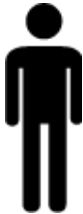


# Rethinking Social Assistance

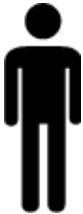
Joe Huston, Managing Director

November 2021

# The question



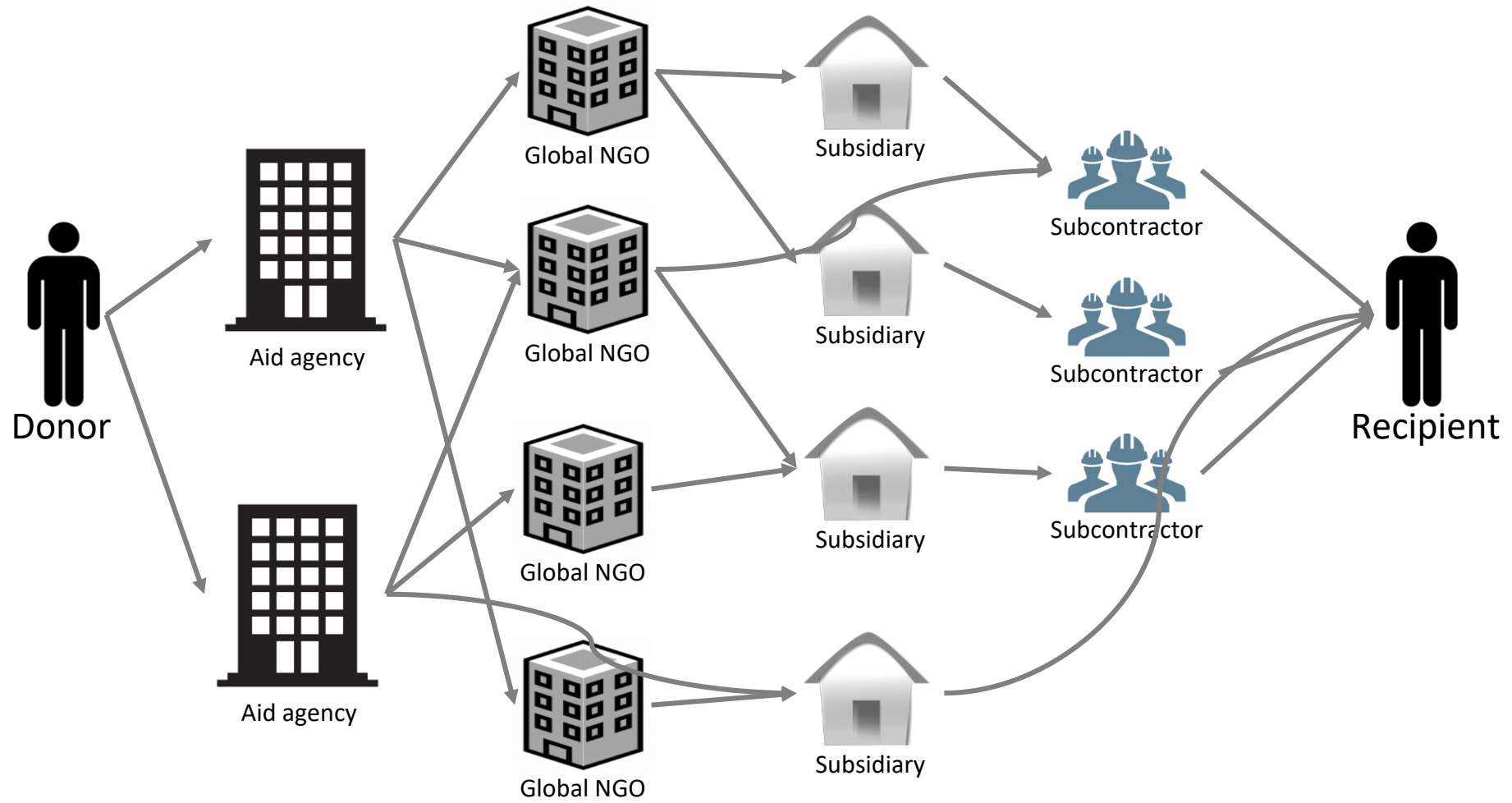
Wants  
to help



Wants  
help

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.

**Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.**



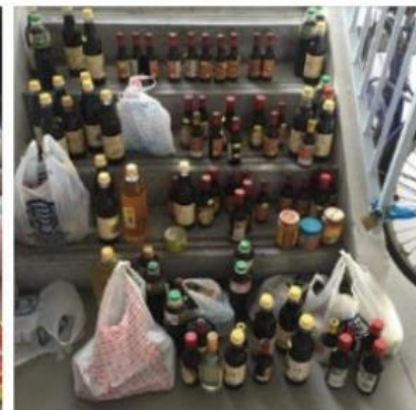


Yesterday at 11:56 PM · 🌐

Imagine the horror to see 80 year old Uncle's house packed with food and countless bottles of condiments. All these were 'donated' to him, but the thing is uncle doesn't cook!

Are we giving what the recipients need? Or are we giving just to comfort ourselves that we have done a 'good' deed? Think again.

Giving is an art and requires wisdom. Pls give what the recipients need, and not what we want to give.... keeping hope alive @ rental estate ..





A young girl with dark hair, wearing a bright yellow t-shirt and blue pants, sits amidst a large stack of cardboard boxes. The boxes are labeled with logos for WFP (World Food Programme) and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Some boxes also have text like 'GIFT UP' and 'NOT FOR SALE'. In the background, there are more boxes and some bottles of soda, suggesting a market or distribution point. The scene is brightly lit, likely outdoors or in a well-lit indoor space.

