSEIP), a five-year World Bank-funded project from 2019-2023, as part of Component 1: Strengthening Social Protection Delivery Systems.

Kenya Red Cross Society

KRCS is the largest volunteer-based humanitarian network in Kenya, with a countrywide presence of over 240,000 volunteers and members, supported by a structure of local branches. Over time, KRCS has built trust and acceptance among the communities it serves which, alongside its auxiliary role, puts the Society in a unique position as a humanitarian facilitator. KRCS is "always there", reaching on average 50% of the Kenyan population annually through development programs and disaster response to affected populations.[4]

KRCS support to social protection

KRCS works closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Social Protection Secretariat. KRCS is a co-chair of the Kenya Cash Working Group and a member of the National Taskforce for the review and improvement of the Single Registry. KRCS was therefore involved in reviewing the National Social Protection Policy and developing the harmonised household registration tool for registering households into the ESR. KRCS also strives to provide humanitarian assistance that is complementary to national social assistance programs. KRCS partners with the NDMA on the Hunger Safety Net Program, providing cash top-ups (vertical expansion) to HSNP recipients affected by shocks, and expanding coverage to reach additional people (horizontal expansion) through complementary humanitarian assistance.
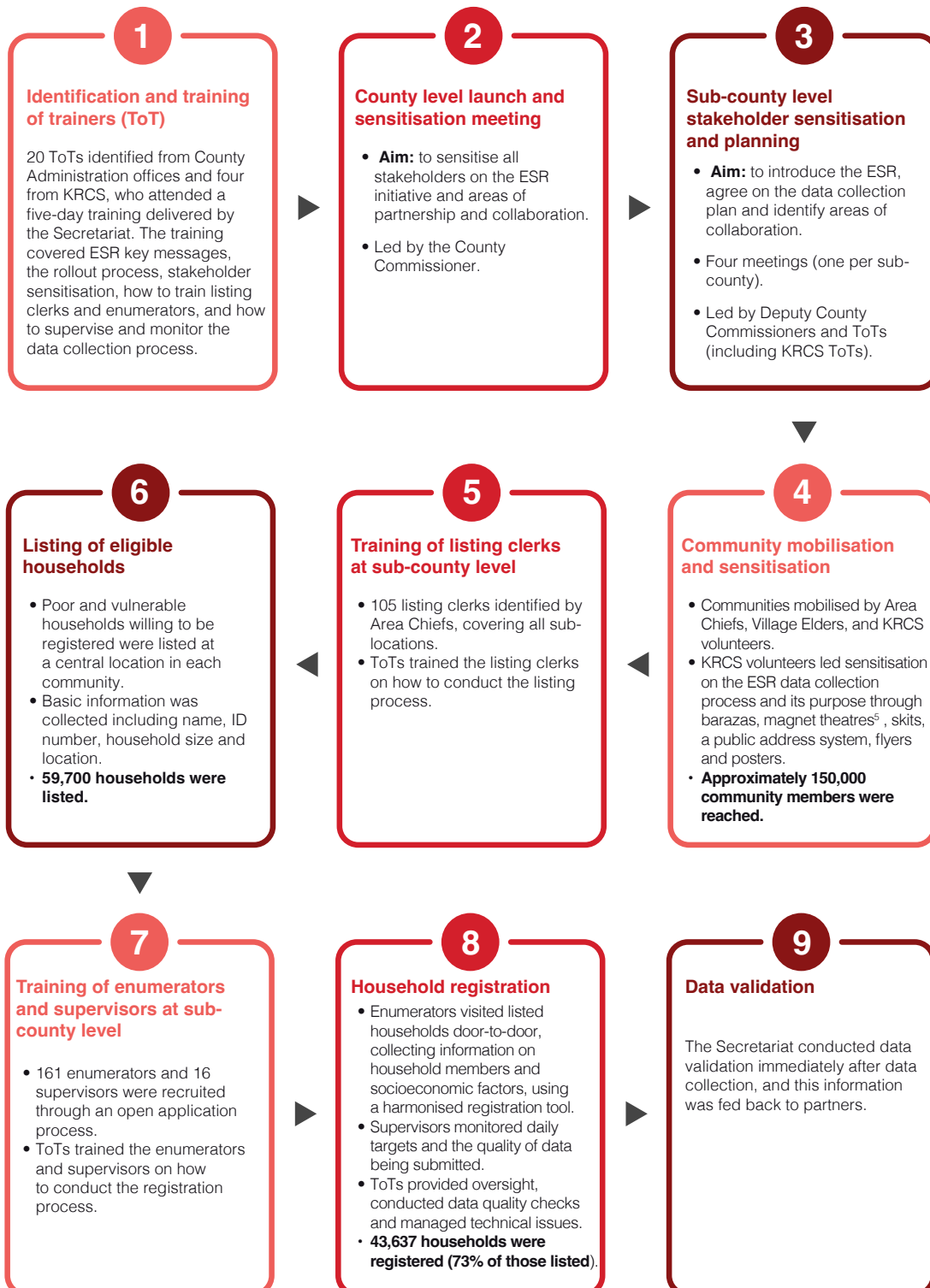
Rollout of the ESR in Taita Taveta County

