



# Cash transfers to tackle childhood poverty and vulnerability: an analysis of Peru's *Juntos* programme

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**ABSTRACT** Social programmes in Peru have been plagued historically by a culture of dependency, clientelism and corruption. *Juntos*, a conditional cash transfer programme targeting children under the age of 14, was initiated in 2005 to provide a new model for social protection provision and tackle the country's widespread childhood poverty. Its design largely follows that of counterpart Latin American programmes and seeks to address the risks to children's future human capital development that stem from inadequate access to basic services and various forms of social exclusion. An innovative dimension of *Juntos* is its explicit focus on populations most affected by the country's political violence during the 1980s and 1990s. Drawing on document analysis and qualitative field research, this independent assessment considers the impacts of the programme on childhood poverty, the strengths and weaknesses of a conditional approach, and changes in intra-household and community dynamics as well as state-citizen relations. It concludes by discussing policy challenges and directions for future research.

**KEYWORDS** cash transfers / childhood / gender dynamics / social protection / vulnerability

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social protection mechanisms are increasingly seen as an important policy tool to tackle poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.<sup>(1)</sup> Within the broad field of social protection, cash transfers are instruments that attract much interest and attention and have been pioneered particularly in Latin America.<sup>(2)</sup> Peru recently followed the examples of Mexico, Chile, Brazil and Nicaragua in launching its first conditional cash transfer programme, *Juntos* ("Together"), in February 2005. By targeting poor children under the age of 14, the aim is to promote human capital development and help break life course and inter-generational transfers of poverty by facilitating households' capacities to ensure children's rights to adequate nutrition, health care and education.

Although the need for greater public investment in social services was widely recognized as critical to addressing the country's stark inequalities,<sup>(3)</sup> President Toledo's announcement about the introduction of the programme sparked opposition from various societal stakeholders. This was due in part to Toledo's low popularity rankings and suspicions that the programme would be used for clientelistic purposes in the pre-election period leading up to the April 2006 national elections. Specific

concerns included the government's plan to implement the programme simultaneously in rural and urban areas without having determined a clear mechanism for targeting the poor,<sup>(4)</sup> and the lack of involvement of key social and political actors represented in the country's post-authoritarian National Accord.<sup>(5)</sup> Some analysts also argued that existing social programmes should be restructured rather than initiating a new programme. The government, however, countered that such cash transfer programmes – whereby mothers receive a regular cash payment on the condition that they ensure their children access public education and health services and avail themselves of other child-focused social programmes – have been successful internationally. Moreover, they argued that there was evidence to suggest that direct cash subsidies were more effective than food subsidies and entailed lower operational costs.

In order to address critics' concerns, *Juntos* was placed under a directorate named by the national Roundtable for Poverty Reduction,<sup>(6)</sup> so as to guarantee the programme's neutrality and transparency and to ensure the participation of the principle social sectors involved in shaping the direction of social policy. *Juntos* has since gained considerable legitimacy, due to minimal politicization, and 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. Not only is the programme reaching the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population, but there is also recognition that *Juntos* is an attempt to address some of the particular vulnerabilities faced by populations that were most affected by the political violence of the 1980s to 2000 (both from the Shining Path terrorist organization and state counter-terrorism).

This paper discusses the development and implementation of *Juntos* in Peru to date, drawing on research in Ayacucho department, the first region where the pilot phase of the programme was implemented. The analysis pays particular attention to the impacts of the programme on childhood poverty, the strengths and weaknesses of a conditional approach, and changes in intra-household and community dynamics – both intended and unintended. Following a brief discussion of methods in Section II, Section III provides an overview of the conceptual understanding of risk and vulnerability that underpins the programme. Section IV describes the coverage, targeting and financing of *Juntos*, and Section V analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of its implementation. Section VI presents participants' perceptions of the programme, including changing intra-household dynamics, while Section VII is concerned with shifting community dynamics. Conclusions and policy implications are presented in Section VIII.

## II. METHODS

This paper draws on document analysis and qualitative research in two communities in Ayacucho department. These communities – Arizona and Rosaspata – were selected on the basis of:

- overlap with the longitudinal international Young Lives project research sites, and the potential to follow up the impacts of social protection initiatives on children over time;

where she was responsible for policy advocacy and communications.

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1. UNDP–International Poverty Centre (2006), "Social protection. The role of cash transfers", *Poverty in Focus* No 8, UNDP–IPC, June; also Barrientos, A, D Hulme and K Moore (2006), "Social protection for the poorest: taking a broader view", in UNDP–IPC, as above, pages 6–8; Marcus, R (2006), "Save the Children social protection scoping paper", Save the Children, UK, August; and Minujin, A, E Delamonica, A Davidziuk and E Sweet (2006), "Notes on social insurance and protection policies for children, women and families", Background Paper for UNICEF's Conference on Social Protection Initiatives for Children, Women, and Families: An Analysis of Recent Experiences, October 30–31, Graduate Programme in International Affairs, The New School, New York.