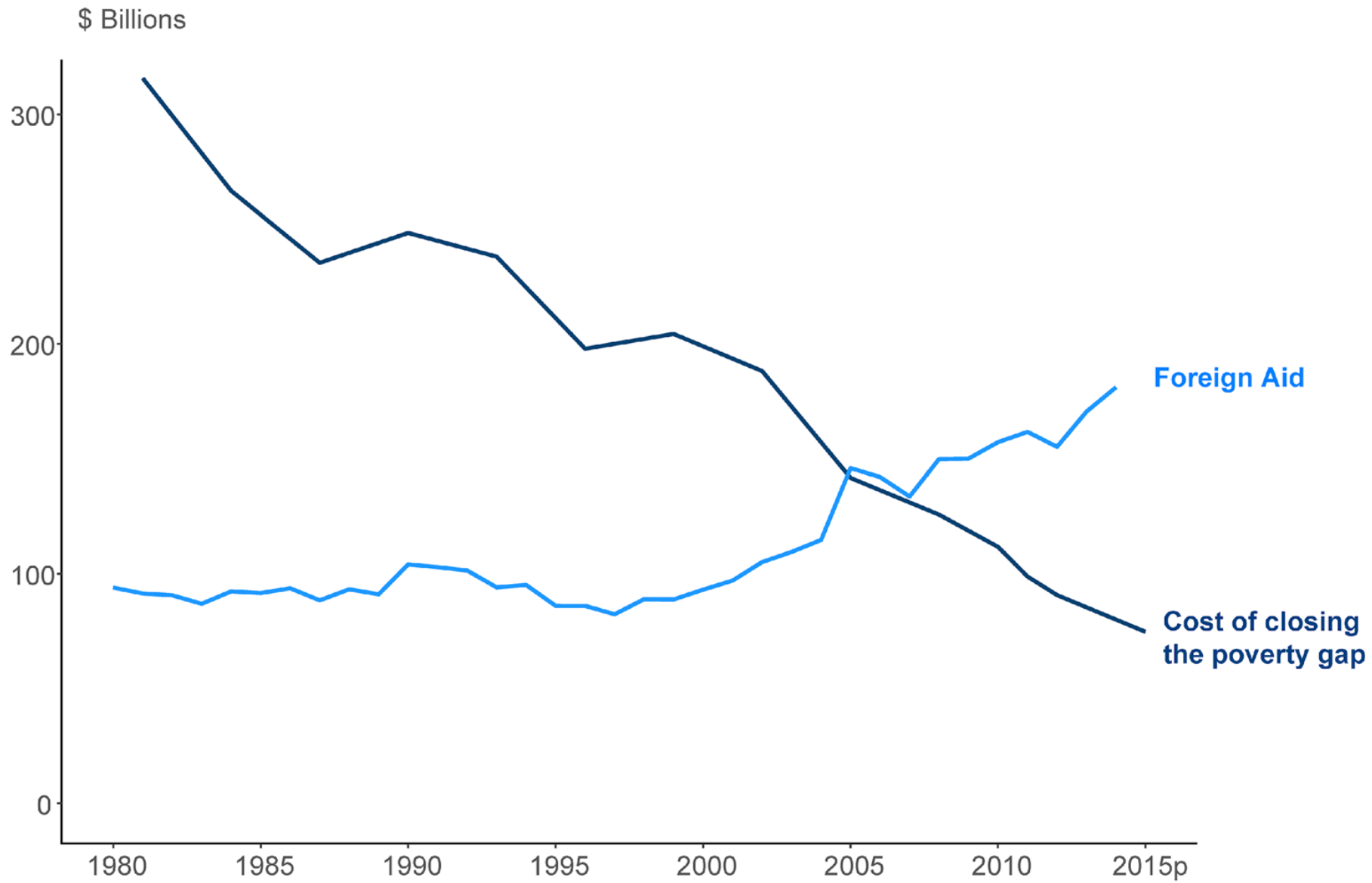
**70%**

of Syrian refugees selling large portions of food aid (2014)

● India

**82%**

of people in Bihar sold their in-kind vouchers for cash, often at discounted rate



