

Measuring the impact of social programs on their beneficiaries



César del Pozo, a researcher at Centro Bartolomé de las Casas Center, points out that although there is positive evidence from the Juntos program about the female users, they perceive a poor health service, since there is no Minsa staff that can speak Quechua or other languages. Laís Gray, of Macroconsult, assures that knowing the level of income that makes the families of Juntos indifferent between entering or leaving this program is key. José María Rentería, of the IEP, explains that for women who use Cuna Más, accessing the program allows them to look for work, better jobs or to work for more hours.

How do social programs impact the lives of their beneficiaries and beneficiaries? This space analyzed, from the different perspectives of three investigations, the program of conditional cash transfers Juntos and the public service of daytime child care Cuna Más. The results are very important to optimize their efficiency and scope.

The study Benefits or harm for women? How the Juntos program affects women users, prepared by César del Pozo and Ligia Alencastre, researchers from Centro Bartolomé de las Casas (CBC), regarding the government-run Juntos program on the well-being of female users.

Del Pozo explained that this social program operates mainly in ru-

ral areas and that it provides monetary stimuli to 824,000 households nationwide (S/ 200 bimonthly). Its operation is supported by women: there are 773 587 beneficiaries who administer the new income, and are responsible for complying with the conditions established to receive the benefit. These conditions consist of having their children go to school and their health checks.

1/ The research desk "Social and gender programs" was co-organized with Macroconsult and had as speakers César del Pozo, from the Bartolomé de las Casas Center (CBC); Chris Boyd and José María Rentería, from the Institute of Peruvian Studies (IEP); and Laís Gray, of Macroconsult. The moderator was the economist Elmer Cuba, principal partner of that consultant. The comments were in charge of Norma Correa, of the PUCP, and Juan Manuel García Carpio, of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (Midis).

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The research had a quantitative and a qualitative component. In the quantitative component, the methodology sought to detect impacts attributable to Juntos in indicators related to mothers' health, access to information, labour indicators, reproductive decisions, exposure to episodes of violence, intrafamilial gender relations, among others. For the estimations, the database of the Demographic and Family Health Survey (Endes) was used for the years 2004-2014, and we worked with women beneficiaries and not beneficiaries of Juntos. The quantitative part was complemented with a qualitative exploration that consisted of 10 semi-structured interviews with women in Tambobamba (Apurímac) and Ocongate (Cusco). In addition, a focus group was held with 20 local managers of the territorial unit Cusco of the Juntos program. The results of the estimates made were the following:

- Juntos would have induced participation in prenatal check-ups by 9.4 percentage points.
- Juntos would have increased radio listening by four percentage points.
- Juntos would have had a positive impact on the use of contraceptive methods between five and 12 percentage points.
- No significant evidence on effects on female labor participation was found.

According to the researcher, the fact that many women have entered

the program has allowed them to control cash for the first time and has raised confidence in themselves.

However, Del Pozo indicated that the users of the program perceive a poor health service, as there are no personnel from the Ministry of Health (Minsa) who can speak Quechua or other languages, so there are serious limits to interrelate adequately with them.

In conclusion, although this research shows positive evidence of the Juntos program on mothers, it reveals the need for greater training of health personnel, and for a greater articulation of the program with the health and education systems.

“The users of the program (Together) perceive a bad health service, because there is no Ministry of Health staff that can speak Quechua or other languages, so there are serious limits to interrelate adequately with them.”

THE CUNA MÁS EXPERIENCE

The research Economy of caring, gender inequalities and participation in the market was also presented at this table: the case of Cuna Más, by Chris Boyd and José María Rentería, researchers from the Institute of Peruvian Studies (IEP) and the Ministry of Education, respectively. The objective of the study was to identify the effect of the social program of child day care Cuna Más on the labor outcomes of the mothers of child users, characterize the beneficiary populations and establish differences between the populations that access Cuna Más and those that do not. One of the hypotheses of the study was that public daytime child care has positive effects on the employment of mothers and

their conditions in the labor market.

José María Rentería explained that there are severe gender disparities in Peru. For example, 29% of women do not have income, while this proportion is 12.5% in men. The activity rate in men is 81% and 62% for women. Added to this, the researcher said that women perform 40 hours of unpaid work weekly, unlike men, who perform 16 hours.

In this scenario, free care services for infants can have important effects on women and their situation of poverty, because while they free up resources of time, they offer incentives to work or to work more hours (if they are in the labor market).

This investigation contemplated two components, one quantitative and the other qualitative. In the first, information was used from the National Household Survey (Enaho) 2014-2016, InfoMidis and other databases in order to compare similar users and households non-users of the service.

The results revealed that female users show a much higher employment rate (78%) than the national average (58%). According to the entropy balancing method, the effect of the Cuna Más program on the occupation status of mothers would be around 14%. In addition, the program managed to get this group of women greater access to informal jobs in the formal sector, without changes in the total number of hours worked (paid or not).

