

Interview: Helen and Kevin

Interviewer: Going to the next question, I do not know whether you are aware of GiveDirectly's enrollment Programme, their plan of recruiting and enrolling potential beneficiaries, the way they approach the households, and the kind of questions they ask. I would like you to tell me when GiveDirectly officials came here the first very day, how you felt, whom did they find at home? Whomever they found, how did he/she receive them? How did you feel when they asked you many questions, writing on your door, what was the experience like?

Helen: I am the one who can answer you. When they came here, they found when I had gone to the river. when I came back, I found them sitting with my mother-in-law. When I approached her, she told me to wait for her in my house, as she would be joining me in a while. When she finally came to my house, she introduced herself. I can only remember she told me she is Nyasakwa, but I cannot remember her exact name. She told me that she comes from an organization called GiveDirectly and that they have come into the village to assist poor people like us. She told me that there is some money that we might receive towards that assistance. I asked her whether this financial assistance was in form of a loan or a grant. My husband was away. Nyasakwa told me that it was a grant that was meant to uplift us from where we were. I went further to interrogate her and even enquired whether that money would bring me problems with my husband because he was not present at that time, because am sure if it was a loan, he would come back and ask me why I got myself into debts yet we don't have any collaterals to pay back. She insisted that it was purely a grant, so I accepted to be part of the enrollment. Because as I said earlier, I thought it was a loan, imagine for instance if you borrowed like KES 20, 000 without consulting your husband and you have no other source of repayment that would be a disaster. So when I called my husband to inform him, he responded well.

Interviewer: What was his response? What did you explain to him?

Helen: I told him that there is some assistance that has been brought into our village and it is helping everyone who is poor and needy. He, however, asked me whether it was a loan, because that is what is currently trending in the villages. For instance, women now have table-banking activities that loan them money. He told me that if it is a grant then we can only be thankful but if it is a loan, we have nothing to repay back with. The GiveDirectly official eventually left. The second time they came back, they brought me a phone and a number that was assigned my household. They took us through some training on how to use the MPESA service

Interviewer: Kevin, did these visitors find you here at any given time? I know the first day they found when you were not there. Did they find you in any of their subsequent visits?

Kevin: They did not find me.

Interviewer: Not in any of the visits?

Kevin: None at all.

Interviewer: So you were only being informed by your wife? So am I right to say that you are the first person from GiveDirectly that you are meeting for the first time? Is that right?

Kevin: Yes

Interviewer: When your wife used to call you and inform you about GiveDirectly from wherever you were, how did you take it? What was going through your mind, since your wife says that she had a lot of questions whether the cash was a loan or how that cash could affect your relationship with her if she took it? How did you react as the man of the house?

Kevin: I responded by telling her that if it was a grant, she needed to inquire more about it since there are different kinds of assistance. Some are brought genuinely by kind-hearted people who want to help others but I hear devil worshippers bring others. For instance, we have heard over

the radio that in places like South Nyanza devil worshipers work in those areas and take money there but later they demand that you offer a sacrifice in the form of your child, your wife, or you personally. I told her to make thorough inquiries and when she gave me results of her inquiries, she confirmed that the GD is offering to help many people in the village. I was happy and I told her to take it as I struggled to look for a job wherever I was. I prayed that God should help us so that we would pull through the many challenges that we were passing through. I was hopeful and looked forward to the date the transfer would come.

Interviewer: Helen, when GD officers came and asked you some questions, wrote on your door, what was going through your mind? Are there questions that you had challenges responding to?

Helen: The GD officials never asked hard questions as such. I remember some of the questions were asking me whether I had ever used Mpesa before.

Interviewer: Was that the first day?

Helen: No...that was later. The first day was just general information on how the transfer would take place and a sneak preview of what steps were to follow. Second time, they came with a new phone and the card that had a number we had been given earlier. They took our photographs. They asked me whether I had withdrawn money from Mpesa. I told them that I have never withdrawn more than KES 1, 000 since my husband only sends me a couple of hundred shillings at any given time. They trained us thoroughly on how to use the MPESA service.

Interview: Teresa and Odhiambo

Interviewer: Now the second question i would like to ask you is this; I would like you to give me your opinions about GiveDirectly's cash transfer enrolment program, from the first day they came here until the time you received your first cash transfer. When they came the first time, they asked you a number of questions, wrote on your door and telling you many other different things. How did you view that program? I mean strangers showing up in the village and beginning to tell you things and writing on your door, what was going through your mind? I don't know whom they found the first day.

Teresa: They found me.

Interviewer: Teresa, tell me how your experience was like. People that you don't know showing up at your home, writing things on your door and asking you many questions. What was your experience like?