In Taita Taveta the ESR was rolled out by the National Government and County Administration, in partnership with KRCS and WFP. KRCS offered operational and financial support to the process. KRCS has a very strong branch in Taita Taveta, with dedicated staff and volunteers who supported the rollout.

Roles and responsibilities in the rollout process

National Social Protection Secretariat	• Provided vision, oversight, and leadership. • Training of trainers (ToT). • Backstopping, ICT support and troubleshooting during listing and registration.
County Administration	• County-level leadership, coordination, supervision and stakeholder engagement. • Participants included the County Commissioner, Deputy and Assistant County Commissioners, Social Development and Children's Services Departments. • Provided ToTs.
Area Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs and Village Elders	• Mobilised community members for sensitisation, listing and registration. • Identified listing sites and eligible households. • Provided information to communities, addressing questions and concerns.
KRCS	• Contributed KSh 14 million (~US$110,000) of funding, provided by the British Red Cross. • The Taita Taveta branch provided coordination, operational support for recruitment and logistics, and managed payment of allowances. • Mobilised and sensitised stakeholders and communities. • One staff member and three volunteers were ToTs.
WFP	• Supported the training of ToTs at the national level • Funded allowances for the enumerators in the Taita Taveta data collection exercise.

Step-by-step overview of the rollout process

The rollout took place from November 2021 to January 2022, as follows:

1

Identification and training of trainers (ToT)

20 ToTs identified from County Administration offices and four from KRCS, who attended a five-day training delivered by the Secretariat. The training covered ESR key messages, the rollout process, stakeholder sensitisation, how to train listing clerks and enumerators, and how to supervise and monitor the data collection process.

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County level launch and sensitisation meeting

- **Aim:** to sensitise all stakeholders on the ESR initiative and areas of partnership and collaboration.
- Led by the County Commissioner.

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3

Sub-county level stakeholder sensitisation and planning

- **Aim:** to introduce the ESR, agree on the data collection plan and identify areas of collaboration.
- Four meetings (one per sub-county).
- Led by Deputy County Commissioners and ToTs (including KRCS ToTs).

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Listing of eligible households

- Poor and vulnerable households willing to be registered were listed at a central location in each community.
- Basic information was collected including name, ID number, household size and location.
- **59,700 households were listed.**

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Training of listing clerks at sub-county level

- 105 listing clerks identified by Area Chiefs, covering all sub-locations.
- ToTs trained the listing clerks on how to conduct the listing process.

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Community mobilisation and sensitisation

- Communities mobilised by Area Chiefs, Village Elders, and KRCS volunteers.
- KRCS volunteers led sensitisation on the ESR data collection process and its purpose through barazas, magnet theatres[5] , skits, a public address system, flyers and posters.
- **Approximately 150,000 community members were reached.**

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Training of enumerators and supervisors at sub-county level

- 161 enumerators and 16 supervisors were recruited through an open application process.
- ToTs trained the enumerators and supervisors on how to conduct the registration process.

