

Communiqué

Social Welfare And Cash Transfer Meeting

Carmona, Spain

April 22-24

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Social welfare and cash transfer experts (list below) gathered between April 22-24, 2009, in Carmona Spain to examine evidence emerging from three systematic reviews exploring linkages between social welfare services and cash transfers. (Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies special issue 2009). The Carmona meeting was a follow-up to the London consultation held in 2007 *Advancing Policy Relevant Research Around Social Welfare Services*.

The reviews collated evidence which summarized a) the efficacy of cash transfer initiatives on child outcomes including child protection outcomes; b) the potential contact opportunities within cash transfer programmes for linkages with social welfare services; c) common barriers and challenges faced by beneficiaries across a range of cash transfer programmes; d) the role of the education sector in providing social welfare services where school attendance is an explicit outcome objective in the provision of cash.

Meeting delegates explored the findings with a specific focus on integration of social welfare services and cash transfers in Ghana, Chile, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya. Evaluation initiatives from existing programmes and future initiatives were also examined in terms of social welfare elements, measurement and future potential in integrating such concepts into provision and evaluation.

What the current evidence and experience base can tell us:

- The following investments are particularly valuable for the reach, effectiveness and enhanced impact of cash transfer schemes and should be integrated into social protection programming:
 - Community-based family support workers (also referred to as social work paraprofessionals) to assist families with accessing entitlements and creating opportunities for linking families with other available services;
 - National documentation schemes (including civil registration);
 - Awareness raising and public education around eligibility and entitlement rights;
 - Parenting support programmes;
 - Government social welfare sector capacity at decentralized levels to provide oversight and coordination across the diverse number of non-governmental actors engaged in social protection activities.
- Civil society is actively involved in many aspects of social protection. Areas where Civil Society is already making an impact include local social work capacity, awareness raising, public education and parenting support. Issues relating to quality, skill enhancement and recompense are needed to ensure quality standards of provision and growth and development.
- Many countries, including those with high prevalence rates of HIV and AIDS, have experienced a proliferation of orphanages. A range of studies show that poverty, not lack of family, drives many placements. Alongside efforts to exercise government oversight of all out of home care, cash transfers coupled with social welfare services should be carefully explored to both prevent new placements and enhance efforts to de-institutionalize children currently living in institutions.

Cross Cutting Considerations

- Political commitment by, and ownership across, government are critical to the scale up and sustainability of social protection initiatives.
- Active synergy and integrations across various social protection initiatives– from conceptualization, planning, implementation, monitoring – is critical for maximizing impact.
- The energy around cash transfers in many parts of the world, including as a way of providing support to vulnerable families in heavily AIDS affected countries, is drawing increased attention to the social welfare sector as a whole, and specific social welfare services in particular.
- There is good evidence on the efficacy of cash transfers on child outcomes, yet it is clear that cash transfers are not enough on their own to respond to child poverty.
- Social welfare ministries and departments often have some responsibility for cash transfers. Cash transfer schemes place an increasing demand on their limited resources and capacities, which include a range of child protection and social welfare functions. While these ministries and departments tend to be under-resourced, increased attention to cash transfers presents both a challenge and an opportunity in terms of capacity across the social welfare sector as a whole.
- Latin American countries are striving to integrate cash transfers with other social welfare services. This experience is helpful in informing the development of social protection in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in high HIV/AIDS prevalence countries, and can be supported by ongoing initiatives for south-south cooperation.
- Social protection elements should strive to be child sensitive, the same way the international community is moving to make child protection and social welfare AIDS-sensitive.
- Social welfare is more effective when integrated into health and education, rather than stand alone.
- Attention should be paid to the supply side of cash transfer programs, in order to improve the capacity and quality of social, education and health services. This is particularly important for conditional transfer programs.

Advancing policy and programming around social protection will benefit from a robust and operational research agenda. Delegates at the Carmona meeting identified the following areas and opportunities:

1. There is strong evidence in support of cash transfers impact on education, health and nutrition outcomes for children. Continued evaluations and research on these linkages is encouraged.
2. There is some evidence that cash transfers positively impact child protection outcomes, e.g. reducing child labor, preventing separation from family, increasing registration and documentation, and prevention of child abuse. Continued research is needed on these relationships.
3. Mapping of services and systems at country level is encouraged. Given the diversity of social welfare services, countries can benefit from knowledge about which services are available, what the relationships are between services, and how the statutory role of the state in the child welfare sector is exercised.
4. Economic considerations of social protection are critical, as the decision to invest in social protection, including social welfare sector capacity is a question of political will and

- opportunity cost. Costing and capacity assessment tools are needed to support scale up and investment options across the social welfare sector, with a particular focus on infrastructure, social work capacity, district social welfare oversight, and gate-keeping for alternative care.
5. Integration of social welfare considerations into existing research and evaluations is critical. Opportunities in Chile, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, and across multi-country studies were identified at the meeting. More action and funding are needed.
 6. Past and future evaluations around social protection are called upon to make social welfare considerations explicit components in their inquiry.
 7. Policy relevant research should be prioritized. The following is a list (in no particular order) of areas for further research and evaluation:
 - a. The role of community-based family support (often referred to as social workers and social work paraprofessionals) in enhancing child-well being outcomes. This was seen as critical, and came out quite strongly as an area in need of empirical evidence.
 - b. Monitoring and evaluation of community based family support workers / social work providers. Oftentimes these local social work actors are responsible for identifying eligible households and, at times, distributing cash transfers; which can create opportunities for early intervention in support of family preservation, referral to other services, and access to other entitlements. Explore whether increased investments in this area impact on outcomes for families and children.
 - c. Evidence to clarify whether family empowerment and participation is impacted by this type of investment?
 - d. An understanding of best practices in operational relationships between community-based paraprofessionals and state social welfare officers.
 - e. An understanding of how issues of quality and training relate to provision and efficiency of family support workers, linkages between cash transfers and services, and outcomes for child well-being.
 - f. Generation of a set of core social welfare indicators which could be included and integrated into existing cash transfer evaluations.

Carmona Participants:

This Communiqué was developed by all the names listed below. It is a reflection of our collective professional positions on the subject, and does not necessarily carry the endorsement of our organizations or institutions.

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