

Conditional Cash Transfers In Peru: Tackling The Multi-Dimensionality Of Poverty And Vulnerability

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1. Introduction

In the context of significant international attention on poverty reduction and realizing the Millennium Development Goals, social protection mechanisms are increasingly seen as an important policy tool to tackle poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. Latin American countries, including Mexico, Chile, Brazil and Honduras, have been some of the world pioneers in this field, and recently Peru has started to follow suit. In February 2005 *Juntos* (“Together”), a cash transfer programme aimed at developing human capital and breaking inter-generational transfers of poverty, was launched by the Toledo government.¹ Initially the announcement sparked opposition from various societal stakeholders, largely in part due to Toledo’s low popularity rankings and suspicions that the programme would be used for clientelistic purposes in the pre-election period prior to the April 2006 national elections. Specific concerns included the government’s plan to implement the programme simultaneously in rural and urban areas², without having determined a clear targeting mechanism, and also a lack of involvement of key social and political actors represented in the country’s post-authoritarian National Accord.³ Some analysts also argued that existing social programmes should be restructured rather than initiating a new programme, but the government countered that such cash transfer programmes had been successful internationally and that there was evidence to suggest that direct cash subsidies were more effective than food subsidies and entailed lower operational costs. Following a congressional recommendation, *Juntos* was placed under a directorate named by the national Roundtable for Poverty Reduction⁴ in order to guarantee the programme’s neutrality and transparency, and to provide participation of the principle social sectors involved in shaping the direction of social policy. *Juntos* has since gained considerable legitimacy, due to a lack of politicization, a growing social consensus about the value of this innovative approach to social protection for the poorest emphasizing co-responsibility for social programmes between citizens and the state, and the fact that the programme is reaching some of the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population. In addition, there is recognition that *Juntos* is an attempt to address some of the particular vulnerabilities faced by populations that were most affected by the political violence (both by the Shining Path terrorist organization and state counter-terrorism) during the 1980s-2000.

This paper discusses the development and implementation of *Juntos* in Peru to date, based on documentary analysis and fieldwork in Ayachucho Department, the first region in which the pilot phase of the programme was implemented. We selected two communities based on the following criteria: presence of Young Lives sites (given plans to follow up with longitudinal research about the effects of the programme over time), geographical accessibility; size of the population and the number of children enrolled in the programme. Based on this selection process, qualitative research involving key informant interviews and focus group discussions in the communities of Arizona and Rosapata was carried out in July/August 2006. The analysis pays particular attention to the impacts of this social protection mechanism on women and children, the strengths and weaknesses of a conditional approach, and changes in family and community dynamics. It concludes by discussing future policy challenges and directions for research.

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2. Risk and vulnerability

As the first cash transfer programme in Peru, Juntos is officially labeled as “The National Programme of Support to the Poorest”. Although the practical focus is on ensuring parents access basic services for their children through an increase in household resources, the programme is conceptualized in terms of developing human capital and breaking inter-generational poverty cycles. There is a clear recognition that children’s present and future poverty and vulnerability need to be tackled in order to overcome inequalities that preclude the poor and marginalized from benefiting from high aggregate national growth. This is a major social concern given that Latin America is the most unequal continent in the world⁵ and Peru one of the most unequal countries in Latin America. Inequalities are stark⁶: in terms of development indicators (see Box 1), income and access to basic services, all of which result in low income, productivity and opportunities and undermining the process of reducing poverty and promoting development. The situation for children is particularly concerning: 2 out of every 3 children under 14 years in Peru live below the poverty line⁷ and do not have access to economic, social, physical, environmental and political resources that are critical for their wellbeing and developing their potential⁸. Lack of access to quality basic services including education, health, water and electricity is often further compounded by the fact that many poor children (and their parents) often do not possess civic identity documents, which further precludes their opportunities to take advantage of social programmes.

Juntos also embodies an explicitly gendered definition of vulnerability. It follows Mexico’s Progres/Oportunidades’ successful approach of directing cash transfers through mothers, not only because women are seen to be more in tune with and take primary responsibility for children’s care but also in order to transform gender relations in the family. That is, there is both an attempt to improve women’s negotiating position within the family by providing them with an independent financial resource as well as increasing fathers’ sense of responsibility in the domestic sphere through a combination of the programme conditions and various awareness-raising initiatives (see further discussion in section 5).

A third dimension of the Juntos programme’s conceptualization of vulnerability is specific to Peru. That is, the programme is explicitly seen as a way to tackle the special vulnerability of populations who were most affected by the political violence that was prevalent in the country between 1980-2000. During this time, 69,280 Peruvians were killed (this is higher than the number of Peruvians killed in all external and civil wars that have occurred in the 182 years since Independence). Many of those who died lived in rural areas and were Quechua speakers. Of the total, 12.5% were children. Most of the victims were poor population living in rural areas.⁹ Accordingly, when the programme was launched in September 2005, the first community selected—Chuschi—was symbolic because this was the area where the terrorist organization, the Shining Path carried out its first act of terrorism in the 1980s.

Box 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of study sites

Basic necessities

According to the last population census (INEI, 2005), Ayachucho Department has a population of 619,338 inhabitants, 43% of which are under 18 years. The department is ranked 20th out of 24 departments (IDH = 0.5095) (PNUD, 2005), data on basic necessities shows that 82.8% of households have less than basic standard of necessities.

Maternal and infant mortality

Indicators of maternal and infant health show grave disparities which hide national averages. The rate of maternal mortality in Ayachucho is 304.7 per 100,000, almost double the national average (163.9) (MINSa, 2001); only 41.5% of pregnant mothers get 4 prenatal check-ups (UNICEF 2004), with a percentage a bit higher for hospital births (47.2%). With regard to child health, the rate of infant mortality in Ayacucho reached 50 per 1000 live births and the rate of mortality for children under 5 years, 68 per 1000, in both cases higher than the national average (43 and 60 respectively).

Child malnutrition

Malnutrition indices are also alarming: one in three children under 5 years in the region suffer from chronic malnutrition (UNICEF 2004)¹, which limits the realization of their potential and survival prospects.

