

## **Helpdesk Report: Scholarships: the impact and effectiveness for disadvantaged children and girls**

**Date:** 27 March 2014

**Query:** What is the evidence of the effectiveness and impact of school-level scholarships for disadvantaged children/girls on a) targeting/uptake; b) participation/retention/completion; c) education performance/learning achievement; and d) longer term outcomes/benefits (if possible)? What is the evidence of the importance and effectiveness (including cost effectiveness) of particular scholarship items and support processes in particular circumstances?

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### **1. Overview**

This report outlines a number of different scholarship, stipend and cash transfer programmes (CCTs). Evidence on the effectiveness and impact is mixed. Most programmes increase enrolments but the impact on learning is less clear.

Programmes that aimed to get girls into schools were successful in that aim. Scholarship programmes that target the poor generally have the aim of improving equality in enrolments and retention. They do not directly address learning. Merit-based scholarship programmes, however, are more likely to see improvements in learning but less likely to reach the most disadvantaged. Filmer and Schady (2009) find scholarships in Cambodia led to great improvements in enrolment and attendance but that learning did not improve. Results suggest that the self-selection of lower-ability students into school in response to the programme is an important part of the explanation. A recent learning review (Krishnaratne et al., 2013) finds CCTs play an important role in reducing inequality of education opportunities but suggests that supply-side interventions to improve school quality are needed alongside.

Some case study examples included in this report are outlined below.

Expanding access to secondary education in Ghana (Duflo et al., 2013):

- Students who passed the exam to gain admission into secondary school but did not enrol due to financial constraints were identified and scholarships were assigned randomly.
- 85% of scholarship students enrolled, compared to 50% in the comparison group.
- A large impact of the scholarship programme on cognitive skills was reported.

- Scholarship winners were significantly more likely to be employed for a wage at the 5-yr follow-up. They were also more likely to be running their own business or working in a family business. In many cases they were involved in these activities as they wait to enrol in tertiary education.
- The scholarship programme significantly improved reproductive health outcomes, in particular by delaying the onset of childbearing.
- Cost-effectiveness will be assessed over the coming years.

Girls' Scholarship Programme Kenya (Freidman et al., 2011; Kremer et al., 2009):

- Scholarships were awarded to the highest-scoring 15% of grade 6 girls.
- Evaluation found that scholarships raised test scores and boosted classroom effort.
- Positive programme effects among girls with low pre-test scores who had little realistic chance of winning the scholarship were estimated. It was not just relatively advantaged students gaining the most from the programme.
- Young women in programme schools had fewer arranged marriages and were less likely to accept domestic violence as legitimate.

Bangladesh primary education stipend programme (PES) (Baulch, 2011):

- Households with qualifying pupils who attend school 85% of the time received the stipend.
- Investigation of the long-term impact found negligible impacts on school enrolments, household expenditures, calorie consumption, and protein consumption
- At the individual level, the PES has a negative impact on grade progression, especially among boys from poor households who are ineligible to receive stipends at the secondary level.
- The programme does, however, lead to improvements in height for-age among girls and body mass index among boys.
- Poor targeting, particularly limited coverage and lack of geographical targeting, plus the declining real value of the stipend, are the most plausible reasons for this lack of impact.

Female secondary school stipend project (Khandker et al, 2003; Schurmann, 2009):

- The programme introduced a uniform stipend and tuition subsidy program for each girl attending a secondary school in rural areas who satisfied the eligibility criteria.
- Data analysis found significant positive impact on the secondary school enrolment of school age girls, and reduced boys' enrolment in coeducational secondary schools in rural Bangladesh.
- Findings indicate that the currently untargeted stipend disproportionately effects the school enrolment of girls from households with larger land wealth.
- Questions remain as to the impact of the stipend programme on delaying marriage, empowerment of girls and women, and enhancing employment opportunities. The case study suggests that with more focus on the quality and content of education and the broader economic and social context, more opportunities would have been created for social and economic participation of girls.

Scholarships in Nepal (UNESCO, 2004; UNESCO, 2006; Phuyal, 2003)

- There were complaints that the targeting was not carried out fairly.
- The scholarship was not sufficient to cover educational materials so the poorest were still unable to send their children to school.
- Results on enrolment were mixed.

