



Eastern Caribbean Social Protection Newsletter

July 2011
Issue 1

Welcome to the **first edition** of the Eastern Caribbean Social Protection Newsletter! This newsletter is intended to provide a quarterly, up-to-date summary of key developments in social protection for countries of the Eastern Caribbean. This initiative is a follow-up to a meeting of donors involved in social protection work (*as part of the Poverty and Social Sector Development Donor Group meeting*) in which the need for better information sharing and co-ordination was recognised.

It is hoped that this quarterly newsletter can help stakeholders keep in touch with the latest developments in social protection and provide a platform to share news on events, research and resources in this field in order to strengthen collaboration across the region. The end of the newsletter also features a 'spotlight' section in which a specific policy area or recent initiative in social protection is discussed in more detail. In this edition, the spotlight section discusses a recent UNICEF-funded visit of the OECS countries to Jamaica's Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes (PATH), highlighting some key lessons for safety net reform.

Upcoming Regional Events & Meetings

Technical launch of Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN), Organisation of American States (OAS), Mexico, August 2011

Central Beneficiary Registries and Management Information Systems Workshop for OECS Governments: OECS Secretariat in conjunction with UNICEF, UN Women and the World Bank, September 2012, Grenada

International Training in Social Protection

Designing & Implementing Social Transfer Programmes—23 Oct - 5 Nov 2011 ~ Chiang Mai, Thailand

The Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and the HelpAge East Asia Pacific Regional Development Centre (EAPRDC), together with the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance offer a course for policymakers, government officials and practitioners around the world.

Social Security Summer School Turin, Italy, 26 September – 7 October 2011

The International Training Centre of the ILO is holding its first 'Social Security Summer School' & will offer its participants a unique opportunity to benefit from a top-class, diversified training package on governance, financing, pension reforms and extension of social protection. Participants tailor-make their own two-week course by choosing from 16 elective courses on relevant social security topics as well as benefit from the possibility of extensive networking and a dynamic, international learning environment. Participation in this Summer School will enhance the capacity of key actors involved in the social security sector to better advise, design, manage, administer and supervise social security programmes. The price of the entire workshop including tuition fee, food and accommodation on campus (excluding travel to/from Turin) amounts to 3,250 EUR. Special discounts are available for participants from developing countries. For further information/applications, contact the Social Protection Programme of the ITC-ILO at socpro@itcilo.org

On Line Training Resources, Tools and Networks

1. **New Social Protection Handbook: 'Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes: 'A policy manual'** (April 2011) – EPRI/DFID – available at www.eprionline.com/resources/book/
2. **World Bank Toolkits in Social Protection (including Safety Nets Primer):** Available on World Bank website or direct link [here](#)
3. **New e-learning programme on socio-economic policies for child rights with equity (including module on social protection systems):** UNICEF & Economic Research Foundation (ERF) www.policyforchildrights.org/

General links and resources

Centre of Social Protection, Institute of Development Studies: www.ids.ac.uk/go/csp

Social Protection Programme, Overseas Development Institute: www.odi.org.uk/work/programmes/social-protection/

Social Safety Nets in the Caribbean - Right to Reality Network (World Bank hosted forum):
www.right2reality.org/group/socialsafetynetsinthecaribbean

Recent events (and related resources)

Centre for Social Protection 3 day Conference, London, April 2011 – Theme: Social Protection for Social Justice, Institute of Development Studies. Presentations and papers available at IDS website or direct link [here](#)

Caribbean Conference on Horizontal Cooperation in Social Protection, Barbados, Jan 2011 – OAS Secretariat. Presentations available at <http://www.socialprotectionet.org/english/index-caricom.html>

OECS Governments Study Visit to Jamaica's PATH Programme, January 2011, OECS Secretariat-UNICEF funded – see spotlight section on page 3

OECS workshop on Proxy Means Testing, June 2010, World Bank. Presentations available at: <http://www.right2reality.org/group/socialsafetynetsinthecaribbean>

