



Dignity and Cash

GiveDirectly's unconditional cash transfers in Kiryandongo refugee settlement

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IDinsight

About IDinsight

IDinsight uses data and evidence to help leaders combat poverty worldwide. Our collaborations deploy a large analytical toolkit to help clients design better policies, rigorously test what works, and use evidence to implement effectively at scale. We emphasize using the right tool for the right question and tailor our rigorous methods to the real-world constraints of decision-makers.

IDinsight works with governments, foundations, NGOs, multilaterals, and businesses across Africa and Asia. We work in all major sectors, including health, education, agriculture, governance, digital ID, financial access, and sanitation.

The Dignity initiative provides tools, advice, and new research to support leaders to build programs, services, and funding streams affirming the dignity of those they seek to serve.

We have offices in Dakar, Lusaka, Manila, Nairobi, New Delhi, Rabat, and Remote. Visit www.IDinsight.org and follow on Twitter @IDinsight to learn more.

About GiveDirectly

GiveDirectly is a non-profit that delivers unconditional cash transfers to households living in extreme poverty. This approach stems from rigorous experimental evidence of impact and core values of efficiency, transparency, and respect. GiveDirectly has been operational in Uganda since 2013.

Executive Summary

GiveDirectly has expressed its commitment to upholding dignity by learning and constantly improving its structures to serve people in a way that maximizes their autonomy.

Dignity matters to all peoples but has a distinct meaning in various cultures. However, research shows that around the world, there are three common pathways for being more respectful of people's dignity: increased representation, ensuring agency, and reduced inequality (Wein, 2021). Organizations need to be intentional in working towards fully respecting the dignity of the people they serve.

This report summarizes our findings from exploring the meaning of respect in Uganda's refugee context and whether people felt respected by GiveDirectly. The study further explored what GiveDirectly could do in future programs to improve the beneficiaries' perception of respect. We found that how aid is delivered was of utmost importance to our respondents; hence transparency, fairness, timeliness, and respectfulness are paramount.

We conducted 61 qualitative interviews and one focus group discussion with refugees from South Sudan and Ugandans drawn from refugee-hosting communities. This study was part of a larger impact evaluation of GiveDirectly's cash transfer program in Kiryandongo refugee settlement, Uganda.

The high-level takeaways from this paper are as follows:

- GiveDirectly was respectful in its interactions with respondents, and most respondents perceived the program as fair.
- The areas of improvement suggested by respondents focus on further efforts at transparency by GiveDirectly, in explaining decisions such as rolling out the program in cohorts and its selection criteria, particularly in the host community.
- Our findings on aid preferences are mixed - there is a tendency towards cash, but some refugee respondents prefer in-kind support.
- Ugandan and South Sudanese respondents approach respect in many ways, freely combining respect for status, good behavior, and universal respect, and offering respect in turn to those who show it.

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I. Introduction

1.1 Meaning of Dignity

Dignity is “a trait universal to all humans, which is inalienable, inherent, and unearned. Recognizing a person's dignity requires us to treat them in a way that respects their dignity. When we fail to show that respect for dignity, the disrespected individual can appeal to the wider society for redress” (Wein, Lanthorn & Fischer, 2022).

Dignity matters to all peoples but has a distinct meaning in various cultures. However, research shows that around the world, there are three common pathways for being more respectful of people’s dignity: increased representation, ensuring agency, and reduced inequality (Wein, 2021). The Dignity Initiative at IDinsight aims at upholding people’s dignity in global development.

Organizations in the social sector need to be intentional in working towards fully respecting the dignity of the people they serve. Some practical steps include engaging people to reach a common understanding of dignity, routinely measuring respectfulness, and committing to a dignity agenda. Such respectful interactions produce greater well-being and self-efficacy while maintaining dignity enhances public and development sector support.

Learn more about IDinsight’s approach to upholding dignity¹.

1.2 The GiveDirectly intervention

The non-profit organization GiveDirectly is providing a one-time unconditional cash transfer (UCT) of 1,000 USD via mobile money to all households registered in Kiryandongo refugee settlement (~10,000) plus ~5,000 nearby Ugandan (host community) households over three years. The dignity lens in this study supplements the broader impact evaluation² that examined the effect of UCTs on households’ economic and psychological well-being.

Dignity is at the core of GiveDirectly’s operating model, as they explain in a case study on “*Cultures of dignity are possible.*”³ GiveDirectly has

¹ IDinsight Dignity Initiative (<https://www.idinsight.org/services/upholding-dignity/>)

² The full impact evaluation report can be found in (https://www.idinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GiveDirectly-Uganda-Endline-IDinsight_Final.pdf.pdf)

³ The case study can be found in (<https://www.idinsight.org/publication/cultures-of-dignity-are-possible-lessons-on-how-to-build-organizations-that-respect-humans/>)

worked to balance the efficiency of technology and the need to serve people flexibly, adding internal audit and learning structures to improve how they deliver aid. They explain that *“We give cash directly to people living in poverty,”* enabling them to choose how best to improve their lives. Further, GiveDirectly puts *“recipients first,”* prioritizing their preferences over those of donors and the organization, which portrays an effort to reduce power imbalance. Finally, they regularly check in with the beneficiaries making them feel seen and valued by the organization. One respondent [M, SSD]⁴ mentioned, *“they take much of their time and reach everyone individually.”* These acts demonstrate commitment to being more respectful, an ever-evolving process of making changes as the organization learns over time.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study sought to understand the dignity experiences of people in the Kiryandongo refugee settlement, including their experiences with the GiveDirectly program. Moreover, this study moves forward the research on how people define and conceptualize dignity and what that means for humanitarian organizations such as GiveDirectly. Also, the study contributes to expanding the evidence in the existing research agenda⁵ to keep demonstrating what works to uphold dignity and why it matters.

Box 1: Research Questions

Primary Research Questions

1. How do our respondents define respect?
2. Did they find their interaction with GiveDirectly respectful of their dignity?
3. What could GiveDirectly do differently in future work to improve recipients' sense of being respected in their interactions with GiveDirectly?

