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# Children's Experiences of *Juntos*, a Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme in Peru

May 2012

Natalia Streuli





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# Abstract

Even though it is widely recognised that children are the age group most affected by poverty, children's own experiences of living in social and economic hardship are still not well incorporated into most poverty reduction strategies and programmes. The purpose of this study is to find out how children and families in three rural communities in the southern Peruvian Andes experience well-being and poverty, in order to understand what may help them to lead the kinds of lives they value instead of following others' pre-established ideas of what is best for them. The study draws on research carried out with 49 children aged between 6 and 14, with primary data being collected using a variety of qualitative techniques including social mapping, free drawing and child-led photography, as well as interviews with children, parents, teachers, healthcare professionals and promoters of *Juntos*, a social protection programme aimed at reducing poverty among very poor families with children under the age of 14. Secondary data from a local household survey were also used.

Findings show that *Juntos*, like other conditional cash transfer programmes in Latin America, is ensuring that children under the age of 14 attend school regularly as well as have frequent health check-ups. *Juntos* is also enabling some families to invest in productive activities such as animal husbandry or small-scale agriculture. However, one of the major findings of this study is in relation to the effects of *Juntos* on people's social relations. These include relationships within families and communities, as well as people's relationships with local service providers, and their perceptions of the Government in general. These effects on relationships have important implications for children, as it is through these social worlds that children feel and experience well-being. This collective experience of well-being is relevant to programmes like *Juntos* because, if not considered properly, it may disrupt social relations and trust between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of conditional cash transfer programmes.

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# The Author

**Natalia Streuli** died on 1 February 2012, at the age of 35, after a brave battle with cancer. This paper is published posthumously, following editing by Ginny Morrow with Paul Dornan and Santiago Cueto.

Natalia was Lead Qualitative Researcher for Young Lives in Peru. Previously she worked as Qualitative Research Assistant for Young Lives at the University of Oxford. She trained as a clinical psychologist at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, and held an MA in Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights and a PhD in Childhood Studies from the University of London. This paper is based on her PhD thesis, completed in 2010, based on fieldwork carried out in 2008. Before joining Young Lives, Natalia worked for the Ministry for Women and Social Development in Peru, and carried out a number of consultancy tasks on child rights and development, childhood poverty, access to basic services and related policy issues for Save the Children UK, Plan International, and the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN).

## **About Young Lives**

Young Lives is an international study of childhood poverty, following the lives of 12,000 children in 4 countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam) over 15 years. [www.younglives.org.uk](http://www.younglives.org.uk)

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# 1. Introduction

Evidence from around the world shows that children are the age group most likely to experience the effects of poverty (Gordon et al. 2003; UNICEF 2005). This is particularly the case in the majority world where it is estimated that over a billion children experience 'severe deprivation of basic human needs' such as food, safe drinking water, health, education and adequate shelter (Gordon et al. 2003: 25). With this in mind, a new generation of programmes specifically targeting children from poor households were introduced in Latin America mainly during the 1990s. These programmes are social protection measures called 'conditional cash transfers' (CCTs), and have rapidly become a critical component of poverty reduction strategies.

CCTs claim to address short-term income needs as well as to promote 'longer-term accumulation of human capital' by providing money to families in poverty contingent upon certain verifiable actions and behaviours, such as school attendance or basic preventative healthcare (de la Brière and Rawlings 2006: abstract). It is also the case that increasing family income puts people in a better position to accrue longer-term resources (for example, make investments, avoid debt). By linking cash transfers to certain desirable behaviour, CCTs highlight the co-responsibility of beneficiaries for their own well-being. This is assumed to strengthen social citizenship, with rights and duties shared between authorities and citizens (Coady et al. 2004; Cohen and Franco 2006). There is also some political motivation to demonstrate to non-recipients that beneficiaries are deserving of the cash transfers. The benefits of CCTs for children include improvements in nutrition, school attendance, use of health services and birth registration, though there is debate about whether or not it is the cash or the conditionality (or indeed the associated development of infrastructure) which makes the difference (Devereux 2009).

Though promising, CCTs may also have important limitations for children. For instance, CCTs tend to focus on children as future adults, prioritising their preparation for adult life as economically productive citizens. By looking mainly at children's future skills, these programmes may not consider children's experiences in the here and now, and may not consider children as agents with their own experiences of well-being and poverty. When children are mentioned in this context, it may be as 'indicators of progress' such as numbers of immunised children or children attending primary school. Even though some CCTs claim to be 'child-oriented', they have rarely involved children as partners in their design, implementation or evaluation processes. As a result, little is known about the effects of these programmes on children's lives that goes beyond the analysis of school enrolment and access to nutrition and healthcare programmes. More importantly, little is known about how children and their families view and experience these programmes and related services in their everyday lives. The lack of inclusion of children's views and experiences may undermine the impact of CCTs, because children's views about the programme could usefully be sought in order to improve the effectiveness of design, in line with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which gives children the right to participate in decisions about matters that affect them (UNCRC 1989).

This paper explores how a CCT, *Juntos*, is experienced by children and their families in three rural communities in the southern Andes of Peru. The main purpose of the study was to explore the everyday effects and implications of a CCT *with* children and the significant people in their lives. The study did not intend to 'assess' the impact of *Juntos* according to

predetermined indicators of development or progress. Rather, it analyses the role of *Juntos* and related basic services – i.e. school and health services – in shaping the everyday lives of children, and their families and communities. It also explores whether children and families felt they had the chance to influence and shape the way services connected to *Juntos* were delivered in their communities. By listening to children's own views and experiences of CCTs, this study provides data that could be used to inform the design and development of social protection measures intended to improve children's lives.

The analysis draws on data from around 50 children aged 6 to 14 years old who were beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of *Juntos*, as well as their families and other key stakeholders such as local teachers, healthcare staff and *Juntos* coordinators and community promoters. The decision to work with young children from rural areas was influenced by the fact that they have rarely been involved in research about their lived experiences of poverty; and even less frequently have they been consulted about the implications of specific poverty reduction measures. The study followed a case-study design (Yin 1994) and involved a range of qualitative methods of data collection, including individual interviews, group discussions, mapping exercises and child-led photography. The research was done as part of my doctoral work (Streuli 2010), and as a contribution to Young Lives, a 15-year longitudinal study of childhood poverty in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam ([www.younglives.org.uk](http://www.younglives.org.uk)).

The next section of the paper provides background information about the situation of children in Peru, as well as the country's socio-economic and political context. Section 3 provides general information about *Juntos* and discusses the emergence of CCTs as social policy in Latin America, focusing on their scope and limitations in relation to children. The fourth section describes the research methodology. Section 5 presents the findings, which have been organised into five sub-sections: poverty and well-being among *Juntos* and non-*Juntos* families; implications of *Juntos* for children's well-being; effects at the household level; effects at the community level; and the approach *Juntos* takes to welfare. Finally, the paper provides recommendations for action and future research.

## 2. Overview of the situation of children in Peru

This section provides the background to the study, reviewing the situation of children in Peru, including their health and nutritional status, their schooling, and the situation of working children, and looking at the socio-economic and policy background prior to the establishment of *Juntos*.

### 2.1 Poverty and children's well-being

During the early 2000s, Peru underwent a period of political stability and economic growth (INEI 2008). Despite this, almost half of the population still live in poverty, with one in six facing extreme poverty (Escobal et al. 2008).<sup>1</sup> Poverty rates only started to fall slightly after that – from 49 per cent to 45 per cent between 2004 and 2006 (INEI 2002; World Bank 2005; INEI 2006). However, significant differences exist within the population. For example, while poverty affects around 37 per cent of the population in Lima, the incidence of poverty in the interior of the country is 58 per cent, reaching 72 per cent in rural areas (almost double the rate in urban areas). The analysis of poverty by natural regions suggests that the number of 'poor' people in rural areas is not only greater, but that people are also two times more 'poor' than their counterparts in urban areas (excluding Lima city): 28 per cent against 14 per cent (INEI 2006).<sup>2</sup>

Peru has an estimated population of 28 million, 30 per cent of whom are children under the age of 14 (INEI 2007a). According to UNICEF, children are the age group most affected by poverty in Peru (UNICEF 2008). In 2004, while 45 per cent of Peru's total population was living in poverty, around 60 per cent of children aged 3 to 16 years old were poor (INEI 2006). In other words, the poverty rate for children was approximately 15 percentage points higher than the poverty rate for the overall population. The situation was even worse in rural areas, where an estimated 80 per cent of 3–16-year-olds experienced poverty.

#### 2.1.1 Health and nutrition

Even though the mortality rate for children under 5 has gone down by 30 per cent since 2000, the child mortality rate in rural areas is still almost double that in urban areas. In contrast, stunting rates, using height-for-age measures, among children under 5 years old have remained almost unchanged since 1996 (in a period of mostly GDP growth) – representing 30 per cent of children. Stunting is much worse in rural areas (46 per cent) than in urban areas (14 per cent); and affects boys more than girls (33 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively). Geographically, all regions with stunting above 40 per cent are clustered in the Andes (ENDES 2007). Even though there are a number of food programmes provided by the Government such as the *Vaso de Leche* (Glass of Milk) which is the largest food programme

1 INEI defines as 'poor' those individuals who living in households whose per capita expenditure levels are below the total poverty line, based on the costs of a basic consumption basket including food and non-food items; while the 'extreme poor' are those individuals in households whose per capita expenditure levels is below the extreme poverty line, which is defined as the cost of all items in a basic food basket (INEI 2006: 50).

2 Based on the analysis of the *indicador de brecha de pobreza* (poverty gap indicator), which measures the distance between the per capita income of the population and the poverty line (INEI 2006).

in the country, the evidence so far suggests that some of these programmes do not have a nutritional impact on children (see Cortez 2001; Alcázar et al. 2003).

In terms of children's access to basic services, the scenario is not very positive either. Only seven out of ten children have access to safe water, whereas only five have access to improved sanitation services (UNICEF 2004), both of which are essential in supporting child growth and development.

### 2.1.2 Education

Although school enrolment is almost universal for primary education, 4 per cent of children of school age are still out of the education system, which is equivalent to approximately 145,000 children (UNICEF 2008). Deficit in coverage lies mainly in pre-school and secondary education, mainly in rural areas and among girls and children with disabilities. The other main challenges in Peruvian education include school drop-out, absenteeism and grade repetition,<sup>3</sup> and more importantly a lack of good-quality schooling, especially in rural areas (see for example, Jacoby et al. 1999; Cueto 2004; Cueto et al. 2004; Lavado and Gallegos 2005). One of the major problems behind this is that the expansion of the school system has not been accompanied by an increase in the budget for education, which has remained relatively constant during the past 30 years (Escobal et al. 2003; Vasquez 2004). In 1999 the World Bank noted that Peru had the highest levels of enrolment while at the same time having the lowest per-student funding when compared to 100 other countries (World Bank 1999).

As a consequence of the Government's efforts towards increased enrolment, more children are now in school, but many of them are not learning at the expected levels. According to the 2004 National Evaluation, 58 per cent of sixth grade children had mathematical skills below the basic level for their grade; and in the case of communication skills this figure is 60 per cent. Differences between urban and rural children are very large: 83 per cent of rural children had mathematical skills lower than expected versus 55 per cent of urban children; and 86 per cent of rural children had communication skills below the basic level against 56 per cent of their urban counterparts (UNICEF 2008). These tests demonstrated that most students could not identify the main theme in what they read, and found it difficult to relate what they read to their own lives (Vexler 2004). In the 2001 international evaluation carried out by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Peruvian students came in the lowest-achieving group, and the country appeared as the one with the largest gap between urban and rural students in five tests of reading, mathematics and science when compared with other countries with similar levels of GDP (UNESCO 2008).

Factors that influence school achievement are not only children's family backgrounds but also school characteristics (Cueto 2004; Cueto et al. 2006; Cueto 2007). In Peru, most rural schools operate with fewer than three teachers, having students from different grades sharing the classroom – also called *multigrado* (multigrade) schools. Half of these schools are *unidocentes* which means they have one teacher-principal in charge of all students. Access to basic services such as electricity, water and sewage in multigrade schools is also limited (Montero et al. 2002). On the other hand, schools in urban areas tend to be *olidocentes completas* where each grade has its own classroom (Montero et al. 2001; 2002; Ministry of Education 2004).

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3 By children who have not attained the level required by the end of the school year. This affects poor children disproportionately because they are absent more and attend more poorly resourced schools.

Another important explanation for the low educational outcomes is the sort of curricular confusion that has been identified in government schools. One study found that teachers at some point were using up to three different syllabi at the same time (GRADE 2004). Moreover, teacher training by the Ministry of Education has been carried out in an unorganised and disconnected way (Cuenca 2002). Ethnographic studies also reveal little use of educational materials, which is associated with teachers not being prepared to use them, and also with the difficulties associated with the materials themselves, especially in the context of rural areas (Ames 2002). As a result, teachers have to use their own criteria to assess the needs of their students, and in doing so, they transfer their own ideas of learning and child development and, therefore, their own pedagogical limitations.

