

# **The long road to full social protection in Latin America.**

## **Some comments on the experiences of Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Uruguay**

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# Objective

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- Bringing together the four experiences so as to draw lessons about good practices, shortcomings and future challenges.
- In particular, discuss around the following questions:
  1. In what direction should these Latin American countries move forward regarding social protection?
  2. What has been done so far in this direction? What are the best practices?
  3. What are the main impacts of policies implemented?
  4. What is still to be done? What are the future challenges?

# **1. In what direction should these countries move forward regarding social protection?**

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- Integrated and multidimensional social protection system for children constituted by different pillars in a broader and comprehensive social protection system for all people.
- In turn, it implies coordination with productive, distributive and labor policies in a macroeconomic framework that promotes growth with creation of good jobs.

## **2. What has been done so far in this direction? (1)**

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- The expansion of non-contributory cash transfers represented an important step forward in the field of social protection in the four countries. High coverage of children (Argentina, 80%; Brazil, 70%).
- Integration between contributory and non-contributory components of cash transfers for children (Argentina and Uruguay).
- Existence of an “umbrella program” with different coordinated pillars (education, health, nutrition, employment, housing).

## **2. What has been done so far in this direction? (2)**

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- Unconditional cash transfer component (“dignity” component of EFI, Chile).
- Inter-institutional coordination (for instance, in Uruguay among MIDES, BPS and National Council for Social Policy). Strengthening institutional capabilities of public agencies.

### 3. Main positive impacts

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- These programs cover the most vulnerable households.
- They have positive impacts on welfare, in particular, extreme poverty, nutrition, health, school attendance.
- The “negative” impacts on labor market (disincentives to work) seems to be, in general, null or very low.
- This type of transfers guarantees a stable amount of money that does not depend on macroeconomic or labor fluctuations. Short and long term positive impacts.

## **4. What is still to be done? Future challenges**

## TO GO BEYOND EXTREME POVERTY

To reach children who are  
not covered yet

Move forward from anti-  
poverty programs to the  
universalization of the  
social protection rights for  
all children.

# Place greater importance to the removal of social exclusion factors

More integration among different pillars of cash transfers for children (contributory, non-contributory and child tax credit).

Greater integration with other programmes that aim at tackling the social risks faced by families with children.

Reduction of the segmentation in the quality of the supply of basic services for targeted and non-targeted populations.

Integration of programs into a more universal network of social policies.

Dimensions such as child-care, gender inequality and child labor should also be considered a priority in building a comprehensive protection system.

Discuss the "graduation" rules  
Are they compatible with the aim of improving the families' capabilities to remain out of poverty by their own means?

# DISCUSSING THE ROLE OF CONDITIONALITIES

What are their aims? Foster demand for social services? Get social support?

Do they have an independent impact beyond the cash transfer?

Are governments able to monitor their accomplishment?

How to avoid the exclusion of the most vulnerable families that do not accomplish them?

From the perspective of “conditionality” to the universal right for children to access basic services.

This requires guaranteed access to good quality social services

# **Some final remarks**

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- Universalization strategies do not override the aim of creating more and better jobs, and reducing informality and inequality.
- Need to integrate public policies so that they become a coherent system of training, employment, social protection and productive development.
- The institutional design, evaluation and monitoring of these programs is essential to turn such programs into permanent state policies.
- Definition and implementation of a long-term economic development strategy.