PROGRESA, Mexico (Attanasio et al., 2012; Skoufias, E. & McClafferty, 2001)

- PROGRESA pays grants to mothers if their school age children attend school regularly.
- The grant is targeted by means testing.

- The size of the grant increases with the grade and, for secondary education, is slightly higher for girls than for boys.
- Results indicate that the programme is quite effective in increasing the enrolment of children at the end of their primary education.
- On the other hand, the programme does not have a big impact on children of primary school age, partly because enrolment rates for these children are already quite high.
- Results imply that children will have, on average, about 0.7 years of extra schooling.
- Taking into account that higher schooling is associated with higher levels of income, the estimations imply that children will have lifetime earnings that are 8% higher due to the education benefits they have received through PROGRESA.

Bolsa Escola/Familia, Brazil (Glewwe & Kassouf, 2012)

- The Bolsa programme provides monthly cash payments to poor households if their children (between the ages of 6 and 15) are enrolled in school.
- To qualify for Bolsa Familia, a family's monthly per capita income must be below one-half of Brazil's minimum wage.
- The programme had a positive effect on enrolments.
- Simple calculations based on the enrolment impacts suggest that the likely benefits in terms of increased wages may not exceed the costs of the programme. However, there may be other benefits such as improved health and reduced income inequality.

## 2. Evidence from Africa

### Estimating the Impact and Cost-Effectiveness of Expanding Access to Secondary Education in Ghana

Duflo, E., Dupas, P., Kremer, M. 2013. Unpublished report draft. 3ie. (Forthcoming)

Report Abstract:

In collaboration with the Government of Ghana, we use a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to examine the medium-run impacts of secondary school for a cohort of students in Ghana who earned admission into a senior secondary school but could not afford to pay the fees. In December 2008, we identified 2,064 youths (just around half of them female) who had taken the Junior High School exit exam in the Spring 2007 or 2008 and had gained admission into a Senior High School (SHS) but had not enrolled due to financial constraints. Out of these students, a third (682) were selected through random assignment to each receive a 4-year scholarship to attend SHS. This randomised scholarship assignment led to a very large gap in educational attainment, with 85% of scholarship winners ever enrolling in SHS compared to only 50% of students in the comparison group. This enables us to measure the medium-term effects of acquiring secondary education on multiple aspects of life and well-being.

The increase in enrollment led to an increase in completion rates. While only 24% of females in the control group had completed SHS as of the 5-yr follow-up survey, the rate was 58% in the treatment group – which is more than double. For males, the completion rates increased from 34% in the control group to 70% in the treatment group.

Between 2009 and 2013, the research kept track of students and conducted in-depth, in-person follow-up surveys with 97% of them in the Spring/Summer 2013, five years after the onset of the study. The follow-up survey included questions on educational attainment and aspirations, labour market outcomes, and fertility and marriage. This report presents core findings from the 2013 survey.

Not surprisingly, given the large impact on educational attainment, the researchers find a large impact of the scholarship programme on cognitive skills. This effect can be seen throughout the distribution of initial performance, but is more pronounced for girls, for whom

the scholarship programme had a larger impact on Secondary High School (SHS) completion rates in percentage terms. Consistent with this, we find that scholarship winners are significantly more likely to be employed for a wage at the 5-yr follow-up. They are also more likely to be running their own business or working in a family business. In most cases they seem to be involved in these activities as they wait to enroll in tertiary education. Indeed, there is a “gap year” in Ghana between the time students complete SHS and the time they can start tertiary training, and our 5-yr follow-up survey was conducted during this gap year.

Finally, the scholarship programme significantly improved reproductive health outcomes, in particular by delaying the onset of childbearing, consistent with earlier results from Kenya on reducing the cost of education at the primary level.

This research study is still ongoing. We plan to conduct two further rounds of follow-up surveys, in 2015 and 2018, to look at long-run impacts of the scholarship.