Secondary Research Questions

1. How often and in what ways do representation, agency, and equality themes come up in peoples' definitions and experiences of dignity and respect?
2. How do our findings from the research questions above vary by gender, refugee-host status, and recipient-non-recipient status.
3. What are the consequences of experiencing (dis)respectful treatment?
4. How do our findings compare to how others think about dignity, especially previous data from East Africa?

⁴ We use three key characteristics of our respondents using the following codes: F = female, M = male; UG = Ugandan, SSD = South Sudanese displaced in Uganda. R = recipient of the GiveDirectly transfer, NR = non-recipient.

⁵ See appendix B for more details on the dignity research agenda

2. Methodology

Study design: This study was part of a broader impact evaluation that combined a randomized controlled trial (RCT) and a longitudinal, qualitative study. Primarily, we explored the topics considered for the dignity lens qualitatively.

Qualitative study: The primary objective was to understand what happened in refugee and Ugandan households as GiveDirectly introduced cash into the settlement and neighboring areas. In the last two rounds of the interviews, we included questions with a dignity lens to capture perceived respect, equality, and aid preferences. Table 3 in the appendix shows the specific interview questions used for our analysis.

Sampling and sample size: We used random sampling with households stratified on the gender of the household head. The selected sample included refugee⁶ and Ugandan respondents and provided variance on other aspects such as household size, ethnicity, and age. The sample size for the dignity lens study included the last round of phone interviews⁷ conducted in September 2020 (N=10) and in-person interviews in April 2022 (N=51).

⁶ All refugees sampled in this study are South Sudanese. 99% of the refugees in Kiryandongo are from South Sudan. While this sample does not represent perspectives of minority nationalities, we ensured representation of different South Sudanese ethnic groups (6) along with other characteristics such as gender, household size, etc.

⁷ This specific round of interviews covering dignity-related questions was the 13th ~30 minute phone interview in our longitudinal study likely resulting in respondent fatigue and this round was also cut short due to the suspension of GiveDirectly's operations in Uganda, which also resulted in a halt of research activities.

Table 1: Sample size and composition

	In-person (2020)	Remote (2020) ⁸	In-person (2022)
Cohort 3 ⁹	20	6 (30% of original sample)	16 (80% of original sample)
Cohort 12 ¹⁰	12	5 (50% of original sample)	11 (92% of original sample)
Host Recipients ¹¹	9	1 (11% of original sample)	12 (100% of original sample + 3 new respondents)
Host Non-Recipients ¹²	-	-	12 (N/A)
Male	16 (39%)	7 (70%)	24 (47%)
Female	25 (61%)	3 (30%)	27 (53%)

The qualitative interview respondents were usually household heads. If not available, we spoke with the next most knowledgeable person in the household as identified by the household member first reached.

Data collection and management: In 2020, we worked with a team of two male interviewers and two male interpreters, recruited from our baseline team and trained to conduct qualitative interviews. In 2022, we worked with a group of five male interviewers covering all the main languages spoken by refugee and host communities.

⁸ The remote survey resulted in a reduced overall sample size due to some households not having phones or reliable phone reception. In addition, our qualitative interviewers did not cover all the languages spoken by respondents and using a translator for phone interviews was not viable.

⁹ Refugee respondents randomly selected as the recipient group sample. Cohort 3 started to receive their transfers in May 2020

¹⁰ Refugee respondents randomly selected as the non-recipient sample. They started to receive the transfers in March to April 2022 as we were conducting the final round of interviews.

¹¹ Ugandan respondents randomly selected from two villages (Ndoyo and Panyadoli-A) nearby the settlement

¹² The host non-recipients included 9 purposively sampled Ugandan respondents from villages that have not been selected to receive GiveDirectly's transfers (Yelekeni, Adagwo, and Panyandoli-B), and 3 purposively selected Ugandan KIs from Bweyale town (e.g., a health worker, teacher, and business owner)

Interviewers audio-recorded and later translated and transcribed the interviews embellishing them with their notes on observations, non-verbal cues, etc. The team held regular debriefs and provided interviewers with feedback on the quality of notes, transcripts, and probing.

Addressing potential bias: Given the sensitivity of the information on how GiveDirectly treated respondents, the enumerators presented themselves as independent evaluators. They often assured the participants of confidentiality; the information they shared would not be linked back to individuals and would not affect the cash transfers.

Analytical approach: We used a thematic approach to analyze qualitative data. We applied “codes” or “labels” to raw data to identify and organize ideas, concepts, behaviors, or experiences and further aggregated them deductively into “themes” based on our research questions and existing theory to describe patterns in our dataset. We tallied the frequencies of identified ideas, experiences, etc., by gender and respondent group. Throughout the report, we use quantifiers as follows:

- *“Majority” or “Most”* refers to the opinion of almost all respondents,
- *“Many”* refers to the opinion of half or more than half of the respondents,
- *“Some”* refers to the opinion of less than half of the respondents, and
- *“Few”* refers to the opinion of a small fraction of the respondents.

3. Results

3.1 Overall findings

We found that the respondents linked aspects of respect to status, behavior, and one's dignity. These perspectives, shared by most respondents, implied that people respected those who earned it rather than being inherent to all human beings. All the respondents reported feeling respected at home and in the community. However, when asked about who was respected by everyone, it was mainly leaders, older people, elders, the rich, "*big people*," workers, and parents in order of frequency. People respected them because of their roles and responsibilities in the community, position, wealth, wisdom, and age.

In addition to respect, we asked about the experiences with aid organizations operating in the settlement. Many felt good about the support from different organizations; however, a few felt bad for depending on the aid. Additionally, the majority perceived the support given by aid organizations as fair, particularly among the refugees. In experiences with GiveDirectly, most respondents felt respected and treated fairly. Themes of recognition, agency, and equality often came up in the description of their experiences.