Education

In the case of education, the main problem is quality, as coverage is basically universal (93% in Ayacucho, compared to 96% at the national level) (MINEDU, 2004). Problems are predominantly related to multi-grade and single teacher schools, and lack of appropriate curricula for such schools. Repetition and dropouts are major problems in areas of high levels of poverty. As UNICEF (2004) argues $\frac{3}{4}$ of students in areas of poverty are over-age (50% in urban, 60% in rural areas). In Vinchos, in 2005 dropouts reached 12% and grade repetition 15%. In the communities we studied in Rosapata 14% of children dropped out and 12% repeated, and in CPMA, it was 10% and 19% respectively.

3. Coverage, size and financing

Coverage

Eligible households in the Juntos programme receive a fixed monthly cash transfer of 100 soles (approximately 30USD) per month which is conditional on their compliance with accessing basic public services for their children.¹⁰ The programme is targeted specifically to impoverished households who have children under 14 years (including widows/widowers, grandparents and guardians). By the end of 2006 it is estimated that 200,000 families will be covered by the programme; as of June 2006 60,000 were under coverage. The transfer is given to mothers, who sign an agreement with the state for a maximum of four years. They agree to:

- ◇ complete civic identification documents for themselves and their children¹¹
- ◇ 85% school attendance for their children
- ◇ complete vaccination, health and pre and post-natal care checks, and attend related capacity building programmes
- ◇ take advantage of the National Nutritional Assistance Programme package for children under three years of age, use chlorinated water and anti-parasite medication

The cash transfer is suspended for three months in the case of non-compliance and indefinitely if non-compliance is repeated.

Targeting mechanisms

Targeting comprises three stages: geographic targeting, household targeting and a process of community validation of potential beneficiaries. In the first step, five criteria are used to efficiently identify the poorest districts in the country: extreme poverty, poverty in terms of lacking basic necessities, level of chronic infant malnutrition and a history of political violence.¹² This data is compiled from the Ministry of Finance and Economics (MEF) and FONCODES poverty maps, the national census and the Report on the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation to identify the areas most affected by violence during the 1980s and 1990s.

The second stage, the household targeting, is based on a social demographic questionnaire designed and implemented by INEI, combined with an algorithm to establish the cut-off point between the poor and non-poor (poverty line). This process has, however, generated some problems given the general level of poverty in areas where Juntos is being established. Because the algorithm does not adequately distinguish between qualifying and non-qualifying families (in some cases the difference is a mere fraction of a percent), it has resulted in problems of leakage (selecting families who shouldn't qualify) as well as under-coverage of families in extreme poverty.

The final stage—community validation—involves bringing together the community and local authorities, along with representatives from the departments of health and education and the Roundtable Against Poverty. The aim is to identify whether the first two stages accurately reflect reality, for example, allowing for the exclusion of traders, persons from outside the community, and those with a certain level of personal property/goods or including impoverished families that were erroneously excluded.

The pressure to implement the programme in the first communities selected generated a series of problems, in part because of the geographic isolation and dispersed population in the poorest rural areas. In some cases, the interviews were carried out in public places meaning that beneficiaries had to forgo agricultural or pastoral work or that they lacked the requisite information to fill out the INEI

questionnaire. This, coupled with lack of knowledge on the part of interviewers about local realities, meant that approximately 20% of those who completed the questionnaire should have been covered by the programme but were not. Many of these initial problems, however, have since been addressed.

The validation assemblies—seen as one of Juntos’ successes—have also presented problems. Although they have served to filter out approximately 10% of the households initially selected, who were somewhat better off due to the ownership of petty business or ownership of larger quantities of livestock, villagers are often reluctant to speak out about who should be excluded from the programme due to community power relations.

Education and health sector personnel have served as important allies to validate programme beneficiaries, given their general familiarity with the living conditions of families in the area. But our interviews suggest that health professionals were often not invited to the validation assemblies and sometimes received insults and threats when they refused to fill out registration forms for families residing outside the community or passing off children from other families as their own. In such cases health professionals chose to stay away from the meetings to avoid confrontation with the population.

It’s a unique problem for us. We were noticing children from other communities and we wouldn’t stamp their contract sheet; the mothers became very angry and, insulted us. We’ve been talking to the coordinator, we don’t know what their criteria is now, but it is clear that a large number of women don’t deserve to get the benefits.(Obstetrician, P.S. Arizona).

Financing

In 2005 Law N° 28562 provided for 120 million soles to finance the pilot phase of the programme, which covered 110 districts of Huancavelica, Ayacucho, Apurímac and Huánuco regions. In 2006 a total of 300 million soles for the expansion phase (including 210 new districts) was allocated to broaden coverage in the original four regions as well as five additional regions: Puno, Cajamarca, La Libertad, Junín and Ancash. This budget has been divided as follows: 60% is used to pay for the cash transfers, 30% to strengthen the supply of basic services¹³, especially to meet the new demand generated by participation in Juntos, and the remaining 10% is spent on operational costs, which is very low compared to equivalent programmes in Mexico and Chile¹⁴.

4. Implementation

The institutional design of Juntos has been carefully thought out to overcome a number of the key problems that plague the implementation of other social programmes in Peru. These include problems of politicization, clientelism, a lack of synergies across sectors and inadequate reach to the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population. Key characteristics of Juntos' institutional composition are i) a centralized directorate managed by a powerful central government agency, the Presidential Council of Ministers (PCM); ii) mechanisms to promote inter-sectoral coordination; iii) the creation of a rigorous information and monitoring system overseen by a monitoring committee, and iv) community-level programme facilitators.

Whereas other social programmes in Peru are under the relatively weak and poorly resourced Ministry of Women and Social Development (MIMDES), Juntos was placed under the PCM in order to ensure efficient implementation and to promote an inter-sectoral approach to the implementation of programme. It is managed by a directorate comprised of a president, four civil society representatives who are part of the National Accord¹⁵ and representatives of the Ministries of Education, Health, Women and Social Development, as well as Economy and Finance. The directorate approves the programme's policies and intervention strategies and meets periodically to address priority themes, such as problems in meeting the demand for services generated by Juntos and attempts to politicize the programme. There is a strong emphasis on consensus decision-making and transparency in order to establish the legitimacy of the programme.