Despite all this, in-depth qualitative and ethnographic studies carried out with both adults and children reveal that education is still considered essential to transform children's lives and is perceived as the 'greatest' equaliser as it is often assumed to enable people to find a route out of poverty (see for example, Leinaweaver 2008; Crivello 2011; and Collatón 2008). Education was seen as 'a viable way out of poverty' (Leinaweaver 2008: 62) or as a way of 'becoming somebody' (Crivello 2011). Formal education has also been valued for social differentiation (between being literate and illiterate), survival (basic skills to interact with the urban world), social mobility and migration, and participation both at public and private levels (Collatón 2008).

However, it is important to bear in mind that ethnographic studies have also found that formal education was not always the best solution, especially when it did not take into account the complexities of children's lives (see for example, Trapnell 2003; and Aikman 2002). For some children and their families opportunity costs of attending school may also be too high, especially in rural areas, and they therefore feel that they will gain more knowledge and learn more useful skills at home than at school (Ames 2005).

### 2.1.3 *Children's work*

An estimated one out of every four children under 18 years old in Peru is involved in economic activities (UNICEF 2004). Almost 21 per cent of Peruvian children combine work and schooling, whereas around 5 per cent of children only work. Child work seems to be associated with poverty: around 40 per cent of children coming from households classified as 'extremely poor' work, whereas only 20 per cent of those classified as 'non-poor' do. The highest incidences of child work are found in rural areas, where more than 30 per cent of 5 to 11-year-olds are already involved in economic activities – against only 4 per cent in urban areas (UNICEF 2004).

Children are not only involved in paid work but they also undertake a range of different work activities at home. Domestic chores can be extremely time-consuming, especially in rural areas. Domestic tasks and care of young children are almost entirely the responsibility of women and girls. In rural areas, children start participating in domestic and economic household activities as early as 5 years old (Alarcon 2001; Montero et al. 2001). For children aged 5 to 11 years living in rural areas, these tasks include fetching water or wood, food preparation, washing dishes and clothes, and in some areas, herding animals. They may also help with basic agricultural activities. Most studies showed that typically, both boys and girls combined work and school (Alarcon 2001; Montero et al. 2001). Work is a more time-consuming activity for boys than girls, which leaves boys with less time to do homework (Montero et al. 2001). Children aged 12 to 16 years increase their work intensity and gender roles become more obvious.

## 2.2 Socio-economic context and policy development

At the end of the 1980s, Peru experienced one of the worst economic and political crises in its history. Inflation peaked at over 7,000 per cent; unemployment rose considerably and the proportion of poor households increased (Escobal et al. 2003). During the 1980s and 1990s the Peruvian population, in particular those living in rural areas, experienced an internal conflict between the Government and *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path), a terrorist communist organisation inspired by Mao's Cultural Revolution in China. During that time *Sendero Luminoso* imposed a ruthless rule on the rural areas it seized, killing elected officials, trade union organisers, peasants, and villagers suspected of siding with the Government. Approximately 69,280 people were killed or disappeared at the hands of *Sendero Luminoso*, Government forces, self-defence committees and other guerrilla groups such as the *Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* (CNDDHH 1997; CVR 2003). Apart from the killings, there were around 600,000 internally displaced people between 1983 and 1991.

During this period, the country went through a period of economic adjustment and structural reforms including trade liberalisation and increased flexibility in the labour market. High inequality was and remains a considerable concern and as part of the adjustment programme, a number of social programmes were implemented to help the most vulnerable sections of the population to bear the transition (Cueto et al. 2011). During this period, the internal conflict was also virtually over (CVR 2003). Between 2001 and 2006, important measures were taken to tackle poverty in general, and to improve the situation of children. Examples of these include the development and implementation of: (i) a *Plan Nacional de Acción por la Infancia y la Adolescencia 2002–2010* (National Plan of Action for Childhood and Adolescence) which is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989) and sets out the strategic priorities of the Peruvian Government with regard to its actions for children (PNAIA 2002); (ii) a new *Ley General de Educación* (General Law of Education, 2003) that includes pre-school education as part of basic education, thus making it free and compulsory; (iii) a *Plan Nacional de Educación Para Todos* (National Plan of Education for All, 2004) approved following the international agreements at Jomtien and Dakar; and (iv) a *Proyecto Nacional de Educación 2006–2021* (National Education Project) which identifies issues of equity and quality as major challenges to Peru's education system, among other things.

In relation to poverty alleviation measures, there are two major initiatives: the *Acuerdo Nacional* (National Agreement) and the *Mesa de Concertación de Lucha Contra la Pobreza* (MCLCP, the Round Table for the Fight against Poverty). The *Acuerdo Nacional* was signed in 2002 as a long-term plan for the economic and social development of Peru agreed by political parties and civil society organisations. It has 31 long-term state policies planned until 2022, seven of which are specifically aimed at children (Government of Peru 2002). The MCLCP is a multi-sectoral, government–civil-society forum aimed at facilitating dialogue and participation in public policies on poverty reduction.

In 2005, the Government of Alejandro Toledo implemented the *Programa Nacional de Apoyo Directo a los Más Pobres* (National Programme of Direct Support to the Poorest), a CCT known as *Juntos* ('Together'), which was continued and expanded by Alan Garcia's Government (2006–2011). Under this programme, eligible households receive a fixed monthly cash transfer of 100 *nuevos soles* per month which is conditional on their compliance with accessing basic healthcare and primary education services for their children (Juntos 2007). Initially, the programme was targeted specifically at 'poor' households which had children under the age of 14, with the purpose of supporting them to invest more in their human capital – i.e. through education, nutrition and healthcare – and thereby break the

cycle of poverty in the long term. In 2010, *Juntos* started a new phase and some of its activities may face important changes. More information is provided in the next section.

## 3. *Juntos*: a conditional cash transfer

*Juntos*, like other CCTs, is a programme aimed at poverty reduction. These programmes offer cash to 'poor' people, with conditions requiring families to invest in their children through greater participation in education and health services (de la Brière and Rawlings 2006). Cash transfers are becoming increasingly common in majority world countries as a tool to tackle childhood poverty (Barrientos and DeJong 2004; Marcus 2004). In the last two decades, several Latin American countries have instituted CCTs, granting cash transfers to families based on participation in education and healthcare services. The first ones were Mexico's *Progresá* (Progress), later renamed *Oportunidades* – Opportunities) and *Bolsa Familia* (Family Purse) in Brazil, which were implemented in the second half of the 1990s.

This rising interest in CCTs in the region stemmed from positive results reached by early evaluations which emphasised their efficiency and effectiveness in improving educational outcomes (Morley and Coady 2003; Valencia 2008). For example, a first round of evaluations made in Brazil, Nicaragua, Mexico and Colombia, found that CCTs were 'administratively efficient' and offered 'effective means' for promoting the accumulation of human capital in poor households (Rawlings 2004). Further evaluations carried out between 1997 and 2003 in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Brazil, Nicaragua, Mexico and Colombia suggested that cash transfer programmes were 'very effective tools' for reducing poverty and inequality 'in the long term' and for the relief of poverty 'in the short term' (Bouillon and Tejerina 2006; Valencia 2008). Consequently, CCTs became valued among politicians, academics and consultants close to international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. However, this favourable view may be due to the fact that CCTs are seen as a relatively cost-effective solution and one which emphasises behaviour as well as structural conditions. Effective social protection is long term and expensive, and there are (for example) other mechanisms, especially child benefit, that tend to be ignored but have great potential. Further, while there is evidence of positive effects of CCTs on rates of use of formal education and healthcare, this can be overplayed as parents may have used these anyway because services have improved or there is increased publicity about the importance of using them.

The following sections describe CCTs in more detail, summarise evaluations of CCTs, and then focus specifically on *Juntos*.

### 3.1 What can CCTs offer?

In relation to CCTs' specific outcomes for children, their families and communities, evaluation studies carried out so far have demonstrated diverse results, as discussed below.

#### 3.1.1 Education

Most evaluations of CCTs conclude that they are successful in increasing school enrolment and attendance. For example, in Bangladesh children participating in the Food for Education programme (now reoriented and renamed Cash for Education) had higher enrolment rates,

and stayed in school between six months and two years longer than non-participating children (Arends-Kuenning and Amin 2000; Marcus 2004). The programme also had a positive effect on girls' progress to secondary school and in turn this appeared to help prevent girls from getting married before the age of 18. The effect on boys was less impressive; they were more likely to leave school to do paid work (Arends-Kuenning and Amin 2000).

Similarly, *Progresal/Oportunidades* in Mexico reduced drop-out rates and facilitated progression through grades, particularly the transition from primary to secondary school (Behrman et al. 2001; Attanasio et al. 2005a). *Progresal's* impact was also greater for girls than for boys, which is consistent with the design of the programme, as it provided higher grants to girls than to boys (Schultz 2000; Gertler 2005). The programme also protected children from so-called 'shocks' or adverse events such as unemployment, illness of the household head, agricultural and natural disasters, and helped keep them in school (de Janvry et al. 2004; Gertler 2005). In Colombia, *Familias en Acción* (Families in Action) was effective at increasing enrolment, particularly among 14–17-year-olds, in both urban and rural areas. In this case, boys benefited more than girls. Younger age groups saw very modest increases in enrolment, but this was largely due to the fact that initial attendance rates among these groups were already relatively high (Attanasio et al. 2005b).

Results are less promising in relation to effects on actual learning. Most CCT studies do not report positive results on this matter (Behrman et al. 2000; Draibe 2006; Levy and Rodríguez 2005; Ponce 2006; Reimers et al. 2006). In fact, improving the quality of education is not an objective of most CCT programmes. Instead CCTs focus more on enrolment and attendance rates and therefore, concerns about learning and the quality of education tend to be ignored in programme evaluations (Valencia 2008). Also, CCT evaluations do not provide much information about what happens to children while they are in school; that is, how do they experience schooling and education? What happens after they finish school? Do they feel they have acquired what is needed to pursue the kind of life they value the most? These and other related questions tend not to be addressed.

### 3.1.2 *Health and nutrition*

Evaluations of CCTs in Latin America suggest a positive impact on infant preventative healthcare – including increased attendance at check-ups during pregnancy and after birth, and early in childhood, higher vaccination rates – and lower rates of illness (Villatoro 2005b). Some cases also report a reduction in maternal and infant mortality and better health-related knowledge among participants. Results with regard to nutrition are mixed (see studies in Valencia 2008). Most studies show improvements in the variety of food consumed, greater height and weight among participating children, and reduced malnutrition in CCT families. However, most evaluations could not find improvements in relation to anaemia, which is a serious concern because iron deficiencies can undermine cognitive development and therefore affect children's learning and a country's long-term human capital formation.

A recent systematic review of CCTs in low- and middle-income countries, including programmes in Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Malawi, Mexico and Nicaragua, concluded that the evidence is reasonably consistent about the effects of CCTs on health-related behaviours and, to some extent, outcomes (see Lagarde et al. 2007 for detailed findings of the studies included in the review). These programmes are successful in increasing the use of health services, including immunisation coverage, and improving nutritional and anthropometric outcomes. However, the authors also warn that the overall effect on health status remains



less clear, and highlight the importance of focusing also on the supply of adequate and effective health services.

### 3.1.3 *Child work*

Another interesting strand of studies has looked at CCTs and their impact on child work. The evidence in this area is less clear. Some studies suggest that the impact of programmes such as *Bolsa Escola* in Brazil and *Progresal/Oportunidades* in reducing child work was limited (Sedlacek 2003). These programmes were more effective in keeping children at school. Even though *Progresal* seems to reduce the participation of boys and girls in work activities, including domestic work, most of them continue combining work and studies (Skoufias and Parker 2001). The effect of Food for Education in Bangladesh on child labour was even more ambiguous. The cash transfer increased schooling far more than it reduced child labour. Also, it seems that work may well displace time for leisure, homework or attending after-school tutorials. The extra time at school may come out of these activities instead of work, although more research is needed in this area (Ravaillon and Wodon 2000). A review of three CCTs in Bogotá, Colombia found that transfers conditional on education can in fact cause a reallocation of responsibilities within the household. Siblings, girls in particular, of students who received the subsidy worked more and attended school less than students in families that received no subsidy (Barrera-Osorio et al. 2008).

