

Social Transfers and Child Protection

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SOCIAL TRANSFERS AND CHILD PROTECTION

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Abstract. The paper assesses the available evidence on the potential effects of social transfers on child protection outcomes in low- and middle-income countries: the negative outcomes or damaging exposure of children to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and improved outcomes or a reduction in exposure to these phenomena. The study identifies and evaluates three possible channels through which social transfers can influence child protection outcomes: direct effects observed where the objectives of social transfers are explicit child protection outcomes; indirect effects where the impact of social transfers on poverty and exclusion leads to improved child protection outcomes; and potential synergies in implementation of social transfers and child protection. It also discusses how the design and implementation of social transfers can contribute to improved child protection outcomes.

Keywords: child rights, child protection, social transfers, poverty

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the century, many low- and middle-income countries have introduced or expanded programmes providing direct transfers in cash and/or in kind to families or individuals facing poverty and vulnerability.¹ In middle-income countries, flagship social transfer programmes – such as Brazil’s *Bolsa Família*, Mexico’s *Progresa/Oportunidades*, South Africa’s *Child Support Grant*, India’s *National Rural Employment Guarantee* and China’s *Minimum Living Standards Scheme* – now reach large sections of the population. In low-income countries, the spread of social transfer programmes has been slower, due to resource constraints and implementation capacity deficits.² Ethiopia’s *Productive Safety Net Programme* is the largest among low-income countries in the region,³ reaching just over 10 per cent of food insecure families.

There is considerable diversity in the objectives, design and implementation of social transfers in lower and middle income countries, but they share the overall objectives of reducing poverty and fostering economic and social inclusion. The high incidence of poverty among children in low- and middle-income countries, combined with a focus on human development, ensures that addressing child poverty and exclusion are a priority for the majority of social transfer programmes.⁴

A growing body of evidence is emerging on the impact of these programmes on children, particularly on health, nutrition and education outcomes. However, with the possible exception of child labour, the impact of these programmes on child protection outcomes has not been examined sufficiently. By child protection outcomes we mean a) the negative outcomes or damaging exposure of children to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and b) improved outcomes or a reduction in exposure to these phenomena. As such, they are elements of enhanced well-being as well as likely contributors to improving other elements of well-being. In other words, reducing violence against children or child labour improves well-being in its own terms and is likely to be instrumental to improving health, educational outcomes and subjective well-being.

In order to achieve these positive outcomes for children, the child protection community is increasingly shifting from a focus on distinct forms of abuse and exploitation, e.g. child trafficking, child labour, child marriage or sexual abuse, to a more comprehensive approach that recognizes the multi-dimensional nature of children’s vulnerabilities. This comprehensive approach calls for the creation of an enabling environment for children where they grow, develop, and feel safe, and where risks they face are addressed and their vulnerabilities are minimized.

Sometimes violence, abuse and exploitation of children can be linked to the impact of poverty and deprivation, and to social and economic exclusion, which often underpin them. If poverty is addressed, will children’s exposure to violence, abuse and exploitation be minimized? This cannot be taken for granted and requires careful examination. The nature and strength of the links between the child protection outcomes and the risk factors, on the one hand, and poverty and deprivation on the other, need to be examined together with a range of other factors influencing child survival, development and well-being. The main objective of social transfers is to address

¹ See Barrientos, A. and Hulme, D. (2009). Social Protection for the Poor and Poorest. *Oxford Development Studies*, 37, 439-456.

² Garcia, M. and Moore, C. M. T. (2012). *The Cash Dividend. The Rise of Cash Transfer Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Washington DC: The World Bank.

³ In the 2012 World Bank country classification, low-income countries have per capita gross national income of US\$ 1,025 or less; lower-middle-income countries have per capita gross national income in the range US\$1,026 to US\$4,035; and upper-middle-income countries have per capita gross national income between US\$4,036 and US\$12,475.

⁴ Barrientos, A. and Dejong, J. (2004). *Child Poverty and Cash Transfers*, London: Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre.

poverty and deprivation, especially extreme poverty and deprivation. Whether they can also contribute to improved child protection outcomes will depend on the extent to which poverty plays a role in child abuse, violence and exploitation.

The aim of this study is therefore to identify and evaluate the known effects of social transfers on child protection risks and outcomes in low- and middle-income countries. It discusses how the design and implementation of social transfers can maximise positive impact, which can serve policy makers and practitioners in their future programming. The study also aims to contribute to the body of global evidence on what works under which conditions so that violence, abuse and exploitation of children can be prevented. It is one in the series of studies the UNICEF Office of Research is currently carrying out to this broader (violence prevention) end.

This paper is based on the hypothesis that there are three potential types of impact social transfers can have on child protection outcomes: direct, indirect and implementation synergies. The evidence examined is framed within this typology.

Social transfers can have direct effects on child protection outcomes where these are explicit objectives of the programme. *Familias en Acción* in Colombia, for example, had a component explicitly designed to facilitate the reunion of families fragmented by displacement in areas affected by internal conflict. In some cases, the direct effects of social transfers on child protection might be an unintended consequence of programme design or implementation, as in employment guarantees or public works programmes which may have adverse effects on parents' care provision.

Social transfer programmes can also have indirect effects⁵ on child protection outcomes. To the extent that children's risk factors are influenced by poverty and exclusion, social transfer programmes which prove effective in reducing overall poverty and exclusion among participant households could also help reduce risk that can cause violence, abuse and exploitation of children.

In addition, the implementation of social transfer programmes could generate improvements in the capacity of public agencies – with implications for child protection risks and outcomes. The administration of social transfer programmes is often carried out by ministries or agencies that are also responsible for providing social support and care services to vulnerable families. The introduction of social transfer programmes can have beneficial effects on child protection agencies through, *inter alia*, improved coordination and shared technical capacities. Agencies delivering social transfers may serve as referral agencies to child protection systems, when children at risk are identified in the course of their work. Countries like Brazil, Chile and Colombia have pioneered a single registry of vulnerable households, greatly facilitating information flows to and from public agencies.⁶ There is also a possibility that social transfer programmes may 'crowd out' child

⁵ As will be discussed in more detail below, the distinction between direct and indirect effects is based on whether the linkages between social transfers and child risk factors can be directly observed, in the findings from impact evaluation studies, or need to be inferred from a model of their relationship. The distinction does not refer to causation being direct or indirect. The causation of direct effects of social transfers on child risk factors could well be mediated by intermediary causal links. For example, an observed reduction in child health risks can be a consequence of the combined effects of nutrition and immunization.

⁶ Fiszbein, A. and Schady, N. (2009). *Conditional Cash Transfers. Reducing Present and Future Poverty*, Washington DC: The World Bank; UNICEF (2012). *Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children*, New York: UNICEF Division of Social and Economic Policy.

protection agencies.⁷ Coordination between social transfers and child protection agencies is therefore crucial for the development of effective social and child protection networks.

This paper is divided into four main sections. Section 2 reviews basic concepts and approaches in social transfers and child protection. This is important to facilitate an understanding across the two communities of practice. Section 3 assesses the effects of social transfer programmes on child protection risk factors and outcomes. Section 4 summarizes the main findings emerging from the study. Section 5 draws out some implications for research and practice.

2. SOCIAL TRANSFERS AND CHILD PROTECTION: REVIEW OF CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES

This section reviews key concepts and approaches in social transfers and child protection. This is important to facilitate a shared understanding across the two communities of practice. There is considerable uncertainty over the scope and objectives of social transfers, even among researchers and practitioners working on this area. This is due in part to the very recent and diverse expansion of social transfers in low- and middle-income countries,⁸ with the implication that harmonisation of concepts and approaches has lagged behind. At the same time, new approaches to child protection justify a brief review. This will be particularly useful to social transfer experts.

What are social transfers?

Social transfers are regular, reliable and direct transfers in cash and/or in kind to households in poverty and deprivation. UNICEF defines social transfers as, ‘predictable direct transfers to individuals or households, both in-kind and cash (including cash for work and public work programmes) to protect and prevent individuals and households from being affected by shocks and to support the accumulation of human, productive and financial assets.’⁹ The main focus of social transfers is the reduction of poverty and social and economic exclusion. This definition largely reflects a low- and middle-income country perspective.

In high-income countries, social transfers include transfers from social insurance, social assistance, or employment programmes. Social or public assistance consists of budget-financed programmes providing direct transfers in cash with the aim of addressing poverty and deprivation. Social assistance transfers can be distinguished from direct transfers originating in contributory social insurance schemes, or from labour market or employment programmes, which have a broader target group and focus on employment. Social insurance transfers address life-cycle or employment-related contingencies and are usually financed from payroll contributions by workers and their employers. In high-income countries with extensive social insurance schemes – in Nordic countries, for example – social assistance is residual.¹⁰ In other high-income countries, a

⁷ See Giese, S. (2009). UNICEF Special Issue: Spotlighting the Relationship Between Social Welfare Services and Cash Transfers Within Social Protection for Children, *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 4, New York: UNICEF.

⁸ It has been estimated that expenditure on social transfers in sub-Saharan Africa in 2009 was US\$ 9 billion.

⁹ UNICEF (2012). *Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children*, New York: UNICEF Division of Social and Economic Policy.

¹⁰ In Anglo-Saxon countries social assistance is more significant, especially in New Zealand and Australia. Adema, W. (2006). *Social Assistance Policy Development and the Provision of a Decent Level of Income in Selected OECD Countries*, Paris: OECD Department for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs.

combination of social insurance and active labour market programmes does most of the job of preventing poverty, but social assistance retains an important role.¹¹

In recent international development policy discussions, the term ‘social protection’ is increasingly being used to describe anti-poverty or social transfers, which equates to social assistance in the terminology employed in high-income countries.¹² This study focuses on social transfers understood in this narrower sense.

Uncertainty over terminology reflects important debates over the evolution and dynamics of welfare provision in the North and South. The welfare states which developed in European countries in the aftermath of World War II were grounded in corporatist social contracts supporting the expansion of welfare provision financed from payroll taxes and based on a commitment to full employment. The absence of corporatist structures in low- and middle-income countries, as demonstrated by the incidence of informality and the limited reach of social insurance, suggests that the expansion of welfare provision in the South will have a different evolution and dynamic.¹³ The growth of social transfers in low- and middle-income countries already signals a different path in the evolution of welfare institutions there.

Policy discussions of social transfers in the South often adopt a ‘project’ perspective, which underplays their role in building institutions. In a low- and middle-country context it is important to distinguish regular social transfers from humanitarian or emergency assistance. The term ‘safety nets’, commonly used by Bretton Wood institutions, describes all interventions addressing poverty, including transfers, and fails to distinguish between emergency assistance and public or social assistance transfers. In this study we focus on the latter, and view them as embedding emerging welfare institutions in low- and middle-income countries.¹⁴

Poverty and poverty reduction

The main objective of social transfer programmes is the reduction of poverty and social and economic exclusion. A brief discussion of poverty concepts and measures will be helpful in understanding the effects of social transfers on child protection.

Poverty describes deficits in well-being experienced by individuals, households or communities considered to be unacceptable in a particular society. From this perspective, poverty is

¹¹ See Marx, I. and Nelson, K. (2012). *Minimum Income Protection in Flux*, London, Palgrave; Pearson, M. and Whitehouse, E. (2009). Social Pensions in High-income Countries, in: Holzman, R., Robalino, D. and Takayama, N. (eds.), *Closing the Coverage Gap. The Role of Social Pensions and Other Retirement Income Transfers*, Washington DC: The World Bank.

¹² This is by no means the rule. UNICEF for example, defines social protection as the set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation, consisting of four components: (i) social transfers comprising mostly cash transfers, public works and in-kind transfers; (ii) programmes that ensure access to services e.g. health insurance and removal of user fees; (iii) social and family support services including family support, parenting education and home-based care; and (iv) reform in legislation and policies that ensure equity and non-discrimination (UNICEF op. cit. (2012)). Researchers in the North would recognize this as a description of social policy. The World Bank notes that “Social protection and labor systems, policies, and programs help individuals and societies manage risk and volatility and protect them from poverty and destitution—through instruments that improve resilience, equity, and opportunity”, World Bank (2012). *Resilience, Equity and Opportunity. the World Bank’s Social Protection and Labor Strategy 2012-2022*. Washington DC: The World Bank, p. 1. The UN defines social protection as “a set of public and private policies and programmes undertaken by societies in response to various contingencies to offset the absence or substantial reduction of income from work; to provide assistance to families with children as well as provide people with basic health care and housing”, United Nations (2000). *Enhancing Social Protection and Reducing Vulnerability in a Globalizing World*, Washington DC: United Nations Economic and Social Council, p. 4.