At the local level the inter-sectoral focus is promoted through Multi-sectoral Technical Committees (MTCs) which are responsible for fostering linkages between the programme, sectors and the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (RPR).

The administrative and implementation functions of the programme—such as registering households¹⁶, certifying compliance with the programme's conditions, and transfer of cash payments—is overseen by the executive director, supported by a technical committee and regional and district coordinators as well as programme facilitators selected through a competitive public process overseen by the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction¹⁷.

Monitoring and evaluation of beneficiaries' compliance with the conditions attached to receipt of the cash transfers is a critical part of the implementation design. In order to facilitate this an information system has been designed whereby barcodes are used to permit direct access to data on each programme beneficiary (mothers and children). Moreover, the system has the potential to synthesize information related to other social programmes which currently lack an adequate registry of beneficiaries. The monitoring function of the programme is overseen by the Committee on Supervision and Transparency (CST) which is comprised of members of the church and civil society¹⁸, in close coordination with provincial and district RTRs.¹⁹ To date this monitoring role has been undertaken in 20 communities. Although they still lacks funds to function, the committees have been effective in the early detection of diverse problems including deals between teachers and parents to cover up mutual absences from school, professionals charging beneficiaries for filling out programme paperwork, the use of cash transfers to purchase alcohol, and mistreatment on the part of National Bank officials when disbursing payments.

In order to raise awareness about the programme at the community level and to promote a smooth flow of information about the programmes objectives, intervention strategies and efficacy, a system of

community facilitators has been developed. These facilitators are part of the beneficiary population, elected by an assembly and are predominantly women²⁰. Their role is to link families to public services, give public talks on the programme and to verify the accomplishment of families' commitments to the programme. However, although the facilitators are being supported by community health workers at present, because many of the women involved are illiterate²¹ they often struggle to comprehend the key messages of the programme and to convey these to the community, and some have resigned as a result.

I don't understand why they started being facilitators.. Many of them don't how to write, which is a huge disadvantage because in order for them to pass on and teach what they know to the others, they must have at least a minimal level of literacy. Maybe some of them have been put in this position against their will? (Nurse, C.S., Vinchos).

5. Effectiveness

(What is your view on the programme Juntos?)

They give us 100 soles to eat

(And who provides the money)

The government

(And what is the money used for?)

To buy out clothes, food, so that we don't miss school and also to buy everything they ask us to buy for school. To go clean to school. And they we have to go to school without fail.

(Who told you this?)

The teacher told us that we are poor and the money is being given to us so we don't miss school, if we do there will be a penalti, and they will stop living us the money (Beneficiary children, Arizona).

Due to rigorous efforts to avoid any politicization of the programme combined with recognized success in reaching some of the poorest and most vulnerable populations²², Juntos' achievements since April 2005 appear relatively impressive. Although there was reportedly some initial skepticism²³, programme beneficiaries also seem to believe that Juntos is making a positive difference in their lives. For example, in the face of silence by presidential candidates about whether they would continue the programme, women beneficiaries from Ayachucho organized a march in defence of the programme and sent a petition signed by the region's president and district majors in their support.²⁴ This view was endorsed by our interviews.

I am really very happy because I am very poor, and everyone knows this. I have never had so much money, ever. This money helps me a great deal...I can use the money to buy things for my children, their clothes, school uniform, I can buy all this (Woman focus group participant, Rosapata).

I say that this government must certainly love its population, the poor, to send us this money, because we have a lot of children (Women beneficiaries focus group, Rosaspata).

Respondents commented that the programme is trying to counter extreme poverty for rural families, as God's grace to the poor, or as an attempt to reduce inequalities in living conditions and to provide the poor with better opportunities, especially education, to overcome their poverty.

"...I think they have realized that here we have nothing, and only in other countries are the children well-educated, study and become professional. If among we rural folk there is nothing, no doctor, nothing, surely this will provide us some (Women's beneficiary focus group, Rosaspata)

The following section will first discuss changes in children's educational attendance and time use, health and nutrition seeking behavior of mothers and children, and birth registration rates. It will then turn to a discussion of changes in family dynamics and livelihood opportunities resulting from participation in the programme.

School attendance and children's time use

Our interviews with programme beneficiaries as well as programme implementers and local authorities suggest that school attendance in communities where Juntos has been implemented has increased significantly. Although there was no reported increase in school enrolment in Rosapata

between 2005 to 2006, there was a 20% increase in Arizona in Vinchos²⁵. Moreover, regular school attendance has reportedly risen considerably due to less economic pressures on households.

Yes, I think it is the case. Many more children now attend school. For instance, now there are two first grade classes, whereas previously as a result of a lack of money and parental interest, there was only one class.

As a result, children's time use has changed. Previously children's involvement in agricultural work and domestic chores resulted in frequent school absenteeism but this has been curbed considerably due to the new requirement to be punctual for school. Although they still carry out work activities to support their families after school, on weekends and in vacations, our research suggested that much of this work has now been absorbed by women, thereby increasing their workload.

Before Juntos, we were not afraid to make our children miss school and instead have them work on the land, transport the produce, and to take care of the animals. The older children would have to work to have money to buy their school supplies (Women Focus Group, Arizona)

Juntos has also resulted in greater parental involvement in children's education, as there is a growing awareness about the importance of education and the need to support children's learning process at home.

Previously, we didn't take very good care of our children. They were often malnourished and dirty, but we are better off now. We weren't working together before, there was no unity, but now, we worry about how our children are doing in school, if they're improving their grades and we go to the school and ask.. Before, our children were left to themselves, once they were registered in school, we would forget about them and only ask for their grades at the end of the year. Sometimes they failed and we thought the teacher had probably just not taught them well. That was the way it was before. Now, the parents support our kids and this is why they are moving ahead. (Women Focus Group, Arizona)

Interviewees emphasized that fathers in particular were becoming more involved than previously in their children's education, in part because of greater financial security and less pressure to work as daily laborers or to migrate outside the community for work.

