Children's Schooling and Work in the Presence of a Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Rural Colombia

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Colombia

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Education and Skills

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Completed

**Intervention Category**
Cash Transfer

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Social Protection

The paper studies the effects of Familias en Acción, a conditional cash transfer program implemented in rural areas in Colombia since 2002, on school enrolment and child labour. Using a difference-in-difference framework, our results show that the program increased school participation of 14 to 17 year old children quite substantially, by between 5 and 7 percentage points, and had lower effects on the enrolment of younger children, in the region of 1 to 3 percentage points. The effects on work are largest in the relatively more urbanized parts of rural areas and particularly for younger children, whose participation in domestic work decreased by around 13 percentage points after the program, as compared to a decrease of 10 percentage points for older children in these same areas. The program had no discernible impacts on children’s work in more rural areas. Participation in income-generating work remained largely unaffected by the program. We also find evidence of school and work time not being fully substitutable, suggesting that some, but not all, of the increased time at school may be drawn from children’s leisure time.

**Gender Connection**
Gender Informed Analysis

**Gender Outcomes**
Gender disaggregated school enrollment, child labor

**IE Design**
Difference in Difference

Familias en Acción is a standard CCT offering transfers equivalent to about $8-16 per school age child and nutrition packages of about $28 for children below 7 contingent on school attendance. The program is targeted based on the household's poverty score index. The schooling transfers go directly to the mothers.

**Intervention Period**
The program originally began in 2001 and was funded by the IDB to last for 3 years

**Sample population**
The final evaluation covers 122 municipalities, 57 treatment and 65 controls. In each municipality approximately 100 households were included in the sample for a total sample of about 11,500, 10,742 of which were included in the follow up survey.

**Comparison conditions**
Households that were treated with the CCT were compared to households in municipalities that did not receive the CCT. The baseline actually was conducted after some of the treatment group were already treated so there is some comparison between the early treatment and the late treatment group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Unit of analysis</strong></th>
<th>Child level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation Period</strong></td>
<td>2001-November 2003. The study examines enrollment data for 3 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td>The program increased enrollment rates of 14-17 year old children substantially, between 5 and 7 percentage points. It also increased the already high enrollment rates of 8-13 year old children by between 1-3 percentage points. The impacts on child labor are greatest for younger children, whose domestic work decreased by 10-13 p.p. but participation in income-generating work did not change significantly.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary study limitations</strong></td>
<td>The program was not rolled out randomly. The treatment and control area my not have common support.</td>
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<td><strong>Funding Source</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Link to Studies</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/648188">http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/648188</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Microdata</strong></td>
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