



Policy Research Brief

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Derived Impacts of Education Conditional Cash Transfer Programs: the Case of Teenage Pregnancy

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THE RISE AND POTENTIAL OF CCT PROGRAMS

In recent years, an increasing number of countries around the world have been implementing Conditional Cash Transfer programs (CCTs) to improve socioeconomic well-being and promote development at the national level. In many cases, these CCT programs have focused on - and succeeded in - increasing school enrolment.

School attendance, however, is not the only outcome that may be pursued through CCTs. Though often related, several other factors may be contributive to the improvement of living conditions. As it is a relatively recent phenomenon, our current knowledge regarding how CCT programs may affect non educational outcomes is scarce.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CCTs ON TEEN PREGNANCY

In 2010, a team of Colombian researchers, from Universidad del Rosario, was mandated by the IADB – sponsoring support from the PEP Research Network - to study the conditions in or through which CCT programs can positively affect non-educational outcomes. The project's aim was to **evaluate the impact of two large-scale education-oriented CCTs implemented in Bogotá, Colombia, on the selected “derived” outcome of “teenage pregnancy”**.

The researchers used data from the ECSAE survey (Survey about Sexual Behavior of Schooled Adolescents in Bogotá) which was originally conducted for this particular project. Given that the two programs were designed differently, the differences in their effects on teenage pregnancy shed light on the specific conditions in which such programs may improve non-educational outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

- One of the two programs we investigated reduces overall teenage pregnancy rates, while the other increases pregnancy rates for girls of particular age/grade groups with no impact on the other groups.

- The main difference between the two CCT programs is that: the one that was found to reduce teenage pregnancy conditions on both school attendance AND performance (grades), while the other conditions solely on attendance.
- It was also observed that the program with no “performance condition” tends to delay benefits associated with successful high school graduation

CONCLUSIONS

Obviously, results show that, in order for education-oriented CCTs to effectively reduce teen pregnancy, it must fulfil certain conditions. Even though our data does not allow identifying the specific channels through which CCTs impact teenage pregnancy, results submit evidence that conditions related to academic performance provide incentives for girls to “delay” pregnancy, and that delaying a program’s rewards may reduce these incentives.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to secure specific desirable outcomes from education CCT programs, the latter must be carefully designed. In the case of teenage pregnancy, conditions must include rewards for academic performance and graduation. But the same conditions may be detrimental to the pursuit of related goals. For example, delaying rewards until the end of high school, if detrimental to objectives related to teen pregnancy, may help increase attendance to higher education, by increasing capacity to pay for starting costs.

Today, policy debates are increasingly concerned with the potential, non-educational, outcomes of CCT programs. For good policy design and effective impacts, however, while other dimensions of welfare are targeted, trade-offs must be carefully weighted.