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Household registration

- Enumerators visited listed households door-to-door, collecting information on household members and socioeconomic factors, using a harmonised registration tool.
- Supervisors monitored daily targets and the quality of data being submitted.
- ToTs provided oversight, conducted data quality checks and managed technical issues.
- **43,637 households were registered (73% of those listed**).

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Data validation

The Secretariat conducted data validation immediately after data collection, and this information was fed back to partners.

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5 Baraza is a Swahili word for a large community gathering to discuss important matters and share information. Magnet theatres are a type of community theatre that typically takes place in public spaces.

Data protection

Data protection in Kenya is regulated under the 2019 Data Protection Act and related regulations. Data protection protocols are embedded within the ESR system and the data collection process. Data protection training is provided to those involved, only the necessary data is collected, and informed consent is obtained from individuals when their data is collected.

Access controls are in place to protect and regulate access to the ESR data. Data sharing protocols define how stakeholders can legally apply to use the data, how those applications are assessed, and how personal data is properly shared, processed and disposed of. Stakeholders can request access to the ESR data through a questionnaire and access is only granted if the request meets the requirements of the data protection act.

Learnings from the ESR rollout in Taita Taveta

Achievements

- The number of households listed in Taita Taveta reached 174% of the initial target of 25,036 households. The community mobilisation strategy was highly effective and all involved were highly motivated and dedicated.

- The Secretariat, County Administration and KRCS formed a strong partnership. The division of duties was clear and all partners actively drove the process forward.

- Collaboration and coordination between stakeholders was highly effective. Regular meetings and open communication ensured the process ran smoothly and managed challenges effectively.

- KRCS provided effective logistical support, including the timely payment of airtime and allowances to almost 1,000 people (listing clerks, enumerators, supervisors, ToTs and Area Chiefs). This allowed activities to run to schedule and acted as an essential motivator.

- The rollout in Taita Taveta is used as an example of best practice by the Social Protection Secretariat. The County was chosen for a visit by a Government of Chad delegation visiting Kenya to learn about the ESR. KRCS worked with the Secretariat to organise the visit.

Challenges

- At the conclusion of registration, 16,063 listed households (17%) were not registered in the ESR due to the constraints listed below. There is currently no clear plan for how to complete the registration. As a result, people may miss out on assistance that would benefit them.

- Enumerators could not reach all households in the allotted time due to challenging terrain and vast distances. The transport allowance was not enough to cover costs. KRCS provided vehicles where possible, but this did not meet demand.

- The number of listing clerks and enumerators was insufficient, and there were some language barriers. Household distribution was not considered when setting enumerator recruitment targets and clerks were overwhelmed by the number of households who attended the listing.

- Some of the gadgets used for listing / registration malfunctioned. Although ToTs and the Secretariat resolved issues this caused delays, especially in areas with limited network coverage.

- The timeframe was too short. Partners and staff learned on the job, without breaks between stages. Enumerators were not able to register all the listed households in the time available.

- There has been no follow-up communication with county stakeholders since registration concluded. Stakeholders lack knowledge of how the data may be used now or in the future.

Learnings related to community engagement and inclusion

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) contributes towards inclusion by recognising and valuing all community members as equal partners, whose diverse needs, priorities, and preferences are accounted for. The ESR's success requires inclusion of all eligible community members. The following successes and challenges were highlighted by partners and community members.

Inclusion

Successes:

- ✔ The knowledge of local leaders was used to ensure sensitisation messages reached all eligible households through appropriate channels.

- ✔ 150,000 community members attended sensitisation sessions.

- ✔ Households without an ID card could use an alternative such as a birth certificate, or register through a proxy.

- ✔ Caregivers attended sensitisation and listing on behalf of people with disabilities, and those unable to travel were visited at their homes by community health volunteers.

Challenges:

- ✘ Ensuring effective participation of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Long listing queues created difficulties for those with mobility challenges and those with work or other commitments.

- ✘ Some households without an ID card could not register, e.g. Tanzanians living in border areas, who are not eligible for a Kenyan ID card.

