

Social Protection and Children:

A Synthesis of Evidence from
Young Lives Longitudinal Research
in Ethiopia, India and Peru

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Executive summary

This paper sets out the key findings from Young Lives research into the ways that major social protection policies are impacting on children, their families and communities in Ethiopia, India and Peru. Most research and policy debate focuses on effects of social protection on households, with children assumed to be passive beneficiaries of programmes to reduce vulnerability. Here we concentrate on children.

Several methodologies, using qualitative and quantitative data and policy analysis are brought together in order to understand what findings are emerging in diverse communities in three different continents. Our research is based on information collected about children, their households and communities since 2001. Two cohorts of children in each country have been followed since the age of 1 and 8 years; three quantitative surveys and two rounds of qualitative fieldwork have taken place in each country. Sub-studies also include qualitative fieldwork and analysis.

Young Lives research finds that social protection schemes have both intended and unintended consequences for children, mostly positive but highlighting areas of concern that should be prioritised in programme design. For example, in Latin America, social protection has strongly moved in the direction of conditional cash transfers (CCTs) and the conditions attached to receipt of benefits are often directly aimed at child 'welfare', for example school attendance or visits to the health clinic. However, insights from qualitative analysis and child perspectives need to also enter into programme design.

Social protection, commonly understood as government-led schemes that either mitigate risk or reduce vulnerability and/or chronic poverty, has moved up the policy and research agenda in recent years with cash transfers now present in 45 countries, covering 110 million families in the global south (Hanlon et al. 2010). In this paper, we explore three important social protection schemes in Ethiopia, India and Peru. While operating in quite different contexts, all three represent formal national schemes being fairly rapidly expanded, and all contain elements of 'conditionality' that affect children's lives. In Ethiopia and India, this is a work requirement, and in Peru, there are conditionalities on beneficiaries that involve visiting health centres and school attendance.

From Young Lives qualitative and quantitative analysis of social protection policies in these countries we find:

- Evidence of the public works scheme in India acting as a cushion, and possibly providing insurance affects:
 - There are particular benefits when drought hits the welfare of households.
 - The poorest households benefit from this (including those of lower castes).
 - However, families in scheduled castes are less likely to participate.
- In Ethiopia, we find that schooling outcomes are improved by certain components of the Productive Safety Net Programme, though there are different impacts on boys and girls.
- In Peru there is evidence that conditional cash transfers are mainly reaching the intended beneficiaries:
 - They are providing a welcome boost to the poorest,
 - As well as improving their capacity to attend school
 - And also the attendance and performance of their teachers.

However Young Lives research also uncovers some of the unintended consequences of social protection for children:

- While children in Peru are attending school there are concerns that these increased demands on schools (through increases in class size) had not been adequately matched by investment.
- While the inclusion of children with different needs is to be welcomed, this should also be accompanied by training of teachers.
- There is also evidence from Peru that programme placement has raised some tensions in the community – views that have been expressed by children and their communities in Young Lives sites.
- In Ethiopia and India, there is some evidence that public works schemes increase the work demands on children, either directly or through children substituting for adults in the household who are involved in the programmes.

These findings must also be considered along with other evidence from qualitative work that documents how children are contributing to the household economy and managing risks themselves and with their families, and limited evidence on the extent to which increased work impacts on children's schooling.

Overall, child-focused research on social protection can provide important insights to make social protection more inclusive of children's needs. This can improve programme design to make better use of scarce resources, and invest in the future of children in very poor communities. From these findings we draw a small number of key conclusions relevant to those seeking to ensure policymakers give close consideration to children's needs and are increasingly child sensitive.

In the conclusion we draw out a series of key policy relevant conclusions:

- Well designed social protection has a major role in improving children's life chances.
- There are however risks of unintended consequences within social protection, and it is important therefore that policymakers consider carefully the possible effects on children.
- Social protection and cash transfers can have important intra-household and gendered effects which should be considered within policy design.
- Despite the size of the social protection schemes in Young Lives countries, considerable numbers of poor children are not covered.
- Schemes usually contain some form of conditionality. Policymakers need to carefully consider the impacts of particular conditions.
- Social protection schemes operate in a context, and policymakers need to consider both the scheme itself and how other economic and social policies are able to help families move beyond dependence on social protection.

1. Introduction: the context of social protection

Risk and vulnerability combine with chronic poverty as a feature of life for many people in developing countries. Members of households and communities have developed their own ways of managing risk, and assisting themselves and one another to cope with or reduce the impact of shocks, should they materialise. The ability of people to protect themselves depends on many factors, not least the type, frequency and levels of risk that they are exposed to, but also their ability to cope using their own (often limited) assets, or to rely on help from others. Especially in the face of large and severe shocks that affect many people, the coping mechanisms that people have are often not enough. In addition there are large numbers of people, including children, living in chronic poverty, with not enough assets to sustain a living on a daily basis.

Social protection, commonly understood as government-led schemes that either mitigate risk and reduce vulnerability and/or chronic poverty, has moved up the policy and research agenda in recent years (Ellis et al. 2008). There is an active debate about whether the focus should be more on asset-building or 'safety-net' activities, about the effects of different conditionalities attached to the receipt of payments, about how different mechanisms affect different members within households, and ability of households to take advantage of such schemes. Further, there have been calls to make social protection more predictable, increase coverage and improve delivery – we conclude by discussing the risks of unintended consequences for children, scheme coverage, the role of conditionality and the context within which social protection schemes operate and how that affects the chances of scheme graduation.

Governments in low-income countries often have very limited tax resources, and one of the characteristics of such low-income status tends to be a lack of comprehensive social policy and social welfare systems (Mkandawire 2001). In most developed countries, social protection would be defined as a mix of social insurance and social assistance, the former being a participatory scheme where individuals pay into a common pot and claim when needed (including for sickness, unemployment and old age), whereas social assistance is non-contributory and aimed at those who cannot contribute (Barr 2004). In middle income countries the situation has been more heterogeneous, for example the transition countries of eastern Europe and west Asia historically had more comprehensive social welfare systems than the 'West' and focus has been on reducing the burden of generous pension schemes for example. In Latin America, there is a high degree of inequality and a general tendency to adopt the North American model of low tax and low social welfare spending. The spread of conditional cash transfers (CCTs) reflects both a new push to try and use social protection to reduce chronic poverty (including intergenerational poverty), through attempts to build human capital, as well as to manage risk, and also a politically more acceptable focus on the

'deserving' poor, who make undertakings around schooling and health in return for the cash benefit.

In many low-income countries in Africa and South Asia social insurance does not exist, and social assistance until very recently has tended to be quite piecemeal, short-term, and a response to crisis (for example food aid for famines or floods). India is something of an exception with a long-established public food distribution system and a growing national safety net. Governments and other policy actors (donors and international NGOs) have in recent years introduced more comprehensive social protection measures as an attempt to mitigate the impact of negative shocks on household welfare, as well as improve the prospects of households living in chronic poverty. Underpinning most models of social protection (assistance, welfare, insurance) is the unitary household model with common preferences across the adults of the household, and adults making decisions on behalf of children. Child outcomes are either not measured, or are focused on a narrow set of quantitative outcomes (e.g. school enrolment or nutrition indicators).

Ellis et al. (2008) provide an overview of existing social protection research in developing country contexts, and highlight a number of gaps. In particular, the authors note that by now there is now less need for emphasis on the 'why' of social protection, and research needs now to be targeted at understanding the 'how'. This paper adds to such analysis by highlighting design and implementation issues that arise when the focus is placed on children, including community impacts, intra-household issues, and unintended impacts of programme design. These findings are sometimes based on quantitative research that examines specific outcomes on children, or qualitative research that challenges the assumption of many social protection schemes that the benefits will trickle down to children through household-level measures, with impacts aimed at the household level (e.g. average food consumption), and little consideration of intra-household dynamics. These findings should be taken into consideration when designing social protection interventions, whether programmes that specifically target child outcomes directly, or that have implied impacts intended for children.

2. About Young Lives

Young Lives is a rich and growing dataset encompassing detailed information on many aspects of almost 12,000 children's lives in four countries. Since 2001, in Ethiopia, Peru, India and Vietnam, children from two cohorts have been visited three times for quantitative surveys, and twice for qualitative studies. The 2,000 'index children' in each country were aged 6 to 18 months on the first visit, and were resurveyed again at age 4 to 5 and most recently aged 7 to 8 years. They will be followed until their fifteenth birthdays. The 'older cohort' of children was aged 7 to 8 years in the first round of the quantitative survey, and in the third and most recent round were 15 years old. This means that using information for late 2009,¹ it will be possible to compare outcomes for children aged 7 to 8 with those of the older cohort at a similar age in 2002.

