

## Impact of the United Republic of Tanzania's Productive Social Safety Net on Child Labour and Education

### KEY MESSAGES

- Many children in the United Republic of Tanzania do not go to school. Often, children engage in harmful work that can be classified as child labour.
- The United Republic of Tanzania's large-scale Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) provides cash to extremely poor households, with the aim of easing financial pressure and improving schooling outcomes.
- A study by the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti found that the PSSN improved school attendance, literacy rates and educational attainment.
- While the PSSN did not decrease the prevalence of child work or child labour, children shifted from working outside to within the household.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, nearly 30 per cent of children engage in child labour.<sup>1</sup> About 30 per cent of children do not attend school and another 20 per cent combine school and work. Although state schools do not charge fees, households still face schooling costs, including for uniforms, shoes, books and school materials.

Since 2012, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has been running its flagship social protection programme, the Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN). Implemented by the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), the programme targets extremely poor households, covering 1.1 million households (10 per cent of the population) as of 2016. The aim of the PSSN is to permanently increase consumption by these households, while easing financial pressure and improving schooling outcomes. With funding from the United States Department of Labor, researchers at the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti examined whether the PSSN leads to improved schooling and reduced engagement in child labour.<sup>2</sup> To do so, the research team combined a quantitative impact evaluation with a qualitative study involving children and caregivers.

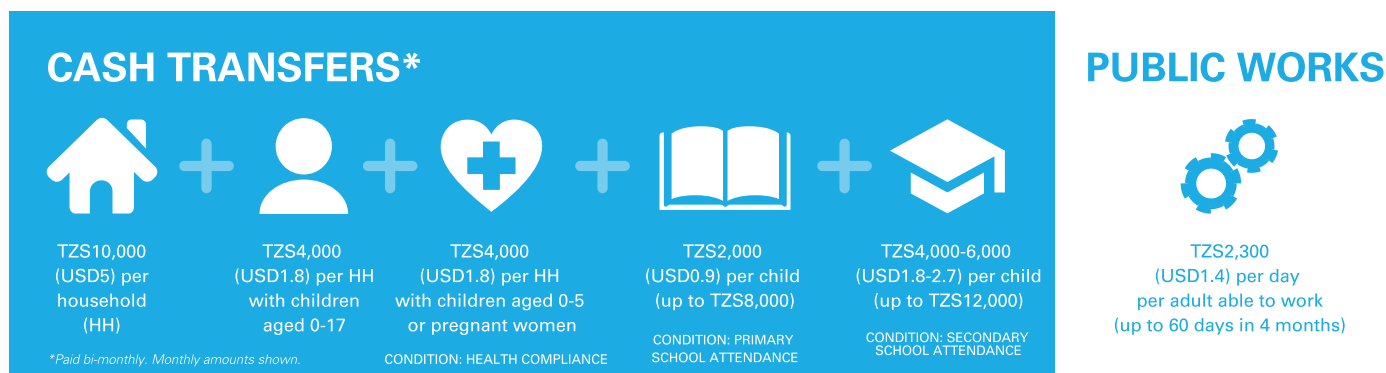


Beneficiaries of a Cash Transfer scheme, to which UNICEF is offering technical support, in Bagamoyo, Tanzania.

<sup>1</sup> Child labour includes hazardous tasks, excessive hours and 'worst forms' such as slavery or trafficking. Excessive hours and hazardous work are defined based on Tanzanian legislation and International Labour Organization recommendations. For details, see: International Labour Organization, *Tanzania Mainland National Child Labour Survey 2014: Analytical report*, ILO, Geneva, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> The research was carried out as part of the Transfer Project, a research and learning initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and UNICEF (<https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu>).

## ABOUT THE PROGRAMME



Note: Further details in de Hoop, Jacobus, Margaret W. Gichane, Valeria Groppo and Stephanie Simmons Zuilkowski, 'Cash Transfers, Public Works and Child Activities: Mixed Methods Evidence from the United Republic of Tanzania', Innocenti Working Paper 2020-03, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2020.

## ABOUT THE STUDY

The quantitative impact evaluation was designed as a cluster randomized controlled trial, directly comparing results for PSSN beneficiaries against those of a control group. A total of 102 villages were randomly assigned to one of three groups:

- to receive cash transfers only
- to receive cash and public works
- for delayed entry (control group).

Cash payments started in autumn 2015, after baseline data collection was completed. Endline data collection was conducted in 2017, after households had received the equivalent of 20 monthly payments.<sup>3</sup> The analysis sample included 3,516 children aged 3 to 15 years at baseline (5 to 17 years at endline).

In addition to the impact evaluation, a qualitative study was conducted in 2017, based on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with older children and caregivers.<sup>4</sup> The focus groups with children used a photo voice technique to elicit richer data (see box).

### PHOTO VOICE

A qualitative method used in community-based participatory research to document and reflect reality. Participants are provided with a camera and basic training on how to use it, and then asked to document certain activities. The photos are then interpreted in discussions.