I used to have to leave to find work in other places like Ayacucho, and so, I was rarely home. I would be in the jungle or in the fields...but now, I rarely have to do that since the money we are getting is helpful (Interview with a couple benefiting from the program)

We are concerned about their homework, we are concerned about doing our bit for our children.

The need for teachers and school principals to rigorously monitor school attendance due to the new Juntos compliance criteria, has in turn indirectly exerted pressure to reduce teacher absenteeism, a major problem in rural schools that clearly compromised education quality.

The children are better off than in previous years. Before, they sometimes wouldn't have teachers, since the Ministry of Education would not send any. Now, since Juntos, there has been an increase in the number of teachers. Previously, although there used to be three or four in every community, only a couple of them would actually work. Now I noticed that they all go to work.(Focus group with men, Arizona).

Accessing healthcare

There has been an impressive increase in health-seeking behavior since Juntos was initiated. This is reflected in the 30% increase of children under 1 year receiving vaccinations in 2006 cf. 2005, and the 200% increase in health clinic visits for children under 5 years and much higher rate of children aged 5-14 years visiting health clinics for check-ups rather than only in the case of illness. Pre- and post-natal visits have increased by 65%²⁶ and there has been a reported reduction in home births, which is seen as a priority given the very high levels of maternal mortality in the area.

More generally, the introduction of Juntos is viewed by health professionals as a positive step as it is helping to overcome the resistance of poor and vulnerable populations in accessing services²⁷, and also guaranteeing good attendance at capacity building sessions.

Well, in the area of, Vinchos, the majority of the people are illiterate and very reluctant to listen to suggestions. They don't understand their lives, or value their own health or the health of their children. For instance, we've previously had problems convincing pregnant women to give birth in a health center; the people were too scared to go to them. Once the Juntos programme was implemented, they agreed more readily, since in this area, the best way to have people go along with something, is to provide benefits in return for doing so. (Obstetrician, Arizona).

Overcoming the alarming rate of malnutrition in the area (60% in Vinchos) is another priority of the health sector. As a result of insistence by programme and health professionals that the Juntos cash transfer should be used to address child malnutrition, families are reporting purchasing more high protein foods (e.g. cheese and meat) and fruit.

...they tell us to eat well and that our mothers have to buy food with that money, they tell us not to let them spend the money on liquor or coke but only on food (Children, Arizona).

Since mothers have some money saved, they buy food with it. Before, we did not eat meat, if we had a goat, we sold it and used it to buy the many other things we lacked including school supplies, clothes, some food (...) Now, we have chickens, goats and pork, to eat. (Focus Group with male beneficiaries, Arizona)

Birth registration

Having a National Identity Document is a prerequisite of participation in Juntos. To date, 15000 cases of mothers and children who lack civic documentation have been identified as a result of the programme's registration process, and 85% of such cases have been resolved by providing these services free of charge.

Family dynamics

Juntos has brought about some changes in family dynamics, including improved bargaining power of women within the household due to less economic dependence and a reduction in familial violence, as well as greater involvement of some men in domestic activities and childcare, especially when women are occupied with the demands of the programme. First, it is interesting to note that there appears to be a general consensus in the communities where we undertook our study regarding the appropriateness of giving the cash transfer to women due to their greater level of responsibility and appreciation of children's needs. By contrast men were perceived to often consume high levels of alcohol and be uninvolved in children's upbringing

Sometimes men are very irresponsible, they spend money on drinking. Women see their children's needs, they ask us for school supplies and sometimes their teachers ask for

installments and shares. Women know about these worries whereas men don't think about these things and sometimes, they don't even give us money (Community facilitator for Juntos, Arizona).

We are happy. Before, we were always waiting for our husbands to bring money, but now we have our own money. We can give the money to our children and sometimes, since the money is ours, we buy something for ourselves with it (Focus group with women beneficiaries, Arizona).

In general, respondents emphasized that men were now participating in activities previously seen as exclusively female (e.g. cooking, cleaning and washing), especially when women are unable to complete those tasks due to the need to comply with programme conditions such as going to the bank, meetings, capacity building sessions etc.²⁸ This sharing of tasks has been reinforced during capacity building sessions, especially in the light of an insistence on improving household hygiene and childcare as part of the programme's conditionality.

During the lectures, mothers are told how everyone is equal and that both men and women have to work, that way they will move ahead faster.(Interview with a male beneficiary, Rosaspata).

When she leaves, I have to take care of the kids. It's a little complicated, since previously, I didn't believe in doing women's work. Before, I would come home and grumble when dinner wasn't ready, I would tell her "what do you do all day, you should at least have a meal ready for when I get home". Now I don't say that to her since I've experienced her responsibilities; I cook, wash the dishes, do the children's laundry, wash them, clean the house and when she suddenly gets home, the food is not ready yet (laughter) (Interview with a male beneficiary, Arizona).

Our interviews reported a reduction in domestic violence, related in part to less daily survival pressures and the greater negotiation capacity and economic autonomy of women, but also due to specific interventions in the region. Nevertheless, these changes were not uniform, and in some cases men's support actually decreased and they used the cash to purchase alcohol and coca.

Household livelihood options

The monthly cash transfer of 100 soles has enabled some improvement in household livelihood options. For example, some households are using part of the cash to not only improve their living conditions (e.g. buying materials for house repairs or to construct latrines) but also purchasing animals to increase their food self-sufficiency and also to sell meat and dairy products.

Some of us didn't have homes. The money is helpful for everything, we are buying building materials and now we are improving our houses... Buying animals is like saving money in a bank account; we buy piglets and when they grow, we have some capital for the future.(Focus group with women beneficiaries, Arizona).

However, our research also highlighted the fact that the amount of the cash transfer has its definite limitations. This is especially the case for families with multiple 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 city to receive the Juntos payment.