Source: Zhang, Chandy and Noe (Brookings 2016) "The global poverty is falling. Billionaires could help close it"



## The numbers on teaching a person to fish

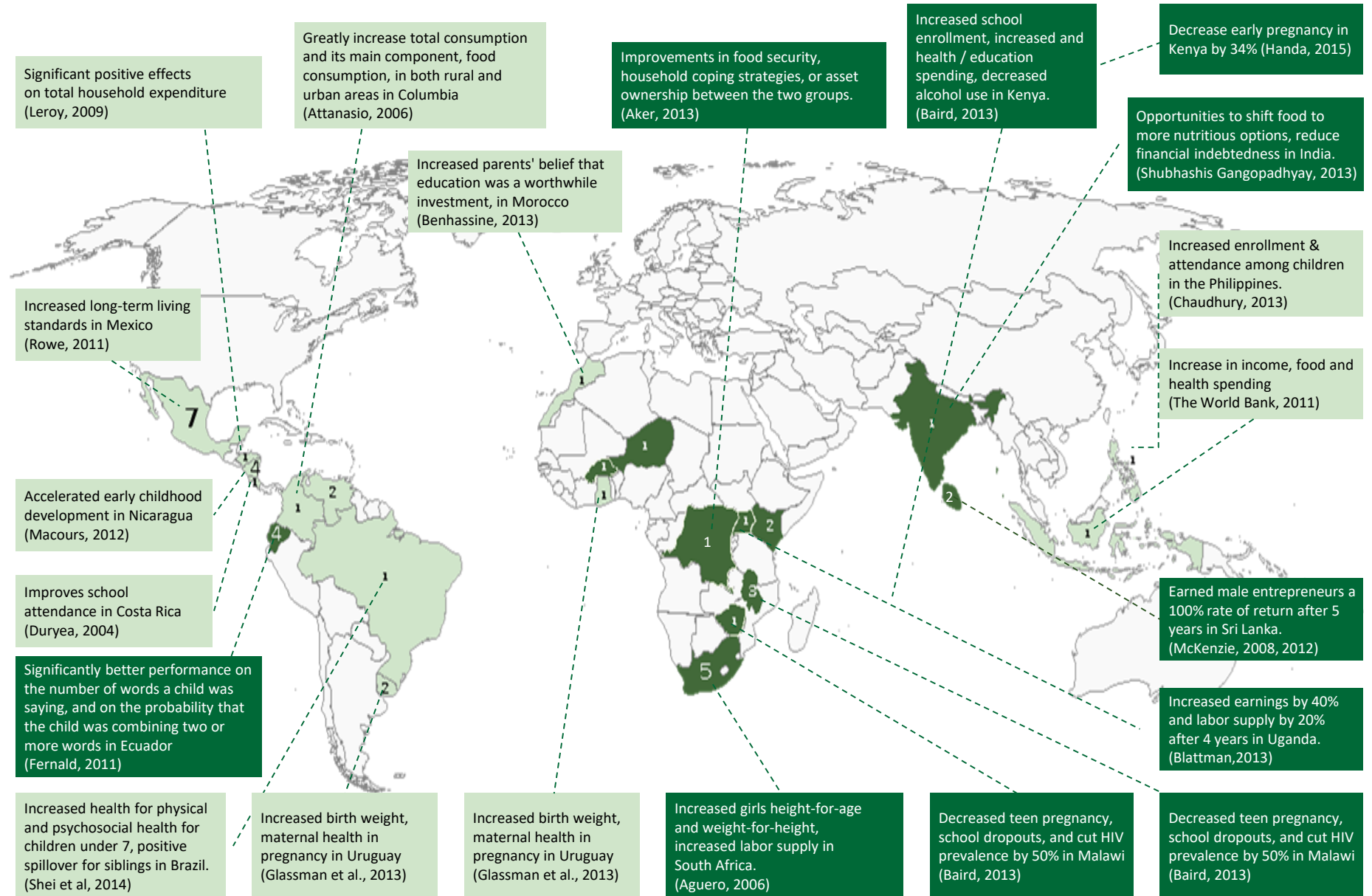
**9B** spent on 93 training programs from 2002 -2012 but