2. See, for example, Moser, C with A Antezana (2003), "Social protection in Bolivia: an assessment in terms of the World Bank's social protection framework and the PRSP", *Development Policy Review*

Vol 20, No 5, pages 637–656; also Britto, T (2005), "Recent trends in the development agenda of Latin America: an analysis of conditional cash transfers", Paper presented at the CPRC Conference on Social Protection and Chronic Poverty: Risk, Needs and Rights Protecting What? How?, 23–24 February 2005, Manchester, available at <http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/research/events/february2005/protection.htm>; Copestake, James (2006), "Multiple dimensions of social assistance: the case of Peru's Glass of Milk programme", Well-being in Developing Countries (WeD) Working Paper 21, University of Bath, UK; Lindert, K, E Skoufias and J Schapiro (2006), "Redistributing income to the poor and the rich. Public transfers in Latin America and the Caribbean", SP Discussion Paper 0605, World Bank, Washington DC; Molyneux, M (2007), "Change and continuity in social protection in Latin America: mothers at the service of the state?", UNRISD Gender and Development Programme Paper No 1, May; and Handa, S and B Davis (2006), "The experience of conditional cash transfers in Latin America and the Caribbean", *Development Policy Review* Vol 24, No 5, pages 513–536.

3. Although total spending on social sector services has increased steadily since 2002, combined spending on social assistance, education and health only constituted 9.2 per cent of national GDP in 2005 (US\$ 61 per capita), which is very low by regional (average of 15 per cent or US\$ 170 per capita) and international comparisons. See UNICEF and APOYO (2006), "El gasto social en el Peru 2000–2005", UNICEF, Lima.

4. Poverty in Peru is concentrated predominantly in rural areas. This situation is reflected in social indicators such as child mortality, which affects 24 in every 1,000 live births in urban areas and 45 per 1,000 in rural areas. It is also reflected in the nutritional levels of children under the

- geographical accessibility; and
- the proportion of children from the community who were enrolled in the programme.<sup>(7)</sup>

Two rounds of fieldwork involving a total of eight focus group discussions and 42 individual semi-structured interviews with adult and child beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, service providers and programme officials at the national and local levels were undertaken in July/August 2006, and again in January 2007. Save the Children UK's ethical guidelines for working with children were followed in all interviews with children, and a Quechua translator led the interviews where study participants preferred to speak in Quechua rather than Spanish.

### III. CONCEPTUALIZING RISK AND VULNERABILITY

Central to the concept of social protection is a concern with reducing risk and vulnerability by enhancing poor people's capacities to avoid, cope with and/or recover from adverse shocks.<sup>(8)</sup> Importantly, it recognizes poverty as a dynamic rather than a static state and that poverty may be temporary, transitory or chronic.<sup>(9)</sup> However, given the multi-dimensionality of factors that underpin poverty and deprivation, there is considerable debate among analysts about how vulnerability and risk should best be defined, ranging from a narrow economic/livelihoods approach through to a broad multi-faceted definition including equity, non-discrimination, empowerment and sociocultural and political rights.<sup>(10)</sup> In the case of children, the conceptual debate is even more challenging. Vulnerability may be used to refer to:

- children pre-defined as particularly vulnerable (e.g. orphans, street children, victims of trafficking);
- children as a general demographic group; or
- it may include multiple dimensions – both broader community and household environmental, political and economic vulnerabilities as well as child-specific aspects, including vulnerabilities related to education/skills acquirement, health, sociocultural norms and practices (e.g. discrimination against girls or disabled children) as well as particular policy decisions (e.g. institutionalization, user fees for basic services).<sup>(11)</sup>

With a focus on children in poor households and communities, *Juntos* (the national programme of support to the poorest) is implicitly underpinned by a mix of the second and third definitions of vulnerability, combining a concern with poor children in general with more disaggregated dimensions of household and child-specific vulnerabilities in the context of high levels of national inequality. Despite rapid national economic growth over the last 15 years (1993–1997 and 2001–2006),<sup>(12)</sup> Peru is one of the most unequal countries in Latin America, which is the world's most unequal continent.<sup>(13)</sup> Stark inequalities are manifest not only in terms of income distribution<sup>(14)</sup> but also in terms of human development indicators and access to basic services (Box 1). Children are particularly at risk, with two out of every three children under the age of five in Peru living below the poverty line, and two out of 10 living in extreme poverty.<sup>(15)</sup> Within this context, *Juntos* seeks to address the

risks to poor children's future human capital development that stem from inadequate access to quality basic services and social exclusion (especially linked to a lack of civic identity documentation, which precludes their participation in social programmes).

The conceptualization of risk and vulnerability that underpins *Juntos* is also focused on rural rather than urban poverty. This is due to both statistics on extreme poverty rates as well as political calculations. According to the Peruvian National Institute of Statistics, overall poverty rates fell from 48.6 per cent to 44.5 per cent between 2004 and 2006. Urban poverty fell by 5.9 percentage points, from 37.1 per cent to 31.2 per cent, whereas there was little change in rural poverty rates, which stood at 69.8 per cent in 2004 and 69.3 per cent in 2006. The urban-rural gap is even more dramatic when it comes to extreme poverty rates: 37.1 per cent in rural areas in 2005 compared to 4.9 per cent in urban areas. However, it is important to point out that of Peru's 72 per cent urban population, more than 11 per cent live in towns of 4,000 inhabitants or less, and thus some of the beneficiaries in poor Sierra (mountainous) regions may be technically urban.<sup>(16)</sup> The political importance of focusing the roll-out of *Juntos* in poor rural areas was reinforced by the 2006 presidential election results. Although at a national level the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria

age of five: while 63.4 per cent of children in urban areas show an acceptable nutritional level, only 30 per cent of rural children are adequately nourished. See UNICEF (2004), "El estado de la niñez en el Perú", UNICEF, Lima. The complaint about focusing on urban areas may also have been a reaction against the primarily urban focus of the government's large-scale Comedores Populares (Community Soup Kitchen) programme. See, for example, reference 2, Molyneux (2007). See also the discussion in Section III on the complexities of this urban-rural divide.