¹³ See, *inter alia*, Levy, S. (2008). *Good Intentions, Bad Outcomes. Social Policy, Informality and Economic Growth in Mexico*, Washington DC: The Brookings Institution.

¹⁴ Two recent papers review the links between humanitarian and emergency assistance and child protection: Save the Children (2012a). *Cash and Child Protection. How cash transfer programming can protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence*, London: Save the Children; Save the Children (2012b). *Child Safeguarding in Cash Transfer Programming*, London: Save the Children.

multidimensional in nature. It cannot be reduced solely to deficits in income. Deficits in health care, education, housing and political voice are often associated with poverty and deprivation. Social and economic exclusion often go hand in hand with poverty and deprivation. To an important extent, poverty reflects the extent to which the relevant groups are unable to participate in the life of the community.

Thresholds defining unacceptable deficits in well-being are normally defined at the community or society level. They reflect shared values and objectives in particular societies. In European countries, income poverty is defined in relative terms. Households are at risk of poverty if their adult equivalent income falls below two-thirds of median income.¹⁵ In low- and middle-income countries, poverty is defined in absolute terms by reference to a subsistence basket of goods and services. In low-income countries, the poverty line is defined in terms of a minimum food subsistence level. In middle-income countries, non-food necessities are added to the food subsistence level.¹⁶

Poverty measures help answer the question: how much poverty is there in an individual, a household, or a community? The poverty headcount ratio, the share of the population living below the poverty line, is the most common measure of poverty in a society. It is a very limited measure of poverty, because it provides no information on the degree of poverty experienced by those below the poverty line. Alternative measures of poverty focus on the gap between the income or consumption of households in poverty and the poverty line – the poverty gap. The size of the poverty gap, usually defined as a proportion of the poverty line, provides information on the depth of poverty.¹⁷

In the context of social transfers, vulnerability is defined as the likelihood that individuals or households will be in poverty in the near future. Vulnerability is in fact ‘vulnerability to poverty’ (see Box 1). From this perspective, households currently in poverty are perhaps the most vulnerable. The notion of vulnerability to poverty is important because it emphasizes the more dynamic processes associated with poverty and deprivation. Vulnerability can itself lead to poverty persistence. In low- and middle-income countries, for example, the onset of financial crises and unemployment often leads vulnerable families to take children out of school to be sent to work (in the context of Box 1, children can be used as a buffer), or to economise in health care or nutrition with longer term adverse effects.

¹⁵ Adult equivalent income enables comparison of the well-being of households of different size and composition. This requires two adjustments to a measure of household income. The first adjustment takes account of the role of public goods in household consumption. A one-person household requires one stove, but a household of 4 can also manage with one stove. The second adjustment takes account of the different needs of children and adults, by converting the number of children in a household to an adult equivalent.

¹⁶ See Kakwani, N. (2003). *Issues in Setting Absolute Poverty Lines*, Manila: Asian Development Bank.

¹⁷ For a review of poverty concepts see Haughton, J. and Khandker, S. R. (2009). *Handbook of Poverty and Inequality*, Washington DC: The World Bank.

Box 1. Vulnerability and its components

Vulnerability can have many interpretations, depending on context. In some cases it means powerlessness or defencelessness, in other contexts it is interpreted as exposure to adverse events. Vulnerability to poverty has a specific interpretation as the likelihood that people will be in poverty in the future. It is useful as a means of guiding policy towards the prevention of poverty. The equations and definitions below aim to provide a more precise definition of vulnerability in the context of poverty research.

Vulnerability [... to income poverty] = Probable loss of income – buffers

Vulnerability [... to income poverty] = [ex-ante hazard probability x cost of hazard] – buffers

Vulnerability [... to income poverty] = [risk x loss] – buffers

Hazards are events which adversely affect well-being, such as unemployment, sickness, family break-up or displacement, etc.

Risk is the ex-ante probability that a hazard materializes

Shocks are the ex-post materialization of hazards

Buffers are protective instruments: assets, entitlements and networks.

Social transfer programme designers conventionally operationalize the notion of vulnerability by reference to groups that are just above the poverty line, for example the decile of households with consumption levels, or incomes, just above the poverty line. In earlier social transfer programmes, vulnerability was identified for categories of households or individuals thought to face a higher likelihood of experiencing poverty – female-headed households, orphans, older people, and people with disabilities, for example. In practice, it was found that these categories of individuals may not fully match groups in poverty and vulnerability, orphanhood for example. Further, agency is located within households, a fact that anti-poverty transfer programmes increasingly acknowledge.

In child protection, on the other hand, risks are understood as the likelihood of a negative outcome or incidence of violence, abuse, exploitation, while vulnerability is understood as openness or exposure to these risks. Risks can be identified at family, community, societal and structural levels and it is most commonly the interplay of different risk factors and vulnerabilities that leads to harm. They are distinguished from protective factors which enhance the likelihood of positive child outcomes. In this approach, child outcomes result from the particular interaction of risk and protective factors.¹⁸

¹⁸ For further discussion on risks and protective factors in relation to child maltreatment see: WHO and ISPCAN (2006). Preventing Child Maltreatment: A guide to taking action and generating evidence, Geneva: WHO. p18.

Poverty research has made an important contribution to the design and orientation of social transfers in low and middle income countries. In particular, an understanding of the following has informed the design of social transfer programmes in low- and middle-income countries:

- poverty as multidimensional and the importance of non-income dimensions;
- the significance of the duration dimensions and poverty dynamics;
- the differences in the depth of poverty among households; and
- the role of households as the site of agency and change.

Types of social transfers

It will be useful to classify social transfer programmes into three main categories: pure income transfers; income transfers combined with asset accumulation; and integrated poverty reduction programmes (See Box 2).¹⁹

Pure income transfers involve transfers in cash targeted at households in poverty, or categorical transfers targeted at groups facing acute vulnerability. Some pure income transfers are focused on households in (extreme) poverty. For example, the *Kalomo Pilot Social Transfer Scheme* in Zambia provides direct transfers to the poorest ten per cent of households in designated districts. Other programmes – for example, children or family allowances or social pensions – are focused on specific groups in the population thought to be especially vulnerable. South Africa’s social assistance is organized in the main through means-tested categorical grants focused on older people, people with disabilities, and children.

Income transfers combined with asset accumulation include programmes providing transfers in cash or kind, which are combined with, and facilitate, accumulation of productive assets. The term ‘asset’ is used here in its broadest sense, to include human, physical and financial assets. Linking direct transfers with interventions aimed at asset accumulation underlines the fact that programmes of this type aim to strengthen the productive capacity of households in poverty.

This category includes two types of programme now common in low- and middle-income countries. The first group includes programmes which combine direct transfers with interventions facilitating household investment in human development, especially education and health. Mexico’s *Progresa/Oportunidades* or Brazil’s *Bolsa Família* are well known examples of this type of programme. The second group includes programmes which combine direct transfers with interventions facilitating physical asset protection and accumulation. Examples of this type of programme include India’s *National Employment Guarantee Scheme* (infrastructure or community assets) and Ethiopia’s *Productive Safety Net Programme* (household and community assets). The *Productive Safety Net Programme* combines transfers in cash or kind with agricultural extension activities for households with work capacity, and direct support to households without work capacity. These programmes require beneficiaries to supply work to create or protect household or community assets. They can also be described as public works, cash/food for work, or guaranteed employment programmes.

¹⁹ For a description of social transfer programmes in developing countries see Barrientos, A., Niño-Zarazúa, M. and Maitrot, M. (2010). *Social Assistance in Developing Countries Database Version 5*, Manchester: Brooks World Poverty Institute. Available at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1672090.

Integrated poverty reduction programmes are an important innovation in social assistance, combining a range of interventions focused on the poorest. BRAC's *Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction – Targeting the Ultra Poor*²⁰ provides an integrated and sequential set of interventions strengthening the nutrition and health status of the poorest households, as well as training in preparation for the transfer of productive assets. Chile's *Chile Solidario*, together with China's and South Korea's *Minimum Living Standards Schemes*, are additional examples of only a handful of programmes providing an integrated set of interventions addressing a range of deficits responsible for keeping households in poverty.

The basis for this classification is provided by the underlying understanding of poverty underpinning the programmes.²¹ Pure transfers rely on an understanding of poverty as largely to do with deficits in income or consumption. Transfers are expected to remedy these deficits and thus reduce poverty. This type of programme borrows from social assistance schemes in high income countries. Income transfers combined with asset accumulation share a broader understanding of poverty. They pay attention to deficits in income or consumption but, important as these are, they also aim to address deficits in productive assets.

Programmes focused on human development, like Mexico's *Progresar/Oportunidades*, understand the persistence of poverty as arising from deficits in human capital. Ethiopia's *Productive Safety Net Programme* understands poverty and its persistence as arising from the asset depletion and destruction affecting food-insecure households faced with droughts or other shocks. Programmes included in this group adopt a multidimensional understanding of poverty, but focus on a few dimensions.

Integrated poverty reduction programmes also share a multidimensional understanding of poverty, but are distinguished both by a wider set of dimensions covered, and by the fact that direct income transfers play only a marginal role in the overall support provided to households in poverty.²² They pay special attention to social exclusion, which can prevent households in poverty from accessing the transfers and services they are entitled to.

²⁰ BRAC is one of the largest international NGOs working on poverty.

²¹ To assess the poverty orientation of social protection in a country, it will be important to include the range of social transfer programmes in place.

²² Chile's *Chile Solidario* is also distinguished by its focus on capabilities. See Barrientos, A. (2010). Protecting Capabilities, Eradicating Extreme Poverty: Chile Solidario and the future of social protection. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 11: 579-597.

Box 2. Types of social transfer programme

- **Pure income transfers**
 - *Household focused*: social transfers in Zambia
 - *Categorical*: non-contributory pensions in Brazil and South Africa, but also Bangladesh, Botswana, India, Lesotho, , Namibia and Nepal; *Child Support Grant* in South Africa; *Asignación Universal por Hijo* (Child Allowance) in Argentina and Uruguay
- **Income transfers combined with asset accumulation/protection**
 - *Physical assets*: India's *National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme* and Ethiopia's *Productive Safety Net Programme*
 - *Human assets*: *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil; *Progres/Oportunidades* (Mexico); *PRAF* (Honduras); *PATH* (Jamaica); *Familias en Acción* (Colombia); *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (Ecuador)
- **Integrated anti-poverty programmes**
 - *Chile Solidario*
 - *BRAC's Targeting the Ultra-poor*

Source: *Social Assistance in Developing Countries* Database version 5 – available at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1672090

Child protection

The UNICEF 2008 Child Protection Strategy defines the aim of child protection as 'preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children', which 'is essential to ensuring children's rights to survival, development and well-being'.²³ Well-being outcomes in child development literature are understood to include not only health, education and material well-being but also relationships and risks that can lead to exposure to harmful practices, violence and abuse.²⁴ In more narrow terms, child protection outcomes are defined as a) the negative outcomes or damaging exposure of children to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and b) improved outcomes or reduction in exposure to these phenomena.

The strategy for securing child protection outcomes is to work to ensure a protective environment in which children's rights are realised. According to the 2002 Protective Environment Framework, this consists of eight dimensions. Table 1 below specifies the connections between child protection objectives, which are further specified in terms of child protection violations, the dimensions of the protective environment, and the outcomes, as described in the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy. Child protection is global and transnational.

²³ UNICEF (2008). UNICEF Child Protection Strategy. United Nations Children's Fund Executive Board, Annual Session 2008.

