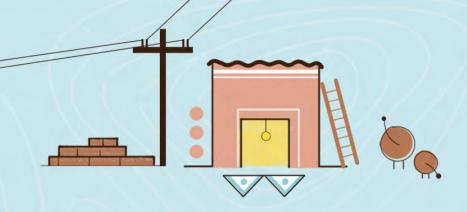


building up lives



Annual Assessment

Krishnapur, Maharashtra July 2024



ABOUT PROJECT DEEP

Project DEEP, incorporated in 2023, is the only organization in India implementing unconditional and direct cash transfers for poverty relief.

Our mission is to transfer money directly to people, so that they can carve their own path towards prosperity. Compelling global evidence demonstrates that this is an effective and scalable model of development. And the recent government movement towards cash transfer programs in India suggest that it is growing to be a preferred tool of social and economic policy.

We aim to build a centre of excellence to spur innovation and build a strong narrative in the space of cash transfers. For this we are building local evidence through program implementation, forming a community of practice to experiment new ideas with peers, and engaging with policy influencers to further strengthen welfare systems.

www.project-deep.org

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why cash transfers

Direct cash transfers have emerged as an effective model for poverty alleviation, with 300+ global studies demonstrating evidence for the same. These studies also dispel the myths that cash transfers induce dependencies, laziness, and a rise in negative consumption.

Cash is a versatile resource and directly transferring it to people has huge benefits on human development and economic empowerment. Most importantly *it provides* recipients with the ability to choose their own version of development.





Project DEEP's flagship program entails a direct transfer of INR 65,000 to all families in a chosen hamlet, with no strings attached. This is done via a woman's bank account.

This transfer provides people with choice and a dignified chance to correct the perpetuating cycle of inequality and poverty. It works as seed capital which unlocks their latent potential and aspirations. It enables asset creation that will benefit multiple generations and provides the opportunity to relieve acute stressors. This accelerates a family's journey towards a better life.

This infusion creates liquidity in cash-starved local economies. This increases communities' ability to access relevant opportunities, and improve livelihood returns resulting in the sustenance and growth of capital.

about krishnapur

Krishnapur is in the Arvi block of Wardha district in Maharashtra. It is inhabited by the Kolams, an Adivasi community, designated as Scheduled Tribe and categorized as particularly vulnerable. *It has 50 households with 181 people.*

It is situated 32km away from sub-district headquarter (tehsildar office) and 41km away from district headquarter. The nearest village for everyday necessities and banking is Virul, which is 6km away.



This village was chosen based on a few parameters of stressors and opportunities. The people of Krishnapur are skilled in their own trades of agriculture, farm labour and livestock rearing, and are ambitious about the next generation's prospects. Most people work multiple jobs, farming on their own land and on another's to earn a daily wage. Some people pursue courses in nearby villages, tend to the livestock in the community and look for opportunities to set up enterprises. Despite this, their earning capacity is constrained due to the inability to invest in their latent potential and available opportunities. There is additional uncertainty due to the weather linked income cycles. At the time of the baseline, *the average net income was INR 76,952* for a family of 4. This is barely enough to cover the costs and spend on their routine needs.

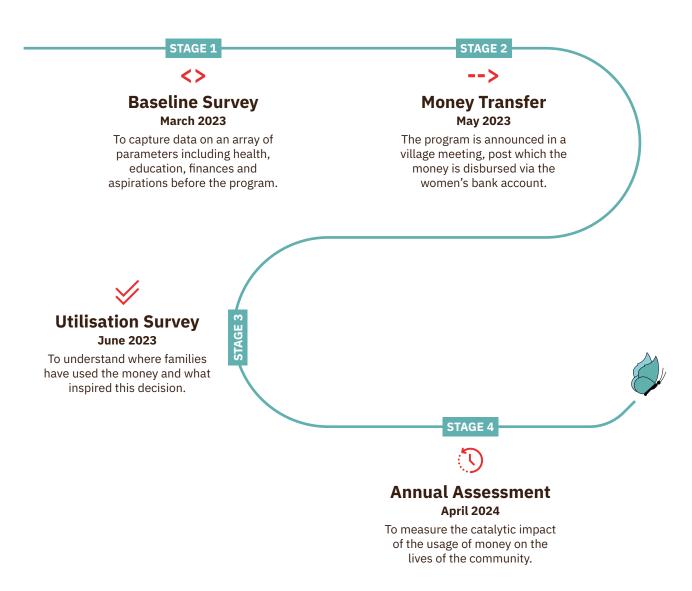
Over time, this has resulted in unhealthy and compounded debt cycles, which people are now trapped in. This inhibits their ability to conduct regular activities at full potential, making risk taking and income diversification endeavours non-existent.