Teresa: Ok, when they came the first time, we had a nice chat. One thing that they did well was that they visited the entire village. Later on after they had gone, their visit was the talk of the village. When villagers met, they had explained to us a number of things. The first time they came, they never gave many details. They spoke little, wrote on the door, and said they would come back. The second time they came back, they gave us more clear explanations how this transfer will be like, when and how we will get it. After explaining all that, speculations began in the village. We were not certain that all we were told would happen. We concluded that may be it was just a passing story. Honestly, we were not sure it would happen.

Interviewer: Ok, when these people came and wrote on your doors, I mean what made you unsure that the cash transfer would not happen? Why did you doubt the things you were told by GD officials would not happen?

Teresa: The reason why we had doubt? The doubt came about when we were told of the amounts that we were going to receive. We did not believe someone would give us that kind of money without having worked for it. That is why we doubted.

Odhiambo: Even the elders in this village were casting doubts about the whole program. They said that nothing of that nature (UCT) has ever happened in their lifetime and it would be foolhardy to want to believe that it can happen now. It made people adopt a wait and see attitude.

Interviewer: What kind of cash did you think it was? It is true that it is rare to find someone who can give you over KES 80,000 just the way you are saying it. It is not easy for someone, not even in this village to give you money and tell you to spend it the way you want without giving you conditions. How did this money affect your relationship as a couple? What kinds of conversations were you having as you stayed home the whole day, strolled around the village and listened to villagers talk...what stories were sharing among yourselves? What were your fears? What were your excitements? What was generally going through your mind?

Teresa: We did not have any fears as such. It was all excitement on our part. We were only a few months old into the village when the GD team showed up. We had been staying in town for a long time. We were lucky to have come back the same year the cash transfer was brought to the village. We came back in January and the cash transfer program rolled out in June. It was such a pleasant welcome for us as luck came our way. We cannot say that there was anything bad. It was all happiness to an extent that many people are pleased that we were so lucky to have arrived the same year that the funds came. We could have just watched from a distance as iron roofs littered the village. It was all God's blessings. It was a miracle from God.

Interviewer: Odhiambo, did the GD team find you at home when they came?

Odhiambo: I was out of the village.

Interviewer: Did Teresa inform you what was going on? Where had you gone?

Odhiambo: I was staying in Kisumu.

Interviewer: When she told you about GD, how did it happen? Did she call you or sent a word?

Teresa: I did not even call him. It was a coincidence he showed up just a day after GD had left the village.

Interviewer: How did you react to the news of GD?

Odhiambo: I came when they had received the phone. I was happy. When I saw the phones, I was convinced that there were high chances of getting the cash. The cash was disbursed on schedule. We had hopes that we were going to use the money to do a number of things.

Interview: Christine

Interviewer: Christine, the next question I would like to ask you is this; I would like you to tell me your opinion, what you think. Describe to me in detail what you saw. When Give Directly first came into this village, I would like you to tell me what it was like to have strange guests coming

to your home and they ask you so many questions, write something on your door and leave you with a card with a number.

Christine: It is true I never expected such a visit from anybody. When they (GD) first came, I was away from home. I had taken my child to the hospital. They found two of my children, whom are in school as at now. They requested the children to provide them (GD) with my cell phone and national identification number. All those were within reach and the children gave them. When I came back, my children informed me that some two ladies, in the company of the Village Elder came and requested us to provide them with my(respondent) Identification and cell number. They wrote on the door and left behind a card with a number printed. They promised to come back soon. I patiently waited for them and hoped they would find me at home the next time they came visiting. That was around August last year. They actually came back and we talked. I just became patient and hoped to see what goodies they would come back with the next time they would show up.

Interviewer: What did they tell you when they came back the second because as you said, they did not find you the first time they came?

Christine: Am not sure whether that was day they brought a phone or not...they came numerous time that I could not recall clearly. They talked to us and we chatted on many things.

Interviewer: What exactly did you chat about?

Christine: They told us that there is some cash that will be sent to us. The first would be KES 7,000 followed by the second transfer and so on and so forth.

Interviewer: Ok...how did you react to this news?

Christine: After they had brought us phones, I said that it could be actually true that the cash being talked about will come. I had initially doubted the whether cash would be sent.

Interviewer: Why did you doubt?

Christine: I could not believe it was possible.

Interviewer: What made doubt that it was not possible...yes I know you have mentioned that you doubted...I would like to know why you thought it was not going to happen?

Christine: Personally, I have never heard of such a thing happening anywhere. They began with my home as they spread to other parts of the village. So I did not believe that there would be any truth to it.

Interviewer: What was this 'such a thing'?

Christine: The cash...whether the cash would truly be sent to us. The cash that they told us about. However, the cash later sent and I was happy.

Interviewer: What did you think would happen anyway? Now that you had doubted whether the cash would be sent.

Christine: You know somebody may say something and it never happens. I did not give it a deep thought that anything serious would happen.