### 3.1.4 *Poverty reduction*

Most CCT evaluations suggest that the effects of these programmes are greater in reducing the intensity than the incidence of poverty (see Valencia 2008). This means that cash transfers are effective in bridging the gap between a household's income and the poverty line but generally do not lift households above this line (see Draibe 2006; Cortés et al. 2007 cited in Valencia 2008), though they may reduce the depth of poverty. Qualitative studies of *Progresal/Oportunidades* in Mexico also confirmed that although the programme did reduce the economic vulnerability of households, the reduction was not enough to do away with deprivation or 'eradicate poverty' (González de la Rocha 2006).

### 3.1.5 *Social relations*

Evaluations of the effect of CCTs on social relations outside the home or in the community are also mixed (see Valencia 2008). Some argue that beneficiaries strengthen network ties as a result of their involvement in a CCT programme and that they are 'empowered' by the cash transfers. On the other hand, others report tension and conflicts between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries as a result of the targeting methods and inclusion/exclusion criteria used, although this is a common problem with targeted programmes.

For example, Adato (2007) found that participation in communal activities and meetings with promoters strengthened social relations in communities. Similarly, in Ecuador a study found that women developed new relationships with each other when they travelled to cities together to withdraw the cash transfers (Armas Dávila 2004). Women also formed new ties through their participation in training workshops, meetings with promoters and other activities in Colombia (Villatoro 2005b, Núñez and Cuesta 2006) and Argentina (Kessler and Roggi 2005). In contrast, some studies found social tensions between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, as in the case of Nicaragua's *Red de Protección Social* (Social Protection Safety Net) (Adato 2007). In this case, most people in the study communities felt everyone was poor and did not perceive the economic differences defined by the targeting system, which created a sort of

resentment among those who were not included in the programme. CCTs could also generate so-called 'moral hazards' which consist of situations in which the provision of cash transfers, leads to a dysfunctional change in the behaviour of beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries. For example, households might reduce their savings or take fewer risk-preventive measures, in the expectation of qualifying for a cash transfer (Barrientos and DeJong 2004).

### 3.1.6 Gender relations

Findings with respect to the influence of CCT programmes on gender relations are also mixed. It is usually women who are required to meet the conditions. Early evaluations of CCTs confirmed that women were instrumental in the programmes' success (Skoufias et al. 2001), and that conditional transfers gave mothers an 'effective commitment device' with which to defend the welfare of children (de Janvry and Sadoulet 2006). Evidence suggests that cash transfers targeted at women may have equalising impacts on bargaining power within the household because they provide an independent income for mothers (Barrientos and DeJong 2004), and may have stronger impact on the living standards of children, particularly girls (Haddad et al. 1997). Also, the increased bargaining power within the household afforded CCTs may raise the self-esteem of beneficiary women.

However, other studies suggest that the way most CCTs are designed and implemented simply reinforces traditional divisions of labour by confining women strictly to domestic chores (Molyneux 2007; Cohen and Franco 2006; García Falconi 2004). These programmes may reinforce traditional gender roles by viewing women as key carers and responsible for the well-being of other family members.

## 3.2 Major challenges to CCTs

One of the most important questions regarding CCTs is their assumption that in raising the income of families, the standard of living of children in these households will also improve (Barrientos and DeJong 2004). The impact of cash transfers on poverty among children, however, depends on the response of the family and the possible inequalities in the allocation of resources within the household.

Evidence also suggests that the conditionality of cash transfers may create some 'perverse outcomes' as it may penalise the very households which are in most need of support (Barrientos and DeJong 2004: 28). For example, in the first phase of Nicaragua's *Red de Protección Social*, one of the conditions was that children gain weight, and if they twice fell below an established rate of weight gain, parents could be sanctioned by having benefits suspended (Adato 2007).

Other arguments against CCTs relate to the theoretical approach behind their design. Most CCTs, including *Juntos*, are based on the World Bank's Social Risk Management approach which advocates a collection of public measures intended to assist individuals, households and communities in managing risks in order to reduce their vulnerability and improve their consumption while they continue to contribute to economic development (Holzmann and Jørgensen 1999). Even though the Social Risk Management approach is widely used in the majority world, some authors argue that this should not be accepted as the 'truth about social protection' because it reflects a limited conceptualisation of vulnerability, does not explicitly address chronic poverty and encourages a limited role for government in social protection provision (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004: 6).

CCTs have also been challenged for being more concerned with providing economic support against economic risks and shocks than with other social risks and non-economic

vulnerability, such as social exclusion, discrimination, and violations of human rights (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004). This is an important gap in relation to poverty reduction initiatives, especially if we consider that poverty is about social exclusion and deprivation as well as economic hardship.

In a similar vein, a series of studies of the welfare reform of the late 1990s in Britain and the United States warn about the risks of introducing a so-called 'conditional welfare' system (Dwyer 1998; Munger 2003; Dwyer 2004; Scanlon 2005) which, to some extent, is followed by most CCTs. Both countries have seen a change from welfare rights to conditional entitlements under the assumption that people should be more responsible for their own well-being and should also make contributions to wider society. Under this new approach to welfare, citizenship is centred on notions of duty rather than rights, and individuals are seen as responsible for their own welfare (Dwyer 1998). According to the principle of conditionality, eligibility to certain basic welfare entitlements should be dependent on an individual first agreeing to carry out particular duties or adopt certain patterns of behaviour (Deacon 1994). This approach has been criticised for enabling governments and service providers to exclude certain citizens from welfare provisions (Dwyer 1998). According to Dwyer, under this approach it is not the welfare system that is changing but 'the welfare rights of the poor that are being redefined' (Dwyer 1998: 513), and for this reason, these changes may have the greatest negative impact on those most in need of a set of extensive, guaranteed social and economic rights (Dwyer 2004).

Studies in the United States illustrate some of the effects of conditionality-based programmes upon welfare recipients. These include recipients dealing with contradictory cultural messages within the welfare system; experiencing surveillance and discipline as a vital part of their relationship with welfare providers; confronting the narrow visions of themselves the Government has; and accepting how 'others' want them to live, among other things (Gilliom 2001; Hays 2003). Conditional systems are inherently complicated (because of the need to judge whether people have met the conditions), and can create some perversities, and they can also be stigmatising. The studies cited here offer only a few examples of 'unintended' consequences of programmes based on conditionality, and are included because of their relevance in understanding the implications of *Juntos* for the lives of children and families described in later in this paper.

In summary, there are a range of experiences of CCTs globally, with positive and negative aspects having been reported. The next section focuses on the background and development of *Juntos*.

### 3.3 An overview of *Juntos*

Similar to other CCTs in the region, the main purpose of *Juntos* is to build capacities of future generations and break the intergenerational transmission of poverty by promoting universal access to education for 6–14-year-olds, providing health services (in the form of health checks with vaccinations, iron and Vitamin A supplements provided for children under 5), and giving 'poor' families economic incentives to use them (*Juntos* 2008: 2). The programme claims to follow a basic rights approach, although there is no clear explanation of what this means in practice, and seeks to promote the full participation of beneficiaries, and oversight of community members (*Juntos* 2008: 2).

*Juntos* was designed to be distinct from other social programmes that offered cash transfers without conditions, and those that were limited to issues of food security and connecting poor families with the economy (Francke and Mendoza 2007). Up to the time of my fieldwork,

*Juntos* provided a monthly cash transfer of 100 *nuevos soles* to eligible households, which was approximately equal to the average monthly income per capita for families living in extreme poverty (20 per cent of the liable national minimum wage per capita) (Francke and Mendoza 2007). The amount was the same regardless of the number of children eligible families had, and was targeted specifically at 'poor' households who had children under the age of 14.

The cash transfer was mainly given to mothers, but could be extended to widowers, grandparents and guardians. In order to receive it, beneficiary families had to enrol their children in school, make sure they attended regularly (at least 85 per cent of the school year), ensure they got all their vaccinations and take them to regular healthcare check-ups (these included monitoring of weight and height, vaccinations, iron and Vitamin A supplements). Pregnant women had to take part in both antenatal and postnatal care programmes, and in addition, adults in the household had to have national identification cards and make sure their children had birth certificates.

As long as they complied with the above conditions, families were eligible to receive the cash transfer for up to eight years; the full 100 *nuevos soles* a month during the first four years, and a reduced amount in the second four years, although this was under review. The cash transfer was suspended for three consecutive months in the case of non-compliance with the conditions and indefinitely if non-compliance was repeated. Every three months, *Juntos* local coordinators visited the homes of beneficiaries to monitor their compliance, and that information was cross-checked with school attendance and healthcare visit records. In 2007, 95 per cent of beneficiary families were reported to have complied with what were called 'health-related' conditions, 97 per cent ensured their children attend school regularly, and 99 per cent participated in the National Nutritional Assistance Programme package for children under the age of 3 (*Juntos* 2008).

During its pilot phase in 2005, *Juntos* served 110 of the poorest districts in five regions in Peru, and by 2008 it had reached 638 of the poorest districts in 14 regions, benefiting a total of 448,787 family households. Targeting beneficiaries was a challenge, given the frequent and profound income fluctuations often experienced by the 'extremely poor'. *Juntos* first targeted specific regions and districts as 'priorities', based on the following criteria: presence of extreme poverty and inequality, chronic malnutrition, unmet basic needs, and high level of political violence. These variables came in part from the *Mapa de Pobreza* (Poverty Map) and the outcomes from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Initially, the programme was seen as a way to tackle the particular vulnerability of populations who were the most affected by the political violence that was prevalent in the country between 1980 and 2000. *Juntos* is, in fact, the only CCT programme in the world which used a history of political violence as a regional targeting criterion, in part to offer reparations to the victims of political violence (Francke and Mendoza 2007).

The second targeting stage was at the household level and involved a census of households in the selected districts using a socio-demographic questionnaire designed and implemented by the Peruvian national statistics agency, INEI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática). The INEI then measures the probability of a household being poor as a function of several easily observable variables such as conditions of living, access to public services, and household composition (Francke and Mendoza 2007). Finally, a community validation process takes place, whereby community and local authorities are brought together, along with representatives from health and education services, to ensure that the provisional list of beneficiaries reflects the realities of poverty in the locality. In the community validation

process, families had the chance to say if they felt they (or others in the community) had been wrongly included or excluded.

*Juntos* also claimed to offer a gendered understanding of vulnerability by directing cash transfers through women as they have generally been seen as more responsible than men in making decisions in the best interests of the entire family (Juntos 2007; 2008). The programme was also intended to help change family dynamics from a traditionally male-dominated structure toward greater familial equality (Francke and Mendoza 2007). Specifically, *Juntos* sought to improve women's bargaining power within the household by reducing their economic dependence and providing them with an independent financial resource.

### 3.4 Strengths and limitations of *Juntos*

At the time of the fieldwork (2007–8), *Juntos* was still relatively new, and for this reason the availability of evidence about its performance and implications were limited. First, a theoretical exercise using an econometric model suggested that a CCT with an educational component – similar to *Juntos* – could have positive impacts on school attendance and child work in rural areas (Cancho Diez 2006).

In 2006, qualitative research into the development and implementation of *Juntos* was carried out, involving documentary analysis, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with non-Young-Lives families and children in Ayacucho, the first region in which the pilot phase of the programme was implemented (Jones et al. 2007; 2008). In 2008, the *Consortio de Investigación Económica y Social* (Economic and Social Research Consortium) and CARE Peru commissioned two studies which looked at the implementation and performance of *Juntos* in the regions of Huancavelica, Andahuaylas and Huánuco (see Trivelli et al. 2009; and Vargas and Salazar 2009). These studies involved adults, and focused on the everyday management and delivery of *Juntos* and related services, as well as on people's perceptions, expectations and experiences of the programme. In the same year, another qualitative study was carried out in selected districts in Amazonas, Apurímac and Ayacucho by the *Instituto de Estudios Peruanos* (Institute of Peruvian Studies) with the technical and financial support of UNICEF and UNDP (IEP 2009).

The findings suggest that the cash transfers were perceived by beneficiaries as significant for their household income, but the studies also highlight the need to evaluate the cap for the cash allocated to each family, and to consider the implementation of differential cash transfers for families with different characteristics – e.g. those with larger numbers of children, or for older and younger children, boys and girls, etc. (Jones et al. 2007; 2008; Trivelli et al. 2009; and Vargas and Salazar 2009; IEP 2009).

The impacts on education were not straightforward. The evidence suggests that there was a more positive attitude towards education after the programme was implemented, and as a result more children were rejoining school (IEP 2009) and fewer dropping out (Jones et al. 2007; 2008). In some cases there was also an increasing parental involvement in children's education (Jones et al. 2007; 2008), and more beneficiary families could afford to pay for their children's school uniforms and materials (IEP 2009). However, in most cases, changes in relation to school enrolment and attendance rates were less evident (Trivelli et al. 2009; Vargas and Salazar 2009). Also, *Juntos* seems to have had an impact on teacher absenteeism. The need for teachers and school principals to rigorously monitor school attendance has in turn indirectly exerted pressure to reduce teacher absenteeism (Jones et al. 2008; IEP 2009).