...it's just a small help, one hundred soles is too little, especially when there are several children. For example, we buy fruit for our children, and when we go to Ayacucho, we have to spend money on transportation and sometimes food, so we end up with even less money (Women beneficiary, Arizona).

The teachers didn't ask for as much money previously. Now they tell us that since we are getting money from Juntos so we should support our children...the teachers ask for money for exams, for chalk, for whatever is needed. In addition to giving money to the teachers directly, we also have school authorities and meetings where we agree to cover the schools' needs (Focus group with women beneficiaries, Arizona).

6. Horizontal and vertical efficiency

Linkages with other social programmes

Juntos' emphasis on an inter-sectoral approach to tackle childhood poverty and the inter-generational transfer of poverty is without doubt a very important one. Given that a growing body of evidence shows that childhood poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon (e.g. CHIP 2004; Lyytikainen et al., 2005), it is clearly important to adopt a more integrated social policy model in Peru. Due to *Juntos*' clear criteria for eligibility and exit, management by a single agency, and a rigorous monitoring system, *Juntos* could help to promote such synergies.²⁹ The following section discusses the strengths and weaknesses of *Juntos*' inter-sectoral efforts to date, especially the need for *Juntos* to be implemented in tandem with initiatives to improve service quality and coverage, as well as the impacts of the programme on community dynamics.

Service access

One of the strengths of the *Juntos* programme is that it highlights the lack of investment in services in the poorest areas of the country.³⁰ In the case of the health sector, given that there is no universal health coverage in the country, Ministry of Health (MINSA) documents recognize that the programme offers opportunities for the sector to create synergies with its own objectives, especially in terms of health service coverage for geographically disperse populations. However, one of the weaknesses identified by our interviews at the regional level is that *Juntos* conditions do not give sufficient priority to the acquisition and application of practical health knowledge (e.g. constructing better kitchens, latrines, safe water supplies). More importantly, there was a general recognition that the sector was not prepared to cope with the increased demand and that this was compromising the quality of services under offer, especially in terms of equipment, human resources and medicines.

...this has generated more demand in the health sector, but what our health services were able to offer was not strong enough, we didn't have the necessary resources, either the materials or the man power to respond to the demand and to the commitments that had been undertaken, many of our establishments have collapsed (Regional Health Director, Ayachucho).

Health workers noted that the programme had meant a higher workload for them and increased paper work, but had not translated into any improvement in quality, generating dissatisfaction among health personnel.

... more people are being seen now, but sometimes the quality of the attention is poor. This is due to the lack of space, the lack of medicines and the need for more doctors. These changes are out of our reach; the fact that the programme has been established, signifies an improvement for education, more children are going to school, but what about these other institutions? They are not getting better and we will not be able to keep our promise with the children, we cannot do it and this is a big problem.(Obstetrician, Arizona).

In the case of the education sector, the Ministry of Education has a central team integrated within the *Juntos* structure, four regional coordinators and a network of pedagogical monitors who are in charge of a monitoring system for school attendance. The focus is on improving education quality in order to break intergenerational transfers of poverty, and several mechanisms have been introduced. First, the increased monitoring of rural schools that *Juntos* has introduced is seen as positive and a first step in addressing major problems of educational under-achievement.³¹

Before, the education statistics could not be trusted...since there were many teachers and students missing school, some lied because they had no supervision. Now that there is a monitoring system in place, the figures and data are more real.(Representative from the Regional Directorate for Education, Ayachucho).

Second, capacity building initiatives to promote bilingual/intercultural education and curricula appropriate to single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes which are the majority in rural zones have also been introduced. However, greater coverage is producing problems in terms of capacity to respond to new demand generated by the programme.

I have noticed that school attendance has increased, there is a greater demand for education. Even in the first grade, there are about 40 to 48 kids in the class,...I went there one day---and I found the children all squeezed in, with 5 or 6 per desk, and why? Because they had to go to school...the problem is that there are not enough teachers. The kids are going there, just to carry out their agreement with the programme, but they are not learning anything...there is one teacher for 50 first-graders and not enough tables or chairs, that's the problem (Obstetrician, Arizona).

There are also linkages to several nutritional and educational programmes under the Ministry of Women and Social Development. The nutritional programme includes utilizing regional facilitators to implement a campaign targeting families enrolled in Juntos. The problem, however, is that there is poor coordination between facilitators employed by Juntos, the education and health sectors. Because of a rather narrow focus on poverty as the denial of children's access to services, there are also no links to public programmes dealing with child protection, especially the Legal Protection Offices for Women and Children (DEMUNAS).

Programme documents also discuss the importance of Juntos linking with livelihoods and income generation initiatives to holistically tackle poverty and vulnerability. The aim is to initiate links with other rural development and export programmes (where there are good market linkages) so as to promote better economic opportunities for the poorest and most marginalized sectors of the population (employment, access to credit, technical assistance etc.). However, as yet few concrete strategies—apart from assistance in purchasing additional livestock—have emerged.

Similar concerns were raised about the limitations to date of the functioning of the technical multi-sectoral committees. While they have effectively served to exchange information, including about reported difficulties by programme implementers (e.g. hiding school absence on the part of teachers, mass attendance at health facilities due to inadequate planning), there has been a relative lack of concrete aims and objectives to ensure the focus of Juntos is geographical rather than sectoral.

Information systems

Juntos is making important advances in developing an information system about families and children living in poverty. It is generating high quality data (through the Código Único de Identidad and the social demographic questionnaire on living conditions and access to services), which can be used by other social programmes to avoid overlap/duplication. A committee has been set up especially to identify state investment in zones where Juntos has been initiated. However, there are still urgent information gaps including the lack of a national database on the real number of children per age group (necessary to overcome problems of exclusion) and inconsistencies between the databases of MINSA, Juntos and PRONAA. In addition, in the case of monitoring and evaluation, a baseline is

needed in order to evaluate the impacts of the programme. However, this has not yet been defined, thus delaying any formal evaluation process.³²

There is also a widespread view that linkages between local authorities and the programme need to be strengthened. Two particular concerns were raised. Our interviews suggested that there was a general consensus that there are insufficient mechanisms to denounce or claim redress in localities and districts where the programme functions. In particular, some cases suggested the need for the programme to have some capacity for flexibility to take into account exceptional circumstances.