41 out of 50 families had *an average debt of INR 77,622* taken from formal and informal sources. The loans had been taken for routine livelihood investment, healthcare, regular expenses, and house construction.

These factors cause an acute paucity of funds at a family and local economy level. Our hypothesis was that this bottle-neck which was stopping them from making a leap upwards could be smoothened with a cash transfer program.

Therefore, we implemented our first program in May 2023, disbursing INR 65,000 to all 50 families in Krishnapur.

Our Process



The surveys are conducted 1:1 with all program participants

about the report_

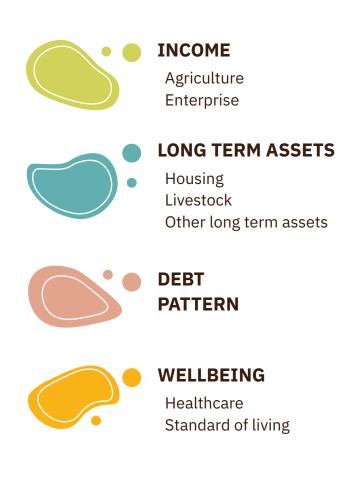
This report focuses on the impact of the funds one year after program implementation. In the utilisation survey, three months after the transfer, we saw a significant increase in agricultural activities, which boosted the local economy through employment generation; and creation of security assets. In the annual assessment, done one year after our program implementation, we see a continued momentum whereby families have been able to reinvest gains from the initial transfer to further their own development.

The subsequent pages detail the impact of the cash transfer over a period of 12 months that has been measured through the following parameters:



These sections can be read in conjunction with the map provided in this report.

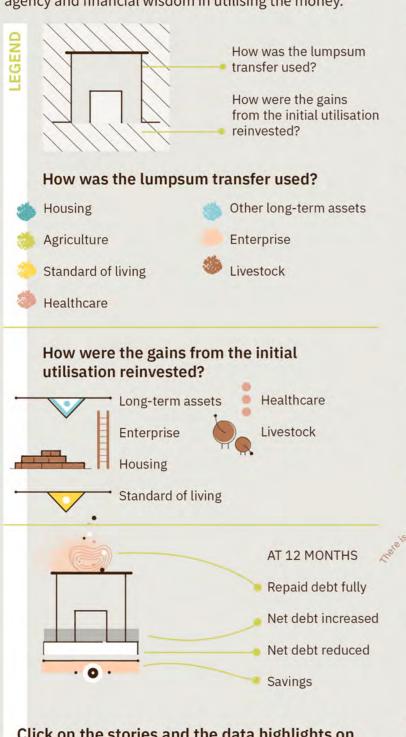
It depicts the individual journey of each family to showcase our data in a human way. The map highlights the agency and exuberance restored by the program.



Look for people's stories between the pages!