Most Ugandans picked cash over in-kind support in a hypothetical situation regarding aid preferences. In contrast, many refugees chose in-kind support such as bursaries because of the challenge of raising school fees, followed by food. These two types of in-kind support mentioned also reflect refugees' spending priorities of the GiveDirectly cash transfer.¹³ Those who shared reasons for choosing in-kind support said it was to avoid redirecting the cash to other needs and inflation.

One-off transfers were also favorable to more respondents than monthly installments. Many respondents valued the flexibility of money as they could use it for various needs. For example, one respondent [M, UG] shared: "*I just execute whatever I feel is needed to elevate me to a better position.*" These findings echo the suggestions in the Dignity Report (Wein, 2021) "*to convert more in-kind aid programs into unconditional cash transfers, which are seen as more respectful by their recipients.*"

3.2 Dimensions of respect

¹³ See more details on the transfer plans and utilization in the impact evaluation report found in (https://www.idinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GiveDirectly-Uganda-Endline-IDinsight_Final.pdf)

We grouped our findings into 3.2.1) what is the meaning of respect? 3.2.2 - 3.2.4) who do the respondents respect in the community and why? and 3.2.5) consequences of respect

3.2.1 Majority of the respondents described respect as good behavior

We asked our respondents what respect means to them. The majority understood respect as a person's behavior and actions in the community, with some understanding it as self-respect, honor, and *"dignity of a person."*

Overwhelmingly, the respondents described respect as good character and behavior. Such behavior determines who is respected and how one can show respect in the community. Respectable character traits included maturity, humility, trustworthiness, and politeness. Whereas doing good, treating others well, no *"fights," "quarrels,"* or *"abuse,"* and being role models were some examples shared of good behavior. To some respondents, respect is actions such as *"doing something valuable,"* honoring others, dressing decently, and respecting people's property. Further, a few described respect as merit-based, *"an honor given to leaders,"* and *"an important person."*

Some respondents felt that self-respect was crucial to gaining respect from others. Relatedly, Wein (2021) found an emphasis on the idea of self-respect from respondents in a dignity study in Kenya. We found that the respondents' concept of self-respect is demonstrable by good character, which aligns with the philosopher Kant's notion of self-respect as *"a subjective motivation to continue striving to do right and be good"* (Dillon, 2022).

3.2.2 Majority of the respondents respected people with status

Most respondents said the people respected by everyone in the community are those with status obtained by authority, sociocultural role, or socioeconomic level.

3.2.2.1 Respect for people in authority

Most of the respondents shared that leaders and *"big people"* who hold *"positions of high esteem"* were the ones who were respected by all. This finding reflects rankism, as discussed by Fuller (2004), where rank and power are the root cause of various dominating behaviors. This opinion was common and did not differ by gender or refugee-host status. The respondents revered their leaders due to their power and position, which warrants respect. According to one of the key informants (KI), [M, UG], *"it is natural to respect leaders."* The leadership mentioned

included the cluster leaders, elected local councils, and all other political leaders in the hierarchy to the President. Specifically, the community valued and respected these leaders because of their roles and responsibilities.

Respondents also recognized and respected religious leaders for their spiritual guidance, and *“people perceived them as holy.”* More males than females mentioned respect for these religious leaders, which was also more common among Ugandans than refugees. In South Sudan, religious institutions were not immune to the war, and churches were involved in the divisive fallouts. Therefore, it was common for tribal traditions and structures to be stronger (Jefferey, 2018).

3.2.2.2 Respect for people with a sociocultural role

It was common among refugee respondents to respect elders, older people, and parents. According to one of the respondents [F, SSD], this portrays South Sudanese tradition and social norms. Another [F, SSD] added, *“back in our country, we used to respect elders and husbands so much.”* It is common for respondents to respect seniors because of their age and wisdom. Their advice, guidance, and opinions are always highly valued. Affirming these views, one respondent [M, SSD] shared that before, he did not hold the respect he does now that he is older.

At the family level, according to a few refugee respondents, the household heads were the most respected for their authority in the household. One respondent [F, SSD] talked about a hierarchy to respect in families: the husband, the wife, and the older children.

3.2.2.3 Respect for people with high socioeconomic status

Other commonly mentioned groups respected due to socioeconomic status included the rich, workers, and the highly educated. Both among refugees and Ugandans, wealth was associated with respect. People with money were respected because *“they had the things others desired”* and *“they could sometimes help”* those in need. A common perception among Ugandans was that *“refugees have money.”* According to one of the KI [M, UG], that belief earned some refugees respect from Ugandans.

Government and NGO workers, social workers, police, and professionals such as teachers and doctors earned respect due to their service in the community.

3.2.3 Many respondents also respected people with good behavior

3.2.3.1 Respect is earned from good behavior

Apart from status, respondents respected people who acted respectfully. For example, to be respected, one needs to respect themselves, honor and value others, and be a good person with good manners. Overall, more males talked about this respect than females.

Other ideas of behavioral respect among a few refugees encompassed being responsible, and more Ugandans than refugees mentioned lack of violence as a way of being respectful. Having a *“good record”* in the community such that people *“do not talk bad about you”* earned one respect among refugees and Ugandans. Additionally, vices such as stealing, drinking, smoking, and gossiping signaled a lack of respect. One respondent [M, SSD] mentioned that *“people who misbehave, for example, drinking alcohol, insulting, etc., cannot be respected.”*

3.2.3.2 Good behavior demonstrates respect

Other than behavior determining who is respected, it is also a way to show respect. For example, people said they felt respected when others used polite language to address them, whenever they were listened to, kneeling and bowing down to them, or being welcomed and offered food in someone's house.

3.2.4 Fewer respondents mentioned everyone deserves respect

Few refugee respondents mentioned *“all deserve respect,” “regardless of age or status in the community,”* or *“irrespective of tribe or religion.”* They talked about the community members respecting everyone rather than specific people. This is *“recognition respect,”* as Debes (2017) suggests, respect for persons *“just because”* they are persons. Similarly, Dillon (2022) argues that people do not need to do anything to earn respect.