In the context of this study, children were asked to take photos of the work that they and other children do around their communities. Focus group facilitators asked children to prioritize the photographs they wanted to discuss, which gave them an active, participatory role. These photos were subsequently used to guide the group discussions. (The images in this brief did not result from the photo voice exercise.)

### HOW DID THE PSSN AFFECT CHILD WORK?

While the PSSN did not change the probability that children worked, it caused a **shift in child economic activities from paid work outside the household to work within the household**. This is a desirable change because work within the household is generally perceived by beneficiaries as less risky.

About 16 per cent of children in control villages participated in livestock herding for the household. In PSSN villages, the proportion was about 20 per cent,

<sup>3</sup> Every two months, beneficiary households received the equivalent of two monthly payments.

<sup>4</sup> Qualitative data were collected in three purposively selected United Republic of Tanzania mainland districts and one Zanzibar district. Within each district, one PSSN village and one control village were selected. In each village, interviewers carried out three in-depth interviews with adults and three with older children. They also conducted in each village one focus group discussion with adults and another with older children.

a substantial increase. About 3 per cent of children in PSSN villages participated in paid work outside the household, compared with 5 per cent of children in control villages.<sup>5</sup> This difference is more pronounced for older boys, who are relatively more likely to work for pay outside the household.

**At endline, household ownership of livestock, such as chickens and goats, was higher** in intervention villages (60 per cent) than in control villages (43 per cent), indicating that households had used the PSSN cash to invest in livestock. This investment helps to explain the shift in child work from outside to inside the household. Adults also increased their participation in livestock herding for the household.

In the qualitative study, both children and caregivers described how the PSSN had **reduced child participation in casual labour outside the household**, including farm work for other families. A 13-year-old girl described this shift:

“TASAF money has reduced my time to search for casual works because if I fail to get money, I can use TASAF money. I was spending one day per week for casual works before PSSN, but after PSSN I spend one day per month on casual works.”

– 13-year-old girl

Caregivers welcomed the shift in child economic activities, as families could now invest in their own business and not rely on others:

“PSSN has reshaped children’s contributions to the livelihood of the household. When I get PSSN money instead of doing wage labour with my children, I work in my own farms. To me, this is a good thing, because working in other people’s farm is something that we hate, but sometimes we have to do it in order to get food.”

– 49-year-old female caregiver

Nevertheless, the prevalence of child work did not significantly decline, which may be due to the transfer amount as well as the high level of poverty among households. Some participants saw no changes in child work even with the extra cash:

“PSSN has not changed what I have been doing before. I am still doing charcoal business, herding cattle and sometimes selling sisal poles.”

– 15-year-old boy

## DID THE PSSN REDUCE CHILD LABOUR?

The study examined whether the PSSN affected child participation in forms of work classified as child labour, that is work involving excessively long hours (including work below the minimum age) and work exposing children to hazards such as carrying heavy loads, working with dangerous tools, or extreme temperatures.<sup>6</sup>

The **PSSN neither reduced nor increased excessive working hours and engagement in hazardous activities** among children. Moreover, after the PSSN, children were just as likely to suffer from work-related illnesses or injuries.

Nonetheless, the shift in work from outside to inside the household was seen as an improvement for children. Casual labour was described by study participants as the riskiest type of work because caregivers could not supervise and so children were more likely to experience violence from employers or other children. One child said:

“I have seen children abused by landlords when engaged in casual works in the farms, example during weeding activities, the landlord abuses children and sometimes refuse to pay them their money after they have completed the work.”

– Child focus group participant

## HOW DID THE PSSN AFFECT SCHOOLING OUTCOMES?

The programme had a range of positive effects on child education outcomes, for both girls and boys. At baseline, about 51 per cent of all children, across PSSN and control villages, attended school. While **school attendance had improved** in both control and PSSN villages at endline, the improvement was stronger in the latter: attendance reached 73 per cent in PSSN villages compared with 68 per cent in control villages. The probability that children could read and write increased, reaching 57 per cent in PSSN villages compared with 52 per cent in control villages. The **highest grade of education completed also improved** slightly in intervention villages.

Moreover, in both the qualitative and quantitative research, families reported using the cash to buy school supplies. A 15-year-old girl said she had used PSSN funds to pay for “extra curriculum studies”, which had

<sup>5</sup> We refer to participation during the year before the endline interview.

<sup>6</sup> Our definition of hazardous work and excessive hours follows that of the *Tanzania Mainland National Child Labour Survey 2014*. For details, see: de Hoop et al., ‘Cash Transfers, Public Works and Child Activities’.



“improved my performance in Swahili and mathematics”. A caregiver said:

“When a household receives PSSN funds, one of the conditions is to make sure that they spend the money in buying school uniforms, shoes, pens, exercise books and other school needs. The fact that PSSN has taken care of school requirements has reduced the burden on children. Children now get time to rest and revise what they have been taught in school.”<sup>7</sup>

– Caregiver focus group participant

Some participants reported, however, that school performance was unchanged or that the impacts were unclear. One 15-year-old boy, who helped in the shop that his grandmother had opened with PSSN funds, felt that the programme had affected him negatively:

“I have to work in Grandmother’s business. I lose concentration in academics because I have to spend time in the business instead of studying. I get tired, particularly during examination time.”