The panel study is generally pro-poor, so allows examination of disparities and relationships between child outcomes and characteristics of households and communities (including policy

¹ All Young Lives data are archived in the public domain. Rounds 1 and 2 are already available, and the third round is currently in data entry phase. See the website for more details: www.younglives.org.uk

links) but is not necessarily nationally representative.² The quantitative dataset by now includes a very rich set of variables that attempt to capture (albeit quantitatively) the multidimensional nature of child well-being: including nutrition (anthropometrics), health, school experiences, time use, psychosocial well-being and cognitive development. There is further information on household consumption and assets, child early health experiences and vaccinations, as well as the adverse events that have happened and affected the household since the children were born (indeed in the year before birth) such as agricultural problems, family adversities, crime, job loss, or legal problems. Young Lives also documents certain informal mechanisms that households use to protect themselves and their children- assets, transfers from other relatives and friends as well as income from diverse sources.

In 2009, the quantitative survey included expanded modules eliciting detailed information from households about their participation in, receipts from, and experiences of major social protection programmes in country. Specifically, these are Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, the National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (NREGS) in India, *Juntos* in Peru, and health insurance in Vietnam. Further, anthropometric and cognitive development information has been collected for younger siblings of the Young Lives index children, which will allow further detailed analysis of intra-household issues and programme impacts.

In qualitative work with a smaller sample of children the study has documented the views of children themselves on their well-being, their responsibilities, interests and concerns, and the way they fit into their household and community. In each country around 40 children were selected for a more detailed qualitative exploration of their circumstances. We also have information from discussions with children and their caregivers about how unexpected events and seasonal issues have affected their lives, and whether government programmes and policy have helped them. The study also collected detailed information on communities in which children are living. The qualitative study is also longitudinal so it is possible to follow how children's opinions develop over time.

In 2009-10 detailed qualitative fieldwork has been undertaken in Ethiopia and India in order to explore children and their households' experiences of public works schemes, including the impacts of the programme on well-being and vulnerability, as well as intra-community relationships.

3. Social protection and children

Young Lives takes a broad view of social protection and adapts the definition from the most recent publication to address the issue of children and social protection – the Joint Statement on Advancing Child-Sensitive Social Protection by a committee of international donors including DFID that are concerned with children's issues.³ Their definition is: 'Social Protection is generally understood as a set of public actions that address poverty, vulnerability and exclusion as well as to provide means to cope with life's major risks throughout the life cycle.'

2 Countries had slightly different methodologies for creating the sample; in Ethiopia, India and Vietnam, a pro-poor sample of communities was chosen purposively, while in Peru communities were chosen at random (excluding the top 5% in the wealth distribution). In all countries, households within the community (conditional on having a child of the right age at the time) were chosen at random.

3 Joint Statement on Advancing Child-Sensitive Social Protection: DFID, HelpAge International, Hope and Homes for Children, Institute of Development Studies, International Labour Organization, Overseas Development Institute, Save the Children UK, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank (2009).

Box 1: Joint statement on child sensitive social protection

The statement notes: The following principles should be considered in the design, implementation and evaluation of child-sensitive social protection programmes:

- Avoid adverse impacts on children, and reduce or mitigate social risks that directly affect children's lives;
- Intervene as early as possible where children are at risk, in order to prevent irreversible impairment or harm to children;
- Consider the age and gender specific risks and vulnerabilities of children throughout the life-cycle;
- Mitigate the effects of shocks, exclusion and poverty on families, recognising that families raising children need support to ensure equal opportunity;
- Make special provision to reach children who are particularly vulnerable and excluded, including children without parental care, and who are marginalised within their families or communities due to their gender, disability, ethnicity, HIV/AIDS or other factors, and;
- Consider the mechanisms and intra-household dynamics that may affect how children are reached, with particular attention paid to the special circumstances of women;
- Include the voices and opinions of children and youth themselves in the understanding and design of social protection systems and programmes.

Young Lives conceptual framing of social protection extends from the multidimensional and holistic conception of childhood that underpins the research design. For example, quantitatively, we are able to extend our analysis of specific programme impacts beyond school enrolment and nutrition to include school attendance, cognitive achievement and psychosocial skills and time use. Using detailed knowledge of the household and community we can deepen our understanding of the economic, social, cultural and political context that policies are introduced in, and how these complex factors interact with policy change, and affect children's lives.

We do not assume that children are passive recipients of social protection policies. First, the children we work with are a diverse group of girls and boys, with different household structures, they may be the oldest, youngest, orphaned, living with extended family or alone with grandparents, and they will be affected by intra-household dynamics. The term 'children' incorporates a broad age range, and in Young Lives thus far we have information on children's lives from the age of 1 to 15, with different issues arising in each age group, and at key transition points such as starting school. Children often make huge contributions to the economic and social lives of their households, and their feelings and perceptions can also be affected by shifts in community dynamics that change with the introduction of new policy.

In this paper we focus on the findings of Young Lives research on major social protection programmes in three countries: Ethiopia, India and Peru – two (quite differently designed) public works schemes, and a conditional cash transfer scheme. India has the largest employment guarantee (public works) scheme in the world (NREGS), and Ethiopia now has the largest in sub-Saharan Africa outside of South Africa (the PSNP). Peru is one of the most recent countries in Latin America to have introduced a conditional cash transfer scheme (*Juntos*). It is these three schemes that we evaluate from a child-focused perspective. Though Young Lives has considerable evidence on these schemes, it is worth pointing out the schemes are relatively new were rolled out in 2005, only a year before the second round of Young Lives quantitative data was collected. Young Lives will soon have data from Round 3 (2009) which will allow more detailed analysis.

The work adds to a fairly small body of work specifically researching children and social protection. Much research thus far on social protection has concentrated on overall household welfare, and there has been limited research on impacts of public works programmes on children. Research on conditional cash transfers in Latin America has focused more explicitly on child outcomes such as nutrition, education, health, however there has been little discussion with children themselves about the impacts of such schemes on their lives. Children reveal in qualitative discussions their time use, as well as their subjective feelings on how life has changed for them, their households and their communities in the wake of new schemes.

Yablonski (2009) synthesises a number of studies on the impacts of social protection on children, including unconditional cash transfer schemes in southern Africa that increased family spending on education and health, and reduced school absenteeism. Yablonski also notes that access to basic services is another key aspect of children's well-being, as well as the benefits of community focused-social protection. The conclusion is that it is essential to understand the specific sources of vulnerability that affect children when designing social protection. Barrientos and De Jong (2006) summarise a number of studies on cash transfers, with different modalities and in different contexts, including both conditional and unconditional transfers, and argue that the evidence is supportive of cash transfers as a significant and effective means of reducing child poverty.

A common factor to consider in the research is that all three of the main social protection programmes in our study countries have a component of conditionality, either through a work requirement (Ethiopia, India) or requirements to attend health clinics and school (Peru). Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) have become the most prevalent type of social protection in Latin America (Rawlings and Rubio 2005). Much attention has been paid to this modality, and the consensus in many respects is that CCTs are politically more palatable as they target the 'deserving' poor who behave responsibly in order to receive the cash. Fiszbein and Schady (2009) summarise a large body of (mainly World Bank generated) evidence and make a strong case for CCTs as an effective poverty reduction strategy. The compelling argument is that CCTs provide both a safety net in terms of an income transfer at a time of need, but also an investment in human capital through the conditionality that will help to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. There has been some criticism of this approach (e.g. Molyneux 2006) due to the pressure put on mothers, nevertheless, the popularity of CCTs is expanding to the African context quite rapidly.

Public works have a long history, including in the developed world. Del Ninno et al. (2009) review 20 years of evidence and show that public works have been used in response to one-off large shocks, repeated shocks and also for poverty reduction. The main advantage of public works is arguably that participants are self-selecting, opting in themselves rather than than it being left to bureaucrats to decide who is eligible. Ravallion (1991) outlines how labour-intensive rural public works projects have the potential to both screen and protect poor people, with the evidence suggesting few non-poor people want to participate, while the direct and indirect transfer and insurance benefits to poorer people can be sizeable. Further, the public works also have an element of 'beneficiary responsibility', again they are politically more palatable as they are less likely to be seen as 'free handouts'. Del Ninno et al. (2009) underline the importance of clear objectives, and creating high-quality public goods. Public works are also seen as having a broader developmental impact if they create public assets (such as infrastructure), however there is a tension between the objectives of low wage

rates to focus the coverage of schemes on the very poorest for targeting purposes and the creation of high-quality assets. McCord (2008) critically examines several issues around the use of public works as a safety-net and argues that they are often trying to achieve more aims than are possible with one scheme – for example, offering one-off episodes of employment in response to structural unemployment (a failure to deal with structural unemployment would therefore make graduation from schemes difficult). In India the NREG scheme is self selecting, however in Ethiopia, the selection of participants is undertaken by administrators, although at a decentralised level including community leaders, since arguably demand would be too high even at very low wage rates. This leads to differing issues in the two study countries.