²⁴ See for example: UNICEF (2007). Child Poverty in Perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, *Innocenti Report Card 7*, Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre; UNICEF (2013). Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview, *Innocenti Report Card 11*, Florence: UNICEF Office of Research.

Table 1. Child protection objectives, protective environment, and outcomes²⁵

Objective	Policy focus: Protective Environment Framework (PEF)	Broad Outcomes
Eradicating violence, exploitation and abuse against children: Child labour Physical, mental and sexual violence against children Child trafficking Sexual exploitation Child marriage Lack of birth registration Family separation ²⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government commitment to fulfilling protection rights - Legislation and enforcement - Protective attitudes, customs, behaviour and practices - Open discussion, including the engagement of media and civil society - Children’s life skills, knowledge and participation - Capacity of families and communities - Basic and targeted services - Monitoring and oversight 	Survival, development and well-being of children

Child protection approaches have changed over time. In the high income world, particularly the Anglo-American countries, the statutory systems were developed to respond to cases of abuse of children, and child protection was often understood in a narrow forensic sense. Since the mid 1990s there has been a gradual move in these countries away from systems focused on this narrowly defined child protection and towards a greater emphasis on early intervention, prevention and family support. This shift was brought about by recognition that not all families were at ‘high risk’ of child maltreatment and needed close monitoring and supervision. A large number of families that were in contact with statutory services had more generic problems, such as financial difficulties, high levels of stress or substance abuse problems. Many of the prevention and early intervention activities that address these problems have been carried out by a voluntary sector, with or without government funding, or other public sectors such as health and education. Recent reviews of child protection systems in these countries have emphasised the need for continued investments in these types of programmes, but also for greater co-ordination among sectors and greater involvement of statutory bodies, i.e. social welfare agencies, in the provision of early help.²⁷

In low- and middle-income countries, a different kind of shift has developed in the way that child protection has been conceptualised. Attention now focuses on developing more comprehensive child protection systems that comprise the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors — especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice — to support prevention and response to violence, abuse and exploitation.²⁸ In practical terms this implies building the high quality child welfare workforce, strengthening data collection and

²⁵ UNICEF (2008). UNICEF Child Protection Strategy. United Nations Children’s Fund Executive Board, Annual Session 2008.

²⁶ Family separation does not imply that violence, abuse and exploitation will necessarily occur. However, out-of-home care arrangements for a child who is not with his or her biological parent may sometimes lead to these violations, both in institutional or family type settings (kinship care or fostering). Family separation as understood in a narrow sense (separation from biological parents or primary caregivers) occurs due to various reasons: poverty, voluntary and forced migration, illness or death in the family and removal of a child from a situation of violence and abuse. When family separation occurs due to conflict, natural disasters, or reasons of poverty, this is not considered to be in the best interest of the child.

²⁷ See for example: the Concept Note supporting the November 2012 Delhi Conference on A Better Way to Protect All Children. The Theory and Practice of Child Protection Systems, at www.cpsconference.org; Gilbert, N., Parton, P., Skievenes, M. (2011). Child Protection Systems: International Trends and Orientations, University of Maryland; Munro, A. (2011). The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report: A child-centred system, London: Department for Education; Broomfield, L and Holzer, P. (2008). National Child Protection Clearinghouse. Australian Institute of Family Studies.

²⁸ UNICEF (2008). UNICEF Child Protection Strategy. United Nations Children’s Fund Executive Board, Annual Session 2008.

information management systems, development of service models and referral pathways and ensuring adequate financing.²⁹ Depending on the local context, and in particular in countries where child protection systems are still nascent, this may require an integration or close co-ordination of positive community practices and custom ('less formal') and statutory ('formal') mechanisms. Still, prevention programmes that include family support and parenting programmes are either scarce or are a replication of models from high-income countries, which, when translated into different political, social and cultural contexts, yield mixed results.³⁰

In both settings, the optimal child protection systems should aim to protect all children, to unite all actors behind a common set of goals, to promote family support and access to early help when needed, and to create a long-term response to the protection of children that is robust, coordinated and adaptable to new problems.³¹ Transnational coordination is essential to promote safe cross-border child migration, and address issues such as child abduction and child trafficking.

3. THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL TRANSFERS ON CHILD PROTECTION

This section focuses on the effects of social transfers on child protection outcomes. It begins by introducing the research strategy adopted to identify these effects, which leads to the identification of three types of effects: direct, indirect and implementation effects. The section then moves on to discuss in some detail each of these types.

Research strategy to identify effects

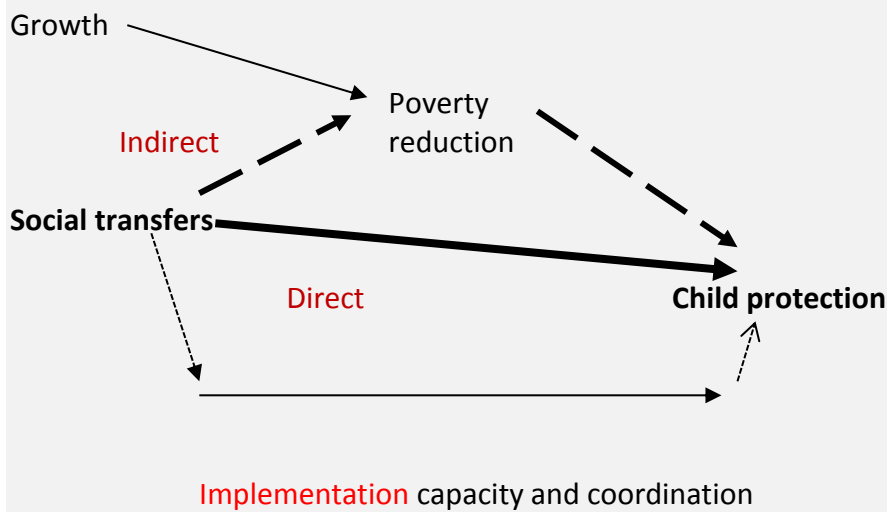
The discussion in the previous section reviewed concepts and approaches informing social transfers and child protection. In this section, the focus will be on identifying and evaluating the effects of social transfers on child protection outcomes, based on information provided by 79 impact evaluation studies covering 45 social transfer programmes in 28 countries. It will be helpful to distinguish three main types of effects. Direct effects of social transfers on child protection describe changes in child protection outcomes which can be attributed directly to the implementation of social transfer programmes. Indirect effects refer to changes in child protection outcomes which may be associated with a reduction of poverty and exclusion arising from social transfer programmes. Implementation effects are associated with improvements in the capacity of public agencies as a consequence of the implementation of social transfer programmes which are able to influence the effectiveness of child protection. These effects are discussed in more detail below, and evaluated separately in the following sections. Box 3 below provides a diagrammatic illustration of the three types of effects.

²⁹ See for example, Training resources Group and Play Therapy Africa (2012). Strengthening Child Protection Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa. Available at: http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/english/strengthening_child_protection_systems_in_sub-Saharan_Africa_-_August_2012_.pdf

³⁰ See for example: Child Frontiers (2011). Mapping and Assessing Child Protection Systems in West and Central Africa: A five-country analysis paper, Hong Kong; Mikton, C., Two Challenges to Importing Evidence-based Child Maltreatment Prevention Programmes Developed in High-income Countries to Low- and Middle-income Countries: Generalizability and affordability, in: Dubowitz, H. (ed.), World Perspectives on Child Abuse (10th edition, 2012). Aurora, Colorado: International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

³¹ Wulczyn et al. (2010). Adapting a Systems Approach to Child Protection: Key concepts and considerations, UNICEF; Concept Note supporting the November 2012 Delhi Conference on A Better Way to Protect All Children. The Theory and Practice of Child Protection Systems. Available at: www.cpsconference.org

Box 3. Social transfers: effects on child protection?



Direct effects: observed directly from impact evaluation studies

Indirect effects: observed impact on poverty, which in turn affects child protection

Implementation: innovation and coordination gains

Direct effects are observed whenever social transfer programmes have explicit child protection objectives, for example the reduction of child labour, or family reunification. In most programmes focusing on strengthening human development outcomes, particularly health care and education, improvement of children’s health, schooling, and nutrition are primary objectives. In this study, social direct effects of social transfers on schooling, health and nutrition will not be covered in detail as the literature on human development conditional cash transfer programmes has paid close attention to these effects.³² Impact evaluation studies, normally focused on the explicit objectives of social transfer programmes, provide information on the direction and strength of these effects. Direct effects can also arise from unintended effects of social transfer programmes. The unintended effects of social transfers on child protection can be positive or negative – for example, programme participation conditional on birth registration, or adverse effects on parental care arising from work requirements. The unintended effects are seldom identified by impact evaluation studies. These effects tend to be captured by independent research evaluations of the impact of social transfers. The latter studies are more focused on an assessment of all effects of social transfers, both intended and unintended.

Social transfers can also have *indirect effects* on child protection through their impact on poverty and exclusion, which may in turn influence child protection outcomes. Social transfer programmes lacking both explicit child protection objectives and unintended effects on child protection outcomes could nevertheless influence child protection outcomes through a reduction in poverty,

³² See, inter alia, Fiszbein, A. and Schady, N. (2009). *Conditional Cash Transfers. Reducing Present and Future Poverty*, Washington DC: The World Bank; Morley, S. and Coady, D. (2003). *From Social Assistance to Social Development: Targeted education subsidies in developing countries*, Washington DC: Center for Global Development and International Food Policy Research Institute; Sanfilippo, M., De Neubourg, C. and Martorano, B. (2012). *The Impact of Social Protection on Children: A review of the literature*. Office of Research Working Paper 2012-06, Florence: UNICEF Office of Research.

which itself may improve child protection outcomes. Identifying and measuring indirect effects poses the greatest difficulty, in so far as it requires investigating two separate linkages: the effectiveness of social transfer programmes in reducing poverty and vulnerability, on the one hand; and the effect of a generalized reduction (increase) in poverty on improvement (deterioration) of child protection outcomes, on the other hand. Studies on the first link, between social transfers and poverty reduction, find that well designed and well implemented social transfer programmes can be effective in reducing poverty and vulnerability. However, there are few studies assessing quantitatively the impact of poverty reduction on child protection outcomes in low- and middle-income countries, although there is a larger literature providing qualitative information on the association between poverty and child protection risk factors.

Finally, there is a growing body of research examining the implementation of social transfer programmes highlighting their contribution to the effectiveness of public agencies. Human development transfer programmes, which include conditions relating to schooling, health and nutrition, for example, generate scope for coordination synergies across several ministries. These implementation effects are of some relevance to child protection, especially as the majority of the population in poverty are children. There are few studies identifying and measuring potential improvements in the implementation of child protection arising from the introduction of social transfers.³³ This is a significant knowledge gap.

The following sections will examine the three types of effects in more detail.

Direct effects

This section introduces the mapping of social transfer programmes and impact evaluation studies which are the basis for assessing direct effects. The database is intended to provide an empirical basis to social transfer effects on child protection risk factors and outcomes. It is not intended as a systematic review of the literature. Direct effects are arranged, first, by social transfer programme type and, second, by child protection outcomes and risk factors.