5. The 2002 National Accord represents Peru's response to the Millennium Declaration, which involves participation from political, religious, civil society and government

### BOX 1

#### Sociodemographic characteristics of study sites

According to the last population census,<sup>(1)</sup> the department of Ayacucho has a population of 619,338 inhabitants (cf. national population of 28 million), 43 per cent of whom are under the age of 18. The department is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of 24 departments in terms of poverty and human development indicators.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### Maternal and infant mortality

National averages for indicators of maternal and infant health hide the grave disparities in Ayacucho. The rate of maternal mortality in Ayacucho is 304.7 per 100,000, almost double the national average (163.9 per 100,000),<sup>(3)</sup> and only 41.5 per cent of pregnant mothers receive the nationally recommended minimum of four pre-natal check-ups. The rate of infant mortality in Ayacucho is 50 per 1,000 live births and the rate of mortality for children under the age of five is 68 per 1,000, in both cases higher than the national average (43 and 60 per 1,000, respectively).<sup>(4)</sup>

#### Child malnutrition

Malnutrition indices are also alarming: one in three children under the age of five in the region suffers from chronic malnutrition,<sup>(5)</sup> which limits not only their survival prospects but also longer-term physical and cognitive development. In Ayacucho, 40.1 per cent of all children suffer from chronic malnutrition and 52.7 per cent are anaemic.

#### Education

In the case of primary education, the main problem is quality, as access is close to universal (93 per cent in Ayacucho, compared to 96 per cent at the national level).<sup>(6)</sup> Problems are related predominantly to multi-grade and single-teacher schools and a lack of appropriate curricula for such schools. This contributes to high levels of grade repetition and dropouts in areas with high levels of poverty. Three-quarters of students in areas of poverty are over-age (50 per cent in urban areas and 60 per cent in rural areas).<sup>(7)</sup> In our study communities, in 2005, 14 per cent of children dropped out and 12 per cent repeated in Rosaspata, and in Arizona the figures were 10 per cent and 19 per cent, respectively.

SOURCES: <sup>(1)</sup>INEI (2005), *Censos Nacionales X de Poblacion y V de Vivienda 2005*, INEI, Lima. <sup>(2)</sup>UNDP (2005), *Informe de Desarrollo Humano*, Lima, Peru. <sup>(3)</sup>MINSA (2001), *Oficina General de Epidemiologia. Mortalidad Materna en el Peru 1997-2002*, MINSA, Lima. <sup>(4)</sup>UNICEF (2004), *El Estado de la Niñez en el Perú*, UNICEF, Lima. <sup>(5)</sup> See reference 4. <sup>(6)</sup>MINEDU (2004), *Indicadores de la Educacion, Peru*, Unidad de Estadística Educativa, MINEDU, Lima. <sup>(7)</sup>See reference 4.

organizations aimed at improving equity and social justice.

6. The Roundtable for Poverty Reduction was created during the transitional government with the objective of reaching an agreement on social policies among diverse governmental and civil society stakeholders, achieving more efficient poverty reduction programmes, and institutionalizing civic participation in social policy design, decision making and budget prioritization.

7. More than 50 per cent of children under the age of 14 are enrolled in the programme in these two communities.

8. See, for example, Shepherd, A, R Marcus and A Barrientos (2004), "Policy paper on social protection", Department for International Development (DFID), London, UK.

9. See, for example, reference 1, Minujin et al. (2006).

10. See, for example, Devereux, S and R Sabates-Wheeler (2004), "Transformative social protection", Working Paper 232, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK.

11. See reference 1, Marcus (2006), page 31.

12. See figures by the Inter-American Development Bank, available at [http://www.iadb.org/countries/indicators.cfm?language=English&id\\_country=PE&pLanguage=ENGLISH&pCountry=PE&parid=8](http://www.iadb.org/countries/indicators.cfm?language=English&id_country=PE&pLanguage=ENGLISH&pCountry=PE&parid=8)

13. According to a World Bank report, the richest tenth of the population in the region receive almost 50 per cent of total income, while the poorest tenth only get 1.6 per cent. See World Bank (2003), *Desigualdad en América Latina y el Caribe: ¿Ruptura con la Historia?*, World Bank, Washington DC.

14. Peru's gini co-efficient was 0.56 in 2002. See UNDP (2006), *Apreciación Sustantiva del Programa Nacional de Apoyo Directo a los más Pobres*, UNDP, Lima, Perú. Despite being

**TABLE 1**  
**Electoral results for APRA and UPP in Peru's 2006 presidential elections**

Region	APRA (%)	UPP (%)
Huancavelica	23.52	76.47
Huánuco	36.05	63.94
Apurímac	26.11	73.88
Ayacucho	16.57	83.42

SOURCE: Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales (2006).

Americana (APRA) won 52.6 per cent of the vote compared to the Unión por el Perú (UPP)'s 47.4 per cent, in many of the poorest districts, the UPP enjoyed a decisive victory, as shown in Table 1.

Finally, unlike other social protection programmes, *Juntos* also explicitly conceptualizes vulnerability in relation to Peru's recent history of political violence. It is seen as a way of tackling the particular vulnerabilities of populations who were most affected by the political violence prevalent in the country between 1980 and 2000, when 69,280 Peruvians were killed. Most of the victims were from poor rural communities, many were Quechua speakers and more than 40 per cent were from Ayacucho department.<sup>(17)</sup> 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.