A factor of particular significance that comes out in this study is that public works have both an income transfer and a household labour requirement, and several researchers in Young Lives have found that in India and Ethiopia, household participation in public works may increase labour demands on children, possibly in different ways for girls and boys, older and younger children.

Since public works programme by definition seek to increase the amount of work available, and since work is a daily reality for many children, it is perhaps unsurprising that these schemes increase the amounts of work some children do (for instance in household chores or other work which would have previously been done by adults now working in the scheme). Since the reason for this is the work requirement, one solution to avoid this would be to consider options around child benefits which focus resources on families but without the work requirement (Townsend 2010).

The remainder of this paper summarises the Young Lives research that provides a number of insights on social protection issues for children, and which demonstrates that there are intra-household differences that policymakers need to consider in scheme design. We provide a brief background on each of the study countries, focused on the main programmes. We show descriptive statistics on access to programmes from the 2006 quantitative survey, and summarise firstly research that identifies the risks and shocks that impact on children and their households. The research often goes further than most studies that tend to stop at household level information (e.g. a crisis caused a drop in food consumption). Evidence from Young Lives shows that children are often adversely (in the short term and possibly in the long term) affected in terms of their nutrition, loss of household assets, and also their nutritional status, school attendance and work burdens.

Second, Young Lives shows how much older children in particular contribute to their household, how they view the risks and shocks that affect them and their families, and how they shoulder the burden when hard times hit. Third, Young Lives has evidence on the impacts and contexts of specific social protection programmes in three countries; again there are impacts using quantitative data, but also qualitative insights that allow us to dig deeper than the statistics, for example, a quantitative piece may identify positive impacts of a programme on beneficiaries, but qualitative work (such as on the *Juntos* programme in Peru) may find that such impacts may lead to increased tension in the community, especially if the selection of beneficiaries appears to be unfair. Finally, we conclude by drawing together some of the findings and draw out policy recommendations in the concluding section.

4. Young Lives findings on social protection in Ethiopia, India and Peru

Ethiopia: Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)

Ethiopia is a very poor country with very low annual GDP per capita (equivalent to US\$195), and poor human development indicators. In terms of child welfare, it is characterised by pervasive malnutrition and persistent hunger, especially in rural areas (Alderman and Christiaensen 2001). Ethiopia has a troubled history of famines (Pankhurst 1986) including prolonged droughts and frequent severe rainfall failure, including major famines in 1974, 1984 and in the past ten years.⁴ The Ethiopian economy has experienced growth in recent decades, but seasonal hunger continues to be an endemic feature of life in many rural areas. In 2004/05, real per capita food expenditure declined by 5% compared with 1995/96, affecting mainly rural areas (where most poverty is concentrated). This is in part due to higher food inflation, which was around 34% from 1999/00 to 2004/05.⁵ In October 2009, the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations and other humanitarian partners launched an appeal for \$28 million for Ethiopia, requesting emergency assistance for approximately 6.8 million people.⁶

There has been an impressive gain in the numbers of children attending primary school with the gross enrolment ratio increasing from 37.4% in 1996 to 61.1% in 2000 and 74.2% in year 2004 (Welfare Monitoring Survey 2004). Less is known about attendance however. Young Lives data confirm the enrolment trend, particularly for poor children, with a 60% increase in enrolment for very poor children in the sample. However, due to dropout, and grade repetition, children do not necessarily progress smoothly through the school system, and the gender bias appears to increase as children progress through grades. At age 12 in 2006, Young Lives girls are on average a grade and a half behind boys, which could be a reflection of their domestic responsibilities. Secondary level enrolment is very low, with at least 85.3% of secondary-age children *not* going to school in rural areas.⁷

A number of Young Lives studies have documented the prevalence and impact of risk and shocks on the lives of the households and children. Woldehanna (2009) shows that while drought is the most frequent shock experienced, a number of individual household factors can lead to nutritional deficiencies of 8-year-old children, in particular divorce and job loss. Outes-Leon and Porter (forthcoming) find that stunting and under-nutrition as infants persists as children grow older, with poorer children being much more likely to remain stunted at age 8.

With regard to social protection in Ethiopia, the national poverty reduction strategy (PASDEP)⁸ includes a key pillar of reduction of risk and vulnerability that motivates social protection policy.

4 See the many useful references in Harvey (2009).

5 Young Lives Country Report: Ethiopia, available on the Young Lives website: www.younglives.org.uk.

6 Ethiopia: Severe Food Shortages Emergency appeal No. MDRET007.
See <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/ASAZ-82DHTZ?OpenDocument> accessed 5 March 2010.

7 See Young Lives Policy Brief 6 'Impact of Social Protection Programmes on Work and Education in Ethiopia'.

8 See Young Lives working paper 22 for a more general analysis of how children are incorporated into the precursor of the PASDEP, the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (SDPRP).

The introduction of a national safety net in 2004 reflected the increasing importance placed on comprehensive and predictable social protection by both the Government of Ethiopia and its development partners. The flagship safety net component of the national Food Security Programme (FSP) is called the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), and includes the provision of food or cash for work as well as direct support to poor households who are unable to participate in public works (around one in five households). This is complemented by the Other Food Security Programme (OFSP) which provides households with access to a suite of improved agricultural technologies which can include extension services, fertiliser, credit and other services. The PSNP initially targeted approximately 5 million chronic food insecure people in 2005, in 262 *woredas* (the unit of local administration), increasing to 8 million in 2006. The aim was to provide support for five years after which households would be able to 'graduate' from the scheme. This raises new issues in 2010, which will be addressed in future studies.

Cash or food for work schemes were not new in 2004, in fact they had been operating for many decades in many parts of Ethiopia. However the PSNP design streamlined multiple systems and programmes and aimed to provide more far reaching and reliable coverage of social protection in Ethiopia. The Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) ran from the early 1990s until the launch of PSNP in 2005, and the design of the work component of the PSNP is essentially a continuation of EGS. However, there has been an increased focus on using cash rather than food as payment. Sequential geographic and household level targeting was used to select beneficiaries. First geographical areas that are drought prone were selected. Then from each site, households were selected using vulnerability ranking criteria such as household assets and level of poverty.⁹

The PSNP is currently the largest scheme in sub-Saharan Africa (outside of South Africa) and has attracted considerable policy and academic interest. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has conducted the main quantitative evaluation on behalf of the government of Ethiopia, and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) and Overseas Development Institute (ODI) have also conducted evaluations.¹⁰ Sharp et al. (2006) discuss the effectiveness of targeting, and Slater et al. (2006) examine institutional linkages of the PSNP with other programmes differentially by household types.

Overall, there have been many positive commentaries on the PSNP, the reduction in administration and the broadening and predictability of the safety net being widely applauded by donors. Several issues have been raised about the scheme, however, including a long standing debate that continues about slow responsiveness in targeting of benefits, which means that beneficiaries are not necessarily the poorest at any given point in time. Related to this, the Ethiopian government has put recent emphasis on 'graduation' from PSNP participation, given that participants were meant to receive support for five years before graduating, allowing new households to participate. This comes with further pressures

9 Sharp et al. (2006) reproduce the targeting guidelines from the official Policy Implementation Manual, which are somewhat vague. 'A *woreda* is considered chronically food insecure if it (a) is in one of 8 regions (Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Afar, Somali, rural Harari and Dire Dawa), and (b) has been a recipient of food aid for a significant period, generally for at least each of the last 3 years.' And 'a household is considered chronically food insecure if it is located in one of the 262 chronically food insecure *woredas* (as defined above); Has been assessed by a mix of administrative guidelines and community knowledge to have faced continuous food shortages (usually three months of food gap or more) in the last 3 years and received food assistance; This also includes households that suddenly become more vulnerable as a result of a severe loss of assets and are unable to support themselves (last 1-2 years); Any household without family support and other means of social protection and support' (p.4).

10 See <http://www.odi.org.uk/themes/social-protection/default.asp>, and <http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/browse-by-subject/social-protection>

on households that have been highlighted in qualitative studies.¹¹ Issues about delays in payments are also frequently highlighted (e.g. Gilligan et al. 2009). In addition, political capture is also a strong possibility: Caeyers and Dercon (2008) found that being connected to powerful people was a more accurate predictor of being included in the safety net than some other poverty indicators.

In terms of the daily functioning of the public works component of the scheme, the wage was set at around 8 Birr per day,¹² and all adult members aged between the age of 18 and 60 within the eligible household are entitled to work. The payment is made in either cash or food. Hobson (2009) outlines how the cash and food wage rates have changed in the wake of the recent food price rises in Ethiopia. Unlike in India (see below) there is no childcare provision for PSNP sites. Thus, while the public work (majority) part of the programme provides an income transfer to households, it also has a significant work demand. While children are not by law allowed to work on PSNP activities, there is the possibility that they substitute for adults in other work activities, or have to engage in more childcare, housework or other chores. The OFSP package may also have a perverse effect on children's work – if the returns to working on the family farm increase, it may become more important to work on the farm than go to school for some or all children. Children of different age and gender tend to have different work responsibilities in Ethiopia (Heissler and Porter, 2010) and so impacts are likely to vary by age and gender, by birth order and sibling composition (which will, for instance, influence the amount of care needed in the household).