“Virtually every program evaluation tells us the same thing: training only sometimes has a positive impact. Almost never for men. And the programs are so expensive—often \$1000 or \$2000 per person—that it’s hard to find one that passes a simple cost-benefit test”

-- Chris Blattman

# Evidence

- Unconditional or both
- Conditional





“

This article reviews **19 studies** ... on average **cash transfers have a significant negative effect on total expenditures on temptation goods**, ... This negative result is supported by data from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, for both conditional and unconditional cash transfer programs.

”



“

**We re-analyze the data from seven randomized controlled trials of government-run cash transfer programs in six developing countries throughout the world, and find no systematic evidence that cash transfer programs discourage work.**

”

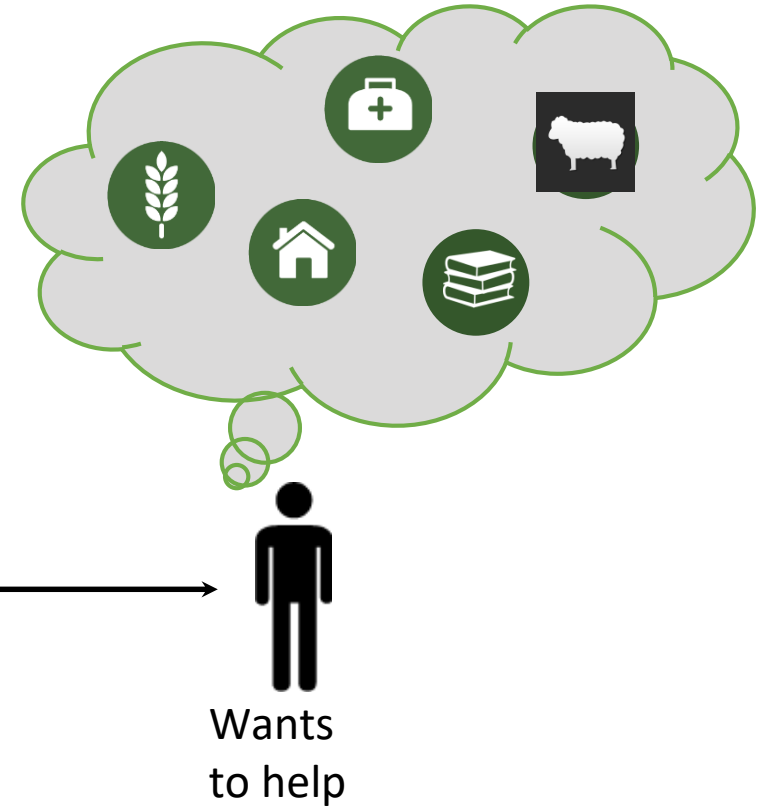


There are **93 countries** with mobile money and **>400M** current mobile money users



Wants  
to help

Wants  
to help



## 1: Design

## 2: Target

## 3: Enroll

## 4: Audit

## 5: Transfer

## 6: Monitor

## 7: Evaluate

Determine location, targeting criteria, payment amount / frequency, and add'l features for program

