

# Social protection and education

Our quick guide through the key issues

In collaboration with:



Social protection refers to policies and programmes that aim to help address risk vulnerability and chronic poverty. There are a wide range of instruments used for social protection including income support, child grants, disability benefits, and pensions, as well as education focused tools such as scholarship, vouchers or school-based feeding programme. The links between social protection and education run in both directions: Education is one route through which poverty could be prevented from passing on from one generation to the next. And social protection aims to address the problems of poverty and inequality that act as barriers to universal education in many countries.

This page explores some of the evidence that has been gathered on social protection and education and considers what lessons have been learned. The first part asks **how social protection can improve education outcomes for poor people**, drawing on both country case studies and economic models. Social protection can be targeted at particular groups or conditional, for instance, on children attending school. The second part of this page examines which of these **different approaches** work best in different circumstances. A final set of papers looks at how countries can weigh up the competing demands of social protection programmes and the school system in order to **balance investment in supply of education services with processes to support demand and access**.

Please submit suggested readings to the Eldis Education Editor – [I.murphy@ids.ac.uk](mailto:I.murphy@ids.ac.uk)

## Featured document



### Using social transfers to scale up equitable access to education and health services

This paper focuses on the impact of one form of demand-side policy option - social transfers, particularly cash transfers and vouchers - on access to health and education services by the extreme poor. It also touches upon the broader contribution that social transfers make to human development outcomes.

<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC22756&resource=f1educ>

## The key issues:

### How social protection can help education outcomes for poor people

Social protection instruments can help to improve education outcomes for poor people by addressing the underlying poverty and inequality that prevents poor children accessing education (if for example they have to work to survive) or fully benefiting from the education they do receive (because they are hungry or malnourished). It can also strengthen demand for education by reducing direct or indirect costs of accessing services.

A number of programmes have been implemented around the world which aim to use social transfers to improve the education of poor people, such as the PROGRESA programme in Mexico. Many appear to have had positive effects on school enrolments and other educational outcomes. These papers examine the evidence.

## Recommended reading...

- **From social assistance to social development: targeted education subsidies in developing countries**  
This book compiles published and unpublished material on existing conditioned transfer for education (CTE) programs and evaluates their ability to advance poverty reduction and education goals. It examines case studies of such 'cash-for-education' programs in Mexico, Brazil, Bangladesh, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Chile.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC13859&Resource=f1educ>
- **PROGRESA and its impacts on the welfare of rural households in Mexico**  
In early 1998, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was asked to assist the PROGRESA administration to "determine if PROGRESA is functioning in practice as it is intended to by design". This document synthesises the findings contained in a series of reports.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC22746&resource=f1educ>
- **Can low income countries afford basic social protection?: first results of a modelling exercise**  
This report presents the methodology and the results of a modelling exercise that demonstrates that basic social protection benefits are not out of reach for low-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, even though some international assistance would be necessary for a transitory period.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC22724&Resource=f1educ>
- **The Minimum Income for School Attendance (MISA) initiative: achieving international development goals in African least developed countries**  
This report argues that there is a strong justification for applying the Minimum Income for School Attendance (MISA) approach in African least developed countries in order to achieve both education and poverty reduction objectives.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC22723&resource=f1educ>
- **The pilot social cash transfer scheme: Kalomo District, Zambia**  
This working paper reviews and analyses the Kalomo Pilot Social Cash Transfer Scheme in Zambia. It contends that the most cost-effective way to improve these children's welfare is to give more economic power to their caregivers. The paper also argues that social cash transfers are affordable.  
<http://www.eldis.org/ds/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC18026&resource=f1educ>

## Different approaches to social protection

Social protection can be made universally available or targeted at particular groups in order to increase the impact and minimise costs. Programmes can also impose conditions, such as that the children of families who receive cash transfers should attend school regularly. These papers consider the benefits of these approaches, as well as the challenges they pose, such as the need for more administrative capacity.