#### IV. PROGRAMME COVERAGE, TARGETING AND FINANCING

##### a. Coverage

Eligible households in the *Juntos* programme receive a fixed monthly cash transfer of 100 soles (approximately US\$ 30) per month irrespective of household size,<sup>(18)</sup> which is conditional on their compliance with accessing basic public services for their children. The programme is targeted specifically at households below the poverty line who have children under the age of 14 (including widows/widowers, grandparents and guardians). The transfer is paid to mothers on the assumption that they are likely to be more accountable for ensuring their children's well-being.<sup>(19)</sup> In return, women sign an agreement with the state for a maximum of four years and agree to:

- complete civic identification documents for themselves and their children;<sup>(20)</sup>
- ensure 85 per cent school attendance for their children;
- complete vaccination, health and pre- and post-natal care checks;
- take advantage of the National Nutritional Assistance programme package for children under the age of three, and use chlorinated water and anti-parasite medication; and
- attend capacity-building/awareness-raising programmes on how to promote their children's physical and educational development, both

within the household as well as availing their families of government-provided services and social programmes.<sup>(21)</sup>

Beneficiaries are issued with ID cards, which they need to take to the Banco Nacional to receive their monthly payments. The bank holds a centralized list of eligible beneficiaries to prevent fraud and, despite initial concerns about theft and trickery to which a number of women fall prey, eligible women are paid the money in the lowest denominations of local currency. The cash transfers are suspended for three months in cases of non-compliance, and indefinitely if there is further non-compliance.

## b. Targeting mechanisms

Targeting comprises three stages: geographic targeting, household targeting and a process of community validation of potential beneficiaries. In the first stage, four criteria are used to efficiently identify the poorest districts in the country: extreme income poverty; access to infrastructure and basic services (e.g. roads, electricity, water, sanitation); level of chronic infant malnutrition; and a history of political violence.<sup>(22)</sup> The data are compiled from the Ministry of Finance and Economics, FONCODES (Fondo Nacional de Cooperación para el Desarrollo) 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.

Within the geographic areas selected in stage one, the second stage – household targeting – is based on a social demographic questionnaire designed and implemented by the National Statistics Office (INEI), and combined with an algorithm to establish the poverty line (the cut-off point between the poor and non-poor). 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 should not 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 for Poverty Reduction. The aim is to identify whether the first two stages accurately reflect reality, for example, allowing for the exclusion of traders, non-community members and those with a certain level of personal property/goods on the one hand, or the inclusion of impoverished families who were erroneously excluded on the other. This is important, as once the list of beneficiaries has been publicly displayed it is almost impossible to reverse the decision.

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, interviews were carried out in public places rather than people's homes or workplaces, resulting in a breach of confidentiality. Beneficiaries also often lacked the requisite information to fill out the INEI questionnaire and/or were required to travel considerable distances and forgo agricultural or pastoral work. These design flaws, coupled with inaccurate recording of information by interviewers who lacked sufficient knowledge about local

a "middle-income country", half of Peruvians live in income poverty, below the US\$ 2 poverty line, and one-fifth live in extreme poverty, below the US\$ 1 poverty line. See DFID (2002), *DFID Peru Country Assistance Plan: 2003–05*, DFID Peru Office, Lima, available at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/peru/cap-peru-apr2004.pdf>.

15. See reference 4, UNICEF (2004).

16. Indeed, definitions of "rural" versus "urban" are currently being rethought in Latin America. While some advocate definitions based on population size, others believe that access to services is another critical criterion. We are grateful to David Satterthwaite and Javier Escobar for information on this point.

17. For more details, see the 2003 Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Comisión de la Verdad y de la Reconciliación), whose recommendations have yet to be implemented, available at <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/>.

18. In Ayacucho, in 2000, the average fertility rate was 4.2 children. See Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas (2006), "Información socioeconómica de Ayacucho", Dirección General de Asuntos Económicos y Sociales, Lima, July.

19. This follows Mexico's Progreso/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 provide women with greater bargaining and decision-making power (through control of economic resources). The extent to which this leads to a transformation of gender relations in the family, or merely exacerbates women's work burden, is however increasingly debated. See, for example, reference 2, Molyneux (2007).

20. Having a national identity document was made a

prerequisite for participation in *Juntos*, in line with the Ministry of Women and Social Development (MIMDES)'s My Name programme, which was established in order to help combat the widespread lack of such documentation, among the rural population in particular. Although it is hard to estimate the exact magnitude of the problem, available data show that there are approximately one million people with no ID, while 15 per cent of girls and boys born in Peru every year lack a birth certificate, putting them at a disadvantage in terms of being able to access public services and social programmes for which they are eligible as Peruvian citizens (see www.demunas.org.pe). The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made a recommendation to the judicial branch to establish a programme for citizen rights in order to address the problem of civic documentation, which is particularly acute in areas affected by internal armed conflict. To date, 15,000 cases of mothers and children who lacked civic documentation have been identified as a result of *Juntos*'s registration process, and 85 per cent of such cases have been resolved by providing these services free of charge.

21. In 2007, a new component focusing on the introduction of smokeless stoves to poor households to reduce the risk of respiratory problems was also introduced.

22. In the 20 years of political violence in Peru (1980–2000), 69,280 Peruvians were killed – this is greater 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 per cent were children. Most of the victims were poor populations 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

realities, meant that approximately 20 per cent 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*'s successes – have not been problem-free either. Although they have served to filter out approximately 10 per cent of the households initially selected (e.g. those who were somewhat better off due to the ownership of petty businesses or of larger quantities of livestock), our qualitative findings revealed that villagers were often reluctant to speak out about who should be excluded from the programme, because of community power relations. Similarly, although 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 – our interviews suggested that they are 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.