### **Incentives to Learn**

Kremer, M., Miguel, E. & Thornton, R. 2009. The Review of Economics and Statistics, 91(3): 437–456

<http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/incentives-learn>

The Girls' Scholarship Program (GSP) was carried out by a Dutch nongovernmental organisation (NGO) ICS Africa, in two rural Kenyan districts, Busia and Teso. The NGO awarded scholarships to the highest-scoring 15% of grade 6 girls in the programme schools within each district. In each year, the award covered the winner's school fees, paid to her school and a grant for school supplies, paid directly to the girl's family. These were full scholarships and were substantial considering that Kenyan GDP per capita is only around US\$400 and most households in the two districts have incomes below the Kenyan average.

This randomised evaluation finds the programme raised test scores and boosted classroom effort as captured in teacher attendance. The researchers also find evidence for programme spillovers. They estimate positive programme effects among girls with low pre-test scores who had little realistic chance of winning the scholarship. In the district where the programme had larger positive effects, even boys, who were ineligible for awards, show somewhat higher test scores.

A key reservation about merit awards for educators has been the possibility of adverse equity impacts. It is likely that relatively advantaged students gained the most from the programme: scholarship winners do come from the most educated households. However, groups with little chance at winning an award, including girls with low baseline test scores and poorly educated parents, also gained considerably in merit scholarship programme schools. One way to spread the benefits of a merit scholarship programme even more widely could be to restrict the scholarship competition to poorer pupils, schools, or regions.

The authors find especially large average programme effects on girls' test scores in Busia, on the order of 0.2 to 0.3 standard deviations, but do not find significant effects in neighbouring Teso district. The inability to find these effects may be due in part to differential sample attrition across Teso programme and comparison schools, which complicates the econometric analysis. However, it may also simply reflect the lower value placed on winning the merit award there or a lack of local political support among some parents and community opinion leaders.

### **Education as Liberation?**

Friedman, W. et al. 2011. J-PAL.

<http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/education-liberation>

The authors assess the social and political impacts of a randomised girls' merit scholarship incentive programme in Kenya that raised test scores and secondary school enrolment. Counter to modernisation theory, increased human capital did not produce more pro-democratic or secular attitudes and, if anything, it strengthened ethnic identification. Consistent with the empowerment view, young women in programme schools had fewer arranged marriages and were less likely to accept domestic violence as legitimate. Moreover, the programme increased objective political knowledge, and reduced both acceptance of political authorities and satisfaction with politics. However, in the Kenyan context, this rejection of the status quo did not translate into greater perceived political efficacy, community participation or voting intentions. Instead, the programme increased the perceived legitimacy of political violence. We argue that selection bias may account for the view that education instills greater acceptance of authority.

### **3. Evidence from Asia**

#### **The medium-term impact of the primary education stipend in rural Bangladesh**

Baulch, B. 2011. Journal of Development Effectiveness, 3 (2), 243-262

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19439342.2011.570449>

The Bangladesh primary education stipend (PES) programme aims to increase school enrolments and attainments by providing cash incentives for poor parents to send their children to school. Since mid-2002, households with qualifying pupils who attend school 85% of the time have received 100 Bangladesh taka (BDT) per month for one child (about US\$1.76) and BDT 125 per month for more than one child. To qualify for the programme, children must be of primary-school age and meet at least one of the following five eligibility criteria:

- 1) Belonging to a landless or near-landless household (one that owns less than half an acre of land)
- 2) Having parents who work as day labourers
- 3) Belonging to a female-headed household (one wherein the head is widowed, separated, or divorced or wherein the husband is disabled)
- 4) Belonging to a household that derives its living from fishing, pottery, weaving, blacksmithing, or cobbling
- 5) Belonging to a household that derives its income from sharecropping.

This paper investigates the long-term impact of the PES programme on a range of individual and household welfare measures using a unique longitudinal study spanning the years 2000–2006. Using covariate matching and difference-in-difference methods, the programme is shown to have negligible impacts on school enrolments, household expenditures, calorie consumption, and protein consumption. At the individual level, the PES has a negative impact on grade progression, especially among boys from poor households who are ineligible to receive stipends at the secondary level. The programme does, however, lead to improvements in height for-age among girls and body mass index among boys. Nonetheless, the impacts of the PES are remarkably small for a programme of its size. Poor targeting, particularly limited coverage and lack of geographical targeting, plus the declining real value of the stipend, are the most plausible reasons for this lack of impact.