Mapping of impact evaluation studies with child protection outcomes

A database was collected as part of the study, including information on social transfer programme characteristics, reported findings from impact evaluations, and reported effects on child protection indicators. The search strategy was guided by the definitions of social transfers and child protection indicators discussed above. The resulting database includes information on 79 impact evaluations in 28 countries, covering 45 medium and large-scale programmes providing regular and reliable transfers.³⁴

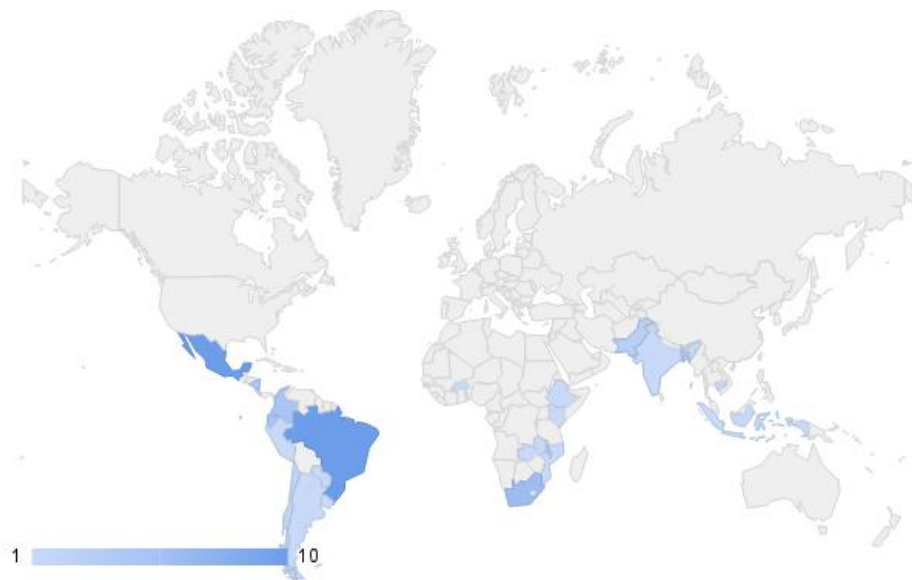
The focus on impact evaluations as the main source of information on the direct effects of social transfers on child protection has several justifications. It is important in order to filter out the policy advocacy-focused literature. It also helps to organise the fast-growing literature on the effects of social transfers.

³³ See Giese, S. (2009). UNICEF Special Issue: Spotlighting the Relationship Between Social Welfare Services and Cash Transfers Within Social Protection for Children. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 4.

³⁴ As noted in the introduction, this study does not cover one-off and emergency transfers.

Selecting impact evaluations imposes a geographical bias, as the map in Figure 3 shows. There is also a programme type bias, in that few social pensions programmes have been rigorously evaluated. In Africa, information was collected from impact evaluations in 8 countries, but the availability of impact evaluations will increase in the near future as several impact evaluations in sub-Saharan Africa are currently underway.³⁵ In South Asia, impact evaluations were reviewed for Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Studies for India and Pakistan focus on employment guarantee and public works. In South East Asia impact evaluation studies came from 3 countries, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines and covered conditional cash transfer programmes only. Eleven Latin American countries covered, with several studies focusing on conditional cash transfer programmes and integrated anti-poverty programmes. As expected, several studies focus on Mexico's Progresa/Oportunidades. Our search did not find appropriate impact evaluation studies for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.³⁶

Figure 1. Distribution of impact evaluation studies processed



The impact evaluation studies processed included few references to child protection outcomes and indicators. We could find no reference in the impact evaluation reports to violence against children, child trafficking and child abuse. Other child protection outcomes and indicators were explicitly mentioned. Several studies measure the impact of social transfers on child labour and on birth registration. A handful of transfer programme evaluations make explicit reference to family separation, child marriage and sexual activity of adolescents. It is possible that the programmes reviewed have effects on other child protection indicators too, but these were not included in the reported impact evaluations. The child protection indicators referred to in the impact evaluations are defined in Table 2.

³⁵ See <http://www.fao.org/economic/PtoP/en/>

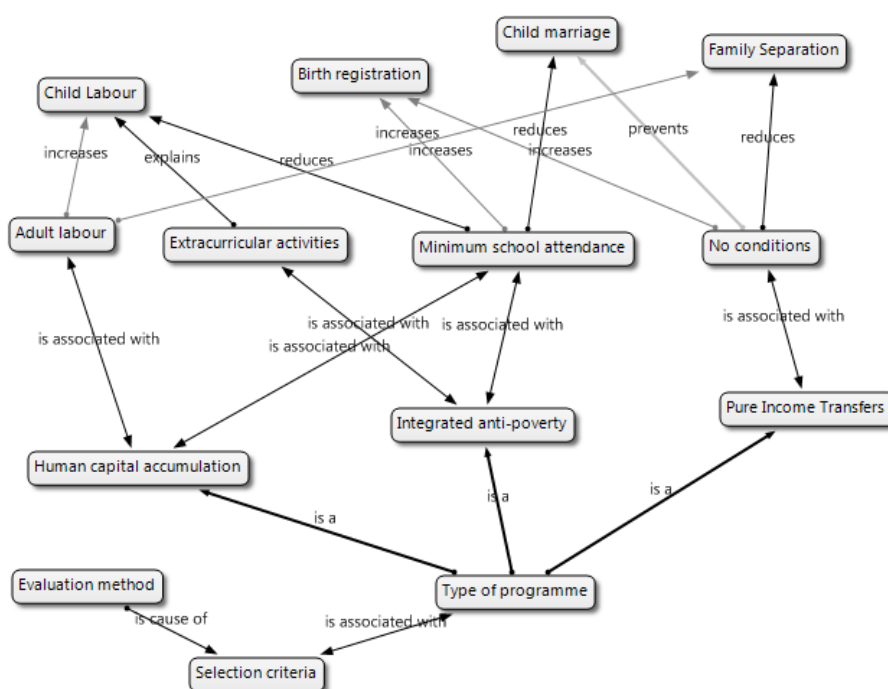
³⁶ Annex 1 describes the search grid.

Table 2. Child protection indicators as defined in impact evaluation studies

Outcome	Indicator
Child labour	1. Children 5-14 years old in work. 2. Children 7-14 years old in work.
Child marriage	1. Women 20-24 years old who were married or in union before age 18. 2. Men 20-24 years old who were married or in union before age 18. 3. Age at first marriage.
Birth registration	1. Children under 5 years old who are not registered.
Family separation	1. Children in formal or informal care. 2. Child-headed households. 3. Unaccompanied children.

The information from the social transfer programmes database was then imported into *Atlas ti*, a network mapping software. The objective is to organise the large amount of information in the database and highlight the main qualitative linkages between social transfers and child protection outcomes, in preparation for a more detailed quantitative analysis in the next section. Figure 2 extracts a visual map of the main linkages between social transfer programme types, design and implementation features, and child protection indicators. The arrows represent the linkages identified in the database.

Figure 2. Network view of programme analysis



Starting from the bottom of the Figure, the specific eligibility criteria used by programmes do not appear to have distinct linkages to specific programme types and child protection outcomes. At the next level, the different types of programme are linked through to child protection outcomes via implementation features. For example, programmes providing transfers combined with human capital accumulation and requiring adult labour show links to two child protection outcomes: child

labour and family separation. Programmes providing transfers combined with human asset accumulation and requiring minimum school attendance show links to all child protection outcomes, except for family separation. Integrated anti-poverty programmes show links to two implementation features: the extension of the school day and school attendance. Through these implementation features, integrated anti-poverty programmes show links to all child protection outcomes, except family separation. Pure income transfers show links with all child protection outcomes, except for child labour.

Table 3 lists the number of impact evaluation studies covering child protection outcomes. As noted above, the discussion which follows will not cover health and schooling outcomes as they have been examined extensively in the literature.

Table 3. Number of impact evaluation studies including child protection outcomes by programme type

Programme type and key features	Family Separation	Child labour	Child marriage	Birth registration	Schooling	Health	Total reports
Human capital accumulation	2	31	5	2	48	10	62
Adult labour		4			1		5
Extracurricular activities		1			1		1
Minimum school attendance	2	26	5	2	46	10	56
Integrated anti-poverty		2			2	3	4
Extracurricular activities		1			2	3	3
Minimum school attendance		1					1
Pure income transfers	1	3			8	6	13
No conditions	1	3			8	6	13
Total outcomes	3	36	5	2	58	19	79

The following two sections provide a more detailed discussion of the direct effects of social transfers on child protection emerging from impact evaluation studies.

Programme types and child protection

Different types of transfer programmes can shape welfare outcomes differently, with implications for child protection. Box 2 described the main types of social transfer programmes. Pure income transfers are mainly focused on categories of the population perceived to be at risk of poverty, such as older people, people with disabilities, and children. Transfers are generally aimed at improving household consumption and at overcoming income barriers to accessing services. Pure income transfers could yield positive outcomes for children, even if they are not the focus of the intervention.³⁷ Regardless of the immediate recipient, in low- and middle-income countries anti-poverty transfers are shared within households.³⁸ At the same time, the potential effects of direct income transfers on child protection could be limited by their design.³⁹

³⁷ BARRIENTOS, A. and DEJONG, J. 2006. Reducing child poverty with cash transfers: A sure thing? *Development Policy Review*, 24, 537-552.

³⁸ Research on receipt of social pensions, for example, shows that transfers are shared by pensioners with their households, in a majority of cases as a contribution to household income. The implication is that social transfers are, in the main, allocated in line with household priorities. Studies on intra-household resource allocation in developing countries point to considerable heterogeneity in decision making. They also find important gender and age differences in power and influence. In developing countries, many social transfer programmes make mothers the direct beneficiaries of transfers in the expectation that they will influence intra-household resource allocation towards

Looking at Fig. 2, income transfers focused on human development, like conditional cash transfer programmes, often require households to ensure children attend school and household members attend health check-ups. They are strongly child-focused, while requiring parents to spend time and money on the verification of these conditions. The explicit objective of these programmes is to ensure children have higher human capital and productivity than their parents, as a means of reducing the generational persistence of poverty.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, schooling and health conditions, if applied strictly, may fail to reach children in poverty in areas without service infrastructure, and could fail to reach children in extreme vulnerability where parents are unable to comply with programme conditions. Eligibility conditions based on specific thresholds of child malnutrition could be problematic from a child protection context. Some programmes target households with higher incidence of child malnourishment, where children are monitored periodically to determine whether the household can remain as a beneficiary. This can generate perverse incentive to restrict the amount of food provided to children, in order to remain eligible for support (Dunn, 2009).⁴¹

Social transfer programmes may facilitate parental care. A qualitative evaluation of Mexico's *Progres/Oportunidades* programme notes that some mothers are able to exercise a preference to reduce market work in order to spend more time with their children, particularly infants.⁴² This is also shaped by their perceptions about the insecurity of the neighbourhoods and the risks associated with leaving children alone during the daytime. This is corroborated by findings from an impact evaluation of Colombia's *Familias en Acción*, where some mothers reduced their labour supply, while their partners raised the hours they worked.⁴³

Finally, integrated anti-poverty programmes combine cash transfers with personal intermediation and follow-up. These programmes aim to address deficits along several dimensions of well-being and pay explicit attention to social exclusion. In Chile's *Chile Solidario*, child protection-related outcomes are explicitly incorporated into the selected dimensions of deprivation. They include antenatal monitoring and training, birth registration, disability support and rehabilitation, fostering, intra-household dynamics and conflict, drug addiction, and others.⁴⁴ This type of transfer programme matches households with a range of support from multiple public programmes, and helps to coordinate the work of the many agencies involved. *Chile Solidario* targeted the achievement of 53 minimum thresholds in seven dimensions of well-being as the condition for households to exit the programme, and as a means to measure progress. Some of the minimum thresholds relating to child protection indicators include birth registration, school attendance, literacy of adolescents, schooling for children with disabilities, parental concern about the

children. See Haddad, L., Hoddinott, J. and Alderman, H. (eds.) (1997). *Intrahousehold Resource Allocation in Developing Countries*, London: John Hopkins University Press; Molyneux, M. (2006). Mothers at the Service of the New Poverty Agenda: *Progres/Oportunidades*, Mexico's conditional transfer programme, *Social Policy and Administration*, 40: 425-449.

³⁹ An old age bias in pure income transfers might be partly due to the fact that older people have voting rights but children do not have them. Hickey, S. (2007). Conceptualising the Politics of Social Protection in Africa. *SSRN eLibrary*.

⁴⁰ The objective of these programmes is to improve school enrolment and attendance, but they lack explicit objectives around the quality of the education children receive. See Reimers, F., Deshano Da Silva, C. and Trevino, E. (2006). Where is the "Education" in Conditional Cash Transfers in Education? Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

⁴¹ Dunn, S. (2009). External Evaluation: Fresh food voucher project by Action Against hunger Dadaab refugee camps, Kenya. Action Against Hunger.