- ✘ Cultural differences and the pastoralist lifestyle hindered groups such as the Maasai tribe from attending sensitisation and registration.

- ✘ Some listed households were missed during registration, especially those in remote areas and those whose members work away from the home.

- ✘ There were isolated incidences of enumerators deviating from protocol and skipping houses that looked better-off, potentially missing other vulnerabilities.

Communication with communities

Successes:

✓ Sensitisation methods were engaging, presenting key messages in a simple way.

✓ Key messages were adapted to the context and audience from the KSEIP communication guidelines. Management of expectations was a key focus of the sensitisation.

Challenges:

✗ Village Elders were not provided with the key messages used by KRCS volunteers, which may have led to misinformation during mobilisation.

✗ Clerks and enumerators did not always have enough time during listing and registration to fully explain the ESR. In some instances, there were also language barriers.

✗ Some community members were frustrated by not receiving immediate support after being registered into the ESR, due to miscommunication.

✗ No follow-up information has been provided to communities after registration. Community members are unclear on how their data is being used.
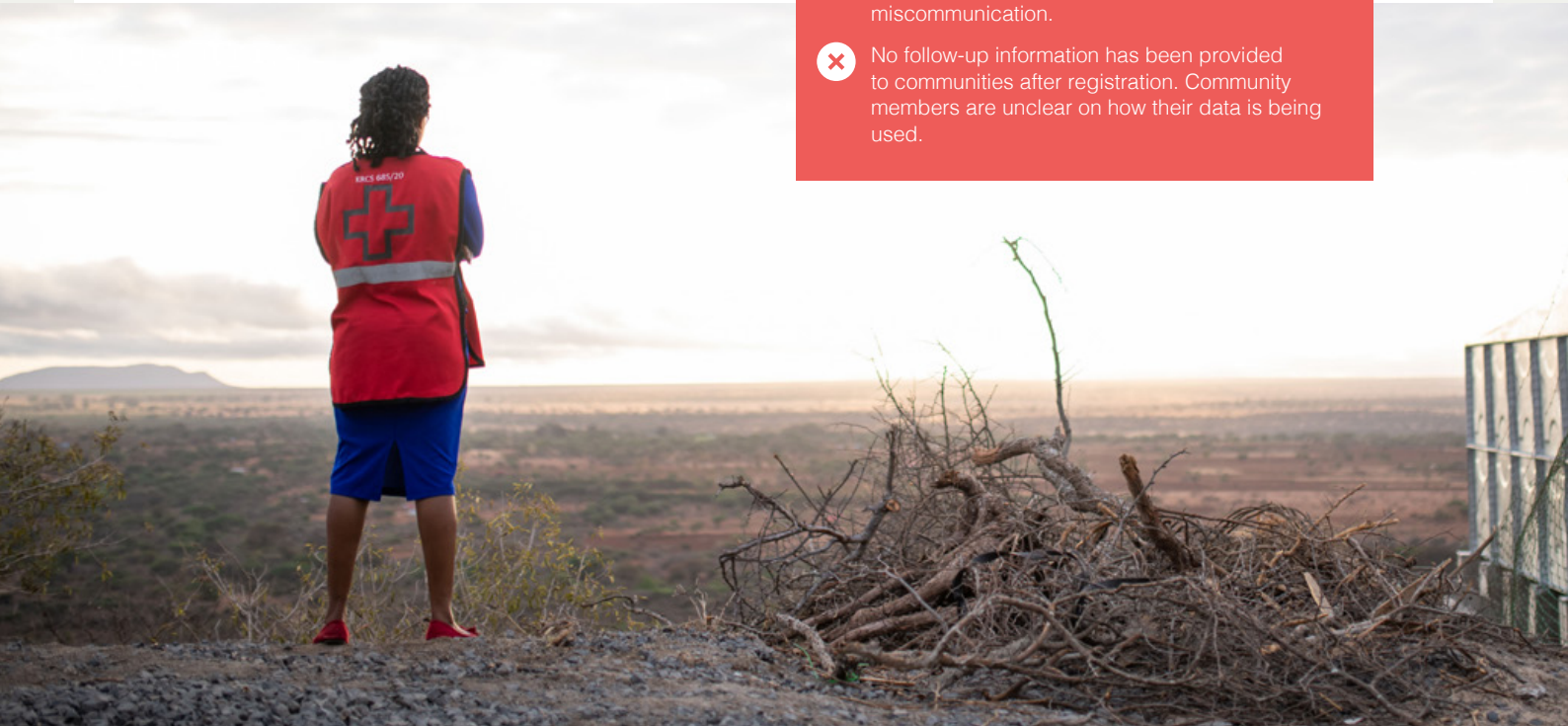
Feedback mechanisms