The above studies also found an increase in the use of health services among women and children. For example, Jones et al. (2007; 2008) found that between 2005 and 2006 there was a 200 per cent increase in health clinic visits for beneficiary children, and a 30 per cent increase in vaccinations in the two locations where their study took place. They also observed a 65 per cent increase in antenatal and postnatal visits, and a reduction in home births among beneficiary women – a policy priority given the high levels of maternal mortality in the area.

In terms of nutrition, interviews with beneficiary families suggest that they were starting to consume foods with higher nutritional value, such as eggs, meat, fish, fruit and milk (Jones et al. 2007; Vargas and Salazar 2009; Trivelli et al. 2009). However, in most cases the extent to which these foods reached children in the family remained unclear. In fact, there is not enough evidence from these studies to suggest that there was any impact on children's nutritional status (i.e. reductions in chronic malnutrition or stunting).

All studies highlighted the need for better-quality services. As we know, an increase in service demand without allocating more human and material resources may generate problems such as over-saturation and low-quality services. For example, in this case, in some communities, beneficiaries complained about long waiting times in the healthcare centres, as well as being mistreated and discriminated against by members of the staff (Trivelli et al. 2009; and Vargas and Salazar 2009). Some women also claimed that they were fined by healthcare staff for missing appointments, among other things (IEP 2009).

Another important finding is in relation to the targeting process and selection of participants, which in most cases generated tensions between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. For example, the evidence suggests that weaknesses in the household targeting approach and community validation process generated adverse effects on community dynamics both among adults and children (see for example, Jones et al. 2007; IEP 2009). Preliminary findings also suggest that the relationship between beneficiaries and the authorities established through the conditionality agreement was to some extent paternalistic and had the risk of infantilising rural women. In particular, Jones et al. recommended that the extent to which programme officials were imposing their own conceptions and conditions of 'good parenting' and 'housekeeping' should be monitored (2007: 17).

In relation to the gender dimensions of *Juntos*, the evidence available is quite mixed. For example, Jones et al. (2007) suggest that women were benefiting from greater access to healthcare, and enjoying greater autonomy in the home because they controlled the income received through the transfers. The authors claim that because women received the transfers, they were beginning to wield economic power in their relationships, and some men, in fact, were starting to participate more in domestic chores and child-rearing. This, however, was less evident in Vargas and Salazar's (2009) study. While they also found indications of a reduction in domestic violence, the process of decision-making in the household was unclear. They observed that the distribution of work in the household remained unchanged, with men going out to 'work' and women staying at home to do the housework and take care of the children. However, what they considered important was that women were getting their identity documents, which entitled them to access basic services where they could obtain more information about their rights and the services available to them.

Since my fieldwork, some further studies have been undertaken. Quantitative analysis carried out by the World Bank (Perova and Vakis 2009) is the first impact evaluation of the first two years of *Juntos*. Using non-experimental evaluation techniques, the study suggests that *Juntos* had a moderate impact in reducing poverty and increasing both income and

consumption. Similar to other programmes in the region, *Juntos* increased the use of health services for both children and women, and improved the nutritional intake of beneficiary households. In terms of education, it had impacts mainly at transition points, ensuring that children entered and finished primary school – which is typical for CCT contexts where primary school attendance was already high.

As with the qualitative studies discussed above, Perova and Vakis (2009) did not find positive impacts on child malnutrition or anaemia. Interestingly, the study found that children from *Juntos* households were more likely to have worked in the previous week, according to data from the 2006 national household survey ENAHO (Encuesta Nacional de Hogares).<sup>4</sup> (This is discussed in more detail below.) Another interesting point is that participation in *Juntos* also induced beneficiary households to spend more on educational supplies. For example, among households with at least one child aged between 6 and 14 years, an increase of approximately 30 *nuevos soles* a year in spending on uniforms can be attributed to participation in the programme. *Juntos*, however, does not seem to affect spending on other types of supplies such as books.

Research has also been conducted by Overseas Development Institute as part of an eight-country study carried out across Africa, Asia and Latin America. This aims to generate lessons from existing programmes that address economic and social risks and gender inequalities in order to inform emerging social protection programmes and policies (see Vargas 2010). Part of the study was carried out in Ayacucho using qualitative approaches, including life histories and group discussions with female and male programme beneficiaries. Although *Juntos* was not designed explicitly to promote women's 'empowerment', Vargas (2010) suggests that because the cash transfer is directed at women, they are more involved in household decision-making, and this is improving their self-esteem and recognition. The study also highlights the importance of *Juntos* in enabling a greater number of women to access preventive healthcare, as well as information on sexual and reproductive health. At the same time, the findings call for the need to reflect on the traditional approach of *Juntos* to family roles and dynamics in order to promote a more equal distribution of care work and gender relations within the household.

In summary, an increasing body of work is beginning to shed light on the consequences and implications of *Juntos*. However, there is a dearth of research that has explored how children themselves experience the conditions attached to *Juntos*.

## 4. The research

My study followed a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach, focusing 'on the subjective experience of the individuals studied' (Robson 2002: 195). A qualitative design was chosen because it considers social realities as multiple and people as active agents defining, and potentially transforming, these realities. Such an orientation supports the idea that children can experience poverty and well-being differently than adults; and provides the flexibility needed to respond to changing contexts and emergent findings as these arise, which is crucial when carrying out research with children. At the time of the fieldwork (2008)

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4 Here is important to mention that ENAHO only has one question on child work, and does not allow for distinction between paid work and household chores.

there was little information available about *Juntos* coverage and its implications for the lives of families in the selected research sites. For this reason, a flexible design was necessary to allow the development of research questions and conceptual framework, and the collection and analysis of data to occur more or less simultaneously, each influencing all of the others.

#### 4.1 Sample and sampling

A multistage sampling design was used for the study. First, I looked for Young Lives sites that were also covered by *Juntos*.<sup>5</sup> At the time of the research, this overlap existed for four Young Lives sites, one of which was immediately discarded because at that time Young Lives household surveys did not include specific questions on *Juntos* because the programme had not been implemented when Round 2 of the survey took place in 2006. Two other sites were also omitted because of reported increasing social tensions among families in the area. In the end, Huamanga, a province in the Ayacucho region, in the south central Sierra of the Peruvian Andes was selected because of its high levels of poverty.

A second stage of sampling was conducted to select specific communities within Huamanga. Young Lives undertakes research in 23 rural communities in Huamanga, reaching a total of 108 children born in 2000–1, hereafter referred to as 'the Younger Cohort', and 24 children born in 1994–5 (the Older Cohort). Preliminary information about children and their families was obtained from the Young Lives 2006 Household Questionnaire for Caregivers in Huamanga.<sup>6</sup> A total of 79 Young Lives Younger Cohort children were identified as beneficiaries of *Juntos* and 29 as non-beneficiaries in Huamanga. Based on that information, the following communities were pre-selected: Alamo, Tara and Vilcas.<sup>7</sup> These communities were chosen because of their high numbers of Young Lives Younger Cohort children living in the same location, whereas in other communities children were scattered over a wide area, making it difficult to conduct group-based qualitative research with them.

A third stage in the sampling process was to approach children and their families on a random basis, until an ideal sample of around 20–30 children had been attained, balancing factors such as gender, age, household poverty level, location, and participation in *Juntos*. Wherever participant children had older siblings aged 9 to 14 years old (age limit for *Juntos* beneficiaries at that time), these were also invited to take part in group interviews. The purpose of including older siblings was to provide alternative and complementary information on the (potentially different) effects of poverty and the role of *Juntos* on different children within a given family household. Children's parents also participated in individual interviews and group discussions, as did *Juntos* local promoters, teachers, and health workers.

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5 Young Lives used a sentinel site sampling approach, which consisted of a multistage sampling procedure, whereby 20 sentinel sites per study country were selected non-randomly, and then 100 households within a sentinel site were chosen randomly. Young Lives used the 2000 poverty map of Peru's 1,818 districts developed by Fondo Nacional de Compensación y Desarrollo Social (FONCODES, the National Fund for Development and Social Compensation) as the basis for selecting the sentinel sites. Poverty maps provide a ranking of all districts according to their poverty index, which is calculated from variables such as infant mortality rates, housing, enrolment rates, roads, and access to services. Young Lives then used a pro-poor sampling approach to over-sample poor districts, which yielded approximately 75 per cent of sample sites considered as poor and 25 per cent as non-poor.

6 The Young Lives household questionnaire in 2006 did not include a specific question on *Juntos* because the programme was relatively new. Nonetheless, I was able to get an estimate of families participating in the programme by looking at a section of the questionnaire that explores whether a family receives money or goods from the government.

7 The names of the province and the communities have been changed to guarantee anonymity and protect the confidentiality of the research participants.



## 4.2 The communities

The district in which the research took place had a total population of approximately 16,000, of which 44 per cent were children under the age of 14 (INEI 2007a). Its overall population almost doubled between 1999 and 2007, which may be a result of the pacification process initiated by the Government during the 1990s. Informal conversations with community members during the fieldwork suggest that people are still returning to their lands after a massive exodus to the capital as a result of the internal political violence experienced between 1980 and 2000 (see section 2.2).

Ayacucho was the region most affected by the internal conflict between so-called *grupos terroristas* (terrorist groups) and the Government forces, recording the highest percentage of victims (40 per cent) in the country. People in Huamanga district were particularly badly affected. As a result, Huamanga became the headquarters of Ayacucho's *Comité de Autodefensa* (Self-defence Committee) created by former President Alberto Fujimori's administration to fight *Sendero Luminoso*. Peasants in Huamanga decided to exchange their sickles for firearms so as to defend themselves against *Sendero Luminoso*. Even though the conflict in the area finished more than a decade ago, Huamanga remains as one of poorest districts in the country (INEI 2006). Around 94 per cent of the population has no access to electricity; 79 per cent has no water supply and another 59 per cent do not have sanitation services. Nearly half of the female population is illiterate (49 per cent), and 45 per cent of children under the age of 5 are malnourished. The Appendix provides a brief description of the three communities in Huamanga province where the fieldwork took place.

## 4.3 The children and their families

Participants in the study formed four broad groups: (i) a group of children aged 6 to 8 years old, hereafter referred as 'younger group of children'; (ii) a group of children aged 9 to 14 years old, referred as 'older siblings'; (iii) a group of parents of the participant children; and (iv) a group of *Juntos* stakeholders which included local primary teachers, healthcare professionals and *Juntos* promoters. Table 1 describes the distribution of participants according to their location, gender and involvement in *Juntos*.

**Table 1.** *Distribution of participants by gender and participation in Juntos*

Children	All	Female	Male	<i>Juntos</i>	Non- <i>Juntos</i>
<b>6–8 years old</b>					
YL YC children (main study)	22	12	10	15	7
Non-Young Lives children (pilot study)	9	3	6	4	5
<b>9–14 years old</b>					
Older siblings	18	9	9	12	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Adults</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b><i>Juntos</i></b>	<b>Non-<i>Juntos</i></b>
Young Lives parents	22	19	3	15	7
Non-Young Lives parents (pilot study)	8	7	1	4	4
Teachers	17	11	6	–	–
Health professionals	8	8	–	–	–
<i>Juntos</i> coordinators & community promoters	5	4	1	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>

The group of the younger children was composed of 31 children aged 6 to 8 years old. Nine of them were involved in the pilot study (2007) and 22 in the main study (2008). The children from the pilot study were from Vilcas and were not Young Lives children.<sup>8</sup> All children in the main study were Young Lives Younger Cohort children: four were from Tara, 11 from Alamo and seven from Vilcas community. All children in Tara were attending first grade in the local primary school. In Alamo, one girl was still attending pre-school, eight were already in first grade of primary school and a boy and a girl were in second grade. Five children in Vilcas were in Grade 1 and one boy and one girl were already in the second year of primary education. All but two children spoke Quechua as their first language, with four of them being not fluent in Spanish.<sup>9</sup>

According to the Young Lives 2006 household survey, nine of the 22 children were 'stunted' (i.e., below the median height for their age and gender). Most children lived with both parents, with the exception of one girl whose father had recently died in an accident, and another three children whose parents had separated and who as a result were now living with their mothers. Four of the children in the pilot study were also living in female-headed households. Children lived with an average of six other people in the same household, with some living with as many as 13, including siblings, aunts and uncles, nephews and grandparents.

The older group of children (9 to 14 years old) consisted of 18 siblings of Young Lives Younger Cohort children who participated in the main study. Most of them were still in primary school with the exception of one boy in Tara, one boy and two girls in Alamo, and two girls in Vilcas, who were attending secondary school.