Hoddinott et al. (2009) conducted an evaluation of the effects of various components of the PSNP on several child outcomes (not using Young Lives data). The results are somewhat mixed but still present a coherent story. In particular, the effects are more pronounced for boys than girls, in particular for younger boys. They found:

- Participation in public works leads to a moderate reduction in average hours worked on agriculture for boys aged 6 to 16 years and a reduction in domestic hours worked for younger boys aged 6 to 10 years. Boys in households receiving more regular transfers (at least 90 birr per member) show large increases in school attendance rates and, at the younger age, a significant reduction in total hours worked.
- When public works is coupled with agricultural packages designed to boost farm productivity (OFSP), there are no effects on boys schooling and hours worked fall only for younger boys in domestic chores.
- For girls, measured effects are weaker, but differences emerge between younger (aged 6 to 10) and older (aged 11 to 16) girls. Younger girls experience worse outcomes, with lower school attendance on average and increases in working hours in households participating in public works and the OFSP. Older girls benefit, with a reduction in hours worked on average and an increase in school attendance in households receiving larger transfers.

In qualitative research Pankhurst (2009) also suggests that OFSP may increase child work and further may not be suitable for the most vulnerable households, especially those who are labour-poor. This is because most loans under the OFSP are used to purchase livestock, which require a substantial time commitment.

¹¹ Graduation is defined by the government as: 'A household has graduated when, in the absence of receiving PSNP transfers, it can meet its food needs for all 12 months and is able to withstand modest shocks.' (2004) This state is described as being 'food sufficient'. See Pankhurst (2009) and Dom (2008) for a discussion of issues arising with graduation implementation at the local level.

¹² Around US\$0.30 per day.

Sharp et al. (2006) found in their evaluation of PSNP that the age-limits on public works participation were being largely adhered to at that point: about 8% of workers were under 18, and 3% were over 60. However, the authors suggest child participation could be further reduced and interruptions to school attendance among older students should also be avoided. The report recommends continued monitoring and supervision to ensure that children are not employed on the public works. Further, that easing the work requirements on labour-poor households will reduce the pressure to send children to the work-sites. They further call for community task forces and monitoring teams to check that the timing of public work does not conflict with participants' school attendance, regardless of their age. This echoes findings in Orkin (2009) on Young Lives data that children's work in general could be better combined with schooling if working hours and school calendars were more carefully calibrated.

In Young Lives Ethiopia, around 87% of households of older cohort children¹³ experienced at least one event between 2002 and 2006 that could be defined as a potential risk to children. On average, households in the lowest wealth quintiles experience more adverse events than wealthier households (and by definition have fewer financial resources to withstand shocks) and were exposed to a wider range of types of misfortune. The type and magnitude of events differed between rural and urban households. Thus, 68% of rural households in the sample were affected by environmental and 61% by economic-related events, while urban households reported 12% and 41% respectively.

Table 1 shows Young Lives household participation in components of PSNP. More rural households participate in public works, as the programme is targeted at rural areas, and coverage is almost half of the rural sample. Only about one fifth of rural households receive direct support, although almost a third of urban households – which is quite surprising, again given the rural focus of the schemes (though this could be attributable to differing definitions of urban and rural areas).

Table 1. Household participation in PSNP

	Rural	Urban	Total
% participating in PSNP: public work programme	46.2	9.1	31.2
% received direct support from PSNP	18.7	32.8	24.4
Mean income from public work, PSNP	367.7	48.3	238.6
Mean income direct support, PSNP	158.3	130.3	147.0

Notes: Older cohort, source Woldehanna (2009). Income expressed in Ethiopian Birr. As a benchmark, the Young Lives country report shows that mean consumption per adult was 1485 Birr, per year in 2004 (around \$185).

Households were also asked about any perceived benefits of various programmes. For all parts of the scheme, the most common response was 'more food' for the child, though improved quality was also cited as a benefit. A minority of households cited more resources were available for education purposes, almost 10% of those benefitting from cash for work PSNP schemes. Very few households cited less time spent on work or chores, which could reflect that the work requirement does not allow more time, or that participants greatly valued the increased resources.

¹³ Older cohort children in all four Young Lives study countries were born in 1994-95, making them 7-8 years old in the first round of the survey, and 11-12 years in the second round in 2006.

Table 2. Perceived benefits child receives from support programmes

	Agricultural extension	Cash/work	Food/work	Food aid
Better quality food	26.9%	21.6%	49.5%	44.0%
More food	55.7%	62.0%	46.6%	46.2%
More resources for education purposes	4.7%	9.4%	1.5%	3.7%
More time to study	-	-	0.4%	-
Less time on work activities	2.7%	1.2%	0.5%	1.5%
Less time on household chores	-	1.8%	-	1.5%

Notes: Older Cohort, Rural children

Table 3 shows, however, that there are actually not many significant differences between PSNP participants and non-participants – many children are in households that are equally poor but are not benefiting from the programme. This lack of difference is partly due to the extremely low levels of consumption in the whole of Ethiopia. It also contrasts with the findings from the India sample in the next section below. In fact, only household size is different (with participants coming from slightly smaller households). In terms of the wealth distribution, participation is quite similar in all of the wealth quintiles (as defined by an index of assets and services available to households), but again consumption as a whole is low and so the differences between groups are relatively small.

Table 3. Testing differences between participants and non-participants

	Participants		Non participants		Significance
	Mean	Std err	Mean	Std err	
Household size	6.5	0.05	6.7	0.1	**
Consumption per capita	84.6	1.2	87.1	1.8	NS
YC % in pre-school	86.8	0.5	85.5	0.8	NS
Height for –age Z-score Younger Cohort	-1.6	0.0	-1.6	0.1	NS
% Older Cohort in school	97.4	0.0	96.1	0.0	NS
Height-for-age-Z-score Older Cohort	-1.7	0.1	-1.6	0.1	NS

Notes: Pooled Older and Younger Cohort sample, Young Lives Ethiopia 2006. NB unconditional t-tests, no attribution of causality is attempted.

Using Young Lives data, Woldehanna (2009) examines hours worked in paid and unpaid work, domestic chores, schooling and childcare of 11 to 12 year olds. These results should be treated with caution given that the PSNP was both new in 2005, and was replacing in many cases participation in one of the previous food or cash for work or transfer schemes. He found:

- The Public Works component (PWP) of the PSNP increased the amount of time both girls and boys spent on paid work (by an average of around 0.13 hours, or 8 minutes, per day for both). However, it reduced the amount of time girls spent on childcare and household chores (by about half an hour on average per day). The net effect was that children's total hours spent on work were reduced. The PWP also increased the time girls spent on studying (by an average of 0.25 hours, 15 minutes, per day).

- The Direct Support component (DSP) of the PSNP reduced child work in paid and unpaid activities and increased grades completed by boys in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, boys' hours of unpaid work outside home and girls' hours of childcare and household chores declined. In urban areas, girls' hours of paid work and boys' hours of paid and unpaid work declined significantly, though the results should be treated with caution due to the very low sample size. The DSP was found to increase grades completed by boys in both rural and urban areas.

Emirie et al. (2008) used qualitative methods in a subset of Young Lives sites and found that PSNP participants have started to send their children to school, instead of sending them to rich farmers for farm wage employment as a result of income they get from PSNP. Members of some PSNP households, including children, are involved in other income-generating activities like collecting and selling cow dung to fill the income gap that is not covered by PSNP and farm earnings. This has particularly been the case in those sites where payment was in cash rather than in food given to food price rises. Given the poor market and rising prices, PSNP payment in kind rather than in cash was cited as the best option by almost all beneficiaries. Some PSNP household heads indicated that the payment would have been adequate, had it not been for the escalating market price of food items. Households with better asset holdings are more likely to graduate from the scheme, or possibly forced to graduate (see Dom 2008 on the variations in graduation policy observed at the local level). This issues is likely to become key in coming years, given that the original scheme design at the launch in 2005 envisaged households graduating within five years.

Respondents mentioned instances of substitution where they saw children (both boys and girls) carrying out domestic chores while their parents were away on safety net work. In fact, some clearly felt that the labour demands of the PSNP mean that children need to sacrifice their time and energy for domestic work instead of studying or playing. Furthermore, the practice of children labouring on public works existed in at least three of the four research sites: Amhara, Oromia, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). Also, some respondents, including teachers, stated that PSNP activities and increased household demand for child labour (as substitutes in domestic or public works) have negatively affected children's educational participation and performance.