⁴² Escobar Latapí, A. and González De La Rocha, M. (2009). Evaluación Cualitativa del Programa Oportunidades. Etapa urbana 2003. CIESAS - Occidente.

⁴³ Nuñez, J. (2011). Evaluación del Programa Familias en Acción en Grandes Centros Urbanos. Centro Nacional de Consultoría.

⁴⁴ Barrientos, A. (2010). Protecting Capabilities, Eradicating Extreme Poverty: Chile Solidario and the future of social protection. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 11: 579-597.

education of their children, housing and public services, adequate home conflict resolution, and domestic violence.

In sum, the design features of social transfers can have important implications for child protection risk factors and outcomes. Social transfer designs can facilitate or limit synergies with child protection and, in rare cases, programme design features could exacerbate child protection risk factors.

Social transfers and child protection outcomes and risk factors

Information on direct effects of social transfers on child protection outcomes captured in the database can also be arranged by specific child protection outcomes and risk factors. The discussion below summarizes the main findings.

Birth registration

Some registration is a requirement for participation in the vast majority of social transfer programmes.⁴⁵ Social transfer programmes lead directly to comprehensive registration among potential beneficiaries. In India's *National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme*, applications for participation require birth certificates as proof of age. The programme has also contributed to the Unique Identification Project in India, which seeks to provide identity cards to all Indian citizens.

Birth registration is usually required for participation in child-focused programmes. Parents are encouraged to register their children and government agencies are required to facilitate registration procedures. In conditions where birth registration is a complex and expensive process, this requirement might be difficult for households to meet. It is important that programme designers pay attention to this issue and not to penalise the families who are unable to register their children at birth. In Colombia's *Familias en Acción*, for example, local officers of the national registration agency are present in the enrolment of new beneficiaries by the programme agency in order to speed up and facilitate participant households meeting this requirement. Parents or caregivers can obtain the required certificates for enrolment into the programme without spending additional resources on travelling to different places. The programme also overcomes the lack of birth registration in conflict situations, by allowing displaced families to obtain preferential access to identification services.⁴⁶ Social transfer programmes providing for follow up and check-ups of expectant mothers commonly ensure birth registration of newly born babies. An evaluation of Colombia's *Familias en Acción* found that 97.3 per cent of participant children had birth certificates, compared to 91.7 per cent of non-participants.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ This has been so since the 17th century. Szreter, S. (2007). The Right to Registration: Development, identity registration and social security - a historical perspective. *World Development*, 35: 67-86.

⁴⁶ Accion Social (2010). *El Camino Recorrido: Diez Años Familias en Acción*, Bogotá.

⁴⁷ Centro Nacional De Consultoría (2008). Evaluación del Programa Familias en Acción para Población Desplazada. *Serie de Evaluaciones Externas*. Centro Nacional de Consultoría.

Box 4. Kenya's Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programme

The Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programme began to be implemented as a pilot in 2004 and then ran its second phase from 2005 to 2009; a third phase, beginning in 2010, was expected to scale up the programme to cover 110,000 households by 2012. In terms of its design this programme is modelled on the conditional transfer programmes in Latin America, but capacity constraints in Kenya have restricted the implementation of conditions. It targets households in extreme poverty with orphans or vulnerable children, and provides a transfer of around US\$26 per month. The main objectives of the programme include: keeping orphaned and vulnerable children within families and facilitating investment in health and schooling; reducing mortality and morbidity among children under five years of age; school enrolment and attendance by children aged six to 17; and ensuring birth registration. The impact evaluation of the second phase showed that the programme has increased ownership of birth registration certificates by 12 per cent in comparison to the control group.

At the same time, the programme did not appear to produce significant changes in reduction of family separation across treatment and control groups. Orphaned and vulnerable children were almost entirely retained within the extended family in both programme and control areas, which were close to universal before the programme even began. This was largely due to the fact that informal fostering, kinship and community care of orphaned children are embedded in existing social norms. However, the Programme contributed to raising the living standards of families, allowing them to provide better care to orphaned children in their households.*

* See: Garcia, M. and Moore, C. M. T. (2012). *The Cash Dividend. The Rise of Cash Transfer Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Washington DC: The World Bank. Ward, P. et al for UNICEF. Cash Transfer Programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC), Kenya, Operational and Impact Evaluation 2007-2009.

Family separation

Social transfers impact on family separation in several ways, but especially through their effects on mitigating the impact of migration and conflict on children.

Social transfers can prevent family separation by allowing parents to avoid involuntarily migrating from rural to large urban areas as job seekers. In such situations, parents may leave children in the care of other family members (grandparents, relatives) or in other informal fostering arrangements. Though kinship care bears certain advantages for children (continued family contact, maintaining identity, reduced distress from relocation), it may also lead to child neglect and deprivation, loss of inheritance and other problems. Where children are more closely related to their kin, e.g. grandparents, the quality of care is better.⁴⁸ Social pension programmes in Brazil and South Africa were purposely designed to support older people in communities affected by large-scale migration.⁴⁹ They had the additional aim of strengthening the local economy in areas

48 Roby, J. (2011). Children in Informal Alternative Care. Child Protection Section. New York: UNICEF.

49 Barrientos, A. (2008). Cash Transfers for Older People Reduce Poverty and Inequality. In: Bebbington, A. J., Dani, A. A., De Haan, A. and Walton, M. (eds.) Institutional Pathways to Equity. Addressing Inequality Traps. Washington DC: The World Bank.

depressed by the migration of working-age adults.⁵⁰ This applies to other social transfers too. A study of South Africa's *Child Support Grant* found that receipt of the grant was associated with an eight per cent higher probability that children lived with their biological parents.⁵¹ Colombia's *Familias in Accion* was originally focused on facilitating family reunion and preventing family separation due to social conflict.

Social transfers are an effective response to family separation forced by migration due to war or internal conflict (See Box 5). Social transfers have been used as an incentive encouraging families to return to the places they were forced to leave, as in *Familias in Accion* in Colombia.⁵² Transfers allow parents to spend more time with their children and strengthen their intra-household relations. A displaced beneficiary from Colombia's *Familias en Accion* CCT programme declares that:

"...if you don't work, you don't eat. But in those days that you receive the money you can reserve that day because you have something for giving them to eat, then you can spend that day to the children"⁵³

Social transfers could also encourage migration. The additional income, combined with its regularity and reliability, facilitate a reallocation of household productive resources. Social transfers provide domestic migration opportunities for parents who are willing to work in larger urban centres, leaving their children in rural areas until they are eventually able to bring them into the city.⁵⁴ Research on the labour supply effects of social pension receipt in South Africa finds that migration of working age mothers can be facilitated by the regular income received by female pensioners, who could also provide care.⁵⁵ In conditional cash transfer programmes implemented in rural areas, compliance with the condition that children attend secondary school may require recipients to migrate to urban centres where secondary schools are located. The fact that social transfers help children accumulate more human capital increases the likelihood that young people will leave their homes in search of better employment opportunities, as has been observed in studies of the trajectories of 14-17 year olds participating in Mexico's *Progresa/Oportunidades*.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Barrientos, A. (2012). Social Transfers and Growth. What do we know? What do we need to find out? *World Development*, 40: 11-20.

⁵¹ Mayrand, H. (2010). *Does Money Matter?: the effects of the child support grant on childrearing decisions in South Africa*, Université Laval.

⁵² centro Nacional de Consultoría (2008). Evaluación del Programa Familias en Acción para Población Desplazada. *Serie de Evaluaciones Externas*. Centro Nacional de Consultoría.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 529.

⁵⁴ Stecklov, G., Winters, P., Tood, J. and Regalia, F. (2007). Unintended Effects of Poverty Programmes on Childbearing in Less Developed Countries: Experimental evidence from Latin America, *Population Studies*, 61: 125-140.

⁵⁵ Ardington, C., Case, A. and Hosegood, V. (2009). Labour Supply Responses to Large Social Transfers: Longitudinal evidence from South Africa, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1: 22-48.

⁵⁶ Oliver, A. (2009). *Does Poverty Alleviation Increase Migration? Evidence from Mexico*. Available at: <http://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/17599/files/356/17599.html>.

Box 5. *Familias en Acción* Programme for the Displaced Population in Colombia

The *Familias en Acción Programme for the Displaced Population* is a monetary transfer conditional on school attendance and health checkups for displaced families registered in the displaced population information system. The programme is an extension of the general *Familias en Acción* programme, and follows the same scheme, with the same amount of transfers, and the same conditions, but it differs in the registration process. In *Familias en Acción* the beneficiaries must be registered and classified by a proxy means test, while in *Familias en Acción* for the Displaced Population, beneficiaries must be registered as victims of displacement with no consideration of their income level. The programme offers two subsidies, a nutritional subsidy of US\$20 per month for families with children under seven years of age, a school subsidy of US\$6 per month for children in primary school and US\$12 dollars for children in secondary school. An impact evaluation found that the programme had improved birth registration and prevalence of identity cards for minors. Using propensity score matching methods, they found birth registration among participants was between three and 3.3 percentage points higher for children aged 0-6 years, and possession of identity cards between 5.6 and 6.5 percentage points higher for children aged 7-17 years, compared to non-participants.*

*Centro Nacional de Consultoría (2008). Evaluación del Programa Familias en Acción para Población Desplazada. *Serie de Evaluaciones Externas*. Centro Nacional de Consultoría.

Child labour

According to UNICEF, a child is considered to be involved in child labour if the following circumstances apply: (a) children 5 to 11 years of age are engaged in one hour of economic activity or a minimum of 28 hours of domestic work in the week preceding the survey, and (b) children 12 to 14 years of age are engaged in at least 14 hours of economic activity or a minimum of 42 hours of economic activity and domestic work combined per week.⁵⁷ However, most of the impact evaluations reviewed define child labour according to the ILO standards, as the engagement of children in remunerated or non-remunerated work at least for one hour in the week prior to the survey; or the engagement of children in job search. This broader definition allows the inclusion of results from some studies which might not be considered child labour in UNICEF's approach. It is noteworthy that the studies reviewed fail to use a common consistent definition, in part because evaluation surveys follow established practices in their national household surveys.⁵⁸

There is strong evidence from impact evaluations on how the design features of social transfers affect child labour.⁵⁹ The main findings from this literature are that social transfers often lead to a reallocation of household labour resources, in response to the specific objectives of programmes. Broadly, child labour declines if social transfers specifically target child labour or child schooling, which effectively limits children's capacity to work outside the home. The effects are stronger

⁵⁷ http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/stats_popup9.html

⁵⁸ For example, in the evaluation of Mexico's *Progreso/Oportunidades* the survey questionnaire (available at www.coneval.gob.mx) included an employment module for respondents from 5 years of age and older. The relevant question is: "In the last week, did you work for at least one hour?" The incidence of child labour was obtained from responses to this question.

⁵⁹ An up to date assessment can be found in de Hoop, J. and Rosati, F. 2012. What Have We Learned from a Decade of Child Labour Impact Evaluations? *Understanding Children's Work Programme Working Paper Series*. Understanding Children's Work.

where extracurricular activities are included. The reduction in child labour hours is often less than proportionate to the rise in hours spent at school. Social transfer programmes providing for extracurricular activities are relatively more effective in reducing child labour.