Thirty parents also participated in individual interviews and group discussions: eight non-Young-Lives parents in the pilot study in 2007, and 22 in the main study in 2008. According to the Young Lives 2006 Household Questionnaire for Caregivers, 17 out of the 22 Young Lives families were 'extremely poor' when their monthly per capita income was compared to the poverty line used in the last national household survey (ENAHO 2006) administered by INEI. Therefore, the majority of families were far below the 'minimum expenditure deemed necessary for an individual in order to obtain all the goods and services which satisfy his or her basic needs' (INEI 2007b). Sixteen out of 22 households had no electricity; 20 had no sewage facilities; and seven had no access to safe drinking water. Most of the participants' fathers had completed primary education and only eight of them had pursued higher education. In contrast, none of the mothers had completed primary school, and therefore, could not read or write. Most families were farmers who produced food only for their own consumption. Exceptions were found among the group of non-beneficiaries in Vilcas where one family ran a small restaurant, another had a small grocery shop, and a third one sold agricultural products in a local market.

Finally, a total of 17 local teachers and headteachers were interviewed in the main study, along with eight healthcare professionals, two *Juntos* community promoters and three *Juntos* local coordinators.

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8 It was agreed to not involve Young Lives families at the pilot stage so as to avoid overloading research participants.

9 Fieldwork was undertaken with two local assistants who acted as translators and ethnographic informants. They helped not only to translate, but also to interpret and understand some events. A female interpreter who had been a former Young Lives fieldworker assisted with the pilot study, and she was familiar with the sites and the research participants. For the main study, a male field assistant who was fluent in Quechua and Spanish and had previous research experience in the locality helped conduct the research. Both field assistants provided support in the search for families, acted as translators from Quechua to Spanish, assisted during group sessions with children and adults, and provided support during the preliminary analysis of data.

## 4.4 The methods

As discussed, the purpose of the study was to understand how *Juntos* – a fairly new CCT aimed at reducing poverty – was experienced by children and their families in three rural communities in rural Peru. In particular, the study wanted to examine: (i) children's and parents' experiences of the services related to *Juntos*, such as the local school and healthcare centre; (ii) children's and parents' views of the *Juntos* design and its implementation; (iii) the implications of the programme in people's everyday lives; and (iv) changes that children and their families would like to make to the programme.

The study mainly draws on data gathered from children and adults using a combination of qualitative research methods. These methods included individual interviews, group discussions, well-being and community mapping, home- and school-based semi-structured observations and child-led photography. This use of diverse qualitative methods facilitated the elicitation of children's views and feelings (see also Punch 2002). These data were then complemented with survey data gathered by Young Lives through its Household Questionnaire for Caregivers, which covers issues such as both children's and caregivers' background information, economic changes and livelihoods.

The fieldwork was carried out in two stages, with a one-year gap separating them. The first stage was a two-month pilot study (May and June 2007) aimed at assessing the feasibility of the study and the second stage was the three-month main fieldwork (April to June 2008). Ethics approval for the study was received from the ethics committee of the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Institute of Education, University of London, and from the ethics committee of the *Instituto de Investigación Nutricional* (Institute of Nutrition Research) in Peru. (For further details of Young Lives methods, ethics and approach to data analysis, see [www.younglives.org.uk](http://www.younglives.org.uk).)

# 5. The implications of *Juntos* for children's well-being

This section starts by examining how families in the three communities viewed and experienced poverty and well-being. Then, it discusses the extent to which *Juntos* was perceived as a programme aimed at children. It also analyses some of the implications of the programme for children's everyday lives, with a particular focus on their experiences of health, nutrition, schooling and other dimensions of well-being. It then explores some implications of the programme at both household and community levels and discusses the potential effects of *Juntos* on children.

## 5.1 Poverty and well-being among *Juntos* and non-*Juntos* families

As mentioned earlier, 79 out of 108 Young Lives Younger Cohort children and their families in Huamanga were identified as beneficiaries of *Juntos* according to the 2006 Young Lives Household Questionnaire for Caregivers. Around 80 per cent of these families had been in *Juntos* at least one year when survey data were collected by Young Lives in 2006. Since *Juntos* was constantly expanding, data from Young Lives were cross-checked with the 2007/8 official lists of beneficiaries that were publicly available on internet before the main fieldwork study in 2008, and again at the local health facilities during the fieldwork.

This exercise revealed some discrepancies between the two sources. According to the 2007/8 official lists of beneficiaries, there were 74 Young Lives families (Younger Cohort children) participating in *Juntos* at the time of the fieldwork (instead of 79 identified through the 2006 Young Lives Questionnaire). Some families may have been excluded from the programme sometime after 2006, but this could not be confirmed because the records of families who withdrew from *Juntos* were not publicly available. Other families may also have been 'indirect' beneficiaries; that is, they lived with a relative who was beneficiary of *Juntos*, but did not get the cash transfer directly. In either case, the official lists of beneficiaries suggest that these families had not received any cash transfer for more than two years, and for this reason they are considered here as 'non-beneficiaries'. Table 2 presents the distribution of beneficiary and non-beneficiary families both within the Young Lives sample and my fieldwork sample.

**Table 2.** *Young Lives families and Juntos coverage in Huamanga district*

	Young Lives Younger Cohort sample in Huamanga district (2006)	No. families in my study (2008)
Beneficiaries of <i>Juntos</i>	79	19
Non-beneficiaries of <i>Juntos</i>	27	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>31</b>

Further general information about Young Lives full sample of families in Huamanga district is provided in Table 3, according to their status of beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries of *Juntos*. This information was used to analyse how similar or different these two groups were.

**Table 3.** *Characteristics of Young Lives sample in Huamanga district (Younger Cohort) (n=108)*

	Beneficiaries (n=74)	Non-beneficiaries (n=34)
Female-headed households (%)	15	8
Mother's first language is Quechua (%)	97	91
Wealth index* (2006)	0.25	0.34
Mother's years of education (mean)	2.24	4.18
Number of children < 14 years (mean)	2.35	3.05

Source: Young Lives Questionnaire for Caregivers 2006

\*The wealth index is used by Young Lives as a proxy for poverty. It uses information on assets of household possessions, thought to be indicative of wealth. It takes values between 0 and 1, whereby a higher value indicates a higher socio-economic status.

As noted above, the percentage of female-headed, and Quechua-speaking households (including mothers and grandmothers) is higher among beneficiaries than among non-beneficiaries, which seems to confirm the *Juntos* goal of giving priority to households with those characteristics. Levels of poverty are also higher for beneficiaries when compared with non-beneficiaries, and they perceive themselves as poorer. However, it is worth noting here that wealth indexes for both groups are very low, which means that both groups fall into the 'extremely poor' category according to national standards. Educational levels for both groups of mothers are very low, but especially among beneficiaries. Contrary to what was expected, non-beneficiary households had on average more children under the age of 14 than beneficiary families.

In relation to subjective experiences of poverty and social exclusion the Young Lives questionnaire asked caregivers how they think they 'are doing now' and then how they see themselves in 'four years time'. Fourteen out of 22 families believed their living conditions were 'going to be better', seven thought they were 'going to be the same' and only one family felt that their 'situation is going to deteriorate'. Most people think that change can happen if they work harder (42 per cent), or get a paid job (25 per cent). Despite these positive attitudes towards the future, there are a number of things that should be considered among beneficiary families, such as reported feelings of shame, exclusion and discrimination. For example, 27 per cent of beneficiaries reported being 'ashamed of their clothes'; whereas only 9 per cent of non-beneficiaries did so. Also, more beneficiaries said that 'people in the community look down at [them]' (23 per cent) than non-beneficiaries (18 per cent).

In relation to the services provided in their communities, a higher proportion of beneficiaries (15 per cent) were unhappy with the services provided at the local health centre than non-beneficiaries (around 7 per cent); 42 per cent were also dissatisfied with the role of the police compared to 24 per cent of non-beneficiaries; and most worrisome of all, less than half of the beneficiaries agreed with the following statement: 'people in my community can influence important decisions of the local Government' – against 62 per cent non-beneficiaries.

## 5.2 The effects of *Juntos* on children's well-being

First, I wanted to explore the extent to which *Juntos* was perceived as a programme for children. Both beneficiary and non-beneficiary children and their parents found it difficult to explain the overall purpose of the programme. Some said the programme aimed to help 'poor families with loads of children' (a misperception, because large families do not receive more cash than smaller families), while others highlighted the role of *Juntos* in supporting children's nutrition and education. Contrary to what I expected, most beneficiary women found it difficult to identify *Juntos* conditions. Their responses were varied and ranged from having to 'sweep streets', and 'clean the church hall' to 'taking children to the health centre', and having to 'buy school materials for our children'.

Children and their parents participated in group discussions where they shared their experiences of services related to *Juntos*, such as local schools and healthcare facilities. Within that context, children and parents talked about *Juntos* and whether they thought it was making a difference in people's lives. Two major themes emerged from the group discussions: the need for increasing the visibility of children within *Juntos*; and the necessity of raising people's awareness about the programme's objectives, strategy and conditions.

All children in the study were to some extent aware of the existence of *Juntos*. However, like their parents, children did not spontaneously associate the programme with being 'for children'. When asked about services, programmes or places where children and families could get support, parents and children from both age groups did not mention *Juntos* as one of them. Their immediate responses were that there was 'nothing available' for them (boy, 9), 'nothing meant for children' (boy, 13), or 'there is no such thing in our community' (girl, 12).

When asked specifically about *Juntos*, most beneficiary children knew that the programme was giving money to their mothers; they even knew the exact amount of the transfer: 100 *nuevos soles*. The children and adults interviewed, however, were less clear about the child-specific conditions of the programme such as attending school and making regular visits to the local health centre. Most people interviewed said they did not have to do anything special for their children, as most of them saw the conditions relating to both education and health as something they had been doing before the programme started.

Both beneficiary and non-beneficiary children associated *Juntos* with a programme for 'mums' rather than for children. Likewise, in all group sessions parents described *Juntos* as a '*programa para las señoras*' (programme for married women). Overall, children were less 'visible' in people's descriptions about the programme. This does not mean that *Juntos* did not have important implications for children's lives, as will be discussed later. But, it highlights the need to better communicate the programme's child-specific aims as these may help both *Juntos* coordinators and beneficiaries to be more sensitive to children's well-being. As a nurse in Vilcas suggested:

It is helping women more than children. Women are now getting better clothes and having their own crops ... how much of this goes to children, we don't know. At least parents are more aware of the importance of schooling and taking children to the health post ... they know that if they don't do it, they won't get the money ... so they'll do it.

Another aspect I wanted to explore was the kind of image of children and the approach to childhood that both basic service providers and *Juntos* coordinators had. The way we see people profoundly influences the way we treat them. In interviews with basic service providers and *Juntos* coordinators there was shared concern about children's well-being. Most of them wanted to act in children's best interests. But at the same time, children tended to be portrayed in their narratives either as the 'cause of poverty' for their families, or as 'victims' of their families' and communities' lack of care, as the following quote illustrates:

[They are poor] because they keep having children. We talk about these issues as well. More children, more poverty.

(*Juntos* coordinator, Tara)

The problem with parents in this district is that most of them do not care about their children's health or education. They only want them to help in the fields. They keep having more children and do not look after them properly ... that's why they remain poor.

(Primary school teacher, Alamo)

The children participating in the study did face a number of risks and vulnerabilities, but by attributing their circumstances to the failure of their families and communities *Juntos* may run the risk of not addressing other wider social, economic and political circumstances that also contribute to their situation, like aspects of inequality, social exclusion, discrimination, etc. This narrow understanding of children's well-being may not only pathologise families and communities, but at the same time lessens the role and responsibility of the state for people's welfare.

### 5.2.1 *Health and nutrition*

When asked about the effects of *Juntos*, both the younger group of children (aged 6 to 8 years) and their older siblings said the programme was having a positive impact on their families' economic and food security. Some children said that they now 'get more food' and that their mothers were 'using the money to improve the house' or 'buy[ing] more materials for school' as shown in the interview extract below:

*Interviewer:* Do you think *Juntos* is making any difference in families' lives?

*Boy 1:* Yes, we are better off now.

*Interviewer:* How come?

*Boy 1:* In the money, food, and clothes too.

*Boy 2:* My mum buys me clothes, and for herself as well. She also bought for my dad. She buys food too, such as grapes, fruit, peaches.

*Boy 1:* Yes, fruit, and chicken to kill [and eat]. Things to store as well [in cupboards].

(Beneficiary children, 6 and 7 years old, Alamo)

Children were also invited to discuss what they thought mothers did with the money given by *Juntos* and explore how the subsidy was spent within the household. Consistently, beneficiary children in the three sites said that their mothers used the money to 'cook', or to buy food items like milk, fruit and other things that they cannot produce themselves, and used them to 'feed their children'. The following interview extract from a beneficiary child illustrates this:

*Interviewer:* And what do mums do with the cash?