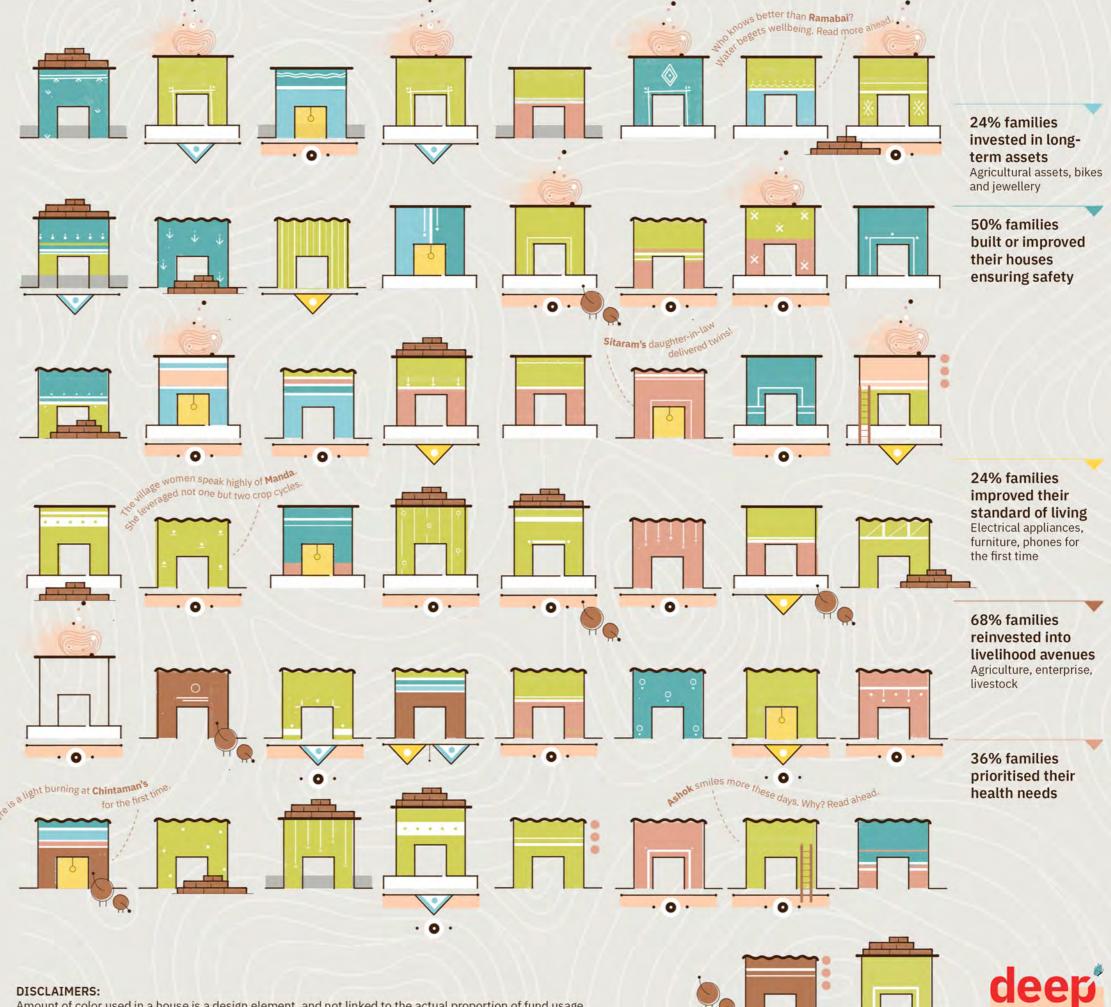
ONE YEAR ON... HOW HAS KRISHNAPUR GROWN?

In this map we have shown how each house in Krishnapur used the lumpsum transfer and reinvested the gains accrued from it, in a year's time. The iconography is derived from the local landscape. It denotes how people have varied ways of building up their lives. There is no set pattern to achieving one's needs and aspirations. It is important to acknowledge how they have exercised agency and financial wisdom in utilising the money.



Click on the stories and the data highlights on the right to know more

Amount of color used in a house is a design element, and not linked to the actual proportion of fund usage. Multiple cycles of harvest enabled for those who engaged in agriculture, have not been showcased separately.