Successes:

✓ Communities could feed back to KRCS through a national toll-free number, KRCS county hotline and their local KRCS office. Information on these channels was continually disseminated through vehicles and volunteers.

✓ Feedback was also shared directly with Chiefs, who passed it to KRCS.

✓ All feedback and complaints received by KRCS were addressed in real time.

Challenges:

✗ When asked, many community members were unaware of the mechanisms in place to share feedback, questions or concerns.

Recommendations

1 **Adequate time, funding and personnel are required,** proportionate to demand and household distribution, to ensure that all target households can be registered.

2 **Ensure all vulnerable groups are included**. Partnerships with local organisations or government departments like the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, could help to identify adaptions to meet peoples' diverse needs and achieve this.

3 **Provide clear information on the purpose and process of ESR registration to manage expectations.** All partners should have access to standardised communication materials, to ensure consistent messaging. The people registered may not fulfil the criteria to receive assistance post-registration and this should be well communicated. Adequate time must be allocated to training and sensitisation, to ensure this is made clear at each stage of the process.

4 **Communities should be engaged in dialogue following registration,** to advise them how their data is being used and what support may be available. The availability of feedback mechanisms should be reiterated.

5 **County stakeholders, including government departments and humanitarian/development groups, should be continually sensitised** on the availability of the ESR data and encouraged to use it. This will strengthen the dataset and reduce registration fatigue for communities.

6 **KRCS volunteers and ToTs can be leveraged in other counties,** to assist with the rollout process and increase its sustainability in the longer-term.

Reflections on the ESR at the national level

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Leveraging experiences of the ESR's rollout at county level can contribute towards its continued success at a national level. The Social Protection Secretariat and KRCS identified the following successes and challenges.

Successes

- The ESR system is working as intended and is being consistently improved with additional functionality as more data is added into the system.

- The quality of the ESR dataset is improving as more counties are integrated. The data is increasingly useful for informing the expansion of social assistance programs and advocacy for the required financing.

- Government ministries recognise the value of the ESR data. The Ministry of Health has used it to identify households for inclusion in the Universal Healthcare Program.

- Stakeholders are increasingly requesting ESR data for use in their programs. For example, it is being used in the ongoing drought response, and KRCS used it to help target recipients for a food security and livelihoods program in Taita Taveta.

- The harmonised targeting tool ensures consistency in data collection. It was also used during the Covid-19 pandemic to verify vulnerable households in need of social assistance top-ups.

Challenges

- Limited availability of budget and personnel is constraining the rollout in other counties.

- Household and socioeconomic data is dynamic and the ESR will need to be regularly updated for accuracy. There is not yet a clear plan or allocated resources for this.

- Across all counties there are eligible households who have not been registered, including those pending at the listing stage. These households may miss assistance.

- County administrations have limited access to the ESR data, as it is held at the national level. Utilisation at the County level could improve the relevance and targeting of services.

- Releasing data to stakeholders takes time, limiting their ability to use the data as intended, especially for emergency response. Speed and data protection need to be balanced.

- Stakeholders who were not involved in the process are often unaware that the data exists, preventing the ESR from achieving its full potential.

- It has not yet been possible to expand Inua Jamii to include additional eligible households, in part due to funding limitations.

- target recipients for a food security and livelihoods program in Taita Taveta.