Well, the woman was pregnant and she had no one to look after her cattle, so she sent her young daughter to take care of them. Consequently, the girl did not go to school and was marked absent. When the people from the Program went to verify her school attendance, they noticed she had been missing school and so they penalized the woman...the Program has to be more flexible with these families because life in the countryside is different than in the city, in the country people depend on their cattle (Technician, Rosapata).

Some informants also saw the policy of silence regarding the national (April 2005) and regional/municipal (Nov 2006) elections as problematic. The decision was taken not to provide information to external agents and the media in order to avoid attempts at political manipulation, distortion or critiques that could possibly damage the programme's image. However, this meant that there was no space for public debate and undermined the information needs of diverse societal actors. It also resulted in marginalizing local authorities from the programme and did not allow opportunities for capacity building, an important concern in the context of Peru's current decentralization process.

ii) Effects on community dynamics

Juntos' targeting process has had an 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, it generates feelings of sadness, resentment and anger. As discussed above, especially in the initial stages, the programme has suffered from a number of weaknesses in identifying beneficiaries: both the inclusion of families with resources and leaving out those living in extreme poverty. The testimonies show that especially vulnerable women, such as single mothers and widows, are often excluded because the benefit is given to the household, even if it contains an extended family (e.g. a single mother living with relatives).

The most visible effects on community dynamics are that the programme is resulting in marked differences between children and mothers who are programme beneficiaries and those who are not. Families who do not receive the cash transfer have less opportunity to purchase uniforms and shoes, or give children pocket money to make small purchases at the kiosk, generating a sense of exclusion among children. This becomes especially problematic when it involves families who are deemed should not have been excluded due to their poverty level. Some interviewees also mentioned that some children do not want to assume responsibilities at school as they consider that these should be done by the beneficiaries of Juntos as "they are being paid".

They also say: we don't receive money from Juntos, that's why we are in this situation, they wander around the streets, not doing anything, as if they had no parents (Children, Arizona).

Sometimes, the boys who are not in Juntos, complain to the teachers, saying, “we are not in Juntos, let them do it” (the other students). Sometimes these students are asked to do chores, like clean something and they just rebel. The teachers have complained about this, they explain that these boys get offended when they see the other Juntos kids eating well, eating fruits, and buying things. Of course, not not all kids are doing so well, there are those that continue to come to school with torn dirty clothes and without a uniform (Leoncia, non-beneficiary, Arizona).

The ones in Juntos have new clothes. The ones who are not part of Juntos, like us, go to school with torn clothes and with no shoes. We don't have money to buy things like that and it makes us upset...we see that they go to a store and buy cookies and eat fruit. Sometimes we ask our mom for money, but she doesn't have any, at the most, she gives us 10 cents (Non-beneficiary girl, Arizona).

This impact is also felt among women who participate in community activities, meetings organized by the health sector or mothers clubs, or paying joint fees for communal water.

“...the community is divided since, only some families are in Juntos, this means that when there are activities, some people participate and others don't...It causes problems, with the result is that communities are weakened from the lack of strong social participation (DIRESA representative, Ayacucho).

This situation needs to be addressed through specific strategies in order not to harm the social fabric of the community to stem any resentment generated. This is of particular concern given that the areas where Juntos is being targeted have a long history of political violence and community tensions.

...we urgently need a mechanism to correctly identify the families that are in extreme poverty and to separate out those who are not, in order to work with our target population.(Local programme implementer).

...being included or not included can generate conflicts in some places, more than in others...Puno, for example, is a complicated zone, conflictual...I don't know if the programme is taking this situation sufficiently into account... (Roundtable for Poverty Reduction).

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 transfer but are obviously impoverished.

That is why during the assembly, the authorities, told us to choose the poorest people who are still not part of the program and everyone agreed (Beneficiary couple, Arizona).

ii) Changing relationship between social programmes and citizenry

One of the longer-term aims of Juntos is to change the paternalistic relationship between the citizenry and state-funded social programmes, and to present accessing basic services for children as a joint responsibility of both parents and the state. Core to this is the idea that in order to ensure that service providers are held accountable for the provision of quality services, citizens have to demonstrate their demand for access to quality services. In order to do this, there is a need to reconceptualize the way the population views government services from that of largesse to fulfilling its responsibility to meet citizen's economic and social rights. As one of our interviewees noted:

Juntos is innovative because it interlinks your interests with those of the state: the state is interested in raising the education level of the population and you are interested in rising out of poverty, but it won't be free. The state will give you 100 soles and you will do what you have not always wanted to do, including sending your children—especially girls-- to school, as boys and girls have the same rights to an education. (Andrés Solari, Agenda Sur)

Our interviews suggested that while some respondents were using the language of rights, this was far from widespread. Many of the women in particular knew about the demands of the programme they had to meet but couched this in terms of tasks to be completed due to instructions from authorities rather than about a balance between citizenship rights and responsibilities.

To clean, to keep the house clean, the children also have to be clean, they need to bathe and not run around dirty on the streets as before...They also say that we have to cook better But the most important thing is to educate our children, for them not to miss school, to send them clean and to take them to the health clinic (Women beneficiaries focus group, Rosaspata).

However, some male interviewees talked about the notion of reparation to compensate the poorest population for their unequal standard of living and for having been the victims of political violence.

...surely they have seen we are poor, the people in the fields are poor, and nor is it the money of the government, it's returning our money that we have given, because when we buy things, we are paying taxes, so for me I don't see it as a present (Focus group with women beneficiaries, Arizona).

...previously there was no support, at a minimum so children could study, orphans, but now these children who were orphaned as a result of the Shining Path violence, it is important that they can get an education (Community president, Rosaspata).