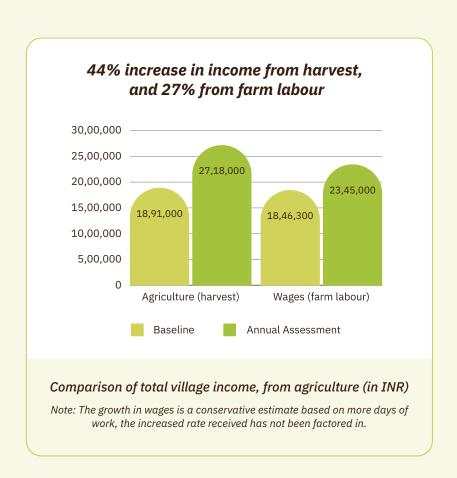
agriculture

The cash transfer resulted in 47 additional acres of land being tilled, a 50% increase from the previous year. Eight landless farmers were able to take land on rent, and four farmers were able to expand the land under harvest, *demonstrating not only an increase in aspirations, but also in risk-taking capacity.* This rise, alongwith the improved quality of crop due to timely processes, resulted in a boost in income from agriculture. This also enabled multiple crop cycles for those who had irrigated land.

The additional farming activities also meant that more employment was available locally ie. more people could work for a longer duration. Work was available in two shifts per day, and until March, as opposed to only until December in the previous year.

48% of the families were able to stock food grains for consumption from the harvest on their land, or what they received from the surplus of those whose fields they worked on.

28 families will be reinvesting in agriculture this year as well.





Manda Burbute was overjoyed when she received the cash transfer and expressed her relief at not having to borrow to buy seeds and fertilisers for farming. She worked hard and had a bountiful harvest of cotton. She used the proceeds to engage in one more cycle of farming sesame seeds on four acres of land, back in her parents' village. Her story is an inspiration for other women, who spoke highly of her diligence. She feels financially secure and her husband expressed relief of being able to provide well for his young daughter. They have been able to store pulses for the full year too, saving on food expenses. They have money for the next farming cycle and have also started putting money aside for an animal shed and strengthening their house.

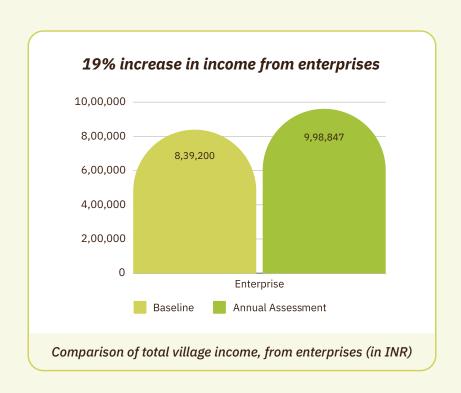


With the cash transfer, *Ashok Yelekar* moved from being a waged labourer to working on his own rented land for the first time. A village elder helped him identify a land parcel with a superior soil quality to support a good crop. His perseverance and hard work resulted in a superior cotton harvest. He used the income to start his own construction unit. He is delighted at being able to put his latent skill to use, and now employs three other people. He builds homes in his own and neighbouring villages. With these contracts, he is able to earn INR 10,000 for ten days' work. He now has multiple sources of income, because he has already paid the rent for the same land and intends to continue farming as well. His restored self-confidence is evident in his reassured body language and twinkling smile.

enterprise

Four new enterprises came up in the village last year. This includes a speaker set for commercial use, two sewing machines and a construction enterprise. Having more enterprises in the community enables money to circulate internally. For example: the resident tailor is able to take on more work, and rely on the support of the two other women who are engaged in sewing too.



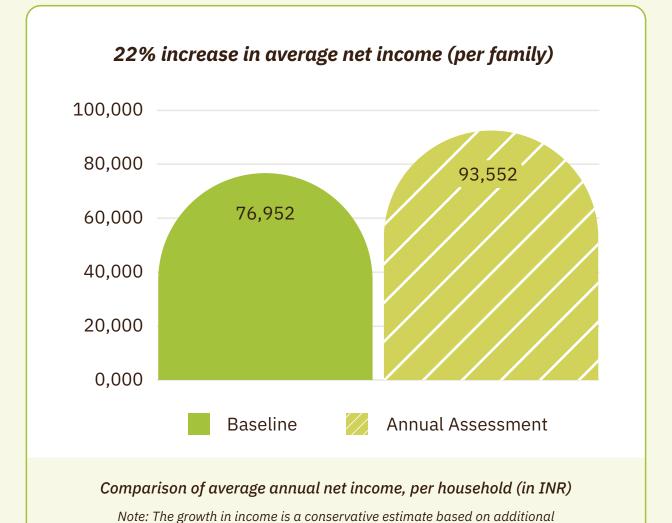


An improved harvest coupled with increased availability of work and a boost in enterprises resulted in a

22% INCREASE IN INCOME.