## Recommended reading...

- **Consumer-led demand side financing for health and education: an international review**  
This paper examines "demand side financing" of health and education services. The paper's review of international evidence suggests that vouchers have been successful in raising the consumption of key services among key groups.  
<http://www.eldis.org/ds/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC19155&resource=f1educ>

- **The role of cash transfers in tackling childhood poverty**  
 This briefing paper focuses on the contribution one main social protection instrument - child-oriented cash transfers - can make to reducing childhood poverty and vulnerability.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC22720&Resource=f1educ>
- **Delivery mechanisms of cash transfer programs to the poor in Bangladesh**  
 This paper examines the practical issues and financial costs of delivering cash benefits from source recipients. It analyses three alternative delivery methods used in Bangladesh.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC22725&Resource=f1educ>
- **Recent trends in the development agenda of Latin America: an analysis of conditional cash transfers**  
 This paper analyses the characteristics, design and implementation factors contributing to the popularity of conditional cash transfers (CCT) in Latin America. It is based on an analysis of the Mexican Program of Education, Health and Nutrition (Progresa) and the Brazilian Bolsa Escola.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC17797&Resource=f1educ>
- **Targeting of transfers in developing countries: review of lessons and experience**  
 This book provides a general review of experiences and lessons learned with methods used to target interventions in developing countries. The objective is to convey available targeting options, anticipated results, and relevant information to assist in optimising the implementation of the chosen option.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC22718&Resource=f1educ>

## Balancing investment in demand and supply – policy coherence

Social protection may raise families' demand for education by improving their situation so that, for instance, they no longer need their children to stay at home or work. But if there are no schools of an acceptable quality within a reasonable distance, then this extra demand will remain unmet. These papers suggest ways that countries can strike a balance between investment in social protection programmes and investment in the school system.

### Recommended reading...

- **A new approach to social assistance: Latin America 's experience with conditional cash transfer programs**  
 This paper reviews the experience of the Latin America and Caribbean region in introducing conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes which provide money to poor families conditional upon investments in human capital, usually sending children to school and/or bringing them to health centres on a regular basis. In particular, the paper reviews seven conditional CCT programmes.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/DocDisplay.cfm?Doc=DOC22641&Resource=f1educ>
- **Is PROGRESA working?: summary of the results of an evaluation by IFPRI**  
 This document summarises an evaluation of the impact of PROGRESA on three poverty reduction focus areas: improving school enrolment, improving health and nutrition outcomes, and increasing household consumption for poor rural families.  
<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC22084&resource=f1educ>

- **The impact of conditional cash transfers on human development outcomes: a review of evidence from PROGRESA in Mexico and some implications for policy debates in South and Southern Africa**

This paper reflects on assessments of Mexico's Conditional Cash Transfer scheme (called PROGRESA) and draws comparisons with South Africa's Child Support Grant (CSG). It captures key highlights of a discussion on the impact of incentive based programmes in Latin America and in Southern Africa.

<http://www.eldis.org/ds/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC10038&resource=f1educ>
  
- **A cost-effectiveness analysis of demand- and supply-side education interventions: the case of PROGRESA in Mexico**

This paper is concerned with the issue of the most cost-effective way of improving access to education for poor households in developing countries. Specifically, the paper evaluates the Programa Nacional de Educación, Salud y Alimentación (PROGRESA), a large poverty alleviation programme introduced in Mexico that subsidises education.

<http://www.eldis.org/ds/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC14428&resource=f1educ>
  
- **Child poverty and cash transfers**

This paper addresses the effectiveness of cash transfers in addressing childhood poverty in developing and transition economies. It argues that the provision of cash transfers and basic services to the poor are complementary activities, in order to ensure that supply responds to demand arising from the transfer programmes.

<http://www.eldis.org/ds/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC14951&resource=f1educ>

## Key websites

- **Social Assistance in Developing Countries Database**

A searchable index of social assistance interventions in over 30 developing countries

<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/docdisplay.cfm?doc=DOC21147&resource=f1educ>
  
- **Social Protection, Vulnerability and Poverty Reduction Team, IDS, UK**

Research aimed at constructing a broader social protection incorporating protection, promotion empowerment and transformation objectives

<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/orgdisplay.cfm?org=10754&resource=f1educ>
  
- **Social Protection and Labour, World Bank**

World Bank's department examining social protection issues

<http://www.eldis.org/cf/search/disp/orgdisplay.cfm?org=10753&resource=f1educ>

## About this guide

This Key Issues Page was produced by Eldis in collaboration with DFID. The latest version of this guide can be found online at [http://www.eldis.org/education/social\\_protection.htm](http://www.eldis.org/education/social_protection.htm). Any suggestions or comments on this guide can be sent to the Eldis Education Editor, Leah Murphy, at [L.Murphy@ids.ac.uk](mailto:L.Murphy@ids.ac.uk). For other education-related information and Key Issues Pages, please visit <http://www.eldis.org/education>.