*Boy:* They buy meat, milk and cheese.

*Interviewer:* For whom?

*Boy:* For all of us. We eat. Sometimes she brings fruit for us to eat, to feed us. Cheese as well. There is no cheese here [in Tara], that's why she goes there [to Ayacucho]. ... Sometimes we have cheese here, but we only have a small cow and it gives little milk, so we only drink it.

(Beneficiary child, 9 years old, Tara)

Children, however, also highlighted that even when their families were getting more food items, these might not be equally distributed among different members within the household. For example, a beneficiary girl pointed out that she always keeps 'part of [her] food for [her] grandma who comes in tired from working in the fields', while another beneficiary girl said 'money [from *Juntos*] goes quickly and there is nothing left after spending it on only a few food items, because I live with my four siblings and my grandparents, who also eat'.

### 5.2.2 *Education and schooling*

Interviews with children, their parents and teachers also suggest that *Juntos* is having a positive effect on school enrolment and engagement with school. For example, a 6-year-old beneficiary girl explained: 'My mum is now making [me] read and study more [and] I've now got all my school materials to do homework'. Since the programme 'punishes' (as some participants put it) those families who do not send their children to school regularly, the majority of families in the area seem to be taking more interest in education. According to a father, 'we didn't send them before [to school] ... we didn't see the value ... we sent them to the fields to help us instead'.

In particular, since *Juntos* started, more children with special needs or with either physical or cognitive disabilities are being taken to school. This is having a positive impact on the children and their families, as the former can now benefit from schooling and the company of peers, and the latter spend less time caring for them and can go to work outside the house in the fields or in the city. However, at the same time, teachers complained that they were not properly trained for these special cases, nor did they have the appropriate educational material. Therefore, the extent to which these children are benefiting from formal schooling remains uncertain. As a result of this, some children with special needs are experiencing social exclusion and violence within the school setting, as explained by one of the mothers whose 13-year-old son is deaf and cannot talk:

It is good that he goes to school. I didn't send him before, because they didn't want to take him. Now with *Juntos*, all children have to be in schools. But now he cries every time he has to go ... The boy next door told me that children tease him during break and that his teacher beats him when he doesn't stay quiet.

(Beneficiary mother, Alamo)

Both children and parents mentioned other difficulties related to schooling, such as low-quality teaching and poor facilities. Most of the parents interviewed felt they could do little to help their children with school work as they did not feel prepared and did not have enough time. Children also said they would like to have access to a library or places where they could do their homework and learn new things. Parents and children also mentioned the difficulties that most children in the area have with continuing their education beyond primary school. Most of them have to travel long distances to secondary schools – as it is the case in Tara and Alamo. Children usually spend hours on the roadside waiting for public buses to take them to school because these prefer to pick up adult passengers, whose fare is nearly five times higher. Parents also expressed concerns about the future of their children once they have finished school, as there are few jobs available in the area. They feel their only chance would be to send their children to urban areas. This, however, would be too costly for families without relatives or social networks in these areas.

As discussed earlier in this paper, CCTs are very effective in getting and keeping children in school. These programmes however, do not normally address other aspects of children's education such the quality of schooling, their everyday experiences of school, and entry to the labour market. All these issues were in fact identified by both adults and children as major concerns in relation to education in the area.

### 5.2.3 *Other aspects of children's well-being*

In general terms, parents valued *Juntos* intervention in health and education, but they would also like the Government to address other child-specific vulnerabilities that they identified during group discussions, such as children's health, the prevalence of respiratory diseases, high levels of malnutrition, children's experiences of violence within the family, school and community, and the impact of environmental shocks (e.g. hail and frost) on children, among other things. Even though *Juntos* aims to provide support to families with children, most of the parents who participated in my study felt they could not get any assistance from the programme when in need. It is not expected that *Juntos* will be responsible for all problems faced by children and parents, but perhaps the programme should be part of a more sound social protection system, therefore complemented by child-specific services and programmes where parents could be referred when needed.

In particular, parents said they would like *Juntos* to be more aware of children and families in special circumstances. For example, one of the participant families, who had a child with a physical disability, reported that the cash transfer was not enough. Their child was now attending mainstream education, but was not necessarily getting the attention and care she required. They needed a specialised school, as well as access to specialised healthcare which is not available in the communities studied and would be extremely costly to get in the nearby city. Also, during group discussions in Tara, women commented that there were a few 'grandparents' who were looking after their grandchildren, and for them it was more difficult to comply with certain conditionalities. Likewise, according to a group of non-beneficiary parents in Vilcas, *Juntos* is not always reaching the most vulnerable. For example, they mentioned the case of elderly people who are getting a pension from the Government. If the amount of



money exceeds 100 *nuevos soles* they are not entitled to receive the cash transfer, regardless of the number of children they are looking after.

Both individual and group discussions with children and parents revealed uncertainty about how long *Juntos* would last. Apparently, families have not been informed when the programme will end, which raises important questions in relation to its sustainability. Some families said that they would like to start a business so as to improve their living conditions. But so far, beneficiary families are not being supported to develop strategies that could last beyond *Juntos*. According to one of the beneficiary children, this is what would happen if *Juntos* finishes, or when they 'graduate' from the programme, whichever comes first:

*Interviewer:* What would happen if *Juntos* did not give money to mums any more?

*Boy:* They won't receive it any more, and its little house [referring to *Juntos* office] would not be there any more and they [mothers] would ask, 'Where have they gone?'... and their plants [crops] will dry out, there would not be water to irrigate their plants.

(Beneficiary child, 6 years old, Alamo)

All these may have important implications for children, especially those who are in their transition to secondary school when their families 'graduate' from the programme. Also, during group activities most children said they would like to continue their studies and become 'professionals', but said their families are worried about what would happen after they finish primary school (presumably because of transport difficulties, as well as perhaps the labour market and future job opportunities).

### 5.3 Effects at the household level

As noted in previous studies, *Juntos* has several implications of *Juntos* for family relationships (Jones et al. 2007; IEP 2009; Vargas 2010). In this paper, I focus on the two aspects that were most mentioned by both parents and children; that is, women's roles and gender dynamics, and intra- and inter-household allocation of resources and care. Of course these aspects are not entirely consequences of *Juntos*, but the findings suggest that the programme may be having important implications at these levels, and should therefore consider them in their design and implementation.

#### 5.3.1 *Women and gender roles*

My findings suggest that *Juntos* is indeed having a positive impact on women's self-image. Most of the beneficiary women interviewed reported feeling more valued within their households and being more confident about their labour and capacity to run small-scale businesses, and therefore, to contribute to their household economy. Even non-beneficiary families reported changes in beneficiary women's behaviour and image: beneficiary women were described as wearing 'better clothes and shoes', and showing a more 'confident' look and behaviour and being more *achoradas* (daring).

This new attitude among beneficiary women seems to be having effects on their relationships with their partners. In some cases, these implications were positive as women were gaining more power in decision-making in the household (see also Jones et al. 2007; Vargas 2010). But in other cases, the findings suggest that this change in women's attitude and behaviour challenged gender-based traditional roles, and may therefore have caused conflicts at a domestic level, as illustrated in the following quote:

Well, my 'señora' [wife] has her money now and we use it to buy things for the family and the house. It is not much, but it is good. She also has to attend meetings and sometimes help at the municipality or health centre. ... Sometimes I come back home and she's gone ... she used to have dinner ready, but now she does other things ... sometimes she goes and chats with other ladies ... I get home tired and I want a warm meal ... that's the only thing I don't like ... that she's not there all the time.

(Beneficiary father, Tara)

Even though *Juntos* is contributing towards increased inclusion and participation of women in family and public life, the data analysed for this paper suggest that there is still much to be done in order to achieve a more equal distribution of gender roles at both levels and greater representation of women in public life. For example, interviews and observations with parents revealed that the design of *Juntos* is still based on a 'traditional' concept of family, where the men provide the main income and women look after the well-being of children and other members of the family. Almost all fathers interviewed were less aware of the overall purpose of the programme as well as the responsibilities that beneficiaries have to undertake in order to get the cash transfer, as is exemplified by this interview extract:

*Father:* Mmm ... don't know really ... I think my wife attends some meetings with other women in the community. The children also go to school.

*Interviewer:* Do you know what these meetings are about?

*Father:* No idea ... I think they teach women how to feed their children and that sort of thing, but I can't really tell ... I've never attended one.

*Interviewer:* Do you know of any father attending these meetings?

*Father:* No, I don't know of anyone here. We have to work, you know? We can't go to the meetings because we need to be in the fields or working, you know? That's why women are there.

(Beneficiary father, Alamo)

This suggests that despite the aim of *Juntos* to empower women within the family, the way it is designed and implemented may run the risk of reinforcing traditional models of care, where it is the role of women to look after the family, leaving men aside. Therefore, the programme may be reinforcing asymmetrical gender roles by not including fathers as much as mothers (see also Molyneux 2009 for similar findings on *Progresal/Oportunidades* in Mexico).

The changes in women's self-image and roles described above have also had important effects upon children, girls in particular. For example, during group activities with children in Alamo, three girls drew themselves 'growing plants like my mum', 'looking after guinea pigs and chickens, like [my] mum does' or 'having [my] own shop'. These examples suggest that girls are witnessing important changes in gender roles as more women are getting involved in productive tasks. This was also highlighted by one of the boys:

*Interviewer:* And how was it before *Juntos* started?

*Boy:* We were not well, we were secos [dried out] ... there was no money. Now it's getting better. They [mothers] are planting their things. Mums are now growing their own plants and some sell them, others eat them.

*Interviewer:* How was it before?

Boy: They were staying at home, they were sad because they didn't have their animals or little plants.

(Beneficiary child, 6 years old, Alamo)

### 5.3.2 *Intra- and inter-household allocation of resources and care*

Other aspects to consider are the differences in the way material and economic resources, as well as time and care, are distributed within households. Even though children reported positive outcomes of the programme such as their families' having more money to buy livestock, food and school materials, they also reported differences between themselves and their siblings in terms of access to the benefits provided by *Juntos*. For example, a group of boys claimed that their sisters were getting more clothes and school uniforms. This was also reported by one of the beneficiary mothers interviewed:

Well, the girls need more clothes ... their skirts, blouses, shoes, things for their hair ... you know, Miss, girls need to look good. With the boys it is fine ... they don't care that much ... but girls want to wear better clothes, so I have to buy my daughter more clothes than my sons.

(Beneficiary mother, Alamo)

Children also reported that 'pressures' and 'demands' are different. For example, an 8-year-old girl said that her mum now puts a lot more pressure on her to perform well in school: 'She gets upset if I don't do my homework or if I lose my pencils or rubber ... if I don't have everything in order, my teacher shouts at me and then my mum gets upset and punishes me.' Another boy said that his mum 'gets really upset when [he doesn't] help [his] younger brother with school work'. A group of girls in Alamo said that they like doing homework, but that now they have less time to play and hang out with friends. In group discussions with parents, some mothers explained that they now worry more about homework and school materials, because they can miss out on payments from *Juntos* if teachers report it to the programme coordinators.

Similarly, interviews with parents revealed that the distribution of chores and work may have also changed within the household so as to free up the children who are required to attend school. This can also have implications for children's and young people's migration. As is already known, it is not unusual for children to migrate to urban areas after they finish primary school, to continue their education or to get a job. According to a beneficiary mother in Alamo, they have decided not to send their older daughter to live with her grandmother in the nearby city – as they did with their older son – because they need her to look after her younger siblings and help them with their homework:

If the children don't do well, we will get punished [will not get the cash] ... and we [parents] cannot help them with homework ... we don't know what to do. My daughter can help. She's very good.

(Beneficiary mother, Alamo)

Finally, another emerging theme was care networks, which can help to shed light on ways in which families try to ameliorate poverty and manage vulnerability, and on the complexity of resource flows and distribution. In particular, the analysis of data revealed children's and women's movement between urban and rural areas, and across different households. For example, the three *Juntos* coordinators explained that some families have moved back to their place of origin after living in urban areas. One mother told us:

Some families are coming back now ... we heard about the programme and that it was helping families ... so we came back. My sister has done the same. She doesn't have a husband ... she's now living with my mum.

(Beneficiary mother, Alamo)

In some cases, women have moved in with their parents, in-laws or other relatives in order to be eligible to apply to access *Juntos*. Interviews with *Juntos* coordinators confirmed this trend. They said that some families had even decided to live apart – husbands in one place and the women with the children in another place. In other instances, the children were sent off to live with older relatives who lived in rural towns covered by *Juntos*. According to one 6-year-old girl in Vilcas, 'some families appear with someone else's child' so as to fulfil the *Juntos* selection criteria. Some families are sharing the benefits with their extended family. For example, in Alamo there was a household with 13 different members of the same family, including a mother and her two daughters, who had their own young children. The daughters said they all moved in together so they could take care of their mother who cannot work any more, and therefore they share the benefits with her. All this is having significant effects on children as they are not only changing location but in some cases experiencing new family settings.