The impacts of social transfers on child labour are heterogeneous, and show strong gender differences. Boys are more likely to be affected by a reduction of child labour than girls. For example, Behrman et al. (2011) find that boys from Mexico's *Progreso/Oportunidades* programme were reassigned from work to school activities by their parents, while the effects on the girls was negligible.⁶⁰ One of the explanations is that boys have higher rates of labour force participation than those observed for girls. As for the girls, some evidence was found of a reduction in the time they spent on household chores, for example in Malawi's Social Cash Transfer.⁶¹

A report by the ILO (2007) discusses how the CCTs in Latin America impact on the employment status of children, and on the impact of variations in the specification of the programme design and benefit amounts.⁶² The report highlights the implementation of the Child Labour Eradication Programme (*Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil*, PETI) in Brazil (See Box 6). It was introduced in 1996 in the north-east of the country, in areas with a large incidence of children working in coal mines and in agriculture. It was very effective in reducing child labour, through a combination of income transfers, school attendance conditions and an extended school day providing remedial and supplementary education. An evaluation of PETI found a fifty per cent reduction of hours worked by children.⁶³ A study finds that conditions reduce the impact of shocks on child schooling and labour because they restrict households' option to rely on child labour as a buffer against shocks.⁶⁴

Social transfers reduce child labour through the additional income to households and through making the transfer conditional on school attendance. The amount of the transfer is often higher than the earned income of children, enabling parents to substitute child labour with school enrolment (See Box 7).⁶⁵ Integrated anti-poverty programmes are also able to monitor the children's labour status, and align interventions designed to address it.⁶⁶ However, if transfer programmes manage to secure higher levels of school attendance, the associated reduction in child labour might be less than proportionate to the rise in schooling at the expense of children's free time. This is the finding from a study of the impact of Bangladesh's cash for education programme.⁶⁷ In view of these findings, the designers of Costa Rica's *Avanceamos* opted to require parents to demonstrate that their children are not engaged in labour activities.

⁶⁰ Behrman, J. R., Gallardo-Garcia, J., Parker, S. W., Todd, P. E. and Velez-Grajales, V. 2011. Are Conditional Cash Transfers Effective in Urban Areas? Evidence from Mexico. Penn Institute for Economic Research, Department of Economics, University of Pennsylvania.

⁶¹ Covarrubias, K., Davis, B. and Winters, P. (2012). From Protection to Production: Productive impacts of the Malawi Social Cash Transfer scheme, *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 4: 50-77.

⁶² ILO (2007). Child Labour: Cause and Effect of the Perpetuation of Poverty. Geneva: International Program for the Eradication of Child Labour-IPEC.

⁶³ Yap, Y.-T., Sedlacek, G. and Orazem, P. F. (2002). Limiting Child Labor through Behavior-based Income Transfers: An experimental evaluation of the PETI program in rural Brazil, Washington DC: Inter-American Development Bank.

⁶⁴ De Janvry, A., Finan, F., Sadoulet, E. and Vakis, R. (2006). Can Conditional Transfer Programmes Work as Safety Nets in Keeping Children at School and from Working when exposed to shocks? *Journal of Development Economics*, 79, 349-373.

⁶⁵ Rawlings, L. B. and Rubio, L. (2005). Evaluating the Impact of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs, *World Bank Research Observer*, 20: 29-55.

⁶⁶ Galasso, E. (2011). Alleviating Extreme Poverty in Chile: The short term effects of Chile Solidario, *Estudios de Economía*, 38: 101-127.

⁶⁷ Ravallion, M. and Wodon, Q. (2000). Does Child Labour Displace Schooling? Evidence on behavioural responses to enrollment subsidy. *Economic Journal*, 110: C158-C175.

A reduction of child labour required by social transfer programmes often has implications for the labour supply of adults. A reduction in the labour supply of children can be compensated for by a rise in the labour supply of adults. Similarly, a reduction in the labour supply of mothers can be compensated for by a rise in the labour supply of other adults in the household. The issue is whether these changes in labour supply among adults have implications for the care of children. In the context of social transfer programmes requiring the labour supply of adults as a counterpart, as in Ethiopia's *Productive Safety Net Programme* or India's *National Rural Employment Guarantee*, the issue has received some attention. There are adverse impacts on parental care arising from the adult work requirement, but these can be minimised through the provision of adequate child care at the work location.⁶⁸ The conditions attached to participation are emphasised to participant households at induction, through a contract describing their rights and responsibilities. Capacity constraints meant that conditions have not been enforced until recently. Monthly meetings with participant households focus on health and nutrition information. A study of Ethiopia's *Productive Safety Net Programme* found that the number of daily hours parents spent on child care and household chores decreased between 0.15-0.19 on average, while child school attendance and study at home decreased by 0.02-0.04 hours on average, a small but statistically significant effect.⁶⁹

Box 6. Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil (PETI) in Brazil

The *Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil (PETI)* was introduced in 1996 as a cash transfer aimed at reducing hazardous child labour, and integrated into *Bolsa Familia* in 2003. The programme includes attendance of after-school activities, known as the *Jornada Ampliada*. The benefit was conditional on school attendance for at least 80 per cent of the time. A study* concluded that the *Jornada Ampliada* reduced children's worked hours by around 50 per cent. The programme was more successful in reducing hazardous child labour among children working part-time than among full-time child workers. The programme also reduced the probability of children being involved in hazardous or risky work.

* Yap, Y.-T., Sedlacek, G. and Orazem, P. F. (2002). *Limiting Child Labor through Behavior-based Income Transfers: An experimental evaluation of the PETI program in rural Brazil*, Washington DC: Inter-American Development Bank.

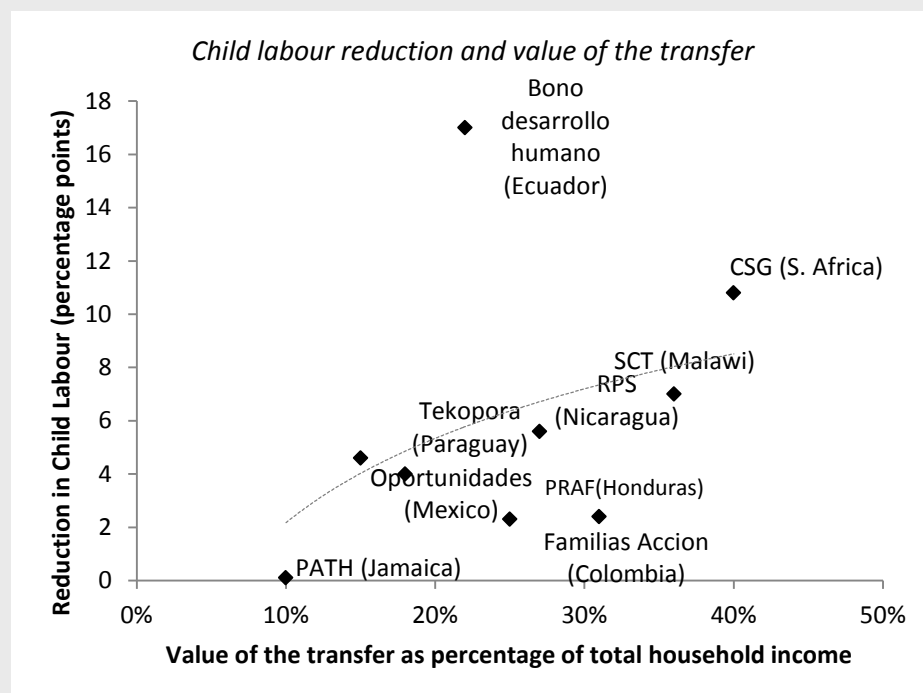
⁶⁸ KHERA, R. (ed.) 2011. *The Battle for Employment Guarantee*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁹ TAFERE, Y. and WOLDEHANNA, T. 2012. *Beyond Food Security: Transforming the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia for the Well-being of Children*. *Working Paper*. Young Lives.

Box 7. Reduction in child labour and the level of the transfer

How important is the level of the transfer for the impact of social transfers on child labour outcomes? Figure 3 below plots reductions in child labour and the value of the transfer as percentage of total household income reported in several impact evaluation studies.*

Figure 3. The level of social transfers and the effects on child labour rates



Note: Data from Barrientos et al (2010) and de Hoop and Furio (2012). The measured effects come from evaluation studies using different techniques for identifying impact and slightly different definitions of child labour, but all of them consider children between 10-17 years of age. The horizontal axis refers to the reported total nominal income of programme participant households.

The Figure shows variation in the observed effects of social transfers on the rate of child labour (percentage points). Starting from a cluster of programmes in the bottom left-hand side, they transfer a lower amount and generate a small reduction in the proportion of children in work. Then another group of programmes on the right-hand side provide higher-level transfers. Some of these programmes generate greater reductions in the rate of child labour, as in Ecuador's *Bono de Desarrollo Humano*. The level of the transfer has a strong influence on child labour outcomes, but other factors, such as co-responsibilities and the initial rates of children's labour force participation, appear to be important too.

*Barrientos, A., Niño-Zarazúa, M. and Maitrot, M. (2010). Social Assistance in Developing Countries Database Version 5. Manchester: Brooks World Poverty Institute; De Hoop, J. and Rosati, F. (2012). What Have We Learned from a Decade of Child Labour Impact Evaluations? *Understanding Children's Work Programme Working Paper Series*. Understanding Children's Work.

Child marriage

Social transfer programmes impact on child marriage, mainly through the combination of school attendance graded transfers and school attendance conditions. Several evaluation studies provide information on this.⁷⁰ In some social transfer programmes, designers have paid attention to enrolment rates and dropout rates for different school grades. The transition from primary to secondary school is often associated with a spike in dropout rates, especially for girls. To address this issue, some social transfer programmes provide transfer levels graded to retain children at school. Mexico's *Progresa/Oportunidades* provides higher level of transfers for secondary school students, rising with school grade, and also at different level for boys and girls. This is intended to provide financial incentives to households to keep children, and especially girls, at school. In fact, the evaluations of *Progresa/Oportunidades*, and other human capital accumulation programmes with similar transfer level incentives, show reduced drop-out rates and higher retention effects for girls than for boys.

This can have implications for child marriage. A study of Bangladesh's *Female Secondary School Stipend* concluded that the transfer programme had been effective in closing the gender schooling gap between boys and girls and reducing the incidence of child marriage and child bearing. The stipend was conditional on girls remaining unmarried.⁷¹ The *Zomba* pilot programme in Malawi tested the impact of an unconditional cash transfer linked to girls' sexual behaviour and found a reduction of 48 per cent in child marriage and 38 per cent in early pregnancy.⁷²

A recent study reports on the use of social transfers to delay the sexual initiation of girls in sub-Saharan Africa. An experimental transfer scheme in Uganda demonstrated that the provision of transfers through saving accounts, workshops and mentorship led to a reduction in sexual risk-taking among participant children.⁷³

Indirect effects

This section examines indirect effects of social transfers on child protection outcomes. These effects are referred to as indirect in order to acknowledge the role of poverty reduction as a mediating factor linking social transfers and child protection outcomes.

Social transfers and poverty reduction

As discussed earlier in the paper the main objective of social transfers is the reduction of poverty and exclusion. Their effectiveness is largely measured in terms of the impact of social transfers on poverty measures.

⁷⁰ Attanasio, O., Fitzsimons, E., Gomez, A., Gutiérrez, M. I., Meghir, C. and Mesnard, A. (2010). Children's Schooling and Work in the Presence of a Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Rural Colombia, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 58: 181-210; Borkum, E. (2012). Can Eliminating School Fees in Poor Districts Boost Enrollment? Evidence from South Africa, *Department of Economics Discussion Papers*, Colombia University, 60: 359-398; De Janvry, A., Finan, F., Sadoulet, E. and Vakis, R. (2006). Can Conditional Transfer Programmes Work as Safety Nets in Keeping Children at School and from Working When Exposed to Shocks? *Journal of Development Economics*, 79: 349-373; Khandker, S., Pitt, M. and Fuwa, N. (2003). *Subsidy to Promote Girls' Secondary Education: The Female Stipend Program in Bangladesh*. Available at: <http://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/23688/files/325/23688.html>.

⁷¹ Khandker, S., Pitt, M. and Fuwa, N. (2003). *Subsidy to Promote Girls' Secondary Education: The Female Stipend Program in Bangladesh*. Available at: <http://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/23688/files/325/23688.html>.

⁷² Baird, S., McIntosh, C. and Özler, B. (2011). Cash or Condition? Evidence from a cash experiment. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126: 1709-1753.

⁷³ Ssewamala, F. M., Han, C.-K., Neilands, T. B., Ismayilova, L. and Sperber, E. 2010. Effect of Economic Assets on Sexual Risk-taking Intentions among Orphaned Adolescents in Uganda, *American Journal of Public Health*, 100: 483-488.