### c. Financing

Although still a relatively small programme, financing has steadily increased over time. In 2005, Law No 28562 provided for 120 million soles (approximately US\$ 38 million) to finance the programme's pilot phase, which covered 110 districts in the regions of Huancavelica, Ayacucho, Apurímac and Huánuco. In 2006, a total of 300 million soles (approximately US\$ 95 million) was allocated to the expansion phase (including 210 new districts), to broaden coverage in the original four regions and in five additional regions: Puno, Cajamarca, La Libertad, Junín and Ancash. The budget was split as follows: 60 per cent to pay for the cash transfers; 30 per cent to strengthen the supply of basic services,<sup>(23)</sup> especially to meet the new demand generated by participation in *Juntos*; and the remaining 10 per cent to be spent on operational costs, which is low compared to equivalent programmes in Mexico and Chile.<sup>(24)</sup>

Initial doubts notwithstanding, the new Alan Garcia administration has expanded the programme significantly. Whereas 135,000 households were receiving transfers by September 2006, by the end of 2007 it is expected that 350,000 households will be covered, across 638 districts in 14 regions.<sup>(25)</sup> The Peruvian Congress allocated US\$ 125 million to *Juntos* in 2007, (a US\$ 40 million increase over 2006), as well as a supplementary loan of US\$ 46 million.<sup>(26)</sup>

## V. IMPLEMENTATION STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The institutional design of *Juntos* has been carefully thought out in order to overcome a number of the key problems that plague the implementation of other social programmes in Peru. These include problems of politicization, clientelism, corruption and leakage,<sup>(27)</sup> a lack of synergies across sectors, and inadequate reach to the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population. Key characteristics of *Juntos*'s institutional design are:

- a centralized directorate managed by one of the most powerful central government agencies, the Presidential Council of Ministers;
- mechanisms to promote inter-sectoral coordination;

- the creation of a rigorous data collection system to monitor compliance with the programme conditionalities; and
- 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 Presidential Council of Ministers in order to ensure efficient implementation and promote an inter-sectoral approach to the implementation of the programme. It is managed by a directorate comprised of a president, four civil society representatives who are part of the National Accord,<sup>(28)</sup> and representatives of the ministries of education, health, women and social development, and 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. At the local level, the inter-sectoral focus is promoted through multi-sectoral technical committees, which are responsible for fostering linkages between the programme, the various sectors and the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (RPR).

The administrative and implementation functions of the programme – such as registering households,<sup>(29)</sup> certifying compliance with the programme's conditions, and the transfer of cash payments – are overseen by the executive director. S/he is in turn supported by a technical committee and regional and district coordinators, as well as programme facilitators selected through a competitive public process overseen by the RPR.<sup>(30)</sup> The latter are predominantly women who are part of the beneficiary population and elected by an assembly.<sup>(31)</sup> Selected largely based on their (admittedly often minimal) literacy and bilingual skills and social networks within the community, their role is to link families to public services, give public talks about *Juntos*, and verify families' compliance with the programme.

Monitoring and evaluation of the 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 allow 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 that currently lack an adequate registry of beneficiaries. The monitoring function of the programme is overseen by the Committee on Supervision and Transparency, which comprises members of the church and civil society,<sup>(32)</sup> in close coordination with provincial and district RPRs.<sup>(33)</sup> Although present in only a small sub-sample of programme communities and still lacking adequate funds to function properly, these 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.

## VI. PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

(What is your view on the programme *Juntos*?)  
*"They give us 100 soles to eat."*

recommendations have yet to be implemented.

23. In the health sector, a diagnosis of services offered was undertaken, which estimated that 105 million soles would be needed 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 the larger number of 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.

24. According to information provided by the programme, this amount is significantly smaller than that used by countries such as Mexico and Chile during the first two years of execution: in the first year, Mexico's *Oportunidades* programme and Chile's *Solidario* programme allocated 57 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively, to administrative and operational expenses in their first year of operation; the following year, this amount was reduced to 25 per cent, gradually tapering off to 5 per cent in year four. See Inter-American Development Bank (2004), "The cost of poverty alleviation transfer programmes: a comparative analysis of three programmes in Latin America", IADB, Washington DC.

25. This is up from 110 districts in four regions in 2005.

26. In addition, the government has launched a new initiative called "Creceer" (Grow), which is concerned specifically with child malnutrition. It is designed to complement *Juntos* by focusing more intensively on pre-school children under the age of five.

27. See, for example, reference 2, Copestake (2006).



28. The National Confederation of Private Business Institutions, the Peruvian Workers General Confederation, the National Association of Research Centres, Development and Social Promotion – Social Development National Conference, and Caritas Peru.

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

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

31. It is important to note that in the case of community health facilitators, many are men who enjoy higher educational levels and greater mobility in geographically dispersed areas (due to safety issues). In the case of *Juntos*, the facilitators are predominantly women (98 out of 107 in Vinchos).

32. Monsignor Bambaren is president of the committee, which also includes Father Gaston Garatea, president of the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, representatives from other churches and from the private sector, and representatives from regional and local governments.