New Research and Publications

Regional

Social Safety Net Assessments for OECS Countries (2009/2010): Conducted for the Governments of Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados. (Funded by UN Women, the World Bank and UNICEF). Downloadable versions of St. Kitts and Nevis and Grenada's reports are available at <http://www.unicef.org/barbados/>

EU Evaluation of Social Investment Fund interventions in the Eastern Caribbean (July 2011)

Assessed results of the EU SFA social investments funds in the Eastern Caribbean, and to derive good practices and lessons learned in implementing social assistance programmes. Available from the EU Delegation Office to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

International

New 'DFID evidence paper on cash transfers' (April 2011): Available at: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/cash-transfers-evidence-paper.pdf>

'Good practice in the development of management information systems for social protection' (2011): A Development Pathways on management information systems (MISs) by examining good practice in their design for social protection.

'Walking the Talk: Cash Transfers and Gender Dynamics' (May 2011): A new report by Concern Worldwide and Oxfam GB, looks at the impacts of cash transfers (CTs) on gender dynamics both within households and communities

'The affordability of social protection in the light of international spending commitments' (March 2011)
ODI Background Paper, Available on www.odi.org.uk or [here](#)

'Natural Disasters: What is the Role for Social Safety Nets?' (Feb, 2011), Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 110 - World Bank Social Protection Discussion Paper, available [here](#):

New book: 'Social Protection for the Poor and Poorest Concepts, Policies and Politics', Barrientos, A (2011): Examines the political processes shaping the formulation of social protection policies; compares the key conceptual frameworks available for analysing social protection; and provides a comparative discussion on the policies focused on the poor and the poorest.

SPOTLIGHT: OECS countries visit to Jamaica's CCT Programme : What lessons for OECS Reform?

In January 2011, the Secretariat for the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean (OECS) and UNICEF's Eastern Caribbean Office organised a study visit for representatives from its Member States to Jamaica's largest social protection programme, PATH – the Programme for the Advancement of Health and Education.

PATH is a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme that began in Jamaica in 2001, with assistance from the World Bank. It is currently one of the most developed CCT schemes in the Caribbean region and was created as part of a broader reform of Jamaica's welfare system. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the PATH project team, the study visit provided the opportunity for very collaborative and candid discussions on Jamaica's experience of reform, its benefits and lessons learned along the way.

This report provides a summary of the major policy issues discussed during this visit with a focus on highlighting lessons that might be relevant for OECS countries during their own reform processes.

The Process of Reform

1. The reform of Jamaica's welfare system started in 2001 but the process of learning is ongoing. The programme has moved from a phase of consolidation (2002-2007) to a second

phase (2008-2013) focused on improving programme effectiveness. This has only been possible because of the heavy investment in M&E.

Evidence obtained from PATH's internal monitoring processes and independent evaluations has led to a number of policy changes to PATH's original architecture. This has included the introduction of a tiered and gender differentiated payment system for school children, responding to findings that dropout rates among older boys were high; increasing the size of transfers in response to the food, financial and fuel crises; and the inclusion of a base payment to provide a social protection floor for the poorest.

2. The use of objectively defined eligibility criteria (in this case through a proxy means test) is considered the backbone of Jamaica's modernised welfare system.

Deciding on the use of the PMT was one of the first steps in Jamaica's social safety net reform. Separating the institution that sets this formula (Planning Institute of Jamaica) from the one which implements the programme (Ministry of Labour and Social Services) has been critical to maintaining the integrity of the selection process. As eligibility for the PATH programme entitles beneficiaries to a wide range of other social assistance programmes (such as second education schemes or back to work programmes) establishing legitimacy for this process has also improved the integrity of other social assistance schemes

in Jamaica.

3. Though PATH uses a Proxy Means Test as a first step in determining eligibility, the application process is not without human input and judgement. The social worker remains an integral resource in PATH's application process. Applicants to the PATH programme are initially tested for their eligibility through a proxy means test, based on information provided by the applicant to the social worker. Though this process is computerised and results are calculated based on an econometric model, the social worker is still a key part of this application process. 'Qualified applicants' only become 'registered applicants' following a social worker-led verification process. An appeal is also possible for those who narrowly miss passing.