Register eligible recipients, ensuring access to mobile money accounts

Process mobile money payments through fully integrated system, controlling payment timing and size, delivered via financial service provider

Evaluate program through additional qualitative follow-up surveys, randomized controlled trials, or focus groups, either conducted by GiveDirectly staff or external evaluators

Conduct census of targeted geography to identify eligible recipients based on targeting criteria

Conduct independent audits of individual households. Run automated data checks to flag suspicious discrepancies pre-payment

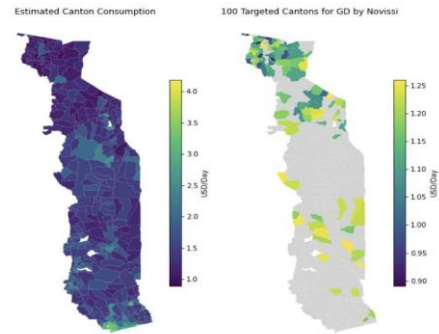
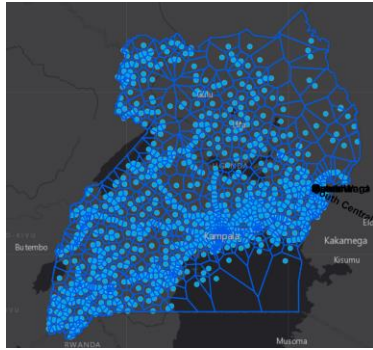
Conduct follow-up surveys after each transfer to assess user experience and record recipient spending

Field inbound calls from recipients through toll-free hotline

# Applications

# 1 Togo: How did we launch there?

Through **cross-sector partnership**, we built a program capable of fast scale-up.



**TED**



## **GiveDirectly:**

Brought operational expertise from past Uganda remote targeting design

+

## **Berkeley's Data-Intensive Development Lab:**

Leading machine learning for poverty-targeting lab developed algorithm

+

## **TED Audacious:**

Private sector group funding transformative responses to COVID gave \$20M to test new models at scale

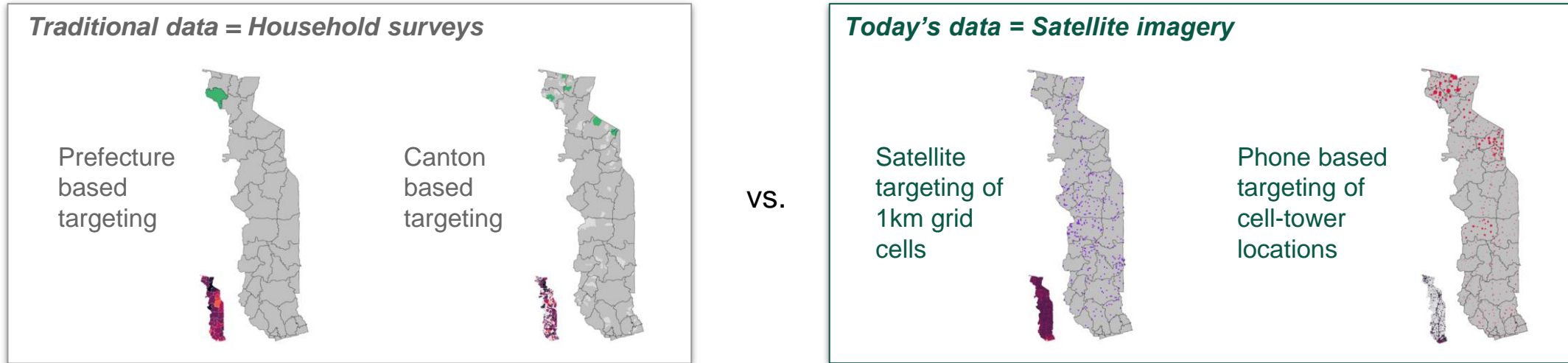
+

## **Togo Ministry of Digital Innovation:**

Togo gov't had cash programming, and wanted to scale up

# 1 Togo: We used satellite imagery & machine learning to identify the poorest people

## Step 1. Satellite prediction identifies the poorest 100 districts in Togo



## Step 2. A machine learning algorithm analyzes cell-phone metadata from the poorest districts, and assigns poverty scores to users

### Metadata includes:

- # of SMS sent
- # of cell towers pinged
- Frequency of top-up

ID	Type	Date-Time	Caller-Tower	...
97939b87	Call	2014-01-04 22:00:11	212	...
97239b87	SMS	2014-01-04 12:20:21	218	...
97899b87	SMS	2014-01-04 21:03:51	235	...
...	...	...	...	...