### **Subsidy to Promote Girls' Secondary Education: The Female Stipend Program in Bangladesh**

Khandker, S., Pitt, M. & Fuwa, N. 2003. Munich Personal RePEc Archive.

[http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/23688/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_23688.pdf](http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/23688/1/MPRA_paper_23688.pdf)

In early nineties, the Government of Bangladesh sought to increase rural female enrolment at the secondary school level by launching a female secondary stipend programme. The programme introduced a uniform stipend and tuition subsidy program for each girl attending a secondary school in rural areas who satisfied the eligibility criteria. Although all of rural Bangladesh was eventually covered by this programme, it was not introduced at the same time in all areas and to all class cohorts. This variation in timing is the source of parameter identification in the analysis. Using two different datasets and school/village-level fixed effects, we estimate the effects of this stipend programme on school enrolments.

An analysis using both household- and school-level data indicate that the nationwide rural stipend programme for girls has had a significant positive impact on the secondary school enrolment of school age girls, and reduced boys' enrolment in coeducational secondary schools in rural Bangladesh. The school level data shows that, on average, an additional year of stipend programme duration increased the female student secondary enrolment of an incoming cohort by as much as 8%. The household-level data analysis suggest that an additional year of programme duration increases the school enrolment rate of girl's aged 11-18 years by 12 percentage points, and has no discernable effect on boy's enrolment.

As the programme is costly and requires donor support to sustain it, a natural question arises if the programme can be targeted and if so how. One possibility is to target the programme by landholding class. The findings indicate that the currently untargeted stipend disproportionately effects the school enrolment of girls from households with larger land wealth. Targeting towards the land poor may reduce the overall enrolment gains of the programme while equalising enrolment effects across landholding classes.

### **Review of the Bangladesh Female Secondary School Stipend Project Using a Social Exclusion Framework**

Schurmann, A. T. 2009. Journal of Health Population and Nutrition, 27(4): 505–517.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2928106/>

The Female Secondary School Stipend Project in Bangladesh was established to increase the enrolment of girls in secondary schools, thereby delaying marriage and childbearing. This analysis examined the existing data using the social exclusion framework to clarify the primary exclusionary factors that have kept girls from education: harassment, poverty, and the primacy of marriage and childbirth and explored the extent to which the project has diminished such barriers. While causality is difficult to establish, data suggest that the stipend programme has contributed to the rise in enrolment of girls in secondary schools. Questions remain as to the impact of the stipend programme on delaying marriage, empowerment of girls and women, and enhancing employment opportunities. A thorough assessment of the impact is required. The case study suggests that, if the programme design had focused on the quality and content of education and the broader economic and social context, more opportunities would have been created for social and economic participation of girls.

**Can a public scholarship program successfully reduce school drop-outs in a time of economic crisis? Evidence from Indonesia**

**Cameron, L. 2009. *Economics of Education Review*, 28 (3), pp. 308-17**

<http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evidence/impact-evaluations/details/25/>

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027277570900003X>

This study analyses the impact of the Indonesian Jaring Pengamanan Sosial (JPS) programme on school dropouts among students at primary schools, lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools. The JPS scholarships programme gave grants to all students admitted to schools in the beginning of the 1998–1999 academic year: the programme gave about US\$10, US\$20 and US\$30 per year for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary students, respectively. The programme was set up to alleviate the effects on education of the economic crisis that hit Indonesia in 1997. The programme's allocation of scholarships was targeted by using Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional (BKKBN) rankings to enrol into the programme individual students belonging to the lowest socioeconomic status level.

The targeting of the JPS scholarships programme was found to be effective but had no impact on dropouts at the primary school level. In contrast, the programme had a strong, negative impact on dropouts at the lower secondary level. In particular, students living in households that had been granted a scholarship had a 2.3 percentage point lower likelihood of leaving school. In other words, the scholarship programme lowered the dropout rate by 38%. The author did not estimate the impact of the JPS programme for the upper secondary level because the sample size was small with village fixed effects in the regression.