This presents two important challenges. First, it is essential to separate out the effects of social transfers on poverty from the influence of other factors, especially the influence of social policy and economic growth. Improvements in the provision of basic services and rapid economic growth are expected to lead to poverty reduction, even in the absence of social transfers. Along the same lines, deterioration in basic service provision due to conflict or emergencies, for example, and financial crises are expected to raise poverty levels, even in the presence of social transfers. The evaluation of social transfers relies on experimental and observational techniques to isolate the poverty reduction effects of social transfers. Experimental methods compare poverty outcomes across programme participants and eligible non-participants. Second, and following from the discussion on poverty measures above, it is important to measure the effects of social transfers on a range of poverty measures, because of differences in the information they provide.

Impact evaluations of Mexico's *Progresa/Oportunidades* provide accurate estimates of the poverty reduction effectiveness of well-designed and well-implemented social transfer programmes. Identification of the communities and households selected to participate in the programmes was done in 1997, but due to administrative constraints, some locations were not incorporated into the programme until late 1999. Comparison of poverty outcomes across these two groups of households concludes that the reduction in the poverty headcount rate was 7.5 percentage points greater among the early participants, consistent with a 17.3 per cent reduction from the baseline.⁷⁴ The impact of *Progresa/Oportunidades* on the poverty gap is larger, estimated as a reduction of the gap by 36.1 per cent. *Progresa/Oportunidades* had the strongest impact among the poorest, with an estimated reduction in the poverty gap squared of 45.6 per cent.⁷⁵ Of course, the poverty reduction effectiveness of social transfers varies with transfer levels, reach and implementation, but well designed and well implemented programmes can make a strong contribution to poverty reduction.

Poverty and child protection

The link between poverty reduction and child protection outcomes, particularly violence and abuse against children, has not been examined with sufficient depth in low- and middle-income countries when compared to high income countries. Linkages between poverty and child labour, for example, may be easier to establish, though by no means is poverty the only contributing factor to child labour. Other factors such as income shocks, cost and quality of education, social norms, child specific labour demand also contribute to child labour.⁷⁶ Poverty has also been identified as a factor in child marriage though other factors such as social norms and gender roles in society play an important part.⁷⁷ Reduction of poverty through social transfers may have an impact on child labour and child marriage even in the absence of conditionality.

⁷⁴ Skoufias, E. (2005). *Progresa and Its Impacts on the Welfare of Rural Households in Mexico. Research Report*. Washington: International Food Policy Research Institute.

⁷⁵ Ibid. The poverty gap measure adds all the poverty gaps of people in poverty and divides this figure by the population to evaluate the average poverty gap. This is usually presented as a percentage of the poverty line to enable comparability across time and place. The poverty gap square multiplies peoples' poverty gaps by the poverty gaps themselves, thus giving additional weight to the poorest.

⁷⁶ See for example ILO, *Microfinance and Child Labour* http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ed_emp_msu/documents/publication/wcms_160842.pdf

⁷⁷ UNICEF (2001). *Early Marriage - Child Spouses, Innocenti Digest 7*, Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. Available at: <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest7e.pdf>

Studies from European countries find a correlation between poverty and child protection risks, for example a correlation between low socio-economic conditions and the incidence of referrals to child protection agencies and out-of-home placement of children.⁷⁸ However, correlation between poverty and child protection risks does not necessarily entail causation.⁷⁹ Analysis of longitudinal datasets, available to a much greater extent for high income countries, provides more precise and more detailed evidence on this link (See Box 8 below).

Box 8. Poverty and child protection outcomes in OECD countries

Ermisch et al. (2001) study the links between poverty and child protection outcomes in the United Kingdom, based on data from a nationally representative longitudinal dataset, the British Youth Panel.* *Persistent poverty* is observed when children's households have incomes below 60 per cent of the median in three or more continuous data points. They find that adolescents experiencing persistent poverty at least once across their lives are more likely to have lower self-esteem and to drop out from school before the age of 16. They also find a higher rate of family separation in poor households and higher risk of early childbearing among girls. Teenagers experiencing poverty were more likely to show psychological distress and to smoke than those who never experienced poverty.

In a meta-study of research in OECD countries by Griggs and Walker (2008), they report a strong correlation between living in a low-income household and victimisation from violence and abuse.** They highlight studies concluding that the stresses associated with living in poverty adversely affect parents' capacity to provide care, leading in some cases to harmful disciplinary practices and to child neglect.

*Ermisch, J., Francesconi, M. and Pevalin, D. (2001). Outcomes for Children of Poverty. UK Department of Work and Pensions.

** Griggs, J. and Walker, R. (2008). The Costs of Child Poverty for Individuals and Society, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

In low- and middle-income countries, extreme poverty and exclusion and the coping strategies families in poverty are often forced to adopt have adverse effects on parental care.⁸⁰ Poor environmental conditions, such as dangerous neighbourhoods, are a contributory factor, driving neglect and abuse of children.⁸¹ In some studies, poverty is identified as a contributory factor in cases of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, alongside disability, poor parental education,

⁷⁸ Griggs, J. and Walker, R. (2008). The Costs of Child Poverty for Individuals and Society, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

⁷⁹ Bradshaw, J. (2002). Child Poverty and Child Outcomes, *Children and Society*, 16: 131-140.

⁸⁰ Harper, C. and Marcus, R. (1999). Child Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. London: Save the Children Fund.

⁸¹ See Drake, B. and Pandey, S. (1996). Understanding the Relationship between Neighborhood Poverty and Specific Types of Child Maltreatment, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 20: 1003-1018. As regards domestic violence, the evidence is mixed. Some studies find no strong evidence that the incidence of maltreatment is greater among children from poor families than children in better off families. See Yoo, J. A. and Huang, C.-C. (2012). The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children's Behavior Problems: Assessing the moderating roles of poverty and marital status. *Children and Youth Services Review*.

overcrowding and community violence.⁸² Social transfer evaluations often report a reduction in parental stress, which can in turn reduce domestic violence and harsh disciplinary practices.

An evaluation of the *Piso Firme* programme in Mexico detected that improvement in housing conditions are associated with improvements in the mood and stress levels of mothers and the nutritional status of children.⁸³ Participation in India's *National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme* has been reported to lead to reduced levels of stress.⁸⁴ Though these studies do not show direct linkages between the reduction of stress and reduction of family violence, they do establish the linkage between poverty reduction and levels of stress within the family.

Implementation synergies

Little attention has been paid to the extent to which the implementation of social transfers generates externalities supporting an improvement in the effectiveness of child protection (See Box 9). The emerging literature on the management and structure of social transfer programmes, and the information emanating from regular monitoring of programmes, suggests that programme implementation raises very important issues for the effectiveness of relevant agencies. This is an important knowledge gap, demanding urgent attention.

Box 9. Programmatic linkages between social protection and child protection

UNICEF's Social Protection Framework* identifies the following programmatic linkages:

- *Mechanisms and interventions*: Some child protection interventions can also serve social protection functions (i.e., family support services). Linking these functions can potentially enhance outcomes in both areas.
- *Explicit integration/linking of services*: Linking child protection with social transfers or other social protection activities may enhance the long-term impact of these interventions.
- *Contact points for identification and referral*: Certain implementation mechanisms and structures of social protection interventions may provide opportunities to identify and refer the most vulnerable households to the most appropriate social welfare services.
- *Social welfare systems*: Social protection interventions can be seen as an important entry point to strengthen social welfare systems.
- *Barriers of access to social protection programmes*: Child protection services can contribute to removing barriers to access.

*UNICEF (2012). *Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children*. New York: UNICEF, Division of Social and Economic Policy.

⁸² ILO and UNICEF (2009). *Training Manual to Fight Trafficking in Children for Labour, Sexual and Other Forms of Exploitation*, Geneva: ILO; UNICEF (2010). *Child Disciplinary Practices at Home: Evidence from a Range of Low- and Middle-Income Countries*, New York: UNICEF; Torrado, M. (2009). *Can Public Policy Have an Impact on Family Stress and Lead to an Improvement in Childcare? Family Stress: Safeguarding Young Children's Care Environment: Early Childhood Matters*, The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.

⁸³ Cattaneo, M., Galiani, S., Gertler, P., Martínez, S. and Titunik, R. (2005). *Evaluación de Resultados de Impacto del Programa Piso Firme Estado de Coahuila. Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*.

⁸⁴ Ravi, S. and Engler, M. (2008). *Workfare in Low Income Countries: An effective way to fight poverty? The case of NREGS in India*. Hyderabad: Indian School of Business.

Increasingly, social transfer programmes pay special attention to training and information components. Informing participants of the objectives of the programme and enlisting their agency in ensuring they are successfully achieved can be hugely effective.⁸⁵ In many conditional cash transfer programmes, parents are required to attend complementary nutrition and care meetings covering areas of child protection.⁸⁶ They include *Pláticas* in Mexico's *Progres/Oportunidades* and the *Encuentros de Cuidado* in Colombia's *Familias en Accion*. At these events, mothers receive personalised medical treatment and advice on how to prepare foods and childrearing tips.⁸⁷ This kind of intervention strengthens social capital and facilitates community enforcement mechanisms to counter child maltreatment and other forms of violence against children.⁸⁸ The Philippines' *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* has emulated the Latin American design on these workshops and implements Family Development Sessions, where women meet to receive training on effective parenting, husband and wife relationships, child development, and family law. Attendance is a condition of receiving the transfer.⁸⁹ Enrolment in social transfer programmes is, in these cases, a very effective means of transferring information on child protection.

Integrated anti-poverty programmes aimed at overcoming social and economic exclusion are implemented in ways which connect households in extreme poverty to the full range of public services and agencies promoting poverty reduction and child protection. This can be observed for *Chile Solidario* but also for Paraguay's *Tekoporá* programme and El Salvador's *Red Solidaria*.⁹⁰ The implementation of these programmes involves additional neighbourhood infrastructure enhancements, legalisation of irregular dwellings, and registration. They emphasise intra-household relations and strengthen agency as a means of overcoming poverty.

The implementation of conditions in transfer programmes engages other programmes and agencies, including child protection services. The requirement that infants are regularly checked by health professionals provides an opportunity for medical staff to examine children's nutrition status but also enables checks for physical signs of maltreatment or abuse. Health professionals trained to detect suspicious symptoms, and in the procedures for referral to the appropriate authorities, can improve the effectiveness of child protection agencies and outcomes.⁹¹ Schooling conditions can also engage education professionals in similar ways.

On a different point, the implementation of social transfers often leads to improvements in the capacity of public agencies, with implications for the effectiveness of child protection services. The impact of social transfers on birth registration was noted above. Further, Latin American countries have introduced information systems for participants in social transfer programmes, but which also

⁸⁵ Shankar, S., Gaiha, R. and Jha, R. (2011). Information, Access and Targeting: The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in India, *Oxford Development Studies*, 39: 69-95.

⁸⁶ See for example Behrman, J. R., Murphy, A., Quisumbing, A. R. and Yount, K. (2009). Are Returns to Mothers' Human Capital Realized in the Next Generation? The Impact of Mothers' Intellectual Human Capital and Long-Run Nutritional Status on Children's Human Capital in Guatemala. *IFPRI Discussion Paper 00850*.

⁸⁷ They include nutritional supplements to reinforce the effects of the intervention. NEufeld, L., Sotres, D., Flores, L., Tolentino, L., Jimenez, J. and Juan, R. (2004). Estudio sobre el consumo de los suplementos alimenticios Nutrisano y Nutrivida en niños y mujeres de zonas urbanas beneficiarios de oportunidades. Bogotá: Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública. A qualitative study of the Peruvian *Juntos* programme illustrates how children from beneficiary households report that their parents buy more fruits, milk and cheese for their consumption. Streuli, N. (2012). Child Protection: A role for conditional cash transfer programmes? *Development in Practice*, 22: 588-599.

⁸⁸ *Familias en Acción* emphasises affection toward children, see the programme website: <http://bit.ly/QiE5hp>. See also Attanasio, O., Pellerano, L. and Reyes, S. P. (2009). Building Trust? Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes and Social Capital, *Fiscal Studies*, 30: 139-177.

⁸⁹ See the FAQs of the programme's website at <http://goo.gl/B3GEz>.