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

34. *Juntos* has received international support and has signed cooperative agreements with the Oportunidades programme in Mexico and the Hambre Cero (Zero Hunger)

(And who provides the money?)  
*"The government."*

(And what is the money used for?)  
*"To buy our clothes, food, so that we don't miss school and also to buy everything they ask us to buy for school. To go to school clean. And then 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 penalty, and they will stop giving us the money."* (Beneficiary children, Arizona)

Due to concerted efforts to avoid politicization of the programme and a focus on reaching some of the poorest and most vulnerable populations,<sup>(34)</sup> *Juntos's* achievements to date are noteworthy. Although interviewees admitted some initial skepticism,<sup>(35)</sup> there was a general consensus among beneficiaries that the programme is making a positive difference to their lives. For example, in the face of silence by presidential candidates in 2006 about whether they would continue the programme, women beneficiaries from Ayacucho organized a march in defence of the programme and sent a petition signed by the region's president and district mayors in its support.<sup>(36)</sup> This positive attitude was endorsed by interviews with beneficiaries who conceptualized the programme as an effort 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 provide the poor with better opportunities, especially education, to overcome their poverty.

The following discussion provides a more detailed analysis of the ways in which the programme is reducing childhood poverty and vulnerability. It begins by looking at children's time use, the health and nutrition-seeking behaviour of children and mothers and shifts in intra-household dynamics. It concludes with a discussion of changes in community dynamics, which have been less positive.

### a. Children's time use

Our interviews with programme beneficiaries as well as programme implementers and local authorities suggested that school attendance in communities where *Juntos* has been implemented has increased significantly; for example, there was a 20 per cent increase in school attendance in Arizona.<sup>(37)</sup> 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 and attend school regularly. Although children still carry out work activities to support their families after school, at the weekends and during the vacations, our research suggested that much of this work has now been absorbed by parents, especially women.

*Juntos* has also resulted in greater parental involvement in children's education, as there is a growing awareness of the importance of education and the need to support children's learning processes at home. Interviews 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 labourers or migrate outside the community for work: <sup>(38)</sup>

“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.” (Beneficiary father, Rosaspata)

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 the quality of education. Although facilitators do not always have sufficient clout to enforce rigorous record keeping, and some teachers have been known to accept bribes to falsify student attendance records on behalf of parents, focus group discussions suggested that more frequent surveillance efforts have had a visible impact on teacher attendance.

## b. Improved health and nutrition-seeking behaviour

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 to accessing services.<sup>(39)</sup> This is reflected in the 30 per cent increase in children under the age of one receiving vaccinations in 2006 compared to 2005, the 200 per cent increase in health clinic visits for children under the age of five, and the much higher rate for 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 per cent 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.

Overcoming the alarming rate of malnutrition in the area (60 per cent in Vinchos) is another priority of the health sector. As a result of insistence by programme and health professionals that the *Juntos* cash transfers should be used to address child malnutrition, families are reporting the purchase of 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 coca 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.” (Father’s focus group, Arizona)

## c. Intra-household dynamics

*Juntos* has also brought about some important changes in family dynamics, both intended and unintended effects. First, the programme’s monthly cash transfer of 100 soles has helped to improve participating household livelihood security to some degree. For example, some households are

strategy in Brazil. UNDP has collaborated with *Juntos* since the initial phase and, in May 2006, the FAO announced its interest in providing financial support to *Juntos*.

35. Initially, many women distrusted the intentions of the government as the programme differed markedly from the traditional distribution of food typical of Peruvian social programmes, which were habitually subject to clientelism and political manipulation.

36. 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 its design.

37. 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, number of house births, number of children who have been vaccinated, number of child growth and development checks, number of children registered in school, number of teachers, school drop outs, etc.

38. Another possible reason is that considerably more women than men are illiterate in Ayacucho: 29 per cent of women versus 9.5 per cent of men.

39. This is due in part 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).

using part of the cash not only to improve their living conditions (e.g. buying materials for house repairs or to construct latrines) but also to purchase animals in order to increase their food self-sufficiency and 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.” (Women’s focus group, Arizona)

However, our research also highlighted that the size of the cash transfer has 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 district towns to receive the *Juntos* payment from designated banks.

A second important impact on intra-household dynamics concerns programme attempts to realign gender relations and the gendered division of labour within the family. More specifically, *Juntos* has sought to improve women’s bargaining power within the household by reducing their economic dependence and providing them with an independent financial resource. Interestingly, there appears to be a general consensus in the communities where we undertook our study regarding the appropriateness of giving the cash transfers 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 to 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 fees to cover various school activities. Women know about these worries, whereas men don’t think about these things.” (Community facilitator, Arizona)

*Juntos* is, however, also trying to promote greater male involvement in domestic activities and childcare. In general, respondents emphasized that men were now participating in activities previously seen as exclusively female (e.g. cooking, cleaning and washing). In part, this is because women are unable to complete all domestic responsibilities, due to the need to comply with such programme conditions as travelling to the bank to receive the transfers<sup>40</sup> and attending regular capacity-building/awareness-raising workshops. It can also be attributed to an explicit emphasis by local programme implementers that ensuring children’s health, nutrition and educational development is the responsibility of both parents:

“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)

40. Initially, women took their children when they went to claim the cash transfers, which meant they missed school; but now the programme demands that women go alone or only take their unweaned babies in order to reduce school absenteeism.

Our interviewees also reported a reduction in domestic violence, related in part to fewer daily survival pressures and the greater negotiating capacity and economic autonomy of women, but also due to a broader campaign to reduce family violence in the region. It is important to note, however, that these changes were not uniform, and in some cases men's support actually decreased and they used the cash to purchase alcohol and coca.

#### d. Effects on community dynamics

*Juntos's* targeting process has had a less positive 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, the introduction of the programme has generated feelings of sadness, resentment and anger among some community members. Especially in the initial stages, the programme suffered from a number of weaknesses in identifying beneficiaries. Our interviews with non-beneficiaries suggest that especially vulnerable women, such as single mothers and widows, are often excluded because eligibility is based on aggregate household poverty status rather than on a consideration of the particular vulnerability of some extended families such as single mothers living with relatives.