68% of the families intend to reinvest this income in livelihood avenues this year too.

20 families have total monetary savings of INR 7 lakhs. This does not include those who have already taken land on rent or invested in other avenues.



There have also been other routine developments in the village, which cannot be directly linked to the program, including rise in wages for ASHAs and Police Patil, and new employment for youngsters. An increase in income has also come about through this, which has not been

considered in the above numbers.

enterprises set up, the increased income within existing enterprises has not been captured.

housing

50% of the families have made investments in housing, ranging from strengthening kucha houses and completing pucca ones, to specific improvements in the form of roofs, sanitation facilities and kitchen extension.

Of the 14 families that invested in housing through the initial money, four continued to add funds to this, from their savings and harvest money. Similarly, eleven families used a portion of their additional earnings through the year to build or improve their houses.

Seven families have been able to move from a kucha house to a pucca one; and three more such houses are under construction.

A major relief stated by the community was that the unconditional money enabled them to build sensible housing based on their preferences, without taking loans. It has also taken care of one major investment, which will remain as a security for the next generation too, providing them with a strong foundation to grow further from.

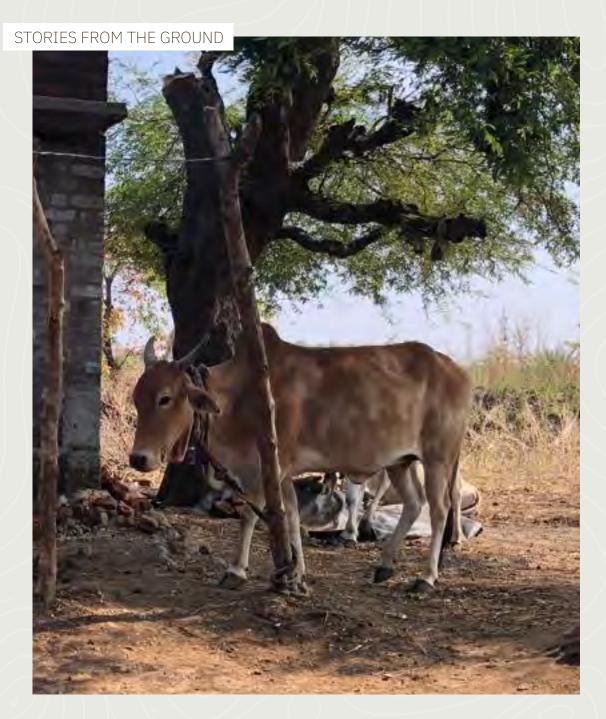
With Cash Transfer	Through Reinvestment	Both	TOTAL
3	1	-	4
-	3	-	3
2	3	4	9
5	4	-	9
10	11	4	25
	Cash Transfer 3 - 2 5	Cash Transfer Reinvestment 3 1 - 3 2 3 5 4	Cash Transfer Reinvestment 3 1 - 3 2 3 4 -





Sangita Kurazadkar was living alone in a straw hut when we visited the village for the baseline survey. Her house was due to be constructed, and she was thinking of taking a loan from her brother for it. Instead she was able to use the cash transfer, and complete her house without incurring liabilities. It is a rare occurrence for a house to be completed with plastering, within a year; and that pride is evident on Sangita's face. Her daughter, son-in-law and grandchild have also moved in with her. She is glad to be able to fulfil her aspiration of providing a comfortable life for her child. A huge stressor has been lifted, and she now leads a more relaxed life.





Radhabai Jedgad was happy at being able to purchase a cow for the first time. This can be used for farming, and she now has better and cheaper fertiliser for her farm. Soon, the cow will also give milk, which will be useful for her young grandchildren.

livestock

The total livestock in the village went up by 28% in the last year. The three families that had bought 13 goats from the initial cash transfer now have 32 goats; and seven additional goats were born from the existing livestock, which have not been considered in the calculation. Goats are an asset that can be sold to meet household expenses or emergency costs. Due to the availability of fodder and vaccination close by, they are lucrative investments.

