

# Impact Evaluation of a Conditional-Cash- Transfer Program in rural areas of Honduras: Lessons and Challenges

Roundtable  
American Evaluation Association

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## “Bono 10,000” Program at a glance...

- Conditional cash transfers to mothers or female household-heads, focused on:
  1. Poor households
  2. Households with pregnant women and/or children under 5 y/o
  3. Households with children 6 to 18 (y/o) :
- Compliance with:
  - i. Health care: attend control visits (women and children <5 y/o)
  - ii. Education: school attendance (children 6-18 y/o)
- Benefit amount
  1. Health care: \$250 USD per year (women and children <5 y/o)
  2. Education: \$500 USD per year (children 6-18 y/o)

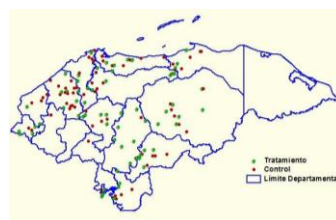
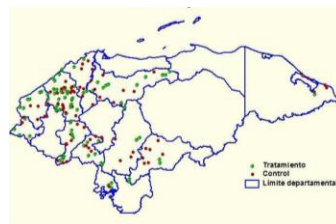
## Evaluation guidelines

- Experimental trial (n=4,416 HHs in 296 villages)
  - Randomization Phase 1. – Random treatment assignment at the village level: 150/ 150 (four of them declined)
  - Randomization Phase 2. – Selection of 15 households per village in household clusters of at least 5 households in each (based on means proxy test).
- Difference in differences. – Changes in certain indicators could be assigned to the program after a series of statistical test of internal validity.
- Baseline (BL) and End-line (EL) survey in the same households across time (2012 and 2013)

## Data collection: Baseline, 2012 & Endline, 2013

Division of data collection in 2 rounds, both BL and EL, why?

- Round 1
  - January-February
  - BL - 2,466 HHs in 166 villages
  - EL – 2,378 HHs
- Round 2
  - May-June
  - BL - 1,950 HHs in 131 villages
  - EL – 1,867 HHs



## Data Collection Instrument

14 modules asking about several topics:

- Household composition
- Dwelling characteristics
- Education
- Health conditions
- Income and consumption
- Experience with subsidies
- Anthropometrics
- Family relations and decision-making
- Self-esteem (Rosenberg Test)



Impact Evaluation of a Conditional-Cash- Transfer Program in rural areas of Honduras: Lessons and Challenges 5

## Social context of rural Honduras

- Poverty (2012)
  - 65% poverty headcount and 53-percentage-points poverty gap
- Diversity
  - Two indigenous groups in the northeast areas (Misquitos and Tahwakas), whose members often do not speak Spanish
  - British-African-descent communities in the north harbor
- Political turmoil
  - Most recent military coup d'état in the region (June 2009) and national- and local-level elections in November 2013
- Emergence of new criminal and violent groups
  - Mara from El Salvador
  - Drug dealing



Impact Evaluation of a Conditional-Cash- Transfer Program in rural areas of Honduras: Lessons and Challenges 6

## Data collection challenges

- Rain season
- Poor quality of roads
- Lodging conditions
- Surveying control and treatment households
- Violent areas
- Political turmoil at the local level
- Elections in November 2013 at different levels
- Nature of the interaction between beneficiaries and the program
- PAPI surveys and verification of data



## Data collection challenges: surprises in the field

- Authorities and community members in a few villages perceived fieldwork teams as suspicious actors, particularly during the end-line stage communities...but that perception can negatively affect the whole data collection schedule:
  - Undermining respondents' confidence to provide information
  - Harming the relationship between local subcontractor and local authorities
  - Delaying field work



## Data collection challenges: surprises in the field

- Organ-trafficking criminal groups
  - During the first quarter of 2013, communities in the western region learned about kidnapped children whose organs were traded
  - Community members and authorities in a few villages stopped the fieldwork teams, and two of them were detained in jail until further inquiries.
- Hermetic attitude of non-Spanish speaking community members and respondents
  - Translation was insufficient, “insiders” were needed to contact respondents and gain their trust so they would provide us information.



Impact Evaluation of a Conditional-Cash- Transfer Program in rural areas of Honduras: Lessons and Challenges 9

## Measures taken (and new challenges involved...)

- Data-entry clerks in the field
  - Power connection and workplace needs
- Learning about new challenges during the field stage enabled the data collection team :
  - Use institutional means to announce the survey visits to the community
  - Include local people of the most remote and/or non-Spanish-speaking communities to serve as “ambassadors” of the survey within their communities.



Impact Evaluation of a Conditional-Cash- Transfer Program in rural areas of Honduras: Lessons and Challenges 10

## Lessons and Reflections

- ✓ Technological advantage vs. privileging staff security?
  - ✓ Bringing data-entry clerks and error reports to the field allowed field teams to rectify and complete information when they were still in the communities.
- ✓ Develop protocols to ensure the security of field staff
- ✓ Develop a respectful (not partisan) relationship with *de facto* powers in the communities
- Need of capacity-building among donors and local subcontractors to promote acceptable security standards of field work (wider insurance coverage).

¡Gracias!

Thank You!

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