In the qualitative component, interviews were conducted with household users of the program (women and men, separately), ex-user households and households that have never been; and focus groups with caregivers of the Cuna Más centers. The three selected districts (Carabayllo, Chivay and Bagua) had an average poverty level, different types of Cuna Más and did not have a Juntos program presence in order to isolate their effect.

The research found that the user households are the ones that manage to adjust to the Cuna Más schedule and those that do not have another offer of care during the day. Among the reasons, for not accessing a Cuna Más center, machismo was mentioned as a cause. Among other findings, it was identified that men from user households did not perceive that the household chores they performed decreased by the program. In contrast, for women users, accessing the program allowed them to look for work, access better jobs or work for more hours.

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As a recommendation, the research suggests a demand analysis to enhance both service and labor participation. In the less populated communities visited, excess quota was observed, while in the most populated, there was excess demand to access the program. Finally, from the study, it is suggested to make both the ages of admission and departure of children more flexible, as well as the hours of attention of the centers.

JUNTOS AND THE ‘GRADUATION’ OF ITS BENEFICIARIES

Finally, the advances of the research were presented. When would it be opportune to graduate the ho-

mes of Juntos?, of the researchers Álvaro Monge, Yohnny Campana and Laís Gray, of Macroconsult. The main research questions were related to two points: (i) determining if there is a critical level of income that makes a household indifferent or not participating in the Juntos program; (ii) how much the autonomous income of Juntos beneficiaries would have to grow to stop voluntarily participating in the program. The objective was to estimate the level of associated critical income from which the beneficiaries of Juntos are indifferent, between leaving or remaining in the program.

Norma Correa, researcher of the PUCP, argues that the findings of the three investigations presented should be discussed more widely, in light of the available knowledge on the behaviour of users of social and productive programs in the Peruvian context.))

According to the economist Laís Gray, in Peru there are no specific guidelines that define the ‘graduation’ or exit of the beneficiary population, even when it is a need to improve its management. Several researchers, and even the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (Midis), state that the Haku Wiñay (HW) program can represent the mechanism of ‘graduation’. Thus, the beneficiary households of Juntos (in terms of exit) could move towards HW, strengthen their capacities and generate autonomous income to replace the monetary transfers of the program. However, it is not clear that this is enough. For example, the evidence found by Javier Escobal, a Grade researcher, reveals that HW would generate 8% impacts on the beneficiaries’ income, a percentage that is even lower than the value of the transfer provided by Juntos, which is 12%, approximately. Knowing the level of income that

makes the families of Juntos indifferent between entering or leaving the program is key.

To estimate the latter, the researchers developed models that explain the probability of a beneficiary household in a base year leaving the program the following year, conditioned to its level of income (approximated by the per capita expenditure), and the probability that a non-beneficiary household in a base year enter the program the following year, also conditioned to your income level (approximated by the per capita expenditure). The assumption underlying the estimates is that there is a demand behavior of the program that depends on the costs and benefits that users perceive, in addition to their income levels.

Among the main findings, they found that the transition between states of participation in Juntos does depend on the household income. The probability of leaving is higher when the household income is higher and vice versa. This -explains Gray- reveals a demand behavior of the program.

Also, the estimated range from which the entry probability is equal to the exit rate of the program is between S/ 327 and S/ 383 per capita. That being the case, and discounting the amount financed by Juntos, then any alternative program that covers it should generate impacts of the order of 16% in terms of per capita expenditure. “With this, voluntarily, households would opt for this second program instead of Juntos”, explained Gray. The comparison of this magnitude with the estimated impact of HW, therefore, seems to suggest that the latter has not yet matured enough to constitute an adequate ‘graduation’ program, at least under the definition presented by the authors.



Norma Correa, researcher of the PUCP, argues that the findings of the three investigations presented should be discussed more widely, in light of the available knowledge on the behavior of users of social and productive programs in the Peruvian context.

COMMENTS

Norma Correa Aste, Professor at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and Main Researcher

While it is necessary to advance in a mixed methodological agenda to improve our understanding of the impacts of public policies on society and the economy, qualitative evidence should not be used only as a secondary support for the hypotheses of the authors or as a mere context for the figures. There is a prejudice that maintains that qualitative data are of lesser value and rigor than quantitative data, which should be eliminated from our academy. The findings of these three investigations should be discussed more widely, in light of the available knowledge on the behaviour of users of social and productive programs in the Peruvian context.

Juan Manuel García Carpio, General Director of Monitoring and Evaluation of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (Midis)

It is important to work on a line of research related to the difficulties faced by the poorest in order to fulfill the co-responsibilities in Juntos, since some families manage to spend considerable amounts such as S/40 or more in transfer for collection, which decreases the benefit net of the program. Since its creation, the implementation of Juntos' 'graduation' rules has been postponed, which is why it is necessary to identify the best moment from specific studies that take into account the role of complementary programs such as Haku Wiñay.