Qualitative research from Young Lives documenting children's and their household's views on work show that it is not always 'bad' and serves as a useful training and protective mechanism, when it is not dangerous, is supported by the household, does not conflict with traditional gender roles and expectations, and does not crowd out schooling. Boys in particular are far more likely to disparage 'idleness' than work. Heissler and Porter (2010) show for the older cohort that work is divided in gendered and age related ways, with boys spending more time on agricultural work either for the household or externally, and girls spending more time on household chores and caring for other household members. Older girls are often shouldering heavier burdens overall than their siblings. Boyden (2009) using the same data shows that children's work and its role in preventing and mitigating household hardship are a potential source of protection, resilience and skills development. Boyden finds that children share responsibility for preventing household adversity with adults. Children engage in work to protect against adversity – work generally conceived of as a means of coping with household adversity. Boyden (2009) concludes therefore that work is not always a risk. If supported and valued it can act as a protective mechanism. Combining work with school can be part of

building child and family resilience. However, if work undermines schooling and/or stigma is attached to work it can increase children's vulnerability, distress and longer term chances.

In sum, early findings from Young Lives on PSNP show benefits of improved incomes and food consumption for those participating, though with some delays in payments, and difficulties for those receiving cash as payment due to rising food prices. There are early indications that school attendance is improving for those receiving direct support, but careful monitoring of children's work demands is needed due to the work requirements of the scheme. There is some evidence that older children do work on the safety net directly, and more evidence that children substitute for their parents in other duties. These findings also demonstrate that since much of any additional work is not within the scheme, it would not be eliminated by better monitoring of who is actually doing the public work. Qualitative research on children's work has shown that it can often be a source of pride and responsibility for children, and also that it is possible to combine work and schooling when the two are compatible, suggesting policymakers should consider how to enable working children to also engage in schooling (e.g. work hours are not too long, and school can be more flexible to accommodate working students).

In the third round of the quantitative survey, conducted in late 2009, a special module was included on PSNP to collect more detailed information on household's activities, experiences and income from the various PSNP components. Also, anthropometric data were collected on younger siblings of the younger cohort children (aged 3 to 7 years in 2009 when the younger cohort children are 8 to 9 years) in order to conduct some more careful evaluation of the impact of the scheme. As a complement to this, qualitative fieldwork has been conducted in three sites, including focus groups with children, adults and key informants, as well as in-depth explorations with children of their feelings about work and schooling. The analysis should be complete by late 2010. Research will be able to unpick more of the scheme's impacts, including within the household, as well as examine new issues arising in 2010 such as graduation and the impact of rising food prices.

India: National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)

Andhra Pradesh is the fifth largest state in India in terms of population, and has a largely rural population, with around 80% working in agriculture. It also has a lower per-capita income than the Indian national average (Mukherji 2008). Andhra Pradesh has achieved considerable progress on child development indicators since the mid-1990s. But despite this growth, significant disparities remain, based on class, caste, gender and geography (Galab et al. 2008). In the Young Lives sample, parental education, caste, ethnicity and household size were important determinants of poverty. Households afflicted by drought prior to 2002 were also more likely to be worse off in 2006.

Research from Young Lives shows that risk and shocks affect children, especially drought. Galab and Outes-Leon (forthcoming) investigate the impact of the 2002-04 drought in Andhra Pradesh. They document the effect of drought on children's schooling, work and eventual cognitive development. They find that the drought reduced schooling hours, increased child work hours (though the effect was slight), and resulted in lower cognitive development (as measured by the PPVT score).¹⁴ This affected all children in the household, except for the

¹⁴ Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was used in all four countries in Round 2 and Round 3 of Young Lives. In the test, children are shown four pictures and choose which picture represents a word. Words are asked with increasing difficulty until the child makes three mistakes. Scores are then calibrated across ages. Cueto et al. (2009) outline the rationale and operational decisions made around this instrument and discuss the limitations.

eldest boys, who may be prioritised in access to food. Eldest boys are also most likely to work in the family fields and the drought reduces the demand for their inputs in the family production. As a consequence the drought reduced their school drop out rates, increases school hours as well as reading and writing skills.

Outes-Leon (unpublished) further investigates whether the average impact of the drought on children's schooling and work (for the default group of non-eldest sons) can be linked to the bargaining power of the mother. He finds that the higher bargaining power of the mother (proxied by education and age) buffers the negative impact of the drought on both schooling and work hours. If increased participation of women in NREGS increases their bargaining power, due to increased independent income, then this could be a further unintended impact of the programme (see also Peru results below).

Public works in India: NREGS, which is now the largest public works programme in the world, came into force in February 2006 under the legislative framework of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005):

An Act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work (Government of India 2005).

The scheme is rights-based and has been welcomed as addressing weaknesses within earlier systems. It also incorporated a time-bound action to guarantee work within 15 days of demand for work and a disincentive for authorities not delivering on this right (Mehrotra 2008; Ambasta et al. 2008), though early evidence from Young Lives does not find that many households had received the full allocation of days (though this may be a choice, rather than a constraint).

NREGS has a number of objectives: 'The basic objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas... This work guarantee can also serve other objectives: generating productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others.'¹⁵ The scheme was initially rolled out in 200 of the poorest districts in early 2006, making use of a 'backwardness index' (comprising agricultural productivity per worker, agricultural wage rate, and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe population developed by the Planning Commission. It was then expanded to an additional 130 districts in 2007, and finally expanded to cover the remaining 274 districts in 2008.

Once the programme is available in a district there are no fixed eligibility criteria. Households can register with the local *gram panchayat* (village council), stating the names of all adult household members who are willing to work under the scheme. The household is then issued with a unique identifying number that entitles it to apply for work.¹⁶ When any household wishes to take up work under the scheme, it needs to make an application to the *gram panchayat* stating its intent to work and the requested number of days it wishes to undertake, which the *gram panchayat* is then legally bound to provide. Uppal notes that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, which is the primary audit institution in the country, carried out a comprehensive and detailed audit of the scheme in 2007 but focused almost solely on its operational aspects rather than on its impact. Scattered reports have begun to emerge

¹⁵ http://india.gov.in/sectors/rural/national_rural.php, accessed 31 August 2010.

¹⁶ Note that in Round 3, Young Lives has asked households to supply this number, so, in theory the two datasets can be matched internally, and re-anonymised for external use.

of singular instances of the NREGS providing benefits in one or the other village, such as preventing migration or increasing crop under irrigation (e.g. PACS 2008).

NREGS programme design includes the presence of childcare facilities at all sites where more than five children under the age of 6 are present, a move especially important given that the NREGS has a condition of at least 33% of beneficiaries being women (GOI 2008). This does not however seem to be reflected in the data with only 8.7% of registered respondents reporting the availability of childcare centres on site in the Young Lives sample (Uppal 2009).

Many reports suggest that Andhra Pradesh is one of the frontrunners in terms of implementation. A survey conducted by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) indicated an awareness level of the scheme at 98% in Andhra Pradesh (AP) compared to only 29% in Jharkhand (Drèze 2006). In addition it was the first state to implement the entire scheme making use of information technology, while also incorporating more traditional methods such as social audits and performance checks to increase transparency and accountability. However, one study found that in AP there appeared to be more political capture of the programme compared to other states, with households with greater land ownership participating more in the scheme (Jha et al. 2009). The authors consider that this is mainly caused by the fact that the NREGS wage rate in AP was more than twice as high as the market wage for male agricultural labourers (Rs80 in NREGS and about Rs37 for male agricultural labourers), thus undermining the self-selection component of the programme (and also putting a floor under the market wage rate). Further, the authors assert that local politicians are more active in programme placement in AP than other regions, and use this as a way to gain local support. Johnson and Tannirkulam (2009) analyse the publicly available information on NREGS in AP, and find that the scheme is growing rapidly, getting a job card does not involve significant corruption or bureaucracy, and that the days worked of different castes depends on the caste composition of the district.

Specific questions on NREGS were included in the Round 2 quantitative questionnaire. Households were asked whether anybody in the household had registered for the NREGS, how many days were they employed for under the NREGS in the past 12 months, the wage rate they were paid, whether they benefited from unemployment allowance, and whether they benefited from childcare facilities at the work-site, and from the work-site being available in their village. The data were collected in six districts of Andhra Pradesh, chosen to represent the different regions and income levels within the state while households were chosen randomly amongst those which had children born in the stipulated years. Importantly, four of the six districts were covered by the NREGS by the first phase of implementation in 2005-06 (Cuddapah, Karimnagar, Anantapur, Mahaboobnagar in Phase I, with the addition of Srikakulam in Phase II). Since the second round of the survey was mostly carried out in 2006, the survey captured the scheme at an early stage of roll out, predating the expansion of the scheme under Phase II and III that took place in 2007 and 2008.