A cow and buffalo were also bought, and two bull pairs were replaced. Cows, bulls and buffaloes ease the farming process, especially for those who have larger parcels of land. The reduction of human effort coupled with organic dung fertiliser, greatly improves the quality of the harvest.

Livestock	Baseline	Annual Assessment				
Cows & Buffaloes	16	18				
Bulls	23	23				
Goats	81	113				
TOTAL 120 154						
Total livestock in the village						

other long term assets

12 families were able to invest in assets that will boost their income generating capacity in the long run.

The bikes are being used to travel longer distances for better work. The well improves water availability and enables better quality of harvest across both seasons. Jewellery is a security asset, that is the pride of the family and can be pledged during an emergency. Animal sheds are important to protect livestock and poultry, especially during monsoon. *All these build the families' potential to better their livelihoods in the long run.*

20 families have total monetary savings of INR 7 lakhs. This does not include those who have already taken land on rent or invested in other avenues.

3
3
5
3

Number of assets increase in the village

Note: Jewellery includes purchase of new items, and release of pledged collateral.



Ramabai had initially considered painting her home with the grant money. But after deliberation and **thinking of the long term, she invested in a motor pump and pipe for irrigation.** Access to water has enabled a better harvest, and her family has been able to grow vegetables throughout the year. This has boosted nutrition and income. **She is most satisfied because it is an asset that will be beneficial to the future generations as well.** With the increased income, she has already taken additional land on rent for agriculture in the next year.



During the program implementation, *Ratnamala Chandekar* had multiple big expenses to take care of. She had taken two acres of land on rent for agriculture, her house construction was to be completed and then her son's wedding was fixed. Managing these within the same duration typically causes immense financial strain on a family. However, because Ratnamala had not taken debt for agriculture, no repayments were due and the entire harvest money was at her disposal for use. Through judicious planning, she was able to complete her house and the wedding arrangements without taking any loans. The harvest will be used to feed the guests at the wedding. She was extremely glad that she successfully managed two big events and that her daughter-in-law will be welcomed into a complete and pucca house.

change in debt pattern.

During the baseline 41 out of 50 families had some form of debt. Nine families have been able to repay all their debt, whereas for four families the outstanding amount has been reduced to less than 50%.

The net debt went up for six families during the year, of which five were for housing and only one was for medical purposes.

A notable amount of agriculture loans were repaid, and no new ones were taken, which is a significant change from last year when 29% of the total debt was for agriculture.

Status of net debt	Number of families				
No change	23				
Decrease	12				
Repaid fully	9				
Increase	6				
Change in net debt through the year					

	Baseline	Annual Assessment	Movement			
Agriculture	1,013,500	584,000	-42.4%			
Other Livelihood	450,000	435,000	-3.3%			
Long Term Assets	522,000	662,000	26.8%			
Wedding	225,000	210,000	-6.7%			
Routine Expenses	972,000	933,500	-4.0%			
TOTAL	3,182,500	2,824,500	-11.2%			
Change in debt across different categories (in INR)						

The quality of harvest also greatly improved because people had ready cash to buy farm materials and hire labour on time. This has boosted their self confidence, restored their dignity and made them more optimistic.

healthcare

18 families were able to prioritise healthcare. Being physically fit goes a long way in improving quality of life and productivity.



Sitaram Kumbhekar and his wife spent a large part of the money on medical care for their daughter-in-law. She had a complicated delivery of twins and a long duration of hospitalisation. Despite the availability of a healthcare subsidy, the cost of medicines, travel and stay for the husband and transport to and from the hospital was a huge amount. They were grateful for the support which mitigated the need to sell their cow, a key asset. The daughter in law had also requested for a television during her pregnancy, since she would be homebound for the next few months. They were able to fulfil her wish. Post delivery, they also purchased a cooler for the comfort of the young ones in the terrible summers. The balance from the grant has been useful in the continued prioritisation of health through nutritious food and consumption. And so, one year on, the twins and their mother are hale and hearty. And the proud grandfather's tiredness buster after a long day of work are the two naughty toddlers that await him.

standard of living

12 families were able to purchase items that ease the daily experience of life.