For cost benefit analysis estimates suggest that for every 100 students who received the scholarship at lower secondary level, three fewer students dropped out of school. Hence, for the programme to have been worthwhile, the benefits associated with each of these students staying in school must be at least Rp 8 million ( $100 \times 240,000/3$ ; Rp 240,000 is the cost per student). The estimate of programme benefit is Rp 25.0 million to each student who, as a result of receiving a scholarship, did not drop out of school. This suggests that the scholarship programme at the lower secondary level covered the direct costs of the scholarships at that school level, and, given that the benefit estimate is more than double the costs of the scholarships themselves, it seems likely that the administrative costs would also be covered.

**Protecting Education for the Poor in Times of Crisis: An Evaluation of a Scholarship Program in Indonesia**

Sparrow, R. (2007) *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 69 (1)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0084.2006.00438.x/abstract>

The scholarship programme was implemented at the start of the 1998–99 academic year. Scholarships were allocated in three phases. First, the funds were allocated to districts, based on the level of poverty. A poverty index (JPS96) was constructed and poor districts were allocated relatively more scholarships, proportional to the number of enrolled students. At the district level, committees were formed to allocate scholarships to schools. This allocation was based on a prosperity measure for the village or subdistrict served by the school, the percentage of IDT eligible villages in the area, and the average school fees paid by students.

Finally, school committees selected students for the programme. The committees received guidelines on which allocation criteria to consider. These included prosperity status, single parent and large households, and travel distance from home to school. Another aim was to allocate at least half of the scholarships to girls. Continuation of scholarships was conditional on enrolment and passing the grade at the end of the school year. However, no formal

conditions were placed on school attendance or how the funds had to be spent. A distinctive element of the scholarship and block grants programme is the funding mechanism itself. The scholarships and grants were transferred directly to local post offices, where the intended beneficiaries could collect the funds.

A survey in February 1999 found the scholarship programme had not yet reached its intended targets. The scholarships had been distributed pro-poor, but with considerable leakage to students from wealthier households.

It was found that without the scholarship programme enrolment would have dropped substantially, especially in primary school. Amongst programme participants aged between 10 and 12 years, 10% would have dropped out of school if they had not received a scholarship. In the absence of the programme, the enrolment rate for this group would have been 0.6 percentage point lower. This suggests that the programme has actually prevented enrolment to decrease from 1998 to 1999. This is an important result because this is the age group where, in general, the transition from primary to junior secondary school takes place. It is at this transition point that many students leave school. For the age group 13–15 years the programme increased the enrolment rate by 0.8 percentage point, although these estimates are not precise. For children aged 16–18 years no significant effect was found. These results suggest that secondary school scholarships did little to affect enrolment.

The results and methodology presented in this paper contribute to the discussion on the viability of social safety net programmes in a crisis situation. However, to gain full insight into the cost-effectiveness of intervention programmes, future research is needed to investigate how the short-term impact of cash transfer programmes and economic crises translate into long-term effects on education attainment.

### **School Enrollment, Selection and Test Scores**

Filmer, D. & Schady, N. 2009. World Bank

<http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-4998>

There is a strong association between schooling attained and test scores in many settings. If this association is causal, one might expect that programmes that increase school enrolment and attainment would also improve test scores. However, if there is self-selection into school based on expected gains, marginal children brought into school by such programmes may be drawn disproportionately from the left-hand side of the ability distribution, which could limit the extent to which additional schooling translates into more learning. To test this proposition, this paper uses data from Cambodia. The results show that a programme that provides scholarships to poor students had a large effect on school enrolment and attendance, which increased by approximately 25 percentage points. However, there is no evidence that, 18 months after the scholarships were awarded, recipient children did any better on mathematics and vocabulary tests than they would have in the absence of the programme. The paper discusses results that suggest that the self-selection of lower-ability students into school in response to the programme is an important part of the explanation. The analysis also shows minimal programme effects on other outcomes, including knowledge of health practices, expectations about the future, and adolescent mental health.