4. Another strength of PATH has been its political sustainability. This has been achieved in part because the programme has obtained non-partisan support for its objectives (whilst being integrated into Jamaica's National Development Plan). PATH was originally funded largely by donors. Today, however, only 28% of PATH is still donor-funded with increasing contribution from the Government of Jamaica every year. Having survived a number of election changes, it is now considered a long-term intervention and a core part of Jamaica's



social assistance regime. According to the PATH project team, one of the reasons it has benefited from such sustained political support is because Jamaica's welfare modernisation process has been integrated into Jamaica's National Development Plan, 'Vision 2030', which was the product of a process that required consensus across the political parties. Its longevity is also credited to the fact that the programme is able to demonstrate positive results (through effective M&E). PATH is also now legislated into Jamaica's Welfare Act, providing a legal base for its operation.

Cash Transfers and Conditionalities

5. PATH cash transfers comprise a mix of conditional and unconditional benefits. This approach has been devised based on a programme of learning about how conditionalities affect beneficiaries and their daily choices. PATH began primarily to address *intergenerational* poverty by using conditionalities on cash transfers to incentivise greater school attendance and use of health clinics among poor families. Recently, however the PATH pro-



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programme readjusted its strategy to introduce the concept of a 'base' payment into its programme which was provided to all beneficiaries irrespective of their compliance with conditionalities. This unconditional base payment is roughly 50% of the benefit. The remaining 50% is then provided as before; on the basis of meeting conditionalities. Part of the motivation for this change was based on feedback from interviews with non-compliant PATH families which showed that in many cases, failure to comply was due to insufficient income (and the benefit was not enough to offset costs of compliance).

6. The cash benefits that PATH provides are relatively small but positive behaviour changes are visible.

PATH's evaluation in 2007 highlighted that for a household with five persons - two non-school age children (eligible for the health grant); two school age children (eligible for the education grant) and one eligible adult - the household would receive the equivalent of US\$32.50 per month or roughly 20% of Jamaica's minimum wage per month for general workers. Yet the same independent evaluations also demonstrate that PATH is having an impact on schooling and health care visits. In 2007, health care visits for children 0 to 6 years old increased by approximately 38% as a result of the program. School attendance rates among PATH students were also noted as being 3% higher than non-PATH students. Even small cash benefits appear to induce some behavioural change among beneficiaries.

7. Based on evidence

of gendered and age-sensitive trends in school attendance rates, PATH has tailored its cash transfers to provide differentiated payments for boys and girls, according to age. In 2005, the GoJ commissioned a pilot qualitative study to evaluate the effectiveness of PATH. This study found high rates of non-compliance among children in secondary schools, especially among the males. As a result, in 2008, PATH introduced a differentiated payment system where older children get higher payments (to incentivise secondary school completion) and where boys get 10% higher payments than girls.

8. Maintaining project flexibility – including in the application of conditions - without sacrificing project objectives is a key challenge for PATH to ensure that programme genuinely serves the needs of the poor.

Though conditionality is a fundamental component of the PATH programme design, policy makers are well aware of the dangers of building a punitive culture of welfare. To avoid this, the GoJ has sought to incorporate a number of features in the programme that allow for flexibility, such as the recent introduction of an unconditioned base payment and the fact that all PATH beneficiaries are given a three month grace period before conditionality compliance is assessed. The types of conditionality applied also varies with age/abilities etc. (For instance adults are only asked to visit health centres

twice a year and disabled children are not subject to school attendance checks etc).

Managing Resources Effectively

9. Attaching health and education conditions to cash transfers is costly and requires heavy resource investments from schools and health clinics to record compliance.