## 2 U.S.: We've paid 134K families affected by COVID-19 in the U.S.

**10 days**

B/w initial idea and first payments in March

**\$0.99**

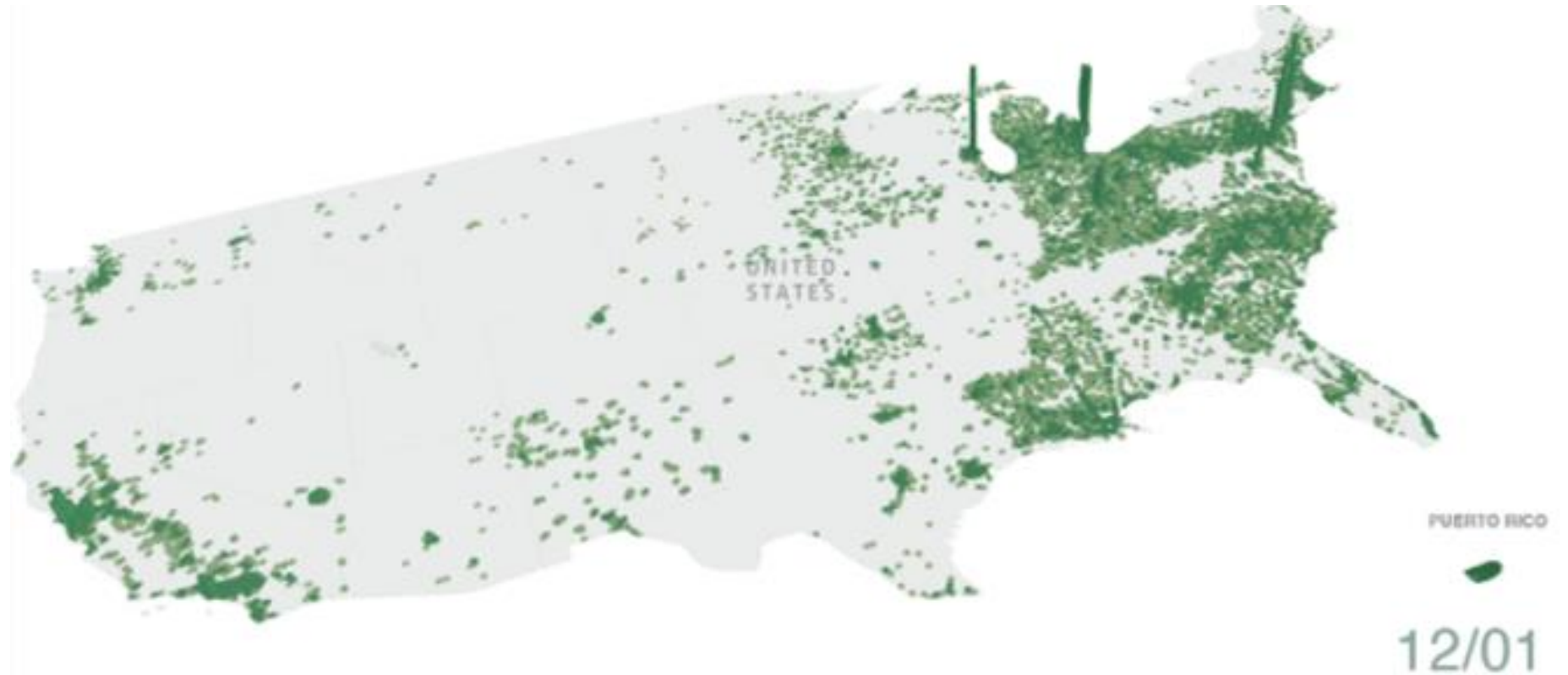
/ \$1 delivered to recipients

**2 days**

Avg time b/w enrollment and payment

**97%**

Prefer cash to material donation of same value



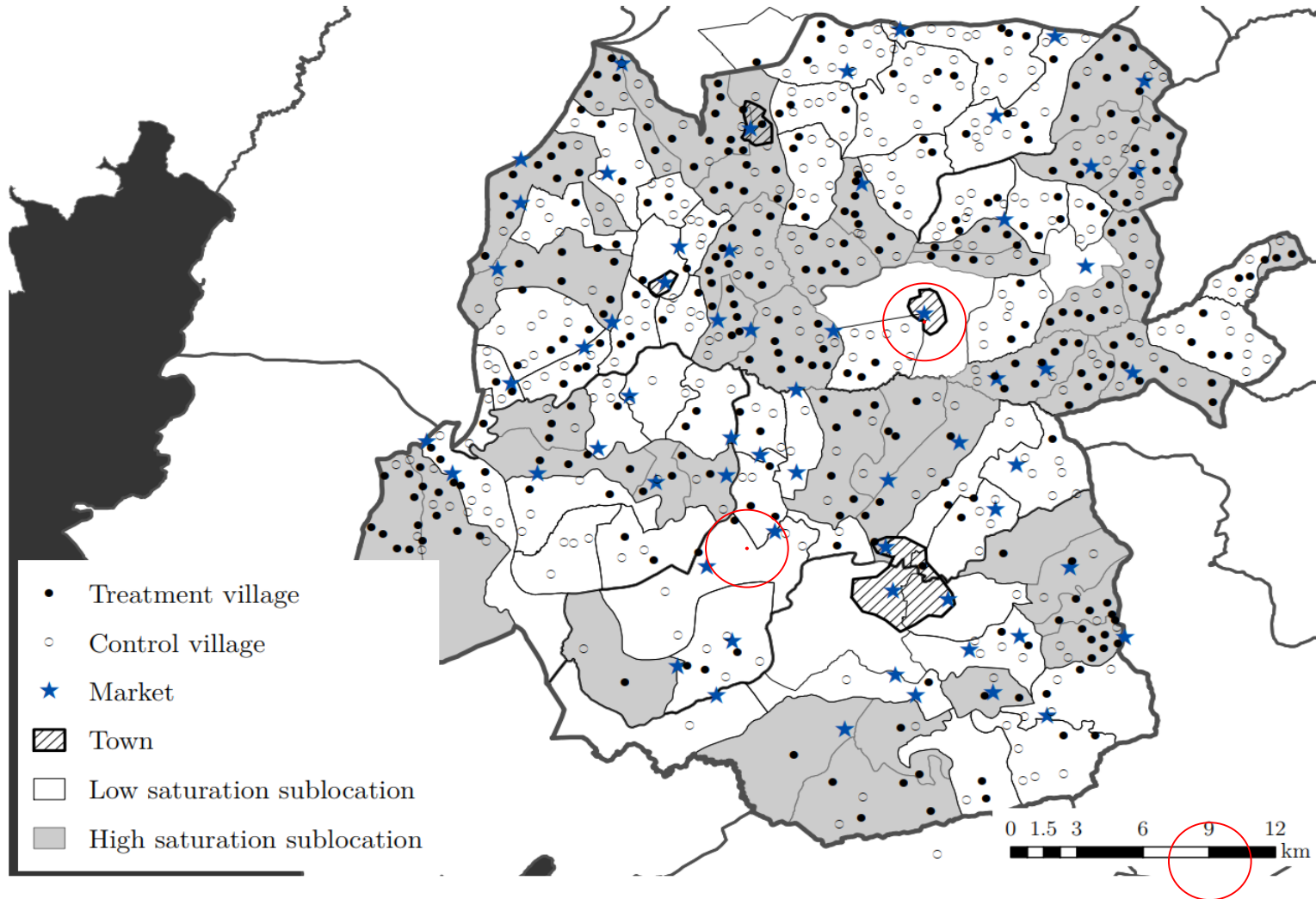
project  
100

FRESHEBT

Propel

STAND™  
for children

### 3 Kenya: Studying general equilibrium effects in Siaya district




**Delivered 15% of district GDP**



**2.6x Multiplier**

4

## Kenya: studying a universal basic income across 300 villages

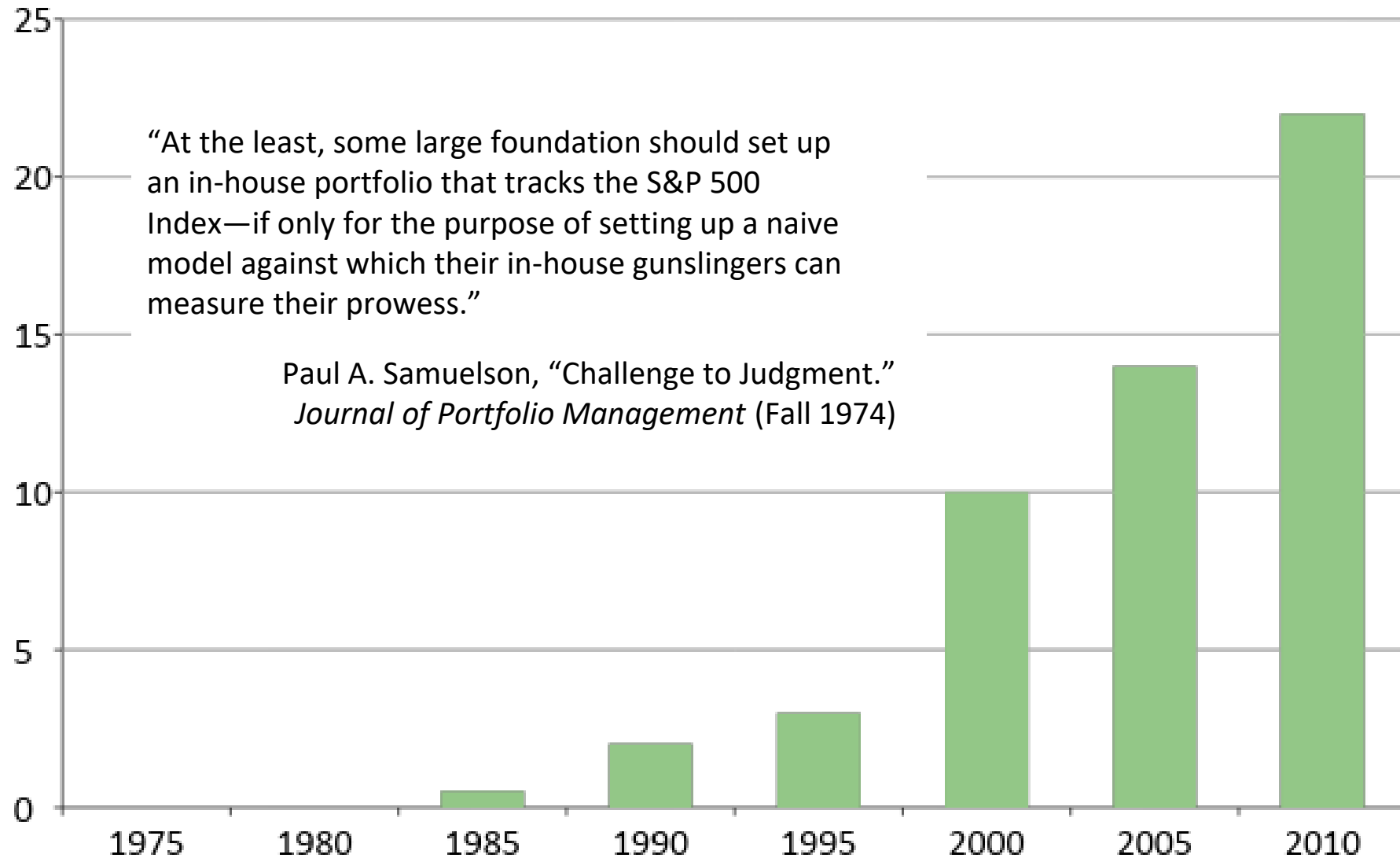
A satellite map of rural Kenya showing the distribution of cash transfer recipients. The map is overlaid with numerous small, colored dots representing different types of recipients. The dots are clustered in several areas, primarily in the central and southern parts of the region. The colors used are blue, grey, and green.

GiveDirectly has delivered cash transfers to 197 villages in rural Kenya.

The project is the largest and longest term test of a universal basic income ever.

- 12-year recipient
- 2-year recipient
- Lump-sum recipient

## 5 An “index fund” or benchmark for how we help each other



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