Some descriptive statistics on the NREGS participation for the Young Lives sample in 2006 show that the scheme is fairly well targeted at the poor. This echoes findings from some other studies that lower castes and holders of *Antyodaya* cards¹⁷ were more likely to register for the programme (e.g. Jha et al. 2009). In the rural sample overall (pooling both cohorts, just under 2,200 children in households), 45% are participating in NREGS but just 14% worked more than 10 days in the scheme. In terms of the wealth distribution in 2006, Chart 1 below shows that

17 Households who are entitled to subsidised rations of food – a measure of destitution in India.

NREGs is fairly well distributed – though with fewer participants in the poorest wealth quintile than the second poorest. This could be because poorer households have less labour available to work (e.g. disabilities or other health issues- or they may be further from a work-site) or indeed that inclusion in the programme boosted wealth position of beneficiaries.

Chart 1: Participation in NREGS, by wealth

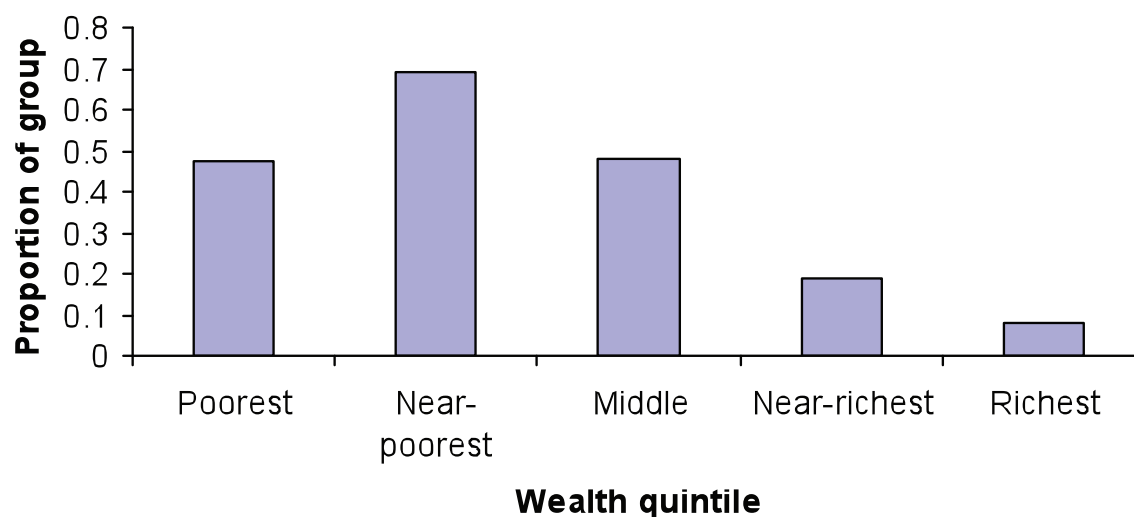


Table 4 shows the differences between participants and non-participants and tests whether these are significant. We find that the children of participants in both cohorts are significantly shorter (measured using the height for age Z-score), which is a sign of long-term differences in nutrition. This could be an indicator that the participant households have been poorer in the past, however we do not find significant differences in the consumption (per capita) of the two groups. We do not find significant differences in school enrolment either.

Table 4. Differences in NREGS participant characteristics

	Participants		Non participants		Significance
	Mean	Std err	Mean	Std err	
Household size	5.3	0.1	5.3	0.1	NS
Consumption per capita	711.3	15.6	706.7	14.9	NS
Percentage of younger cohort experiencing pre-school	47.7	0.0	50.3	0.2	NS
Height for age z-score (younger cohort)	-1.8	0.0	-1.7	0.0	**
Percentage of older cohort in school	87.3	0.0	88.6	0.0	NS
Height for age z-score (older cohort)	-1.7	0.1	-1.5	0.1	**

Notes: Young Lives Older (OC) and Younger Cohort (YC) children, 2006, rural children only. N=2194. HAZ=Height for Age z-score. No causality assumed as differences are unconditional.

Table 5 further examines participation and shows that 69% of Young Lives households from a Scheduled Caste are participating in NREGS, and 24.8% of this group worked more than ten days in the year prior to the survey (the allocation is 100 days per year). This compares to only 35-45% of those from other backward castes, other Hindus and other Muslims. The participation rate of Scheduled Tribes is much lower at only 8%, suggesting that this group is still marginalised, despite that they are often poorer than scheduled castes and are a similar focus in public policy. It is likely that they are less well incorporated into national schemes as they are poorer, and tend to live in more marginal areas (the proximity of work-sites to

communities could therefore be an important factor here). The proportions of all groups working more than ten days is low (though the scheme had only been rolled out the previous year), and again much lower for the Scheduled Tribes.

Table 5. Breakdown of NREGS participants as % of caste

Caste	Participating in NREGS	Working more than 10 days
Scheduled caste	69.3%	8.1%
Scheduled tribe	21.8%	1.3%
Backward caste	45.3%	4.7%
Other, Hindu	34.6%	2.4%
Other, Muslim	40.1%	2.5%
Number	996	648

Uppal (2009) looks in more detail at the access to and impact of the scheme in its first phase in Andhra Pradesh (as noted above, the four of the six districts had NREGS by Round 2). He found:

- Households impacted by drought are 10.7% more likely to register for the NREGS than other households.
- Households who have variable incomes and are prone to seasonal shocks and lean agricultural periods seem to be more likely to register – households whose primary occupation is agriculture are 12.7% more likely to register, and households whose primary occupation is casual labour are 15.1% more likely to register.
- However, those who are dependent on agriculture as their primary source of occupation are 12.7% more likely to register, but once registered are 7.9% less likely to take up work. This might suggest that these households recognise the potential insurance capability of the programme and register, while possibly not required to actually make use of the income transfer in the surveyed period.
- Uppal also suggested that NREGS is having a positive impact on child nutritional outcomes for the younger cohort. Registration and take up of work are both positively correlated with nutrition, although it is the actual take up of work that seems to be having an impact suggesting the importance of the income transfer itself. Findings are of greater significance for height-for-age than weight-for-age, suggesting that the programme is having a positive effect on children's long term nutrition.

Uppal's results seem to suggest different processes determining the incidence of child labour (which is defined in this case as paid work) among boys and girls as a result of the NREGS. For boys, drought seems to increase the likelihood of work by 14.8%, while registration for the scheme has an almost identical negative effect, reducing the likelihood of work by 13.4%. For girls, being in a rural area increases the chances of child labour by 10.1%. However, girls in households taking up work under NREGS are 8.2% less likely to participate in paid work. This could either be due to the households having more income, however the measure of paid work may not capture the unpaid work (for instance on household land or in household work/chores) which may increase if adults are increasingly working within NREGS. Additionally children of farmers with small plots may have an increased workload if their parents can no longer afford to employ labourers due to NREGs having increased average wages (Ginny Morrow and Uma Vennam, personal correspondence, 23 April 2010). We do not find the same results on child work in Ethiopia and India, but part of this may be the broader definition used for analysis in Ethiopia (paid and unpaid work, rather than simply paid employment). Policymakers should

carefully consider the design of schemes on the likelihood of child work, paid and unpaid. Further research on Young Lives would be well-placed to investigate this component of time use, using either Round 2 or the new Round 3 data.

Finally, in terms of social exclusion, Scheduled Caste and Other Backward Caste appeared more likely to register for the scheme. Scheduled Castes are 28.7% more likely to register. Other Backward Castes are 20.1% more likely to register. Results also indicate that those who are better connected (have more than 5 influential relatives) are 10.3% more likely to register for the programme. This may be evidence that the process may be biased towards the more influential and powerful in the community. It may also be explained by greater awareness and knowledge arising from the better connections. More worryingly Scheduled Tribes appear to be the group least able to access the scheme, despite being from the poorer areas, which is an indicator of continued social exclusion for this group.

Peru: Juntos conditional cash transfer scheme

While all three countries in our case study are of course quite different, Peru is classified as 'upper-middle income' in development terms, and has a significantly higher average national income than Ethiopia or India but has higher inequality (World Bank, 2009).¹⁸ Despite a turbulent history, not least in the past 30 years, Peru has experienced high rates of economic growth in the last decade (IADB 2006). Since the return to democratic rule in 1980, democratic participation is seen to have deepened in (IADB 2006).