### **Getting Girls into Schools: Evidence from a Scholarship Program in Cambodia**

Filmer, D. & Schady, N. (2006) World Bank

<http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-3910>

This study evaluates the impact of a programme designed to increase the enrolment of girls in secondary school in Cambodia. The programme evaluated is the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) scholarship programme. This programme, which began in the 2004 school



year, awarded scholarships to poor girls who were completing sixth grade, the last grade of primary school. Though called a scholarship programme JFPR actually functions more like a cash transfer programme. Girls put in an application form for the chance of a scholarship and “selection of the girls who were encouraged to fill out application forms by the primary school teachers appears to have been somewhat ad hoc”. A committee then identified by scoring using weights that “were developed somewhat arbitrarily”.

The authors show that the scholarship programme increased the enrolment and attendance of recipients at programme schools by about 30 percentage points. Larger impacts are found among girls with the lowest socioeconomic status at baseline. The results are robust to a variety of controls for observable differences between scholarship recipients and non-recipients, to unobserved heterogeneity across girls, and to selective transfers between programme schools and other schools.

### **Conditional Cash Transfers And Female Schooling : The Impact Of The Female School Stipend Program On Public School Enrollments In Punjab, Pakistan**

Chaudhury, N. and Parajuli, D. 2006. World Bank.

<http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-4102>

Instead of mean-tested conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes, some countries have implemented gender-targeted CCTs to explicitly address intra-household disparities in human capital investments. The stipend was allocated to all girls in the lowest-literacy districts. The girl receives a stipend conditional on her being enrolled in grade 6-8 in a government girl's school in a target district and conditional on her maintaining average class attendance of at least 80%.

This study focuses on addressing the direct impact of a female school stipend programme in Punjab, Pakistan and aimed to find out if the intervention increased female enrollment in public schools. To address this question, the authors draw on data from the provincial school censuses of 2003 and 2005. They estimate the net growth in female enrollments in grades 6-8 in stipend eligible schools. Impact evaluation analysis, including difference-and-difference (DD), triple differencing (DDD), and regression-discontinuity design (RDD) indicate a modest but statistically significant impact of the intervention. The preferred estimator derived from a combination of DDD and RDD empirical strategies suggests that the average programme impact between 2003 and 2005 was an increase of six female students per school in terms of absolute change and an increase of 9% in female enrollment in terms of relative change. Results, strongly suggest that the stipend is attaining its objective of increasing female enrollment in public schools in Punjab. The evidence from the household survey data also points that the stipend program is helping children from poorer households to attend schools. Incidence of stipend subsidy also shows more equal distribution across rich-poor population groups.

### **Impact of Incentives to Increase Girls' Access to and Retention in Basic Education**

Ridley A & Bista MB, UNESCO, 2004

[http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/unesco\\_impact\\_of\\_incentives.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/unesco_impact_of_incentives.pdf)

A study into the effectiveness of incentives in Nepal revealed that scholarships were not distributed to the girls most in need. Indeed, they were distributed according to political pressure from local leaders. There were also complaints that needy students were not receiving scholarships and incentives, and that nepotism and favouritism were pervasive in the distribution process. It was also found that scholarships were not sufficient to cover the cost of educational materials, and money was found to be misused. In fact, the amount of scholarship paid to girls attending primary schools was so small that it did not provide any incentive to families to send their girls to schools.

The study estimated a direct cost of 1,819 Nepalese rupees (NPR), or 25 U.S. dollars (USD), and an indirect cost (opportunity cost) of 4,607 NPR (62 USD) to put a child in primary school. Combined, it cost a family a total of 6,426 NPR (87 USD) to put a child in primary school annually. The amount of scholarship given to a child in Nepal is 250 NPR (4 USD) per annum, thus covering only 5% of the total cost. Poor families who must rely on children's labour and income will not be prepared to release their children for schooling despite the provision of a cash incentive if the incentive is too small. The study further noted that due to the small amount of scholarship and high direct and indirect costs of schooling, families living in desperate poverty were not able to benefit from limited financial support or incentives provided by the government.

### **The Functioning and Effectiveness of Scholarship and Incentive Schemes in Nepal**

Acharya, S. & Luitel, B.C. 2006. UNESCO

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001460/146085e.pdf>

This study aims to answer a number of questions concerning the functioning and effectiveness of scholarships and incentives intended for girls and children of disadvantaged communities. The desire to understand various incentive schemes from local perspectives arises from the need to provide policy makers, planners, administrators, educators and donors with important insights to help improve the management of existing incentive and scholarship schemes. Initiated primarily to generate understanding about the management, functioning, institutional arrangement, potential impact and constraints related to Government and UN scholarship/incentive schemes, this study also uncovered some unexpected issues and information. One of these issues a debate on the concept and intention of scholarships. Three districts – Rasuwa, Saptari and Surkhet – were selected for the study.