It is interesting to note that beneficiaries and service providers alike believe it is necessary to apply pressure to ensure compliance with the conditions. However, although this strategy seems to be effective, it also tends to infantilize women, promoting a submissive attitude which is unlikely to be sustainable over time.

I'm not aware that the families are in opposition, it's more a case of submission. Sometimes it appears to be treating them like children but the advantage is the system is producing results...I believe the task is twofold and also involves talking to them about their rights...your sons and daughters have the right to be educated... (Andres Solaria, Agenda Sur).

This is particularly the case with issues of hygiene which is one of the key points of traditional discrimination between urban and rural populations. While the insistence of programme authorities that women improve their personal appearance, children's hygiene and domestic living conditions no doubt has a positive effect, but also results in these women internalizing discourses that they were previously "dirty" and "idle".

This is changing, now we are no longer idle, we clean the house, before we were dirty...now we see that other women are clearing an so we are ashamed to go around dirty...previously our houses were in disarray, but following the lectures we changed, some of us cook better, not on the floor (Focus group with beneficiary women, Rosasapata).

It is also worth noting that although many women appreciate the capacity building opportunities that Juntos provides to become more “advanced/developed”, some are already complaining about how time-consuming their involvement in the programme is. This raises concerns about whether the demands are realistic and not overly burdening women through a steep increase in unpaid work.

On the one hand it seems like a good thing, we see them buying things, food that makes us envious, fruit, meat, clothes, but others say that every moment they are called to meetings, they get behind with their work and want to leave the program (Non-beneficiary woman, Arizona).

Conclusions and policy challenges

1. Broadly speaking Peru's new conditional cash transfer programme, Juntos, is recognized as having been effective in its first year of operation, enjoying support from the international community as well as public and private institutions involved in its implementation. It is reaching populations with the highest poverty rate in the country, and has consistently avoided politicization, despite a difficult political transition in Peru's fledgling democratic history.
2. Although considerable efforts have been made in terms of targeting, including the innovative inclusion of communities most affected by prior political violence, some weaknesses in the household targeting approach and community validation process are generating adverse effects on community dynamics. Marked differences are emerging between participants and non-participants, both among adults and children. Moreover, the program has not managed to solve the leakage problems and the exclusion of families in extreme poverty. In this sense, it is important to get the authorities and the health services and education operators involved in a more effective way. It will also be necessary to establish information and complaint channels to allow the population to present demands and it would be advisable to have a possibility to reevaluate excluded families, including those with specific needs, such as single mothers living in extended family arrangements.
3. The program promotes joint responsibility between citizens and the state, with an emphasis on people's rights as well as duties. In practice, the relationship established through the agreement is somewhat paternalistic, with women being particularly infantilized. A stronger rights-based approach should therefore be more consciously embedded in the design of the project.
4. The program combines actions directed at the demand and offer of services. Notwithstanding evidence of an increase in maternal and child health and primary school coverage, service quality improvements have not kept pace of increased demand. The subject of service quality should be tackled as a priority -with an equity and social justice approach- in order to guarantee effective improvements in human capital.
5. One of the critical elements in the country is the absence of a unified efficient information system to overcome problems of duplication and exclusion in the State's social programs and guaranteeing that the needs of vulnerable boys and girls are adequately met.
6. Juntos' inter-sectoral approach represents an important strength of the programme vis-à-vis other social programmes. However, while this approach to date has allowed for an important degree of information sharing and problem identification, an effective articulation of actions transcending sectoral logic has not yet been achieved. This articulation would be achieved by establishing common goals and objectives to attain synergies and to tackle national priorities and problems.
7. The programme's intention of promoting income-generation strategies is an important one if sustainable poverty reduction is to be achieved but still has to be translated into concrete mechanisms oriented towards improving productive infrastructure and facilitating access to loans and technical assistance.
8. Juntos' specific focus on gender inequalities and women's vulnerability within the household was also found to be bearing fruit. Household dynamics are shifting, with a reduction in family violence in some cases, more involvement of fathers in domestic tasks, including childcare and helping children with their education, and greater negotiating power for women given improved intra-household bargaining power. It will be important, however, to monitor these tendencies in order to

better understand these dynamics and to better reinforce positive changes. Moreover, research is needed to understand to what extent women's increased visibility and decision-making power is actually resulting in a greater work burden for women.

9. Child protection from violence and abuse is missing from Juntos' inter-sectoral approach. However, fostering linkages to children's legal protection offices (DEMUNAS) found throughout the country could foster a more joined-up approach to tackling this serious social issue.

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¹ Juntos was in line with the National Social Policy Development Plan and the National Plan to Overcome Poverty (2004-6) which have three objectives: developing human capital, respecting human rights, with an emphasis on children under 3 years, and providing economic opportunities and social protection for the most vulnerable sectors. These initiatives are also part of Peru's efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals.

² Poverty is concentrated predominantly in rural areas. This situation is reflected in social indicators such as child mortality, which affects 24 in every thousand live births in urban areas and 45 per thousand children in rural areas; it is also reflected in the nutritional levels of children under the age of 5: while 63.4% of children in urban areas show an acceptable nutrition level, only 30% of rural children are adequately nourished. UNICEF, 2004. *El Estado de la Niñez en el Perú*.

³ The 2002 National Accord represents Peru's response to the Millennium Declaration, which involves participation from political, religious, civil society and government organizations aimed at improving equity and social justice.

⁴ The Roundtable for Poverty Reduction was created during the transitional government, with the objective of reaching an agreement on social policies, achieving a better efficiency in the execution of programmes against poverty, and institutionalizing the participation of citizens in the design, the decision making and the fiscalización of the State's social policy. It brings together government, civil society, the business sector, NGOs and international donor agencies.

⁵ According to the World Bank Report "Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean: a rupture with History?", the richest tenth of the population in the region, receives almost 50% of total income, while the poorest tenth only gets 1.6%. (World Bank, 2003).