## 5.4 Effects at the community level

This sub-section presents both positive and some 'unintended' negative effects of the programme upon community-level relationships and dynamics.

### 5.4.1 Targeting and social tensions

At the start of the programme the targeting process created some tensions at the community level. Participants in the communities visited expressed their confusion and disappointment about the targeting process and the selection of beneficiary families, which affected relationships as well as collective action and reciprocity between members of the community.

During the pilot study carried out in 2007 in Vilcas, non-beneficiary families complained that the programme was supporting both 'poor' people and those who were 'not so poor'. A non-beneficiary mother said that some families who were not receiving subsidies from *Juntos* are feeling upset:

When we saw for the very first time that some families were receiving it [an allowance from *Juntos*], we cried. I do not care any more. I am used to it now.

(Non-beneficiary mother, Vilcas)

Non-beneficiary parents said there had been targeting errors, and suggested that some families had not been appropriately assessed during the census and as a result were left out. In group discussions, non-beneficiary mothers argued that they had been 'too honest' when the census took place in their communities. When the surveyors asked if they lived with their partners, or if they had their own business or whether they had a TV, DVD, fridge, etc., these mothers gave honest answers. As a result of this, some non-beneficiary mothers suggested that the programme benefited only the *mentirosas* [dishonest women or liars]. These non-beneficiaries felt upset because they saw other people such as 'the wife of a municipality worker' receiving money from *Juntos*. This unclear pattern in the selection of beneficiary families generated confusion and upset families in general, and non-beneficiary families in particular.

The findings suggest that despite *Juntos* efforts to improve its targeting strategy, most families did not understand the criteria used to select beneficiaries. As discussed earlier, data from both my qualitative study and Young Lives' 2006 survey show that poverty in the communities studied is so widespread that it is very difficult to draw a line between the 'poor' and the 'non-poor'. Therefore, the way *Juntos* measures and assesses poverty may have limitations in these communities, especially as these measurements may exclude 'poor' people who live on just a little more than others.

#### 5.4.2 *Fears and distrust*

Most parents, including beneficiaries, were unsure about *Juntos* management, that is, whether it was a government programme or run by an NGO or a private institution. This uncertainty about the origins and purpose of the programme generated mixed responses among different members of the community, parents in particular. For example, in group discussions and individual interviews, parents from the three research sites expressed fears that the programme's staff might take their children away from them. For example, a mother in Alamo asked whether *Juntos* was taking beneficiary children away from their families to make them study and live in Lima, while another woman in Tara said there were rumours that 'the programme was investing in their children only to give them for adoption to foreigners'.

During an individual interview, a mother in Alamo expressed her fears about the real intention of the programme, as illustrated in the following quote:

There are rumours you know? Some people here say that we shouldn't allow our children to take part in *Juntos*. They say they are going to take them away ... why do they want to pay for our children? We don't understand ...

(Beneficiary mother, Alamo)

These fears were not exclusively related to *Juntos* (see Morrow 2009 for similar experiences within Young Lives research). When asked about the reasons behind these fears, a *Juntos* promoter in Alamo explained:

Oh, yes, there have been rumours like this. Apparently is due to their religion [evangelical Christian] or cultural beliefs. At the start of the programme we went to a remote community and they told us that they sent away the person who did the household census. They viewed *Juntos* as sent by the devil, as something that would take their children away. There was a complete refusal there. We first went to the health centre in order to explain the purpose of the programme but they did not want to meet us. People said they did not want anything from us. I told them not to complain later on. There was a group who wanted to participate but there was another more aggressive group who wanted us to get out of there. They made out that the programme was something evil. People here have always had that fear of strangers taking their children away. When they see people from other places they always feel the same.

(*Juntos* promoter, Tara)

These fears can be understood in relation to ancient local myths about indigenous people being abducted, and murdered by so called *pishtacos*, which can be traced back to the earliest years of Spanish colonisation. *Pishtacos* were Spanish conquerors and missionaries who, it was rumoured, wanted the 'fat' of native people for all kinds of purposes (Vasquez del Aguila 2007). Today, these fears appear to have been extended to any 'white', 'urban' person from outside the community.

### 5.4.3 *Strengthening social exchange and reciprocity*

Despite all this, *Juntos* has also contributed to strengthening relationships between different members of the community. Beneficiaries are now more involved in decision-making, and participate more in activities organised by the communities. The following is an example of community redistribution, though it is not clear whether beneficiaries had a choice in the matter:

The other day there was an activity organised by the council and we all attended. *Juntos* families gave an extra 1.00 nuevo sol so that everyone could get drinks and potatoes. In the health post as well, they asked us to give extra 0.20 *nuevos soles* to buy folders for everyone ... so now all families have their documents organised.

(Beneficiary mother, Alamo)

Yeah, we sometimes lend other children our pencils and rubbers. My mum says that we should help those who have less, and the teacher as well.

(Beneficiary girl, 9 years old, Alamo)

According to the *Juntos* coordinator in Vilcas, some families have also decided to become 'business partners'. For example, two families have started a trout farm business and each of them gave a share of their monthly cash transfer to start the business and are now splitting the profits. Another family bought chickens and cattle together and they are taking turns in looking after them. Also, interviews with parents revealed that some mothers are helping each other by looking after their children in shifts, so that everyone can attend meetings and spend time working in the fields.

These examples of reciprocity and mutual collaboration were mainly seen in Alamo and Tara, whereas in Vilcas people reported more tensions and discontent between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. In terms of the history of Vilcas, this village was the most affected of the three by the internal conflict during the 1980s and 1990s, and also had the highest number of displaced people, who only recently started to come back (see section 2.2 above). Tara and Alamo, on the other hand, are more rural, were less affected by violence and seem to hold more powerful values of reciprocity and mutual collaboration.

This highlights the need for *Juntos* to address the particular vulnerabilities faced by populations that were badly affected by political violence and displacement. This is particularly the case in contexts where relations between the state and citizens are still fragile and where conflicts have arisen from social divisions. CCTs like *Juntos* can help rebuild the trust between service providers, the state and the people, but they need to pay careful attention to the community context and social dynamics (Holmes 2009).

## 5.5 *Juntos* approach to welfare

One of the aims of the group discussions with teachers, healthcare professionals and local coordinators of *Juntos* was to analyse the ideas and perceptions of household poverty and welfare that were behind the design of the programme as well as in its everyday implementation. The main purpose here was to explore the extent to which *Juntos* was shaping children's and families' own views and experiences of well-being.

### 5.5.1 'Cleanliness' and 'neatness'

Overall, *Juntos* was described by the research participants not only as a monetary support for 'poor' families but also as designed to 'teach' families how to live what they perceived as

'a better life'. For example, teachers and healthcare staff interviewed said the programme was meant '*para que mejoren*' (to make people improve) or '*para que no sean ociosos*' (to stop them being lazy). Most people interviewed, including beneficiary families, saw the conditions attached to the programme – e.g. schooling and health check-ups – as a way of encouraging people to follow better and healthier lifestyles. In particular, they highlighted the role of *Juntos* in making them more 'responsible' towards their children's well-being, and in teaching families good hygiene habits such as keeping themselves 'clean' and well-dressed, and their houses 'tidy' and 'neat'.

Phrases like 'we want them [beneficiaries] to look tidier and cleaner', and learn 'values and life skills' such as 'being punctual', 'keeping your word', 'being affectionate with their children' were common during interviews with *Juntos* coordinators and basic service providers. A group of teachers in Vilcas and Alamo said they wanted children to 'stop being so submissive and be more proactive like leaders'.

*Interviewer:* What would be your ideal view of beneficiary children? What would you like them to achieve?

s: Their values, for example. I would like them to learn more values. They should not be selfish. They should learn values like friendship, goodness, etc. ... Mums here are a bit cold. I talk to them a lot because some mothers don't even know when their child's birthday is. I tell them to show love to their children so I make them memorise their children's birthdays. They don't even know that. And what do they do for their birthdays? Nothing. I tell them 'but you should give your child a big hug, say something nice to them'. Now it is improving ... there are some mums who are doing it.

(*Juntos* coordinator, Alamo)

Children used phrases such as 'they look dirty' to refer to children from rural and remote areas. During group activities, children discussed differences between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in relation to whether a child had had his/her vaccinations or not or had pencils and a rubber or not. According to teachers, some children are using similar comparisons to single out children who are not beneficiaries or those who were not complying with the programme's conditions. In this case, specific aspects of well-being were used to label and mark differences between some children.

A similar approach was seen towards women. Basic service providers said that *Juntos* was affecting not only the way beneficiaries 'look', but also other people in the community. Apparently, *Juntos* families were looking 'cleaner and tidier', which was making others in the community copy that model. During a community parade, beneficiary women were invited to march wearing a *Juntos* T-shirt and holding the Peruvian flag, in what appeared to be a display of discipline and discipline.

As the result of their everyday interaction with families in the area, local promoters in the three communities studied came up with the idea of teaching families to carry out what they called 'productive tasks'. During their home visits as well as in training workshops, some promoters encouraged beneficiary families to invest part of the monthly cash transfer in what they called 'productive activities', which ranged from making 'home-made jam' and 'knitting and sewing' things to sell in the local market, to animal husbandry (e.g. chickens, pigs, goats, cows and most of all guinea pigs), and small-scale agricultural activities.

Also, local promoters of *Juntos* asked beneficiary families to implement so-called *cocinas mejoradas* (improved kitchens), which consists of building kitchen cupboards where families

can store pans and plates above ground level, avoiding contact with germs and dirt. Families are also asked to build chimneys to prevent the smoke from the stove entering the house, and *galpones* (hutches for guinea pigs), which prevented the animals from running around the kitchen floors.

Although most of these actions are having a positive impact on families, these requests were not part of the conditions agreed in the original contract signed by beneficiary families. Promoters were therefore including 'new conditions', which in most cases reflected their own ideas of what they considered important for families' well-being in the area. Undoubtedly, most of these 'new conditions' were well intended and benefited a number of families, as confirmed during interviews with parents and children and illustrated by the following interview extract:

*Interviewer:* Have you ever heard of a programme/place called *Juntos*?

*Boy:* Yes, Madam.

*Interviewer:* What have you heard about it?

*Boy:* To avoid the smoke, we make *cocinas mejoradas* [improved kitchens].

*Interviewer:* How does that work?

*Boy:* We get the smoke out with a pipe.

*Interviewer:* And is that better?

*Boy:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* How come?

*Boy:* We don't smell [breathe] it.

*Interviewer:* What else does *Juntos* do?

*Boy:* There is an assembly where they tell them [the beneficiaries] things. They go there ... for us to get cleaned, to meet school requirements [*para que cumplimos en la escuela*].

*Interviewer:* What happens if people don't 'get clean'?

*Boy:* When we are dirty [*cochinos*], it pollutes [*contamina*] us.

*Interviewer:* And what happens if they don't send their children to school?

*Boy:* They don't receive it [the cash] any more. They get punished, they don't give the money.

(Beneficiary child, 9 years old, Tara)

The main concern around these added conditions is one of ethics and respect. The three *Juntos* promoters interviewed were former 'health promoters' who worked on behalf of the Ministry of Health at a community level in different parts of the country. They themselves said that *Juntos* – and its conditions in particular – had made a 'real impact on the implementation of social programmes, because people now obey and participate more than ever before' (*Juntos* coordinator). The problem with these 'new conditions' is that they are not just causing confusion among beneficiaries about what the real conditions of the programme are, but they are also giving local promoters a new sense of power and control over local people. It is giving them 'the power to change people's attitudes', as one of the promoters interviewed put it. This seems to be something they had wanted to achieve for a long time:



They don't have anything. They are poor and they need to feed their children. I think it is up to the promoter to teach them. We cannot change them all, but maybe some of them will get out of poverty. Perhaps they listen to us more because of the money. Maybe they would do anything we ask because otherwise *Juntos* will punish them. Therefore, we have the opportunity to teach them, to show them more things. I think that it is in this way that they are going to change themselves. This is what we want.

(*Juntos* coordinator, Vilcas)

Another problem is that these 'new conditions' may not reflect people's actual needs, but because they are seen as a condition to receive the cash transfer, most beneficiaries will do 'whatever they are asked to do', as suggested by a local healthcare professional interviewed. For example, one of the promoters in Vilcas said that some families do build latrines when asked but they do not necessarily use them. During the fieldwork, some beneficiaries said they did not use the latrines because their children did not like them, they 'smell bad' and they are afraid of falling down the hole. These aspects of power and control between beneficiaries and service providers are discussed next.