⁹⁰ Soares, F. V. and Britto, T. (2007). Confronting Capacity Constraints on Conditional Cash Transfers in Latin America: The cases of El Salvador and Paraguay, Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

⁹¹ See for example the official guidelines in Mexico, Desarrollo Integral De La Familia (2012). *Protocolo de Atención a Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes Víctimas de Explotación Sexual Comercial. Dirigido a: Sector Salud*, Mexico DF: Desarrollo Integral de la Familia.

cover users of other government services. Brazil's *CadUnico* provides a single registry of all households in Brazil who apply for *Bolsa Família* and other public services. The *CadUnico* has made a huge contribution to improving the effectiveness of public agencies. It has helped to harmonise the diverse eligibility requirements for public services, leading to large economies in resources and, at the same time, better coordination of public provision.⁹² The *CadUnico* can be accessed by all relevant agencies and by users, thus enabling rapid updating of information. Similar schemes are in place in Colombia (*Sisben*), Chile (*Ficha de Protección Social*) and India (*RighttoWork* website). The potential for improving the effectiveness of child protection services is great.

The introduction of social transfers has also resulted in greater horizontal and vertical coordination among public agencies.⁹³ Improved horizontal coordination across ministries and public agencies is often a consequence of the bundling of social transfers with service utilisation and service provision. In human development social transfer programmes coordination across transfer agencies and ministries of health and education is a key feature of programme implementation. Improved coordination and partnership between central government and local authorities is also key to the implementation of social transfer programmes in countries with federal structures. Coordination between social transfers and child protection can generate synergies in implementation horizontally and vertically.

Social transfer programmes increasingly base eligibility on a ranking of households according to their socio-economic status, an improvement on binary poor/not poor identification techniques. There are alternative techniques for generating this ranking, but proxy means tests, which rank households according to a range of information on household living conditions, habitat, and demography, are increasingly common. Household rankings are updated at regular intervals. They can provide a very useful tool for child protection agencies.

Monitoring and evaluation protocols have been introduced in the majority of social transfer programmes. They generate key information to assess progress in poverty reduction and on the effectiveness of the programmes. There are important lessons for child protection services as regards the importance of evaluation. Incorporating child protection indicators within the monitoring and evaluation of social transfer programmes could be helpful in maximising positive child protection outcomes, and minimising adverse effects.

Integrated anti-poverty transfer programmes, and increasingly conditional cash transfer programmes, pay strong attention to intermediation. Personal intermediation is a core component in these programmes, especially as they seek to overcome social exclusion (see Box 10). Conditional cash transfer programmes also include intermediation, initially as a tool for local implementation of the programmes, but later as an instance needed to address compliance failures. There are important opportunities here for cross-fertilization between social transfers and child protection.

⁹² Azevedo, V., Bouillon, C. P. and Irrarrázaval, I. (2011). La efectividad de las redes de protección social: El rol de los sistemas integrados de información social en seis países de América Latina, Washington DC: Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo.

⁹³ Lindert, K., Linder, A., Hobbs, J. and De La Brière, B. (2007). The Nuts and Bolts of Brazil's *Bolsa Família* Program: Implementing conditional cash transfers in a decentralized context, Washington DC: The World Bank.

Box 10. CRAS in Brazil

Brazil's *Centros de Referência em Assistência Social* (CRAS) developed from the 2004 National Policy on Social Assistance.* The latter involved a significant change in approach in the provision of social services. It established the state's responsibility for provision of social services and intermediation between vulnerable households and public agencies. It moved away from a segmented approach, in which older people, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups were targeted by separate agencies and programmes. Instead, the new approach was open to all citizens, while service provision centred on households. The CRAS are part of a Unified Social Assistance system, with child protection as an important component. Evaluation of the CRAS, and its more specialist counterparts, the *Centros de Referência Especializada de Assistência Social* (CREAS), has noted their reach and effectiveness.

* Jaccoud, L., Hadjab, P. D. E.-M. and Chaibub, J. R. (2009). Assistência social e segurança alimentar: Entre novas trajetórias, velhas agendas e recentes desafios (1988-2008). In: Diretoria De Estudos E Políticas Sociais, *Políticas sociais: Acompanhamento e análise 17*. Brasília: IPEA.

4. FINDINGS

Our main findings are as follows:

There are important linkages between social transfers and child protection. Social transfer programmes in low and middle income countries have expanded rapidly in the last decade and now reach a significant number of households in poverty in low- and middle-income countries. They can make a large contribution to the reduction of global poverty and deprivation. Children are a majority of the population in poverty. Child protection outcomes in a broad sense include child survival, development and well-being. Social transfers also aim at improving these for the population in poverty. Poverty and social exclusion are contributory factors to child protection risk factors.

A systems approach to child protection, aiming to shift its focus away from individual forms of harm – violence, abuse, child labour, trafficking – and towards creating a protective environment that addresses risks and minimizes vulnerabilities of children, will extend the linkages between social transfers and child protection. This involves a broader focus on child well-being, as well as stronger coordination between specialised agencies engaged in child protection. In low- and middle-income countries, the scarce evidence available suggests that poverty and exclusion can contribute to child protection risk factors. Therefore, child protection strategies are unlikely to be effective if they are unconnected to strategies addressing the causes of poverty and deprivation.

Three features of the evolution of social transfers in low- and middle-income countries suggest growing linkages with child protection: large-scale programmes with significant reach, a child focus, and multidimensional approaches to poverty reduction. In middle-income countries, the scale of social transfer programmes reaches groups in extreme poverty, moderate poverty, and in some cases groups vulnerable to poverty. In low-income countries, the reach of social transfers is more limited. Children are the focus of social transfer programmes in the majority of countries in

Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and in some countries in Asia. Innovative social transfer programmes are underpinned by a multidimensional understanding of the factors generating poverty, and aim to collect interventions in a coherent package. These features point to growing linkages with child protection.

Social transfers have effects on child protection risk factors and outcomes. This study identifies three main types of effects: direct effects, indirect effects and implementation synergies. Direct effects refer to changes in child protection outcomes attributed to social transfers, as reported in impact evaluation studies. Indirect effects refer to changes in child protection outcomes which stem from changes in poverty and exclusion as a result of social transfers. Implementation synergies point to potential improvements in the effectiveness of child protection services as a result of the implementation of social transfers.

Analysis of a database of social transfers impact evaluation studies indicates that, depending on design, social transfers have direct effects on birth registration, child labour, family separation and child marriage. Social transfer programmes encourage registration through eligibility requirements. In child-focused programmes, birth registration is a participation requirement and also an outcome of support for, and conditions on, expectant mothers. The reduction of child labour is an explicit objective in child-focused social transfer programmes, especially in programmes aiming to improve school attendance. They are generally effective in meeting this objective, but compensatory changes in adult labour or in children's free time could reduce the size of this effect. Social transfer programmes facilitate parental care through an improvement in household resources which reduces separation; but, in other cases, they facilitate labour migration of adults and children of secondary school age. Child-focused social transfer programmes with schooling conditions reduce the incidence of child marriage. This effect is stronger where financial incentives are designed to maximise children staying in school.

The fact that our database of impact evaluation studies did not capture effects on other child protection outcomes cannot be interpreted to mean that no further effects exist. A limitation of impact evaluation studies is that they focus primarily on the explicit objectives of programmes, although our database also included evaluation from independent researchers. Our results do imply that many social transfer programmes lack explicit child protection objectives.

Social transfers can generate positive, and also negative, direct effects on child protection outcomes. Asset accumulation transfer programmes requiring adult labour, such as public works and workfare programmes, were found to have effects on child labour and informal care if the associated child care is not adequate.

Regarding indirect effects, there is strong evidence that social transfers reduce poverty and exclusion, but research on the link between poverty, and poverty reduction, and child protection outcomes in low- and middle-income countries is weak. In high-income countries, longitudinal data enable a more precise and accurate identification of the effects of poverty, and poverty reduction, on child protection outcomes. This literature suggests that indirect effects can be large in low- and middle-income countries especially with regard to child marriage, birth registration and child labour, but less so on violence and abuse. Further research is needed before reaching reliable conclusions on this point.

Implementation synergies are important, but under-researched. The introduction of social transfer programmes in low- and middle-income countries is driving forward important innovations, with implications for the effectiveness of child protection services. They include the introduction of unified registration of the population accessing support from public agencies, monitoring and evaluation, referral systems, and household ranking according to socio-economic status. These innovations improve the information available to public agencies, and facilitate agency coordination.

Implementation features of social transfers support potential synergies with child protection services. They include: information and training for participant households covering nutrition, intra-household relations and family services; compliance with conditions as a potentially effective instrument for identification of child protection risk factors and referral to appropriate agencies; packaging additional interventions within integrated anti-poverty transfers; and intermediation. Intermediation is essential to the effectiveness of both social transfer programmes and child protection. Technological innovation in social transfer programme delivery is to be welcomed, but it should be aimed at raising the productivity of public agencies, and should not replace them. Limited integration of social transfer implementation and child protection provision suggests a missed opportunity

Social transfer programme type is less important to child protection effects than the fact that programmes include human development objectives. Pure income transfers, transfers combined with asset accumulation, and integrated anti-poverty programmes show child protection effects. The linkages to child protection are stronger and deeper where social transfers have human development objectives. Public works and employment guarantees are more likely to have adverse child protection effects on parental care. This raises the issue of whether all social transfer programmes should integrate human development objectives. It also leads to the conclusion that social transfer programmes should be designed and implemented so that potentially adverse effects on child protection are prevented.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The following knowledge gaps were identified in this study.

A more **detailed specification of child protection outcomes** would greatly facilitate further research on the linkages between social transfers and child protection. The child protection literature identifies three broad outcomes: child survival, child development, and child well-being. These are achieved, *inter alia*, through preventing, and responding to, violence, exploitation and abuse. A more detailed specification is needed to identify key indicators which can be connected to the results from impact evaluation studies.

The **knowledge base on the links between poverty and poverty reduction, on the one hand, and child protection on the other** needs further research in the context of low- and middle-income countries. This will require analysis of longitudinal datasets which are emerging for these countries.

It also needs consideration of whether existing conceptual frameworks to study child development and well-being need to be adapted to conditions in low- and middle-income countries.⁹⁴

Implementation synergies are a key research gap. This is very likely a high-return area for research investment, as it is capable of generating knowledge of direct applicability. Developing an understanding of the opportunities and constraints in inter-agency collaboration and coordination on the ground is urgent. It will be interesting to explore the extent to which diverse forms of case management can enhance the reach, impact and effectiveness of social transfers.

In terms of practice, it will be **productive to explore case management practices in social transfers and child protection**, especially in the context of a larger role for intermediation in established social transfer programmes in Latin America and elsewhere.

The growing institutionalization of social transfer programmes in middle-income countries provides an **opportunity for common areas of practice in social transfers and child protection**, including information systems, referral practices, monitoring and follow up.

The **attention to programme monitoring and evaluation in social transfers provides significant lessons for child protection**. The drive towards evidence-based policy in low and middle income countries is likely to further enhance pressures for regular evaluation of public agencies and programmes.

⁹⁴ Conti, G. and Heckman, J. J. 2012. *The Economics of Child Well-being*. Cambridge MA: NBER.

ANNEX 1. SEARCH GRID

Websites including:

- I. UNICEF
- II. WHO
- III. ADB (social protection)
- IV. AfDB
- V. WB (safety nets, social protection upscaling poverty reduction)
- VI. IADB (sustainable development and development effectiveness reports)
- VII. UNESCO
- VIII. ILO (social protection)
- IX. ISSA (Social Security Programs through the world)
- X. WFP
- XI. Bilateral development agencies:
 - a. DFID
 - b. USAID
 - c. AUSAID
 - d. GTZ
 - e. SIDA.
- XII. National governments' websites on a selective basis
- XIII. Social protection programme websites (for links to other programmes)
- XIV. Publications databases: ELDIS, Science Direct, JSTOR
- XV. Databases of Working Papers: SSRN, ELDIS, IDEAS, REPEC, IZA
- XVI. IPC-PG website Brazil with links to programmes.

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