Items purchased	Number of units
Electrical Appliances	8
Furniture	8
Phone	4
TOTAL	20

Purchase of items to improve standard of living

Note: Electrical appliances include fan, cooler, TV, light; Furniture includes chair, cupboard, racks and flooring stickers.



Durga purchased mobile phones for her sons, who stay away from home with their uncle for medical and educational purposes. She also purchased two chairs for the first time.

Chintaman bought a solar powered light and phone charger, bringing light into his house for the first time.

Saraswati was able to get vinyl sticker flooring in her house, which will ensure that the clothes that she stitches for clients do not get dirty on the dusty floor.

Prabhabai bought a cupboard and some racks to store her clothes and belongings, and to make her routine more convenient as opposed to keeping things wrapped up in sacks due to having no storage.

our reflections

The few key design elements of our program that were thoughtfully curated through learnings from existing models, and our own ideologies. The one year cycle validates a lot of the initial hypothesis that we started out with.

Unconditional

The no-strings attached approach was key to the success of the program. The essence, which is of choice, went a long way in developing agency, enabling families to prioritise their needs, own their decisions and feel motivated to make the most of the support provided. The diversity of the usage demonstrates that despite being from the same community and living in the same location, there is an independent understanding and preference of what a good life means. There were some who invested in housing right away, while others invested in livelihood to generate returns which could in turn be used to build their house. It motivated some to set up their own enterprise and put a long ago learnt skill to use. And some others fulfilled their specific requirements of sanitation, a phone or livestock.

When we attach conditions to the usage, we homogenise the participants, not fully seeing them as individuals with subjective challenges and aspirations.

Universal

Similar to conditions, targeting also puts a collective identity to a group, with limited scope to acknowledge the other dimensions of them or their reality. It sometimes penalises those who are doing slightly better, and other times leaves behind those who are more vulnerable. When working with a fungible resource like money, especially in cash starved locations, including all the households in the community worked well. The socio-economic status was largely similar, but the level of exposure and the creativity of ideas was across a spectrum. Since everyone was able to participate, there was a seamless flow of information and ideas, with more willingness to support one another. Additionally, there was circulation of capital within the small physical proximity. People with additional land were able to provide employment to those working on daily wage, and also share surplus harvest. The collective relief resulted in more camaraderie.

Lumpsum

A large transfer comes with high risk and potential for high reward. In a place like Krishnapur, which is abundant with opportunities and yet stuck due to scarcity of capital, this program seems most suitable. There is land available to rent, opportunity for entrepreneurship and other avenues to create the momentum that aids circulation of capital. In this case, the lumpsum worked as the initial investment that was used to create livelihood, security and household assets. This will go a long way, in terms of generating income but also improving quality of life and productivity that comes from having sensible housing, reliability of long term assets and relief from the spiraling debt burden.

O Timed

Through our extensive exposure visits, prior to selecting the village and commencing our program, we learnt that the need for money is most acute prior to the sowing season. Everyone is coming off a lean summer season, when most of the savings from the previous harvest are spent. It is also the time that most families require debt again for basic raw materials like seeds, fertilisers and pesticides. There is a vicious cycle of taking debt before sowing season, and repaying at the time of harvest, that keeps people stuck in their situations, with no room to break out and spend on wellbeing. Therefore, the grant was intentionally timed to reach their bank accounts before the first rains. While the funds were unconditional, it enabled those who depended on agriculture for income to break away from the debt trap. And now we can see how the returns are being reinvested on themselves, opposed to being subsumed in repayment.



Woman's bank account

There is no strong evidence to suggest that the participation of women in financial decision making has been affected by this program. However, anecdotal stories speak of a few instances where women felt empowered to voice their own desires, and make decisions, sometimes for the first time. One woman stated that her husband and young children have bank accounts, only she did not. For others like her, opening a bank account itself was a source of joy since that had never been a consideration for them before.