The most visible effect on community dynamics is 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 transfers have less opportunity to purchase uniforms and shoes, or give children pocket money to make small purchases, generating a sense of exclusion among children. As one non-beneficiary girl from Arizona noted:

"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 most, she gives us 10 cents."

Interviewees also mentioned that some children do not want to assume responsibilities at school, as they consider that these should be assumed by the beneficiaries or "...workers of *Juntos*" as "...they are being paid":

"Sometimes, the boys who are not in *Juntos* complain to the teachers, saying, 'We are not in *Juntos*, let them [the other students] do it'. Sometimes these students are asked to do chores, such as clean something and they just rebel." (Non-beneficiary woman, Arizona)

This sense of division was not limited to children but was also experienced among some of the women in these communities; whereas community activities are usually open to all and tend to be widely attended, in the case of *Juntos* community initiatives only *Juntos* participants are involved, therefore further strengthening the sense of exclusion. Indeed, some key informants feared that there is a risk that these divisions will harm the social fabric of the community. This is of particular concern

given that the areas where *Juntos* is being targeted have a long history of political violence and community tensions:

“...being included or not included can generate conflicts in some places, more than in others...Puno,<sup>(41)</sup> for example, is a complicated zone, conflictual...I’m not convinced that the programme is taking this situation sufficiently into account.” (Roundtable for Poverty Reduction)

It should not be concluded, however, that the community effects are solely negative. 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 transfers but who are obviously impoverished.

## VII. LINKAGES TO BROADER SOCIAL POLICIES

A growing body of evidence suggests that childhood poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that is better addressed by an integrated social policy model.<sup>(42)</sup> Due to *Juntos*’s clear criteria for eligibility, management by a single agency, and a rigorous data collection system, the programme is well-placed to serve as an umbrella framework to coordinate synergies across child-related sectors.<sup>(43)</sup> The following section discusses the strengths and weaknesses of *Juntos*’s inter-sectoral efforts to date, especially the need for the programme to be implemented in tandem with initiatives to improve service quality and coverage, as well as the impacts of the programme on understandings and practices of citizenship.

### a. *Juntos* as a means of tackling the multi-dimensionality of childhood poverty?

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.<sup>(44)</sup> 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 is a general recognition that the sector was not prepared to cope with the increased demand for health care. Although there was a higher workload and increased paperwork for health workers, increased demand was resulting in poorer quality of services, especially in terms of equipment, human resources and medicines.

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 addressing educational underachievement and poor-quality educational services in order to break inter-generational transfers of poverty. One critical

41. Puno is another very poor region in the southern highlands where the programme is about to start.

42. See, for example, Harper, C (2005), “Breaking poverty cycles: the importance of action in childhood”, CHIP Briefing 8, Save the Children, London, UK.

43. However, the executive director of *Juntos* is cognizant that the programme first needs to be well established before it can take on this type of umbrella function.

44. As a result, it has secured commitments through international cooperation agreements to invest more in education and health services in affected areas.

mechanism entails the increased monitoring of rural school attendance – students directly and teachers indirectly, as the latter need to be present in order to keep a record of children’s attendance.

Capacity-building initiatives to promote bilingual/inter-cultural 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 also producing problems in terms of capacity to respond to new demand generated by the programme. In particular, several key informants complained of overcrowded classrooms and questioned whether mandatory school attendance was really improving children’s ability to learn in the absence of sufficient teachers.

Similarly, although child protection is a major concern in the country, there are no links to public programmes dealing with child protection, especially the legal protection offices for women and children (DEMUNAS).<sup>45</sup> However, such synergies could help to tackle some of the key barriers to child development: for example, non-enforcement of child support payments can hinder children’s uptake of social services or, in the case of violence against children, contribute to school absenteeism and educational under-performance.

*Juntos* programme documents also discuss the importance of linking with household livelihood and income-generating initiatives to tackle poverty and vulnerability holistically. The aim is to initiate links with other rural development and export programmes 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, so far, few concrete strategies – apart from assistance in purchasing additional livestock – have emerged.

## b. The challenge of intersectoral linkages

*Juntos* is making important advances in developing an information system on 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 the Ministry of Health, *Juntos* and the National Programme of Nutritional Assistance (PRONAA). In addition, in the case of monitoring and evaluation, a baseline is needed in order to evaluate the impacts of the programme.

There is also a widespread view that linkages between local authorities and the programme need to be strengthened. 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 introduce adequate flexibility to take into account the particular vulnerability of single-headed households and circumstances of exceptional need (e.g. relating to family illness, sudden loss of employment).

45. DEMUNAS are mandated to deal with cases of child abuse and violence and enforcement of child support payments (typically from absentee fathers).

Informants also saw the policy of silence regarding the national (April 2006) and regional/municipal (November 2006) elections as problematic. The decision was taken not to provide detailed information about programme impacts 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 that the information needs of diverse societal actors were undermined. 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.