3.2.5 The main consequence of respectfulness was reciprocation

Some respondents shared that they respected people who treated them well. The idea of reciprocated respect was common in the age context, where the young and the old respected each other mutually. Similarly, in the family, between spouses and parents and children. Reciprocation relies on relationships, similar to the argument that dignity in the Southern African context is achieved through communities as described by *“ubuntu”* (Metz, 2010).

Additionally, two refugee respondents suggested that being respected leads to a *“good life”* and improved status in the community. In the

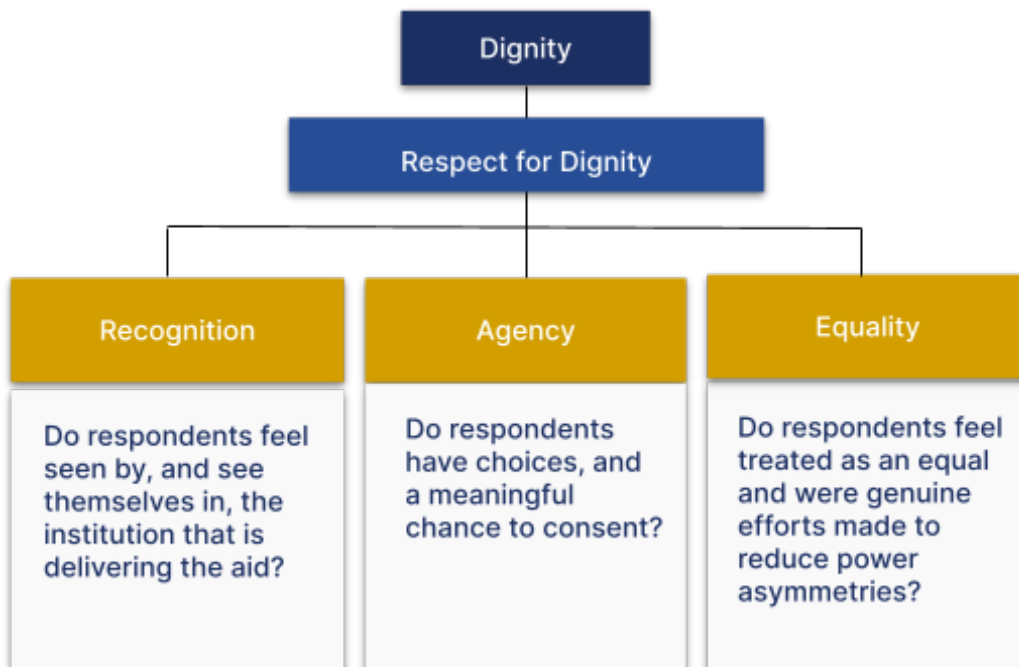
existing pieces of literature, as Wein (2022) analyzed, “*respectful interactions may lead to greater wellbeing and self-efficacy, improved health, better functioning democratic spheres, greater cooperation, and increased service uptake and satisfaction.*”

3.3 Experiences with GiveDirectly

3.3.1 Almost all respondents felt respected by GiveDirectly

Most respondents shared that GiveDirectly was respectful in their interactions. This finding supports GiveDirectly’s internal data, collected as part of their routine monitoring. An independent audit team investigates sexual harassment, rudeness, general complaints among respondents, and misconduct involving the field operations staff asking for or receiving hospitality from respondents. Between January and June 2022, 29% of the total beneficiaries¹⁴ enrolled in the Kiryandongo UCT program were surveyed, and none reported any complaints or cases of misconduct.

We discuss the respondents' experiences using the following pathways to dignity (Lamberton, Wein & Saldanha, forthcoming).



Recognition

Themes of respectful behavior by the GiveDirectly team were honesty and transparency, greetings, “*bowing down,*” and “*handling people with*

¹⁴ Total beneficiaries enrolled from the refugee settlement, and host communities were 13,978

care." The staff spoke to them respectfully and using polite language. Some respondents admired GiveDirectly's commitment to serving and resolving any issues they had. For example, one respondent [M, SSD] testified, *"we had a challenge with our sim card, I went to the GiveDirectly office, and the staff handled me well."* All these examples highlight how GiveDirectly upholds its value of keeping *"recipients first."*

Additionally, GiveDirectly hired a diverse team of staff that speak 13 different languages represented in the refugee settlement, and all the staff in selected host villages are Ugandans. This works in favor of beneficiaries, who are likely more comfortable expressing themselves in the local language or with people they can relate to. According to GiveDirectly, *"language is the first demonstration of trust and confidence that we can offer recipients. When surveys are conducted in local languages, we build trust and also increase comprehension of the program."*

Agency

According to one study participant, GiveDirectly *"ask for your consent"* before enrolment in their program, demonstrating respect. Only 12 out of ~5,000 Ugandan households refused enrollment, and none of the refugee households. Those who declined enrollment were not comfortable taking money they did not earn, could not agree without approval from family members, and others did not offer reasons. Besides, the baseline study of the impact evaluation of the UCT program found that GiveDirectly involved local stakeholders, for example, community leaders when deciding on the lottery approach.

Some respondents loved UCTs because there was no follow-up on how recipients used the money, and it is not *"like loans which give people a lot of pressure."* They knew it was in their power to use the transfers *"in a good way"* because such aid only benefits those who use it well. The respondents, primarily males, talked about the adverse effects on those who would misuse money. For example, according to one host non-recipient, *"if they give you the money and put it into bad use, you find yourself in trouble, but if put into good investments, you get a good reward."* Another added, *"you can either spoil it or use it wisely to change your life."* Community leaders in recipient villages shared testimonies on how *"many did good things with the transfers"* and, as a result, *"some changed their lives."*

Shapiro (2019) found supporting evidence from Kenya that cash amplifies the dignity of the recipient more than other forms of aid

because it enables choice. One respondent [F, UG] mentioned, *“you get to invest the money in the business which you understand the most, therefore reaping immediate benefits.”* Additionally, the beneficiaries can use the cash for several purposes.