According to a group of non-beneficiary mothers, teachers have also become more exigent since *Juntos* started. They not only ask beneficiary parents to buy all school materials but also non-beneficiary families, even if they are considered 'poor'. The latter complain that they do not always have enough resources to fulfil these new demands. Non-beneficiary mothers also claimed that their children were being singled out by teachers because they were not as clean and well dressed as their counterparts from *Juntos*. The following quotes illustrate some of this:

They [the teachers] make us bring all the books and materials. We have to have everything complete; all school materials ... even school uniforms ... they should ask these things only of *Juntos* families, because they are getting extra money ... we are not.

(Non-beneficiary mother, Vilcas)

Well, now he [her son] has to wear his uniform. They [teachers] no longer accept other clothes. For example, for physical education they're asked to wear only white. He wears white trainers, socks, and T-shirt, and also blue shorts. They [the teachers] don't want anything else. They are asking for more things than before; more pencils, notebooks, etc. They demand quite a lot

(Beneficiary mother, Alamo)

### 5.5.2 '*Rights*' or '*duties*': relationships with basic service providers

Another level at which *Juntos* seems to be having an impact is on the relationships between the people and basic service providers. In both intended and unintended ways, CCT programmes are said to be changing accountability relationships between local service providers and poor households. These include the new CCT focus on 'co-responsibilities' between the state and citizens, whereby the state is thought to be lessening its paternalistic role by placing time limits on benefits, and requiring beneficiaries to comply with certain conditions. It is believed that by, for example, requiring families to take responsibility for schooling and health of their children, CCTs seek to foster a culture of co-responsibility between the Government and families, which may be key to fostering social inclusion (de la Brière and Rawlings 2006).

On the positive side, the findings show that more people are getting access to basic services such as health, nutrition and education. Also, *Juntos* engages with the population through consultative councils and via elected beneficiaries who serve as conduits between their communities and the programme providers. The downside of this is that these so-called 'community promoters' are still being chosen by service providers themselves, and they do not necessarily fully understand their roles. It is more a kind of surveillance instead of two-way communication channel.

The findings also suggest that beneficiary families may be experiencing stigmatisation and discrimination by basic service providers. Beneficiary women, for example, were subject to regular monitoring to check whether they were fulfilling the conditions of the *Juntos* programme and, on some occasions, they have been publicly singled out for not complying. Some beneficiary women complained that *Juntos* coordinators 'criticised' them and used 'name and shame' strategies at community meetings to make them comply with the programme's demands, instead of showing them how to 'improve their situation'. Similar practices have been experienced by beneficiary children in school, when their teachers increased their demands and asked them to have all their educational materials, finish their homework, and perform and behave well in the classroom.

Both schools and health centres were to some extent 'policing' people for not following rules, sometimes making them feel embarrassed. The quote below exemplifies this:

Sometimes we pick a classroom at random and check that beneficiary children have their notebooks, that they are clean and neat, that they have pencils, and that their books are covered in plastic wrap. We then keep records. The children know that and they try to get everything ready. Some of them get upset with their mums if they are caught out by *Juntos* for not having all their materials.

(*Juntos* coordinator, Vilcas)

Beneficiaries seem to be so concerned about being punished for not complying with the conditions and therefore losing the cash transfers, that they do not always tell the truth about their conditions. Perhaps they are afraid of consequences, or it may be a strategy to try to obtain further benefits. Even children seem to be afraid of the consequences, because at least two of them did not want to talk about *Juntos*. It seems that children have learned what to answer when they are asked about the benefits of the programme.

This leads to another important implication of *Juntos*. The programme is supposed to be voluntary in all matters. Beneficiaries can decide whether they want to participate in the programme and comply with the conditions or not. However, interviews with both *Juntos* coordinators and parents revealed that this is not always the case. Participants feel compelled to attend all capacity-building workshops, and do whatever *Juntos* coordinators ask them to do; otherwise, they fear they will not get the monthly payment, which is of great value to them. The question here is what happens when the concept of 'voluntary participation' is attached to a necessity for survival? The programme seems to be relying on people's need for survival to make them comply and behave in ways they consider appropriate and conducive to future human development (see research in relation to programmes in the USA and the UK, Dwyer 1998; Heron and Dwyer 1999; Gilliom 2001; Hays 2003; Dwyer 2004).

Finally, it seems that beneficiaries are experiencing contradictory messages within the programme. For example, while they are told that they are expected to become independent and self-sufficient, they are also (implicitly) asked to be compliant and obedient to the

authorities. Beneficiaries are getting used to constant public supervision and to sometimes intrusive surveillance from *Juntos*. As discussed earlier, this surveillance is inherently an instrument of power, where *Juntos* stakeholders (i.e. local teachers, headteachers, healthcare professionals, *Juntos* community promoters and *Juntos* local coordinators) may use this power of surveillance to make judgements about beneficiaries' behaviour and ultimately decide who 'deserves' and 'does not deserve' the cash transfer. Ultimately, this may leave children in a more vulnerable situation.

## 6. Implications and conclusions

A number of implications arise from the findings reported above. Like other CCTs, *Juntos* appears to be having beneficial effects on certain aspects of children's well-being, such as physical health, nutrition and schooling. At the same time, however, there are limitations to these benefits, not least because *Juntos* cannot guarantee the quality and usefulness of government services that it obliges recipients to utilise. Given that a certain amount of stigmatisation seems to accompany recipient children and families, one might also ask questions about effects on other aspects of children's well-being and development, such as individual self-esteem, gender-based notions and practices, cultural identity and relationships within the community.

Taken together, the study findings offer insight into the design and delivery of *Juntos*. On the one hand, the programme holds a traditional view of women that places on them the entire responsibility for the household and children's care, while men are scarcely involved. But the CCT then traps the women with expectations apparently not realistic for their situation. The overall image of children that *Juntos* was promoting at the time of the fieldwork reflected normative ideas about childhood and child development mainly coming from outside the community, perhaps even from industrialised countries. This is illustrated by failure to attend to the needs of grandparents and pensioners, who in much of the community are the ones often actually in charge of children. The programme associates normative childhood with dependency and nuclear family structures not commonly found, and schooling patterns not always readily accessible in the communities studied. This makes children and their families seem less 'capable', less 'motivated', and less 'developed'. For this reason, teachers and *Juntos* promoters assumed that recipient children and their families needed constant monitoring and direction from them on how to behave and to meet their CCT obligations. Further, the findings could be interpreted to suggest that *Juntos* may have tried to use the programme's conditions to change recipients' attitudes and behaviour less to what was needed than to match professionalised assumptions and ideas of what kind of childhood and family life is normative. One suspects from the data that many children may in their relations with *Juntos* have to deal with unjustifiably narrow views of who they are and accept how others want them to live.

The findings also suggest that a narrow view of childhood as potential human capital may induce *Juntos* to retain a rather traditional approach to childhood poverty in a situation in which more flexibility and innovation might have been helpful. An overemphasis on children's future skills and contributions as adults diverts attention, as noted above, from present needs and experiences while they are still children. One could also question the assumption that

what is good for the household will automatically be good for children. *Juntos*, like other CCTs, is based on the notion that cash transfers to the family household, and access to education and healthcare for the children, are the main means to improve the living conditions of people in poverty. For all these reasons, if CCTs like *Juntos* are to become more 'transformative' by enhancing social equity and social rights of the people involved (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004) they need to go beyond just raising income and consumption standards of people living in poverty, as helpful and important as that is. These programmes could usefully take a rights-based approach that recognises the need for integrated, inter-sectoral approaches to child-related policies, which would help with the problem of CCTs as stand-alone programmes referring people to services that may be sub-standard. Such an approach would involve gathering information that goes beyond health and education statistics, and includes data on child abuse and exploitation, as well as civil and political rights of children. It certainly would include systematic dialogue with both children and their families.

To be more child-sensitive, CCTs need to consider children within the context of their relationships with their families and wider society (Ray and Carter 2007). Some of these children experience systematic and institutionalised exclusion, and for this reason, it is crucial to understand the roles of different actors and institutions in the lives of the children. CCTS that were more child-centred also would show more knowledge and awareness of child-specific risks and incorporate different family models and structures, including grandparents, the extended family and child-headed households. They would also pay more attention to community history, backgrounds, and social cohesion and dynamics in order to minimise tensions and maximise people's use of social networks. CCTs like *Juntos* need to combine their focus on individual households with community-level actions so as to strengthen mutual collaboration and sense of reciprocity, which is vital to most rural communities in the country. Finally, to be more child-sensitive, CCTs should build better links between child protection and broader social protection measures.

In conclusion, *Juntos* appears to be based on a rather narrow approach to childhood poverty and well-being, in which children are mainly seen as indicators, and investments for the future. Second, further research is needed to improve knowledge and awareness of child-specific risks and vulnerabilities – these may include the effects of environmental shocks; nutrition; violence within the household, school and community; social exclusion; and the sense of powerlessness that children and their families experience. Third, it would be realistic for *Juntos* to recognise that there are multiple family forms and structures of care (grandparental care, other relatives, child-headed households) instead of basing interventions upon the nuclear family norm. Fourth, closer attention needs to be paid in CCTs to community histories, backgrounds, social cohesion and dynamics in order to minimise potential conflict and tensions and to maximise people's use of social networks. A combined focus on individual households and community-level actions would strengthen mutual collaboration and sense of reciprocity. Finally, a move away from the emphasis on beneficiaries' 'duties' towards a view that respects people's dignity and rights, together with a move away from 'monitoring, policing and surveillance' to an approach that emphasises inclusion, listening and working together would enhance *Juntos*.

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# Appendix

## Description of research sites

	<b>ALAMO</b>	<b>TARA</b>	<b>VILCAS</b>
<b>Population</b>	Around 550 residents (51 per cent are children under 14).	Around 350 (52 per cent are children under 14).	Around 1,150 residents (49 per cent are children under 14).
<b>Living conditions</b>	Most families rely on agriculture (arable and livestock). A few families also provide services such as transportation, small family-run restaurants and grocery stores. Most houses in Alamo are single-room and made of stones or adobe (mud) bricks with hay/straw roofs, or in a few cases, corrugated tin roofs.	Characterised by its mountainous landscape and widely scattered dwellings. At these latitudes cold temperatures, frost and hail can strike 12 months a year, but particularly in June, July and August. These harsh weather conditions destroy potatoes and other crops in the area and pose a real threat to children's nutrition and health. The overall economy in the area relies on agriculture and cattle-raising. Most people live in one-room houses made of stones with hay/straw roofs.	Most families in Vilcas rely on agriculture, although some people work as daily labourers in Ayacucho city, while others are drivers, run small restaurants, or trade in the local markets. Vilcas is the best-served community in the whole of the district for basic services. It has a primary school, health centre with ambulance (open 24 hours), Catholic church, police station, a <i>Juntos</i> office that oversees the programme in Huamanga district, the municipality and Mayor's office, and a district court. Most houses in the central square are built from brick, but less than 20 metres away the scene changes: roads become narrower and bumpier, and houses are smaller and made of large adobe blocks with corrugated tin roofs.
<b>Basic services</b>	Alamo has a Government primary school with seven teachers serving about 150 students from grades 1 to 6. It had a pre-school but that closed after the fieldwork. Students have to attend secondary school either in Ayacucho city or in Vilcas. In 2008 <i>Juntos</i> opened a small office in the community, which also serves Tara and other nearby villages. There is a health post in the community, which provides basic healthcare and nutritional supplements mainly for women and for children under the age of 5. For serious illness or injuries people need to travel to Ayacucho's public hospital.	Tara has a Government multigrade primary school and a PRONOEI (non-formal pre-school for children aged 3 to 5, run by local mothers but with some support from the Ministry of Education). In 2007, the school had three female teachers teaching all six grades in three classrooms. Enrolment rates have decreased in the last ten years. In 2008 the primary school had fewer than 20 children. There is no secondary school in the area. Children who want to continue their education after primary school need to travel to Ayacucho city or Vilcas (10 km). The community does not have a health post. The nearest health facilities are a public hospital in Ayacucho city or the health centre in Alamo (6 km).	The primary school in Vilcas was rebuilt during the 1990s and is sturdy and well constructed. In 2008, it had 14 teachers and about 240 students. Vilcas also has a secondary school, which also serves students from nearby communities such as Tara and Alamo. In 2008 this school had 11 teachers and about 200 students enrolled. There is also a pre-school. Even so, some people to send their children to study and live with relatives in Ayacucho city.







**Young Lives is an innovative long-term international research project investigating the changing nature of childhood poverty.**

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Young Lives is coordinated by a small team based at the University of Oxford, led by Jo Boyden.

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