- The harmonised targeting tool ensures consistency in data collection. It was also used during the Covid-19 pandemic to verify vulnerable households in need of social assistance top-ups.

Future ambitions of the Social Protection Secretariat:

- To clear the backlog of pending households and to strengthen inclusion of all poor and vulnerable people.

- To integrate the Universal Healthcare Program into the ESR, followed by additional programs of the Government and other stakeholders.

- To continually strengthen the ESR, noting that in future it may be possible to deploy machine learning to better monitor poverty trends and advise on targeting.

- To increase complementarity with partners, through awareness raising on the ESR and increased two-way data sharing.

Added value of KRCS engagement in the ESR rollout

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All stakeholders agreed that KRCS played a critical role during the ESR rollout in Taita Taveta, via:

Willingness to be a flexible and hands-on partner: KRCS funding was essential to the ESR rollout. By combining this with practical and flexible operational support, KRCS set themselves apart from other partners. The logistics of listing and registration are complex and have presented a major challenge in other counties where there is no operational partner.

Its volunteer network: the availability of dedicated and trained volunteers, who are always on the ground in their communities, added great value to the mobilisation, sensitisation and data collection processes. Utilising KRCS volunteers can also add to the sustainability of data collection going forward. This was a key learning point from Taita Taveta for the Secretariat, and they expressed interest in using KRCS volunteers and ToTs to support the ESR process in other counties, even if KRCS is not a funding partner.

Community presence and acceptance: KRCS has strong existing relationships at the county and community level through its branches and volunteers. They are therefore trusted and accepted by local leadership, communities, and other stakeholders.

Holding an auxiliary role: KRCS also has strong relationships at the national level through the KRCS HQ and can utilise its auxiliary role to support the Government at all levels. Combined with community presence, this puts KRCS in a unique position to add value.

Advocacy: KRCS is using its platform to advocate for the value of the ESR and encouraging other stakeholders to consider using the data.

Future ambitions of KRCS in the field of social protection

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Building upon the achievements so far and opportunities emerging, KRCS has held a series of consultative forums with the National Social Protection Secretariat, to develop and institutionalise a sound, actionable framework for KRCS engagement in social protection. Senior leadership, technical teams and legal teams from both institutions have developed a document detailing potential areas of collaboration. KRCS seeks to support the National Social Protection System wherever possible to achieve the following:

01. Establish an operational and interoperable data centre.

02. Research and operationalize a knowledge management hub for social protection.

03. Strengthen and implement a comprehensive grievance management system integrated into the ESR.

04. Promote shock responsive and adaptive social protection including use of participatory approaches for vulnerability assessment, targeting and validation of beneficiaries' lists.

05. Promote harmonization, joint platforms or common delivery mechanisms to strengthen coordination with government and humanitarian actors in social protection.

06. Disseminate the national social protection curriculum to practitioners at both the National and County levels.

07. Joint implementation of the national social protection monitoring and evaluation framework.

08. Lobby for adoption of forecast based financing in budgeting by Government and humanitarian actors.

09. Develop and operationalise a robust communication and advocacy strategy for the social protection sector, specifically the humanitarian sector. KRCS aims to leverage its convening capability to both government and non-governmental institutions to advocate for policy tweaks and resource allocation.

To institutionalise the above, KRCS and the Department of Social Protection, through financial support from the IKEA foundation and British Red Cross, have developed an MoU to strengthen linkages between government social protection and humanitarian work. This MoU is finalised, pending signature.

To find out more

Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies can play a critical role in strengthening and supporting national social protection systems. Further resources, including guidance, tip sheets and learning from the experience of National Societies can be found on the Cash Hub:

cash-hub.org/resources/cash-and-social-protection

Meaningful engagement of communities in programs and operations leads to outcomes that are more effective, sustainable, and of a higher quality. Resources on community engagement and accountability, including the CEA toolkit, can be found on the CEA Hub: communityengagementhub.org/

Further information on social protection in Kenya can be found at: socialprotection.or.ke

Inua Jamii: socialprotection.go.ke

Hunger Safety Net Program: hsnp.or.ke/

Acknowledgement

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