On the other hand, a few respondents had different views regarding their lack of choices in GiveDirectly's modality. One respondent [M, SSD] disagreed with the cohort system of issuing transfers, and due to that, he felt that *“GiveDirectly does not listen to the opinions of the people.”* A respondent's relative added that she would prefer *“the household head receives the first installment, then another family member receives the second installment.”*

Equality

We found that GiveDirectly worked to reduce power asymmetries between themselves and the beneficiaries of their program. Through efforts to inform the community about its program and process by conducting sensitization meetings and forums to answer questions. One respondent [M, SSD] acknowledged, *“I attended a GiveDirectly meeting whereby people asked them why they are working very slowly.”*

Further, the respondents described acts of respectfulness that they appreciated. For example, refugee respondents valued that GiveDirectly staff looked for *“everyone individually”* and *“door to door”* instead of the refugees queuing in their offices. Case studies from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Lebanon, and South Sudan on dignity for displaced people highlighted *“how undignified people felt having to wait in queues to receive aid”* (Holloway & Mosel, 2019).

The respondents also felt respected by GiveDirectly's flexibility to accommodate their schedules, the time they dedicated to serving them, and consistent follow-up with them. For example, one respondent [F, SSD] appreciated GiveDirectly for confirming if the recipients received the money. Another [F, SSD] acknowledged that they would try again if they did not find a respondent at home or called with no answer, *“and that is respect.”* The refugee respondents also liked that the staff respected their privacy; they would call before visiting and wait to be invited into the recipient's homestead.

3.3.1.1 Consequences of respectfulness of GiveDirectly

When talking about their experiences, some respondents shared their reactions to the treatment received, ranging from immediate emotional feelings such as happiness to long-term connections such as trust and allyship.

Some respondents expressed appreciation to GiveDirectly and reciprocated the respect. For example, showing the staff directions as they looked for households in the settlement and others offered food that the staff politely declined. Others became allies and denounced refugees who falsely accused GiveDirectly of *“eating their money”* or those who spoke to the team harshly whenever there were delays in the transfers. One Ugandan respondent added that as a result of GiveDirectly being respectful, they trusted them.

Moreover, community leaders in the focus group discussion were happy with the GiveDirectly program because their support was *“free of charge.”* Many study participants, especially from the host communities, had never heard of such a program and could not believe they could receive *“free money.”* Further, the host community recipients felt valued by being supported.

3.3.2 Most respondents thought the GiveDirectly program was fair

According to most refugee and host community respondents, the GiveDirectly program was fair, and this opinion did not differ by gender. We explored the perceptions of equality among the groups:

- Among refugees,
- Between refugees and Ugandans, and
- Within the host community villages.

3.3.2.1 Almost all refugee respondents thought the support from GiveDirectly was fairly distributed

The most common reasons for fairness were:

1. The use of the public lottery method to select cohorts that determine the order in which the households would receive the cash transfer,
2. Enrollment of all refugee households in the settlement,
3. Starting the transfers with persons with special needs (PSN), and
4. All households getting the *“same amount.”*

After consulting community leaders, GiveDirectly chose to use the lottery method. This ensured fairness given the ethnic tensions among refugees in the settlement and worked well for GiveDirectly’s logistical needs when rolling out the UCTs. From the quantitative RCT baseline study, with a larger sample of 1264 refugee respondents, we found that 90% thought the lottery provided a fair process. Respondents from the qualitative interviews had a similar view. For example, one respondent from cohort 12 mentioned, *“I picked the number by myself, nobody*

picked for me, so I'm okay with it." However, a few respondents disagreed with GiveDirectly's approach. For example, not all participants were in favor of the cohort system. A few respondents had hoped that they would all receive the transfer at the same time.

On whether it was fair that every household received a cash transfer of the same value, 72% of the respondents from the RCT said "yes." However, others expressed that it was unfair. For example, one respondent from the qualitative interviews mentioned, *"GiveDirectly should have given the money per person because a family of 16 members cannot eat what a family of two eat."* Additionally, one respondent [M, SSD] did not agree with enrolling PSN households first because *"even some people who are not lugoros¹⁵ got the money."*

3.3.2.2 There was a mixed perception of fairness in support between refugees and Ugandans

Many respondents thought the support given to refugees and Ugandans was fair because GiveDirectly gave the same amount to both. However, a few respondents, particularly host non-recipients, believed it was unfair since GiveDirectly left them out.

One respondent [F, UG, R] mentioned, *"GiveDirectly gave people money regardless of their tribes, religion or color, which was good because nobody felt neglected in this program."* Another reason for fairness by GiveDirectly was sending the transfers directly to the household head, eliminating any loopholes for corruption. Corruption was one of the main challenges affecting aid organizations. According to one Ugandan respondent, *"some NGOs give you something which is not worth it, take your photos and tell their bosses they have helped you."* A refugee respondent also heard of a similar situation: *"Ugandans taking part of the things meant for the refugees and giving them [refugees] the remains."* However, GiveDirectly gave respondents what they promised. During enrolment, the staff *"did not ask anything from us,"* and they gave the transfers according to the cohort numbers.

Those who thought of the GiveDirectly support as unfair shared it was because *"some got the transfers and others did not."* Another respondent [M, SSD] thought it was unjust because despite Ugandans and refugees getting the same value, the Ugandans benefitted more. After all, *"Ugandans developed the town council through refugees aid,"* suggesting that refugees should get more since the host communities benefit indirectly from the aid given to refugees.

¹⁵ "Lugoro" is a word in the local language that refers to the PSNs

On the other hand, a few Ugandans thought the host community should get more than 30% as stipulated by the United Nations and Government of Uganda Refugee and Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) framework.¹⁶ One KI [M, UG, NR] suggested that *“if they could increase to 45% and refugees get 55%, that would be a fair distribution because there are many Ugandans who are suffering, and they [host community] are the one taking care of these people [refugees].”*

3.3.2.3 Within the host communities, respondents thought the village selection was fair

Surprisingly, slightly more non-recipients reported fairness than recipients. Some non-recipient respondents thought it was reasonable as they understood GiveDirectly *“could not manage to reach everybody,”* and others were still hopeful their time would come to receive the transfers. This misleading perception would have led to the wrong assessment of the fairness of the GiveDirectly program. Among the recipients, it was fair because they received and GiveDirectly must have assessed they needed the help. Other recipients said it was fine since everyone in their village got the transfer.

