Final report and future work

Main objectives

This activity aimed to collect data and analyze the long-term impact of 2 related interventions that ended in 2006 and 2010. Specifically, the report presents 12-year impacts of a one-year productive safety net (CCT) program, as well as 8-year impacts of an early childhood parenting (ECD) intervention. The report summarizes overall key findings for 3 cohorts of interest: 1) the adult women that were the main beneficiaries of the CCT interventions; 2) young adults 19-29 that were of primary or lower secondary school age during the CCT interventions; and 3) teenagers 9-19 that were 0-6 during the CCT or ECD interventions.

Unexpected circumstances

Data collection for all instruments started in September 2017 through collaboration with the local survey firm. Following successful protocols of prior long-term panel data collections, the field work plan envisioned an initial phase of 8-9 months in which all the original villages and municipalities were to be visited, and targeted households and individuals that had not moved beyond to be surveyed. After this first phase, an intensive tracking phase was planned, in which both revisits to the original location and intensive tracking to migration destinations was to be pursued.

However, in April 2018, Nicaragua was immersed in a political crisis and civil unrest that led to the suspension of survey activities after the first phase. Given the continued civil unrest in the country, field activities were not able to be resumed. As a result, no tracking was done outside of the original municipalities, affecting attrition rates. By early 2019, the team decided to start analyzing the data while closely continuing monitoring the situation in Nicaragua and waiting to see if the chance would arise to restart the field work. Unfortunately, this was not possible.

Core results

The results impressively show sustained impacts of the productive safety net program on economic activities of the past beneficiaries, suggesting that even after 12 years, these beneficiaries continued to have a more diversified portfolio of economic activities and related income sources. Evidence also shows sustained impacts on the cognitive outcomes of children exposed to the CCT during early childhood, though these differ by age group. In contrast, the parenting intervention did not lead to sustained impacts on cognition. It did however lead to lasting improvements in parent-child relationships, and possibly as a result, in a number of behavioral indicators.

Additional future work outside the scope of this activity

The team has secured additional funding to continue analyzing the existing data. This will not involve additional data collection but focus on analysis of the existing data. Further analysis will aim to test the robustness of the findings in the main report by including controls (which can help

1 The survey firm was able to visit all original villages in the first phase, though could not entirely finish all planned activities in them.
increase precision), and possibly interactions with the CCT. For the older children, testing differences between those that are siblings of children targeted by the parenting intervention (i.e. whose parents were exposed to the parenting intervention), and other children in the village will be important too, to further understand possible spillovers. Further analysis will also widen the scope of the analysis to other household members, and analyze in particular whether the limited impacts of the training intervention on the main beneficiary was offset by impacts among other (possibly younger and more mobile) household members. The team will also further analyze whether the attrited main beneficiaries were more likely to have migrated for work if they got the training intervention. Finally, the additional work will aim to consolidate the key findings of the analysis for wider dissemination across different audiences including authorities in Nicaragua and academic and policy practitioners around the world.