One of the biggest challenges facing the success of PATH, even 10 years down the road of its implementation, is the demand that the CCT programme – and particularly the use of conditionalities - places on schools and health clinics, whose resources are already under heavy strain. During the study visit, discussions with representatives from a participating health clinic, primary school and secondary school took place and in all three organisations, staff raised problems they face in meeting implementation demands. This includes filling out the compliance forms and conducting the monitoring exercises as well as responding to questions from participating and prospective beneficiaries.

10. Recognising the reality of limited resources, PATH keeps its objectives focused and specific and relies on strong inter-agency machinery to help families deal with non-PATH related problems.

The objectives of using a CCT scheme in Jamaica are very clear. The CCT is a policy instrument designed to offset the opportunity costs of using health and education services for poor families and to encourage greater take-up. The CCT scheme is not directed at improving the *quality* of schools or health services, nor is it being used to influence how well children do in schools or to handle other social problems affecting the family. Given that the ratio of social

workers to beneficiary families on the PATH programme is 1:1000, recognising the limits to its mandate is an important part of PATH's planning process if resources are to be managed effectively!

Though PATH's own mandate is very specific, its outreach is greatly enhanced by the fact that it is also provides a gateway to a range of other social assistance programmes in Jamaica offering complimentary services, such back to work programmes and psycho-social assistance. This process works partly because during the welfare modernisation process, the Government of Jamaica harmonised eligibility criteria across these social programmes. The PATH project team also continually works with other Ministries and agencies to integrate the programmes they offer (e.g. the Ministry of Education and its school feeding programme) in order to provide a unified service to poor households. The PATH project team also works with other social welfare bodies to provide effective referral processes and with civil society bodies to design innovative outreach initiatives.

Developing strong interagency networks has not happened overnight but is a result of continuous efforts throughout the reform process, with stakeholders incentivised by the opportunities PATH provides them to lower their own targeting costs and profit from each other's outreach efforts.

Employing Innovative Techniques for Quality Service Delivery and Outreach

11. PATH uses social marketing strategies to research behavioural change and to design its outreach programmes. PATH's communication strategy is

three pronged comprising public education, public relations and social marketing. Social marketing involves first understanding the processes that underpin a change in behaviour and then finding an entry point for influencing a change. An example from PATH's social marketing strategy is a current initiative where the MLSS is working with the Jamaican Cultural Development Cooperation to develop a cultural programme that can educate children on PATH and why it exists. This is partly in response to findings from the National Education Consultation that exposed how many children (beneficiary and otherwise) do not fully understand PATH. The cultural programme intends tackle issues of discrimination and stigmatization between PATH and non-PATH children.

12. CCTs are used to improve school attendance and health centre visits but PATH is starting to use other methods to enhance educational performance among the poorest. In addition to administering transfer payments, over the years, PATH has sought alternative ways to improve human development outcomes among the poorest without the use of additional funds. The 'top achievers forum' is an example of the innovative approach used. This annual competition is led by the MLSS and awards those students in PATH that receive the highest grades in their secondary school examinations. In addition to participation at the annual awards ceremony, participants are also provided significant financial rewards (sponsored by the private sector) and the competition attracts national publicity. 'High achievers' also feature in PATH's promotional videos. The intention behind such efforts is to generate pride in academic success among

PATH beneficiaries.

13. Internal monitoring has also been crucial to effective service delivery. Its success depends on using M&E as a tool for better management rather than a threat, and on creating a rewards-based culture to encourage quality service delivery. The PATH programme conducts monitoring and evaluation for three purposes: to support results-based management (where the administration is judged on its performance not control of inputs); to enhance accountability and transparency to civil society and beneficiaries; and for knowledge generation on development effectiveness.

The project recently introduced service standards across implementing agencies as a direct response to findings delays in payments to beneficiaries were common. These new service standards - which include stipulated time periods for which registered beneficiaries should receive payments - are intended to encourage quality delivery and to help identify areas where further project support is required. Staff rewards systems are also used, such as 'best parish manager' awards to help foster commitment to quality service delivery within implementing bodies. PATH is also currently planning to film a short documentary about the Programme focused on the role of the social worker, showcasing their important contribution to the work.

About us, subscribe and send us your contributions

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