Among those who thought the selection was unfair, it was because GiveDirectly left other villages out of the program. One respondent [F, UG, NR] was disappointed because *“for us, they had given us forms to fill by the village board leaders, and we thought they would consider us.”* A few others, especially the local community leaders, said they did not understand the selection criteria. This lack of transparency may have led to tensions in the community. For example, one non-recipient shared that *“maybe those areas whose leaders were active, they got this money, but others did not get it because their leaders were lazy and uninformed like ours.”*

3.3.3 The respondents suggest that GiveDirectly should work faster, reduce delays and give more money to all beneficiaries simultaneously.

Respondents suggested that GiveDirectly should:

1. Work faster so that the later cohorts may receive their money.
2. Reduce the timeline between the transfers and any transfer delays,
3. Increase the transfer amount and frequency,
4. Give everyone money simultaneously instead of the cohort system, so others receive the transfers later.

¹⁶ “30-70 Principle” dictates that 30 percent of all refugee interventions target host-community needs

Some refugee respondents complained that GiveDirectly was *“working slowly.”* At that pace, beneficiaries in later cohorts were worried the transfers might not reach them as *“it will take years.”* Some were unhappy about delays in the subsequent installments which sometimes brewed tension in the family where other family members thought the recipients had received and wanted to spend it alone. Other than that, some shared that the delay in receiving the transfers affected their spending plans.

On the other hand, few respondents were satisfied with the program and felt there was nothing GiveDirectly could have done better. One host community respondent commended them for working independently to help them directly instead of handing the money to the government as *“we wouldn’t have received any money.”* Others who were happy suggested GiveDirectly should continue with their program, consider those who were not enrolled, and even give a second round to those who received. One refugee respondent also added that GiveDirectly should expand its activities to South Sudan to *“give help to every household to start a living.”*

3.4 Experiences beyond GiveDirectly

3.4.1 People feel good about the support from organizations

Most Ugandans and refugees felt good about the aid they received from various organizations. Some felt more positive about the support and were *“really happy,”* others just expressed it as *“fine,” “okay,”* and *“not bad.”*

The refugees were happy with the support, mainly because they needed it. For example, one respondent mentioned that *“people are suffering,”* and because of aid, they are *“better off.”* Another added, *“though not giving us everything, we are happy for the support we get.”* Some respondents expressed gratitude for the help as they depended on it, while others requested continued support. One KI added that the Ugandans were also happy with aid to refugees as *“without it, I don’t know what we would have done with these refugees.”* The continued dependence on aid echoes the results of the study on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) progress in Uganda, which found that the model to achieve refugees’ self-reliance through agriculture has not worked (O’Callaghan et al., 2019).

On the other hand, other refugee respondents expressed their desire to be self-reliant. In line with the philosophical idea of *“dignity as agency,”*

some respondents hoped to be able to provide for themselves and their families. One respondent [F, SSD] who felt good about the support added, *"I am only praying that we get enough money to help us sustain ourselves in the future."* In juxtaposition, three refugee respondents felt bad about their dependence on aid. One specifically highlighted that it was detrimental to future generations. He said, *"if they give you everything, it is not good, it makes children fools as they will get used to free things, always waiting to be supported, and they won't work to earn a living."* Another negative perception was that aid was not always timely.

The host community respondents had different reasons from refugees for appreciating support. Many were happy because organizations shared aid between refugees and host communities. Such fair treatment maintained harmony in the community. For example, one respondent [M, UG, NR] mentioned, *"they support both the refugees and the host community equally and respectfully, which has brought love between the refugees and Ugandans."* In contrast, One respondent [F, UG, NR] said, *"we do not get these kinds of support; we just see different NGO vehicles and motorcycles moving around."*

Other adverse experiences included:

1. The refugees' aid from World Food Program (WFP) was insufficient,
2. Mistreatment, for example, by not getting feedback from the organization when one needs help,
3. Delays in the support,
4. Corruption, and
5. Fear that the support from organizations will stop in the future.

Other than the negative perceptions, one respondent [M, SSD] acknowledged that the aid they receive, *"only meets survival needs, but cannot offer peace of mind."*

3.4.2 Refugees get more support than Ugandans, but there is a need for more clarity.

Overall, many respondents thought that the support by other organizations was fair among refugees. However, the majority did not know what the other got between refugees and Ugandans, and among those who knew, many felt refugees got more support.

For organizations like WFP, some refugees mentioned it was fair as they gave the same food ratio depending on the household size. Generally, they felt they got the *"same treatment"* in hospitals, schools, or food

distribution points, and *“everyone gets”* the support offered by the organizations. In addition, there was no tribalism in the support system; hence, it was fair. One respondent [F, SSD] added, *“that distribution has made us [refugees] not to be in bad terms.”*

The respondents had mixed feelings about the support given to refugees versus host communities. Most refugees and Ugandans did not know what the other got; hence, they could not tell if there was fair distribution. Holloway & Mosel (2019) found that potential beneficiaries value targeting criteria and allocation decisions openness. However, for aid organizations, it also potentially increases the risk of fraud or behavior change in the target population.

Among those who had an opinion on the fairness status, both refugees and Ugandans thought refugees got more support, while some thought all organizations were fair. Less common views were that only refugees should get help, Ugandans get more support, the government treats refugees and Ugandans fairly, and Ugandans should get the same benefits as refugees.

3.4.3 There is a tendency towards cash, but some refugee respondents prefer in-kind support.

Slightly more respondents preferred cash to in-kind support. Interestingly, more refugees than Ugandans chose in-kind support; on the other hand, more Ugandans chose money over in-kind support.