In all three study districts, most of the respondents agreed that the available scholarships/incentives reached the needy population, but complained that they did not cover all of the needy children. According to the teachers, since the scholarships/incentives have been in place, the girls' enrolment and school attendance have increased in the selected schools. In Saptari, the scholarship money has brought some changes to girls' education with a few exceptions. In most cases incentives in the form of food and oil were reported to be the most effective in increasing girls' enrolment and attendance.

As the selected schools lacked statistics regarding recipients, their admission and drop-out trends, and beneficiary-wise schemes, a complete picture could not be produced regarding the schemes and their effects. Schools for several reasons did not pay attention to the collection, storage and retrieval of the information on scholarship/incentive schemes. One of the reasons for this is the uncertainty of funding in the following year.

In all three study districts, one problem that may stop or discourage girls and their parents from claiming benefits is lack of information about the availability of various kinds of scholarships/incentives. Parents are intimidated by teachers and head teachers and are afraid to ask freely about these schemes. District Education Office (DEO) officials also reported that the budget is not released on time and consequently quota division (dividing allocated scholarship money according to the number of recipients) and allocation (managing the distribution of funds to students) are delayed. This prevents the DEOs from informing all of the potential recipients on time. In Saptari, the primary barrier/constraint regarding the scholarship/incentive scheme is the inadequacy of the fund. The Government's inability to provide support to all of the target children as announced has created problems at all levels – DEO, schools and parents. In this situation both have enough reasons to blame each other. The DEOs complained that they have to face severe pressure from schools but cannot do much unless funds arrive.

## **Effectiveness of Incentive/Scholarship Programmes for Girls and Disadvantaged Children**

Phuyal, N. 2003. Tribhuvan University Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development, Nepal

<http://www.cerid.org/?s=formative&a=download&id=4e0af002a8a4524f844c4fa6d7dfecba>

This study tried to find out the impact of different incentive programmes that were conducted to increase girls' participation in primary education in Nepal. In this context, the study concentrated on the impact of the Educational Incentive Programme for Girls (EIPG), Dalit Scholarship Programme and Primary School Scholarship for All Girls Programme. Enrolment and retention of girls were the two parameters used to measure the impact of the programme.

Findings include:

- Increase in the enrolment of girls after the introduction of the EIPG programme in the sample districts
- Retention of out-of-school girls was 61%, 50% and 44% in the three EIPG districts.
- With the Primary School Scholarship for All Girls Programme there was no significant increase in girl's enrolment in the five years. There was a decrease of 11.74% in children's enrolment but increase of 6% in girls' enrollment. The main reason for the decrease in enrolment was transfer to boarding schools or schools in India and family's migration.

## **4. Evidence from Latin America**

### **Education Choices in Mexico: Using a Structural Model and a Randomized Experiment to Evaluate PROGRESA**

Attanasio, O.P., Meghir, C. & Santiago, A. 2012. Review of Economic Studies, 79 (1) 27-66

<http://restud.oxfordjournals.org/content/79/1/37.short>

PROGRESA pays grants to mothers in Mexico if their school age children attend school regularly. The grant is targeted by means testing. The size of the grant increases with the grade and, for secondary education, is slightly higher for girls than for boys. The authors use a powerful economic model to estimate the effects of the programme. Results indicate that the programme is quite effective in increasing the enrolment of children at the end of their primary education, a fact that has been noticed in several evaluations of conditional cash transfers in Latin America. On the other hand, the programme does not have a big impact on children of primary school age, partly because enrolment rates for these children are already quite high.