Within the Latin American region, however, Peru has performed economically less well than average, and has higher levels of poverty and lower human development achievements than many other countries in the region. In terms of education, Cotlear (2006) finds that while Peru has higher enrolment levels at all stages of learning than even some richer comparison countries, achievement is lower and inequality is higher. He finds a similarly mixed picture in the health sector (for example inequality in ability to receive treatment for illness). Stunting in Peru (a measure of childhood nutrition) is higher than the LAC average, though it has fallen over time.¹⁹ Coverage of social programmes is also mixed: 5% of households access healthcare through social insurance, and benefits are high compared to the regional average. The number of people covered by social assistance (non-contributory) programmes in 2002 was high, but benefits were low (see below for specific information on *Juntos*, which was introduced in 2005). This is partly because Peru has a lower tax base than average for the region, but spending on social assistance was also low in comparison even to health and education. Cotlear (2006) also notes a number of institutional issues in the social sectors in Peru around poor performance, poor targeting and accountability issues. He shows for example how the mothers of *Vaso de Leche* (Glass of Milk) have continuously extended the age limit of beneficiaries to keep their children in the programme. Stifel and Alderman (2003) find no evidence of any nutritional impact of spending on the Glass of Milk Programme.

Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) have become the most prevalent form of social protection in the Latin American context (Rawlings and Rubio 2005). Peru's *Juntos* ('together') programme is one of the most recent arrivals, introduced in 2005, and currently covers around 430,000

¹⁸ Peru GNP per capita is over ten times that of Ethiopia at current US\$ (World Bank 2010). There is an ongoing discussion on the merits of various comparison mechanisms between countries, however the difference in development terms overall (and especially in large urban areas) is clear.

¹⁹ Stunting is defined as low height relative to an international comparison group of the same sex and age in days (specifically, 2 standard deviations below the average)

households in 638 districts, making it the largest social programme in Peru.²⁰ The aim is to expand to all 880 of the poorest districts in Peru. The key objectives are to reduce poverty and increase human capital (common to most CCT programmes). The monitoring of *Juntos* (post-introduction of the programme) has been conducted by a number of donors in collaboration with government agencies.²¹

Eligible households in *Juntos* receive 100 soles (around US\$30) per month, regardless of number of children or household size. This is relatively modest compared to other similar programmes in the region. For example it is around 13% of household consumption per month, whereas for a similar programme, *Oportunidades* in Mexico it is 20% (Perova and Vakis 2009). The conditionalities attached to the programme depend on the age of children: for those under 5 years, they must attend regular health and nutrition visits (including height and weight monitoring, vaccinations, parasite checks and vitamin supplements); for children aged 6 to 14 with incomplete primary school, children must attend school for at least 85% of the year; for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers a series of pre- and post-natal checks (including vaccinations, vitamin supplements and parasite checks).

As long as they comply with the conditions, families are eligible to receive the cash transfer for up to eight years; the full 100 soles a month during the first four years, and a reduced transfer in the final four years (therefore with an assumption of graduation). The cash transfer is suspended for three months in the case of non-compliance and indefinitely if non-compliance is repeated. Every three months, *Juntos* local promoters are scheduled to visit the homes of beneficiaries to monitor their compliance, and that information should be cross-checked with school attendance and healthcare visit records.²²

Beneficiary households are selected in a three-stage process: i) selection of eligible districts; ii) selection of eligible households; and iii) community level validation of the selection. The selection of districts depends on five criteria including exposure to violence (namely internal terrorism), material poverty, and child malnutrition prevalence. The national statistics office (INEA) based the selection of households on poverty data, and in addition, only households with a child under 14 years or pregnant woman were selected. *Juntos* is the only CCT programme in the world which uses a history of political violence as a regional targeting mechanism, in part to offer reparations to the victims of political violence (Francke and Mendoza 2007), though on that background it is concerning that there is some qualitative evidence of tensions between communities over allocation policies (see below).

Relatively little analysis has been carried out on *Juntos*, due to its relatively recent introduction, and so findings here are tentative. Perova and Vakis (2009) have studied the impact of *Juntos*, including some child outcomes using quantitative data. Their evaluation is based on sampling households from the national household survey and adding data from the census, and the *Juntos* registry exercise. They use this information to calculate how long a household has been in the scheme, and use the best available information on pre-scheme characteristics in order to 'match' participating households with relatively similar non-participants in order to compare the outcomes that can be attributed to the scheme. The authors find that *Juntos* reduces the

20 www.juntos.gob.pe accessed 17 March 2010. Note also that approximately 20,000 households are suspended for conditionality reasons and around 60,000 others are in process.

21 World Bank, IADB, UNICEF, GRADE and CIAS, MEF, MINSA, MINEDUC and INEI.

22 Though see below for qualitative evidence that these conditions are often not met. Anecdotal feedback from scheme employees also highlighted that early on the in scheme administrative records were not always in place to evidence compliance.

depth of income poverty and increases food consumption (though brings few households over the poverty line due to the relatively small transfer size).

In terms of their findings on child outcomes, children in *Juntos* were less likely to have experienced illness in the month prior to the survey. *Juntos* beneficiaries sought medical attention for their under-5's in case of illness more frequently (65% compared to 43% of non beneficiaries), had more vaccinations (43% vs 36%) and attended more health controls (83% vs 46%). However, these improvements are still well below the 100% goal of *Juntos*. The authors speculate that gaps in the supply of services to support these goals may be a driving reason for this. Alcazar (2010) found that spending on basic social services did increase in line with programme implementation, using budget data and qualitative evidence in Young Lives sites. However she also finds that improvements in supply have not reached some of the less accessible communities, and there appears also to be a gap in human resources in some sectors.

Perova and Vakis (2009) were unable to assess effectively whether there are any impacts on nutritional status of children due to lack of data on height and weight. In terms of school attendance, the authors conclude (on the basis of fairly limited sample sizes) that attendance results appear concentrated on transition points in schooling e.g. *Juntos* children were more likely to transition from primary to secondary. (Similar results on transition have also been found in other Latin American countries, for example Behrman et al. 2005; Attanasio et al. 2005 on Mexico.) The authors also found that spending on educational supplies increased. They were unable to assess the impact on learning and cognitive development or child work (Young Lives will be able to provide better data in due course with data collected in the Round 3 survey).

Thus far, little quantitative research has been conducted on *Juntos* using Young Lives data mainly due to the low numbers of beneficiaries in Young Lives sites in 2006, but a new module in the 2009 survey and the expansion of the programme (as well as the collection of sibling data on nutrition and cognitive development) will allow a richer exploration of *Juntos* using the Round 3 data of Young Lives (2009).

Three qualitative sub-studies in Young Lives communities have found interesting effects that echo the World Bank quantitative study discussed above but add more depth on both intra-household and social dynamics in communities. Streuli (2009) notes that the impact of cash transfers on children depends on the way in which resources are distributed within the household and the bargaining power of each of its members (citing Alderman et al. 2001). Moreover, Streuli notes that issues relating to children's participation rights and their involvement in decisions about their life –about their well-being in particular –are absent in the programme design and implementation.

Alcazar (2010) investigates two Young Lives communities, comparing one which is covered and one which is not. She finds that there are some considerable impacts that can be attributed to *Juntos* – such as improved attendance, especially for girls (and particularly in the last year of primary school). Also, *Juntos* appears to be improving the attendance and performance of teachers. Streuli (2009) also finds that *Juntos* is increasing school attendance rates but implementers need to pay more attention to the quality of education provided and local needs to convert higher attendance into better results. According to teachers interviewed by Streuli, *Juntos* is also having a positive impact upon parents' and children's attitudes towards school and education. On the other hand, children and parents highlighted poor quality of teaching, teacher absenteeism, corporal punishment and bribes for good grades or

completing *Juntos* records that indicate compliance. Teachers also complained about having a higher workload as the number of students increased. *Juntos* children feel more pressure to do well in school, while non-beneficiaries feel pressure to buy extra school materials etc. to keep up with *Juntos* children/families.

Since *Juntos* started, more children with special needs or with either physical or cognitive disabilities are being taken to school. This is having a positive impact on the children and their families, as the former can now benefit from education and the company of peers, and the latter spend less time caring for others and can go to work outside the house in the fields or in the city. However, at the same time, teachers complained that they are not properly trained for these special cases nor they have the appropriate educational material for them. Therefore, the extent to which these children are benefiting from education remains uncertain.

Streuli (2009) finds that even though children and parents recognise that the programme aims to benefit families living in poverty, they observed targeting problems. For example, a beneficiary girl said that: 'some families turn up with someone else's child' so as to fulfil the selection criteria. Parents also observed that the programme is supporting both 'poor' people and those who are 'not so poor'. As was noted in relation to the other two schemes it will be important to know whether *Juntos* is reaching the poorest households when more detailed quantitative information is available in late 2010. Alcazar (2010) also notes that a large number of women receiving the benefit seemed unclear about what the conditions were for their receipt of the benefit, and there were some instances of disgruntled communities due to perceived errors in within-community targeting.

Juntos has also brought about some important changes in family dynamics, both intended and unintended effects. First, the programme's monthly cash transfer of 100 *soles* has helped to improve participating household livelihood security to some degree. However, Jones et al. (2008) also highlighted that the size of the cash transfer has definite limitations. This is especially the case for families with several children and in the context of new expenses, such as increased demands from teachers to purchase school-related items and the need to cover transport costs to the towns to receive the *Juntos* payment from designated banks.