The most mentioned form of in-kind support by Ugandan and refugee respondents was education because of the challenge of raising school fees, followed by food. Almost all who chose food were refugees, supposedly because of the recent reduction in the WFP food ratio. One respondent gave an example, *“last December, they gave us maize only without oil and gave us some money on our own, but the money was little that you cannot be able to buy oil with it.”* Another added that they would prefer in-kind support to be cushioned against inflation. The other forms of in-kind support mentioned in order of frequency included farm inputs (mostly Ugandans), healthcare, and water (mostly refugees).

A few respondents' answers shed light on their persistent denial of choice by organizations. For example, when given a hypothetical situation to choose between different forms of support, one respondent [F, UG, R] mentioned, *“I’m just a recipient. I cannot be the one to choose. You know better what I want and can choose for me.”* Another [F, SSD] added, *“we are refugees; you are the people who may know better what we need.”* Additionally, a few refugee respondents felt that some of the

programs offered were not making an impact; however, they cannot *“refuse their services”* since the program is already there. These examples highlight the need for organizations to work with communities to assess their needs and preferences as a routine part of program design.

3.4.4 Direct, unconditional, one-off cash transfers preferred over indirect support.

The host community respondents shared their experiences with the UCTs, and the majority liked the idea because of the autonomy to plan and achieve individual goals. The excitement about UCT was evident in how they described it as *“a good thing,” “so good,” “a good initiative,” “a great idea,”* and *“really amazing.”* However, a few respondents preferred that GiveDirectly would have made the transfer conditional. One respondent [F, UG, R] said, *“sometimes it's not good to just give money like that without telling them what to do with the money.”* A KI added that giving conditions, for example, *“recipients to do a project, will make an impact in the community.”*

Other Ugandan respondents commended GiveDirectly's form of support and hoped the government would embrace it and turn from *“indirect support.”*

When asked about preference between one-off cash and monthly installments, slightly more respondents favored one-off cash transfers to enable them to plan for the money at once and direct it to various needs. Another reason for the preference for one-off cash was certainty. For the installments, *“the organization may stop sending,”* or *“the recipient may die.”* Among those who would prefer monthly installments, most were female and refugees. They preferred installments to avoid misusing the money, and some liked the security of a consistent income.

4. Discussion

4.1 Relevance to GiveDirectly's mission and dignity journey

This study showed that from the beneficiaries' experiences in Kiryandongo, being respectful, fair, and transparent are vital steps to upholding dignity. We found that GiveDirectly did the following to respect the dignity of respondents:

1. **Reduced inequality:** GiveDirectly's operating model of delivering the aid directly to the beneficiaries was respectful. It maintained the confidentiality of the respondents as no one would know when they received the assistance. Processes like enrolment were done at the convenience of respondents, for example, by going to their homes. Additionally, efforts like using the lottery to ensure fairness in the program were acknowledged and appreciated.
2. **Ensuring Agency:** GiveDirectly's UCT enabled the beneficiaries to choose how best to improve their lives. Many respondents highlighted that their transfer spending choices meaningfully impacted their lives. Additionally, involving the local leaders in program design decisions meant they had a say in what works best for the community.
3. **Increased representation:** The overall respectfulness by GiveDirectly from the language used to address respondents to dedicating time to serve them made the beneficiaries feel seen and valued.

However, there were things that the respondents highlighted that they felt GiveDirectly could still do better, which include:

1. **Transparency about processes:** The GiveDirectly processes seemed transparent to everyone in the refugee settlement. GiveDirectly's efforts to be transparent, for example through the public lottery or holding sensitization meetings, contributed to respondents generally perceiving the program as fair (with few dissenting views). On the other hand, in the host community, the views about transparency were more mixed. There was uncertainty in the selection criteria of the beneficiary villages and misinformation.
2. **Transparency about delays:** GiveDirectly's operations stalled due

to external, unforeseeable factors such as COVID-19 and the temporary suspension by the Government of Uganda. This led to rumors and uncertainty, especially among respondents who had not yet received the money. Further, irrespective of the external factors, GiveDirectly's operational considerations, such as inflation risk and logistical feasibility to enroll ~10k households at once, meant the program would take years. This timeline is against the beneficiaries' preference of registering everyone within the shortest possible time. In the future, in similar large programs, GiveDirectly could consider alternative strategies weighing the operational constraints with beneficiaries' preferences for shorter timelines between program introduction and cash disbursement.

3. **Transparency about choices:** While most respondents felt that GiveDirectly designed and ran the program well, considering the community's preferences, some felt they were not listened to. For example, not all respondents liked receiving cash transfers in cohorts. Some host community leaders did not understand why GiveDirectly did not work with them to identify potential beneficiaries. While it is impossible to account for everyone's preferences, GiveDirectly could consider additional strategies to acknowledge people's different preferences and continue explaining the reasons for certain choices in "*barazas*" and community events. This could also include leaders from surrounding villages not selected to receive the program.

4.2 Broader dignity agenda and future research

This study provides more insight into what respect means to our refugee and Ugandan respondents in the context of their communities and organizations offering support. We also learned that elements of GiveDirectly's approach are tangible ways of showing respect for dignity. They may be emulated and further tested. These include large, unconditional cash transfers and the use of a public lottery to determine enrollment sequence. Further testing may be valuable in offering choices about programs or program modalities (e.g., number of installments, the gap between installments, etc.) and how to maximize transparency.

Respectful treatment, as suggested, was connected to greater mutual respectfulness, higher well-being, and greater community harmonies. Researchers may add the above to the list of hypothesized and tested consequences of respect for dignity.

In Table 2, we report some findings of relevance for the broader research agenda and some implications for future research, organized by the research themes in our working paper on the dignity research agenda (Wein, 2020).