### **Is PROGRESA working? Summary of the results of an evaluation by IFPRI**

Skoufias, E. & McClafferty, B. 2001. IFPRI

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/16418/1/fc010118.pdf>

The initial analysis of PROGRESA's impact on education shows that the programme has significantly increased the enrolment of boys and girls, particularly of girls and above all, at the secondary school level. The results imply that children will have, on average, about 0.7 years of extra schooling because of PROGRESA, although this effect may increase if children are more likely to go on to senior high school as a result of PROGRESA. Taking into account that higher schooling is associated with higher levels of income, the estimations imply that children will have lifetime earnings that are 8% higher due to the education benefits they have received through PROGRESA.

## **The Impact of the Bolsa Escola/Familia Conditional Cash Transfer Program on Enrollment, Drop Out Rates and Grade Promotion in Brazil**

Glewwe, P. & Kassouf, A.L. 2012. *Journal of Development Economics*, 97 (2)

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304387811000538>

<http://faculty.apec.umn.edu/pglewwe/documents/BrBolsa6.pdf>

This paper examines the impact of Brazil's Bolsa Escola (later renamed Bolsa Familia) programme on children's progress in school in Brazil. The Bolsa programme, which started in the 1990s and expanded rapidly in 2001 and 2002, provides monthly cash payments to poor households if their children (between the ages of 6 and 15) are enrolled in school. To qualify for Bolsa Familia, a family's monthly per capita income must be below one-half of Brazil's minimum wage. Using eight years of school census data (from 1998 to 2005), the authors estimation method compares changes in enrolment and in dropout and grade advancement rates across schools that adopted the Bolsa programme at different times. The authors estimate that, after accounting for cumulative effects, the Bolsa programme has increased enrolment in Brazil by about 5.5% in grades 1-4 and by about 6.5% in grades 5-8. We also estimate that the programme has lowered dropout rates by about 0.5 percentage points and raised grade promotion rates by about 0.9 percentage points for children in grades 1-4, and has reduced dropout rates by about 0.4 percentage points and increased grade promotion rates by about 0.3 percentage points for children in grades 5-8. Only about one third of Brazil's children participate in the Bolsa programme, so the assumption that these results are due only to the impact of the programme on participants, with no spillover effects onto non-participants, implies that the impact of participating in the Bolsa programme is about three times higher than these estimates.

While these impacts cast a favourable light on the programme, simple calculations based on the enrolment impacts suggest that the likely benefits in terms of increased wages may not exceed the costs of the programme. However, there may be other benefits such as improved health and reduced income inequality. Overall, it is unclear that the benefits exceed the costs. One reason why the costs may exceed the benefits is that the 18% increase in school enrolment among participants implies that 82% of participants would have been in school even without the programme, so the 82% of the funds have no effect on enrolment, although this income transfer could be viewed as a benefit solely on distributional grounds. This raises the question: can Bolsa be targeted towards those households who would not enroll their children in the absence of the programme? Answering this question is an important task for

### **5. Other useful resources**

#### **Quality education for all children? What works in education in developing countries**

Krishnaratne, S., White, H. and Carpenter, E. 2013. 3ie

[http://www.heart-resources.org/doc\\_lib/quality-education-for-all-children/](http://www.heart-resources.org/doc_lib/quality-education-for-all-children/)

This recent review on learning notes the positive effects of merit-based scholarships but does not discuss scholarships targeted for disadvantaged children.

It does include analysis of conditional cash transfers (CCTs) and concludes: Children are more likely to enrol, attend and progress in school when they are part of a CCT programme. Programmes often target the poorest children, who are the ones who respond the most positively. CCTs play an important role in reducing inequality of education opportunities between rich and poor families.

However, doubts remain about the ability of CCTs to contribute to long-term improvements in learning outcomes. Many programmes do not measure whether children are learning more, as well as attending more. Where there is evidence, it suggests no impact on learning outcomes. Transfers could be conditional on performance, but this would disadvantage the

poorest. Rather, this finding suggests that supply-side interventions to improve school quality are needed alongside CCTs.

On reducing school fees the report concludes: Reducing school fees increases schooling and merit-based scholarships increase learning outcomes. The poorest students benefit most but context matters.

## 6. Additional information

### Author

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**About Helpdesk reports:** The HEART Helpdesk is funded by the DFID Human Development Group. Helpdesk reports are based on 2 days of desk-based research per query and are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues, and a summary of some of the best literature available. Experts may be contacted during the course of the research, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged.

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