⁶ Vásquez points out that the scholarly breakfast and lunch programmes reach only two out of ten children who need the assistance, while four out of ten programme beneficiaries do not require the help from the State. CIES-UP, Available at: <http://cies.org.pe/files/BA/ba5.pdf>

⁷ UNICEF, 2004.

⁸ IIN/GRADE/Save the Children UK, 2003. Informe Nacional Preliminar Niños del Milenio.

⁹ For more information, see the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Comisión de la Verdad y de la Reconciliación*) whose recommendations have not yet been implemented.

¹⁰ Juntos was created under the Supreme Decree N° 032-2005-PCM in April 2005 and modified by Supreme Decree 062-2005-PCM in August 2005.

¹¹ The lack of identity documentation is a particular problem among the rural population in Peru and so MIMDES has established a programme entitled My Name Programme to address this. Although it is hard to estimate the magnitude of this problem, the available data shows that there are approximately one million people without an I.D, while 15% of girls and boys born in Peru every year lack a birth certificate, which means they have a disadvantage for carrying out and claiming their rights. The Truth Committee Final Report made a recommendation for the Judicial Branch to establish a programme for citizen rights, to regularize the state of undocumented people due to the internal armed conflict. For more information, go to: www.demus.org.pe.

¹² In the twenty years of political violence in Peru (1980-2000), 69,280 Peruvians were killed (this is higher than the number of Peruvians killed in all external and civil wars that have occurred in the 182 years since Independence). Many of those who died lived in rural areas and were Quechua speakers. Of the total, 12.5% were children. Most of the victims were poor population living in rural areas. For more information, see the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Comisión de la Verdad y de la Reconciliación*) whose recommendations have not been implemented yet.

¹³ In the health sector a diagnosis of services offered was undertaken which estimated that 105 million soles would be needed to allocated to cover this gap. However, in reality the budget transferred in 2005 was just 16 million soles (12 million assigned to health and an additional 4 million from MIMDES) for the 100 districts participating in the pilot phase. In 2006 this amount increased in line with more districts involved to 30 million soles (320 districts).

The budget allocated to the education sector in 2005 increased to almost 13 million soles. Priority areas identified included contracting new teachers, strengthening monitoring systems for rural schools, and increasing investment in infrastructure.

¹⁴ According to information provided by the Programme, this amount is significantly smaller than the one used by countries such as Mexico and Chile during the first two years of execution: in the first year, Mexico's Opportunities Programme and Chile's Solidarity Programme destined 57% and 41% respectively, to administrative and operational expenses; the following year, this amount was reduced to 25%.

¹⁵ National Confederation of Private Business Institutions, Peruvian Workers General Confederation, National Association of Research Centers, Development and Social Promotion – Social Development National Conference and Caritas Peru.

¹⁶ For each type of conditionality there is specific paperwork for families to fill out. This data is then compiled centrally and is used to verify programme compliance in order to decide upon payment or suspension of the cash transfer.

¹⁷ The profile of these facilitators is based on residence in the area where Juntos is being implemented, fluency in quechua language, and at least three years fieldwork experience. Generally these facilitators are health professionals, teachers, agronomists etc.

¹⁸ Monsignor Bambaren is the president of the Committee, which is also made up by Father Gaston Garatea, president of the Agreement Table for the Fight Against Poverty, a representative from other churches and from the private sector, as well as representatives from regional and local governments.

¹⁹ The committee's role is viewed as transitory and should eventually be assumed by the local RTRs and the Defensoria del Pueblo, with the aim of strengthening local capacities in line with ongoing process of decentralization in the country.

²⁰ It's important to note that in the case of community health facilitators through MINSa that they are men who due to higher education levels and better capacity can move around in geographically disperse areas. In the case of *Juntos*, the facilitators are predominantly women (98 of 107 in Vinchos).

²¹ According to data from the Ministry of Education, in the year 2004, only 11% of mothers had completed primary school. Data from the UNDP in 2005, shows that 28.2% of Ayacucho's population is illiterate (World Development Report 2005), and that women and rural populations are the most affected.

²² Juntos has received international support, and has signed cooperative agreements with Programa Oportunidades in Mexico and the strategy Hambre Cero (Zero Hunger) in Brazil. The UNDP has collaborated with Juntos since the initial phase and in May 2006 the FAO announced its interest to provide financial support to Juntos.

²³ Many women initially distrusted the intentions of the government as it differed markedly from the traditional distribution of food per typical social programmes, habitually subject to clientelism and political manipulation.

²⁴ Continuity of the programme was eventually ratified by Alan Garcia's government in July 2006. Although some programme adjustments were announced, there was to be no substantive change to the programme's design.

²⁵ Due to the absence of a baseline, information records are being developed at a regional level, along with a group of indicators that will allow an evaluation of the changes that have been generated since the start of the programme, such as the number of pre-natal checks, house births, number of children that have been vaccinated, number of children with growth and development checks, number of children registered in school, teachers, school desertion etc.

²⁶ Although this has not been specifically reported in the areas of study, the national and regional interviews show that pre-natal check-ups now start during the pregnancy's first trimester and not the second or third (like before) when the possibilities of detecting possible complications are reduced.

²⁷ This is in part due to the inadequacy of the health sector in working in an inter-cultural context (i.e. with indigenous populations for whom Spanish is commonly not their mother tongue).

²⁸ Initially, women took their children when they went to claim the cash transfer, making them miss school. Nowadays, the programme demands that the women go alone, or only take their unweaned babies, to reduce school absenteeism.

²⁹ However, the executive director of Juntos is cognizant that the programme first needs to be well established before it can become an umbrella programme for all social programmes.

³⁰ As a result it has secured commitments through International Cooperation Agreements to invest more in education and health services in affected areas through International Cooperation Agreements.

³¹ Peru ranks as one of the poorest in this regard in Latin America.

³² Several countries have applied quasi-experimental designs for the result evaluation, this process was facilitated by the sequential expansion of the programme. In the case of Mexico, this situation allowed to fulfill systematic measurements in households before and after the intervention, and to collect similar and comparable data from households that had not been covered by the programme, isolating the influence of other factors that could have influenced the observed changes.