Table 2: Relevance to the broader agenda

Research theme	Learnings	Future research
Theme 2: Measurement	The qualitative questions used for this study can be employed for future investigations (see Table 3).	IDinsight has developed and validated a measure of Felt Respect for Dignity in interactions (Wein, Khattry & Bhimani, 2022). Future quantitative measures should focus on whether people feel generally respected in their lives outside of specific interactions and whether they embrace an ethic of respecting the dignity of others (building on Lalljee, Laham & Tam, 2007).
Theme 3: Describing the operation of dignity and respect	<p>Ugandan host respondents and South Sudanese refugees describe a similarly complex web of respect for status, behavior, and personhood. This confirms the sole existing previous case study among similar communities in Uganda (Holloway, 2019). People hope to move towards greater self-reliance.</p> <p>Representation, agency, and equality - the three pathways - are all important to these communities, and this framework continues to be useful.</p> <p>Yet there are essential differences between refugee and host communities in the effectiveness of efforts to show respect.</p>	Research on refugee and host community experiences should be extended to new geographies and to examine other programs and that put greater obligations on recipients in line with the humanitarian sector's commitment to dignity.
Theme 4: Increasing perceptions of respectfulness and the consequences	<p>Cash transfers are a strong way to show respect by an increasing agency - but in a refugee setting, this preference is not unequivocal.</p> <p>Lotteries, when well explained, can be a respectful way of randomizing distribution.</p> <p>Transparency about choices, processes, and delays is important in communicating respect.</p> <p>Respondents were gratified to be respected and tried to show respect back. They suggested this had led to increased well-being and increased community harmony.</p>	<p>We should evaluate the resulting hypotheses from this study that more programmatic choices, and different modes of transparent communication, can have a great impact on perceptions of respectfulness.</p> <p>A further theoretical and empirical examination of the wide range of hypothesized consequences of respectfulness and how these operate outside the laboratory is pressing.</p>

These research themes are derived from our working paper on a research agenda for dignity (Wein, 2020). Theme 1 (on philosophical investigation), and Theme 5 (building support for the dignity agenda) are not relevant to this study.

4.3 Limitations of the study

Small sample: The insights for the dignity lens study emerged from qualitative interviews with a small sample size of 61 respondents. This may have limited our ability to further dissect the views shared along demographics such as age and ethnicity. However, we interviewed people in different respondent groups, such as refugees vs. Ugandans and recipients vs. non-recipients. Their similar and divergent views enriched the analysis.

Limited interview time: The dignity lens study complements the broader impact evaluation study. The time needed for the qualitative study's primary learning objectives restricted the topic's interview sessions, limiting the depth of the dignity issues discussed.

Respondent bias: Despite the effort to present IDinsight as independent evaluators, some respondents would often think of the team as GiveDirectly. This may have resulted in biased responses when describing experiences relating to GiveDirectly.

Enumerator team composition: The qualitative study team consisted of only male enumerators. This may have potentially limited the engagement of female respondents. However, the depth and quality of responses did not differ by gender, and enumerators were generally able to build a good rapport with both male and female respondents. Presumably, the longitudinal design allowed us to build trust over time.

Recency bias: For experiences related to respectfulness of GiveDirectly, the respondents may have reported based on the most recent interactions and may have disregarded previous experiences. However, respondents' examples cut across different program stages, including the lottery, enrollment, or interactions during barazas.

5. Appendix

A. Table 3: Interview Guide Questions

Research question	Question in the interview guide
How do our respondents define respect?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does it mean to you to be "respected"? 2. Do you feel respected in your family? Why/ why not? 3. Do you feel respected in your community? Why/ why not? 4. When you think about your family and your community, who are the people you think are well respected by everyone? Why do you think everyone respects them?
Did the respondents find their interaction with GiveDirectly respectful of their dignity, and why/ why not?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thinking about the cash transfer program GiveDirectly is implementing around here and the many activities they are doing, like enrolling households and calling households. Even back to the lottery in August last year. Do you feel GiveDirectly is treating people with respect? Why do you say so? 2. Many organizations here in Kiryandongo settlement, like WFP, UNHCR, GiveDirectly, Refugee Law Project, and many more, support refugees. How do you feel about the support you are getting from such organizations? 3. How does it make you feel to depend on the support from such organizations to meet your basic needs, like feeding your family? Why do you say so? 4. Do you think the support that refugees get and the support the Ugandans get is the same? Why/why not? 5. Do you think the support from organizations like GiveDirectly or any other organization is fairly distributed between refugees and Ugandans? 6. What are your thoughts on the selection process of Ugandan households to receive the transfer? <p>RCT questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think the lottery provided a fair process to determine in which order the household would receive the cash transfer? 2. Do you think the lottery was the fairest possible approach? 3. Do you think it was fair that every household received a cash transfer of the same value?
What could GiveDirectly do	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you think about the idea of giving households a large,

<p>differently in its future work to further improve recipients' sense of being respected in their interactions with GiveDirectly?</p>	<p>one-off cash transfer like this without any conditions or requirements on how households need to use the money?</p> <p>2. a) If you had to choose between cash and in-kind, what would you choose? Why?</p> <p>2 b) Now, imagine an organization would be offering to give you free in-kind support each month worth 125,000 UGX over two years. If you had to choose, what type of in-kind support would you prefer?</p> <p>3. Now, imagine an organization asking you to choose between a one-off large cash payment worth 3 million Ugandan Shilling or a monthly cash payment of 125,000 Ugandan Shilling over two years, which is 24 months. Both options have the same total value - the monthly payment also adds up to 3 million Ugandan Shilling. So both options are of the same total value. Which of the two options of support would you choose and why?</p> <p>4. Is there anything you think GiveDirectly could have done differently or better? If yes, what would that be?</p>
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B. A Research Agenda for Dignity in International Development

The below research questions are intended to guide all those doing research on dignity and development. See our working paper for a fuller discussion of the current literature in relation to these questions and the consequent research agenda (Wein, 2020).

1. How is dignity to be defined?
2. How can respectfulness be measured?
3. How do dignity and respect operate?
4. What acts increase perceptions of respectfulness, and what are the consequences of that?
5. How does international development regard dignity, and what actions will increase support for a dignity agenda?

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