One time

We have often heard that a one time grant only serves the purpose of relief, and does not really have the potential to aid development. However, as we can see one year down the line, it was just this one time assistance that was required to put the gears in motion and lift people to a stage where they can operate effectively. The sustainability that organisations seek for themselves through a returnable element, is actually seen at the individual and family level whereby *they can themselves reap the fruits of their investments.* We are confident that an additional grant is not required in Krishnapur at this stage.

conclusion

Our inaugural program in Krishnapur reaffirms our belief in the transformational power of direct and unconditional cash transfers.

Impact

Our findings align with global evidence that shows that direct and unconditional cash transfers are an important tool for development that improves individual lives and boosts the local economy. The myths around counterproductive purposes remain unfounded.

In Krishnapur, most people invested in agriculture that led to an increase in income and employment. The profits, which had no debt repayment liabilities attached, were re-invested in other productive assets ensuring the momentum continued. See Our Impact.

The quality of life significantly improved as people had economic stability, could meet their housing needs and prioritise health. All these boost their sustenance and resilience, contributing to their long term development. See Our Impact.

The diversity of usage signifies that people have varied ways of defining and pursuing development. It is therefore crucial to build the element of choice into any poverty alleviation program.

Design

It is advantageous to have a universal program (as opposed to a targeted one). It motivates everyone in the local economy to be entrepreneurial with their money, and support each other on the way.

There are several models of cash transfer. Providing a lumpsum amount is most useful in economies like Krishnapur where the main barrier to growth was scarcity of capital. See Our Reflections.

It is imperative to study the local economy before introducing cash as a way out of poverty. We are therefore testing our program in other geographies, with other demographic groups too, to understand the levers of success better.

Potential

Direct and unconditional transfers can become the dominant way of giving in the social and public sector. We will hope this project, and the subsequent ones, become an example of trust based welfare – one that others can build on.

EVALUATION SUPPORTED BY:

Yatin Diwakar, PhD Scholar, IIT Bombay

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26 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WHERE HAVE PEOPLE USED THE MONEY THROUGH THE YEAR?

Number	Number of families	% of total
Agriculture	31	62%
Enterprise	4	8%
Livestock	7	14%
Housing	25	50%
Other long term assets	12	24%
Standard of living	12	24%
Health	18	36%
Change in net debt	21	42%
Savings at the end of the year	20	40%

INVESTMENT JOURNEY OF FAMILIES



house holds	Agriculture	Enterprise	Livestock	Housing	Other long term assets	Standard of living	Healthcare	Change in debt pattern	Savings at the end of the year
1								†	
2								•	
3								†	
4					•			•	
							•		
5								†	
6								•	
7								+	
8								•	
9								†	
10								•	
11								•	
12								+	
13								•	
14								•	
14									
15								•	
16								+	
17								•	
18								†	
10	_								_
19								•	
20						_		•	
21								+	
22								†	

No. of house holds	Agriculture	Enterprise	Livestock	Housing	Other long term assets	Standard of living	Healthcare	Change in debt pattern	Savings at the end of the year
23						_	_	•	
24				A				+	
25								•	
26								+	
27								•	
28				_		_	_	+	
29								+	_
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"Giving cash directly is about giving freedom and dignity to people. We need to be serious about what addressing extreme poverty means. I had an economist come with me to visit a GiveDirectly project on the Rwanda-Burundi border. He found an old woman – maybe she was in her early 70s – living in a building without a formal roof with one possession, which was a cooking pot. Three grandchildren she was looking after who were not in school. She'd spent \$2 of the money she received on getting a mattress and he said, "Is that a productive investment? Can you prove that the mattress is a productive investment?" And I'm thinking, wait a second do YOU sleep on the floor? Are you saying a 72-year-old woman should be sleeping on the floor? I mean what is the point of lifting somebody out of poverty if they don't have the freedom to get a mattress?"

Rory Stewart (Advisor at Give Directly) at Devex @ UNGA 78

JOINTHE MOVEMENT

to empower people with choice, one village at a time!



Click here to watch the video

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Project DEEP