– 15-year-old boy

While comments like this were rare, it is possible that investments made in family businesses using PSSN funds could increase responsibilities for children.



Credit: © UNICEF/UNIT162004/Holt

Beneficiaries of a Cash Transfer scheme, to which UNICEF is offering technical support, in Bagamoyo, Tanzania.

## DID THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME AFFECT CHILDREN?

The study compared outcomes for children living in villages receiving cash only with those of children living in villages receiving cash and public works. Overall, we found limited differences in outcomes for these two groups.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW NOW?

The findings underline that **regular cash transfers, even if small (US\$8 per month on average), can make a difference for children**. In the case of the United Republic of Tanzania’s PSSN, impacts on schooling and on the types of economic activities carried out by children are considerable.

The findings reveal that even with cash transfers, a significant proportion of children continue to be engaged in child labour and remain out of school. A likely explanation is that while the cash transfers make an important contribution, poverty persists – and hence there is still a need for children to substantially contribute to household income. In addition, cash transfers do not address all possible drivers of child labour. Consider, for instance, social norms related to child labour, perceived labour market opportunities, and the quality of education offered in schools.

The findings also show that the impacts of cash transfers on child labour are complex. Cash transfers do not lead to a uniform reduction in all child engagement in economic activities. The research found that PSSN cash transfers led to more children working in the expanded household business and fewer children working outside the household for pay. Participants in the qualitative study perceived this as an improvement in children’s lives. In other countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, the expansion of household businesses as a result of cash transfers has not only led to increased child work in the household business, but also to child engagement in long working hours or hazardous activities.<sup>8</sup>

Together, these findings highlight the importance of **monitoring potential unintended effects** of interventions that increase household productive activity. A wide range of child outcomes should be monitored, including time for sleep and play. Long-term impacts on child schooling and health should also be assessed.

<sup>7</sup> In fact, the programme does not verify how the money is spent. Another feature of the PSSN, however, is that transfers are made to an adult woman whenever possible (usually the mother). It may be that mothers are encouraged to use the cash for health and education purposes.

<sup>8</sup> See: de Hoop, Jacobus, Valeria Groppo and Sudhanshu Handa, ‘Cash Transfers, Microentrepreneurial Activity, and Child Work: Evidence from Malawi and Zambia’, *The World Bank Economic Review*, forthcoming.

An **opportunity** for future research is to **explore what helps to limit child labour** in the household business. It is interesting to note here that, in contrast with most of the other cash transfer programmes in the region, a large part of the PSSN cash transfer is conditional on school attendance. Could this condition explain why the PSSN did not affect children's engagement in long working hours or hazardous activities, while unconditional cash transfers in other settings did? This is an open question, as the findings from the United Republic of Tanzania may not be directly comparable to those in other countries. Other research suggests, however, that conditions do matter for children's time allocation.<sup>9</sup>

Beyond exploring schooling conditions, there are also opportunities to evaluate lighter interventions, such as **providing information** to programme beneficiaries on the importance of schooling and the risks related to child labour. In other settings, such labelling of cash transfers was as effective as formal conditions in improving education outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This brief was written by Jacobus de Hoop, Margaret Gichane, Valeria Groppo and Stephanie Zuilkowski, on behalf of the Productive Social Safety Net youth evaluation team. The team comprises: Tia Palermo (co-principal investigator), Amber Peterman, Leah Prencipe, Lisa Hjelm, Valeria Groppo and Jacobus de Hoop (UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti); Flora Myamba (co-principal investigator, baseline), Blandina Kilama (co-principal investigator, endline) and Paula Tibandebage (Policy Research for Development [REPOA]); Tumpe Lukongo and Paul Luchemba (TASAF); and Paul Quarles van Ufford (UNICEF Tanzania). The authors thank Kevin Hong (US Department of Labor) for his comments on an earlier draft of this brief. We thank Angie Lee for her inputs to an earlier draft as well as to the design and layout of the brief.

Funding at endline for the collection of qualitative data and the examination of programme impacts on education, economic activities, household chores and child labour was generously provided by the US Department of Labor to the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti under cooperative agreement number IL-2669414-75-K-36. This brief does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the US Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the US Government. One hundred per cent of the total costs of this examination were financed with federal funds, from the total cooperative agreement of US\$1,384,468.

Additional acknowledgments and funding information are reported in de Hoop et al., 'Cash Transfers, Public Works and Child Activities'.

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this brief are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF.

9 Baird, Sarah, Craig McIntosh and Berk Özler, 'Cash or Condition? Evidence from a cash transfer experiment', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 126, no. 4, November 2011, pp. 1709–1753.

10 Benhassine, Najy, Florencia Devoto, Esther Duflo, Pascaline Dupas and Victor Pouliquen, 'Turning a Shove into a Nudge? A "labelled cash transfer" for education', *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, vol. 7, no. 3, August 2015, pp. 86–125.