Jones et al. (2008) note that *Juntos* has sought to improve women's bargaining power within the household by reducing their economic dependence and providing them with an independent financial resource. Importantly, there appears to be a general consensus that women have a greater level of responsibility for, and appreciation of, children's needs. Similarly, Streuli (2009) finds that *Juntos* is viewed as a programme for women more than for children, although children are aware of the importance and role of *Juntos* upon their lives. Women are improving their image and showing more confidence. Some feel more pressure to fulfil responsibilities at home, for *Juntos*, and carrying out new productive activities.

The targeting process appears to have had a less positive impact on community dynamics. In a context of general poverty, when some families are included and others not and there is insufficient clarity about the reasons for this, the introduction of the programme has generated feelings of sadness, resentment and anger among some community members. Especially in the initial stages, the programme suffered from a number of weaknesses in identifying beneficiaries. Streuli (2009) finds that the *Juntos* emphasis on 'human capital' may be undermining people's 'social capital' and other crucial aspects such as participation, choice and power in decision-making. There are tensions between families who are part of the scheme or not: non-beneficiaries have perceptions of *Juntos* families as being dishonest to get benefits or lazy by participating. Some non-*Juntos* children are singled out for discrimination

and some beneficiaries complained that coordinators 'criticise' and 'name and shame' them. 'New' and informal conditions are being added locally and coordinators have a 'new sense of power' towards (and over) people. This is of particular concern given that the areas where *Juntos* is being implemented have a long history of political violence and community tensions. Streuli does not conclude that the community effects are solely negative, however. In some cases, the programme has also generated an attitude of solidarity among the beneficiaries, who seek to share with those who do not receive the cash transfers but who are obviously impoverished.

Streuli (2009) concludes that overall her evidence suggests that *Juntos* is 'child-oriented' but not yet child-centred; that is, the programme does not fully recognise children as people already, rather than adults in formation, and to think of children as partners in changing the future, and not as passive recipients of services. In the forthcoming rounds of Young Lives qualitative fieldwork, it could be useful to further explore the following issues: children's views and experiences as beneficiaries of *Juntos*; experiences of stigma, labelling, social exclusion or discrimination of any kind for being either beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries of the programme; and children's potential contributions to the design, implementation and monitoring of *Juntos*. More generally using complementary quantitative data it will be possible to investigate programme impacts on children's physical, psychosocial and cognitive development. From a policy point of view there is an important question around whether it is service improvement or conditionalities which drive improved service engagement, given that this ought to determine policy development.²³

5. Conclusions and policy discussion

This paper has outlined findings from three quite different countries on the impact of social protection programmes with different designs and objectives on children and their families and communities. We find evidence of positive impacts in terms of diverse child outcomes, but also unintended outcomes, some of which may be damaging. We conclude with a brief discussion of key findings, and then the policy implications from this work.

There are many positive findings from Young Lives about social protection for children. We find that the NREGS (employment guarantee scheme) in India acts as a cushion when drought hits the welfare of households, and that the poorest households are benefiting from this (including lower caste families). In Ethiopia, we find that schooling outcomes are improved by certain components of the Productive Safety Net Programme, though with different gender impacts. And in Peru there is evidence that conditional cash transfers are mainly reaching the intended beneficiaries, are providing a welcome boost to the poorest children, and improving their capacity to attend school (as well as improving the attendance and performance of their teachers).

²³ Thus far, only one study has managed to isolate the impact of conditionality in Mexico, due to some administrative errors that led to no conditionality being imposed on one group. The study found that school outcomes improved less for the group who were not monitored (see De Brauw and Hoddinott 2008).

However Young Lives research also illustrates the risks of unintended consequences of social protection for children. While more children in Peru are attending school there are concerns about the increased demands on teachers of the increases in class size. Although the inclusion of children with different needs is to be welcomed, this needs to be accompanied by teacher training if it is to result in better educational outcomes. Further in Peru there is evidence that programme placement has raised tensions in the community – views that have been expressed by children and their communities in Young Lives sites. In Ethiopia and India, there is some evidence that public works increases the work demands on children, either directly or through children substituting for adults who are involved in the programmes. This must also be considered with other evidence from qualitative work that documents how children are contributing to the household economy and managing risks themselves and with their families.

We also see some evidence of gender-specific effects for parents, both good and bad. On the positive side, social protection schemes accessed by women seemed to have an empowering effect on women within households by increasing their bargaining power and valuing their labour. On the negative side, non-work conditions are more likely to affect women than men. One clear design point which emerges is that childcare arrangements are essential in order to aid female participation. These were (in principle if often not in practice) provided through the NREGS increasing the chances that women would be more likely to access work. They were not in the PSNP.

The countries and schemes reviewed are different, and so messages from each do not automatically translate to other contexts. They are indicative, however, of factors and processes which policymakers should consider when considering introducing or developing social protection schemes.

The value of social protection in improving children’s life chances: our research supports the growing consensus that properly designed schemes can promote children’s life chances, by reducing chronic poverty and by cushioning the effects of shocks such as drought. By alleviating risks such as malnutrition, social protection can intervene early to prevent events or circumstances doing long-term harm to children. Social protection mechanisms can support community development through injecting demand into disadvantaged communities, by improving infrastructure (through public works or because the introduction of CCT schemes may require policymakers to consider the quality of health and education services which families are required to engage with). or through the wider social and economic benefits of healthier and better-nourished children.

The risk of unintended consequences: child-sensitive social protection mechanisms need to mitigate against risks where possible but also need to balance trade-offs. In particular we find schemes including labour requirements can increase child work (either through engagement in schemes or through the reallocation of existing work within a household from parents to children to make more time for parents to engage with schemes). Since any additional child work is likely to represent an important contribution to the household economy, and that additional child work may not be at a public work site, this problem is difficult to avoid without addressing the more fundamental reasons why children work (including household livelihoods). The child benefit transfers in developing countries are a more promising solution to improving child outcomes without increasing child work, although their cost depends on coverage and generosity. Policymakers should also consider how flexible the education system is to enable children who are working to attend school as well.

Different effects within the household: social protection and cash transfers can have important intra-household and gendered effects. For example programmes aiming to provide work for adults can have unintended consequences for children, and effects may vary by gender (with girls and boys expected to do different types of work for instance). Women's involvement in social protection schemes may also increase their bargaining power within the households (an objective in *Juntos*). There is also consensus that measures providing cash transfers to women are most likely to improve children's well-being (Fajth and Vinay 2010). Child-sensitive policy therefore needs also to consider particularly the role of mothers. One practical step in relation to NREG schemes (and by extension to all public work mechanisms) is that childcare appears only patchily available which is likely to reduce women's ability to engage in the scheme.

Scheme coverage and reach: despite the size of the PSNP, NREGS and *Juntos* schemes considerable numbers of poor children are not covered. In Ethiopia we find little evidence of difference between those covered by the PSNP and those excluded, and in India the highest coverage of NREGS is in the second poorest quintile, not the very poorest (though this could be precisely because the very poor are poor because they are not covered, perhaps not being able to meet work requirements). Qualitative evidence on *Juntos* highlights community concerns about the fairness of who is included or excluded. Policymakers ought therefore to consider the reach of programmes carefully.

The role of conditionality within social protection: schemes usually contain some form of conditionality, ranging from work requirements to requirements within CCT schemes for children to be attending school or having medical check-ups. Such conditionalities are usually justified on the basis of the policy desire to change behaviour (increasing school participation for example) and may ensure schemes are politically viable by avoiding the risks that beneficiaries are seen as undeserving. It is also possible that requiring greater use of public services may provide a trigger to improve investment in schools and health services (the reverse of more pressure on existing facilities is also possible). However imposing such conditions adds administrative complexity, can have unintended consequences which policymakers should be aware of, and may impact differently on different members in the household. Policymakers need to carefully consider the impacts (good and bad) of particular conditions, alongside other measures such as improving the information available to possible beneficiaries.

Assumptions about graduation: assumptions are often made within schemes that beneficiaries will graduate from the scheme to more adequate livelihoods and food security. The PSNP and *Juntos* contain assumptions around graduation, both of which assume that improved human capital or agricultural improvements generated through the scheme will improve households' position. Though such changes are possible, policies assume relatively fast changes which are unlikely to be realistic in the absence of community development to widen economic opportunities. To facilitate graduation beyond social protection, policymakers need to give greater attention to the context and the existence of 'full and productive employment' envisaged within MDG 1 to eradicate poverty and hunger.

Finally our research confirms the benefits of social protection measures, but reinforces the point that to be child-focused, policymakers need to consider design and administration very closely indeed. That there are different effects for different family members from schemes clearly demonstrates the need to understand better the effects on children.

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