### c. Changing the 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 access to 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 one of largesse to that of fulfilling its responsibility to meet citizens' economic and social rights. As one interviewee noted:

*"Juntos* is innovative because it interlinks your interests with those of the state: the state is interested in raising the education[al] 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, local NGO staff member)

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 citizens' 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's 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." (Male focus group, 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 also interesting to note that beneficiaries and service providers alike believe it is necessary to apply pressure to ensure compliance with the conditions. Yet, while this strategy appears to be effective from a programme management perspective, there is a risk of infantilizing participants if the discourses used to inform them about the conditions focus on compliance rather than on balancing rights and responsibilities. Some of the respondents suggested that discursive practices in our study communities erred towards the former and promoted a submissive attitude that is unlikely to be sustainable over time. This is particularly the case with issues of hygiene, which have traditionally symbolized the social distance between urban and rural populations. While the programme authorities' insistence that women improve their personal appearance, their children's hygiene and their domestic living conditions no doubt have a positive effect, it also results in these women – many of whom had never visited a city prior to joining *Juntos* – internalizing discourses that they were previously "dirty" and "idle", as the case below illustrates:

"This is changing, now we are no longer idle, we clean the house, before we were dirty...now we see that other women are cleaning and 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, Rosaspata)

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. As Molyneux argues, there is a real risk that conditional cash transfer programmes targeted at mothers are:

"...despite some adaptation to modern conceptions of citizenship, still premised on a gendered construction of social need and, indeed, have the effect of re-traditionalizing gender roles and responsibilities."<sup>(46)</sup>

46. See reference 2, Molyneux (2007), page iii.

### VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY CHALLENGES

Overall, Peru's new conditional cash transfer programme, *Juntos*, is recognized as having been effective in its first phase, enjoying support from the international community as well as public and private institutions involved in its implementation. It is reaching populations with among the highest poverty rates in the country, and has largely avoided politicization despite a difficult political transition in Peru's fledgling democratic history. These successes, notwithstanding, our research identified a



number of implementation weaknesses and policy challenges that need to be debated by policy actors and urgently addressed, as plans to scale up the programme to other regions are set in motion.

### **Targeting, social exclusion and poverty dynamics:**

- 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. It will therefore be important to monitor to what extent this divide spills over into other aspects of community participation, given that our research has already identified an emerging unwillingness among non-participants to carry out voluntary work within school and community groups.
- While one possibility for combating this challenge could be to set a higher threshold for excluding participants, this will depend on financing from both domestic revenue and donors and on the sustainability of these sources over time. At a minimum, it will also be necessary to establish information and complaint channels to allow the population to register their concerns. Such a process should consider a mechanism for re-evaluating excluded families, including those with specific needs, such as single mothers living in extended family arrangements, and also those who fall into poverty but who were originally screened out. In this regard, it will be important to foster more effective involvement from local authorities, health service personnel and teachers – all of whom are likely to have a deep knowledge of local realities.

### **Strengthening a rights-based approach:**

- The programme promotes joint responsibility between citizens and the state with an emphasis on a balance between civic rights and duties. In practice, however, the relationship established through the conditionality agreement is somewhat paternalistic, and risks infantilizing rural women in particular. A key challenge therefore is to address the disjuncture between national level policy documents and discourses and the way the programme is implemented by front-line staff at the local level. If a culture of citizenship, rights and state accountability is to be fostered, then it will be important to monitor the extent to which programme officials are imposing their own conceptions and conditions of “good parenting” and “housekeeping”.
- Although reducing gender inequalities was not a specific goal of the programme, interestingly there have been some positive spillover impacts of women’s greater empowerment within the household that stem from greater financial independence. Not only are some husbands sharing more of the domestic and caring work out of an awareness that complying with the conditionalities will necessitate a joint effort, but a number of women reported a reduction in family violence. It will thus be valuable to monitor these tendencies, in order to better understand the underlying dynamics and to better reinforce positive changes. Moreover, research is needed to understand to what

extent women's increased visibility and decision-making power are camouflaging a greater work burden for women and a reinforcement of traditional social caring roles.

#### Strengthening inter-sectoral linkages:

- *Juntos's* inter-sectoral approach represents an important strength of the programme vis-à-vis other social programmes. However, while this approach has allowed for an important degree of information sharing and problem identification to date, an effective articulation of actions transcending sectoral logic has not yet been achieved. One of the first challenges will clearly be to develop a unified efficient information system to overcome problems of duplication and exclusion in social programmes. Equally important, will be the development of a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system that will help to consolidate learning from the programme and ensure that these lessons are embedded into the design of the programme as it is scaled up to other areas.
- Despite improvements in maternal and child health and increased primary school attendance, service quality improvements have not kept pace with increased demand. The issue of service quality should be tackled as a priority, in order to guarantee effective improvements in human capital and avoid a situation whereby people are compelled through conditionality to use public services that are of little value. Because of over-extension of existing services, an immediate priority will be to ensure adequate financing of these pro-poor sectors to expand coverage in line with demand. In this regard, existing civil society child-sensitive budget analysis and monitoring initiatives should be expanded to focus specifically on this issue, not only at the national level but also at sub-national levels.<sup>(47)</sup>
- Child protection from violence and abuse is missing from *Juntos's* inter-sectoral approach. However, fostering linkages to children's legal protection offices (DEMUNAS) that are found throughout the country could foster a more joined-up approach to tackling the multi-dimensionality of childhood poverty and vulnerability.
- Finally, the programme's intention of promoting income-generating strategies is an important one if sustainable poverty reduction is to be achieved, but much work still needs to be done to translate this goal into concrete strategies oriented towards improving productive infrastructure and facilitating access to credit and technical assistance.

47. See, for example, Vasquez, Enrique (2005), *¿Los Niños... Primero? Volumen III: Niveles de Vida y Gasto Público Social Orientado a la Infancia: 2004-2005*, Centro de Investigación de la Universidad del Pacífico and Save the Children, Suecia, Lima.

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