

Child Work and Child Labour:

*The Impact of Educational Policies and
Programmes in Low- and Middle-Income
Countries*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

By 2025, the international community aims to achieve notable progress towards eliminating child labour, including its worst forms. However, between 2016 and 2020, global progress stalled for the first time in 20 years, reversing previous downward trends that saw child labour falling by 94 million between 2000 and 2016, from a value of 245.5 million in 2000. Between 2016 and 2020, there have been increases in the number of children in child labour (8 million more children) and children in hazardous conditions (6.5 million more children), particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where one in five children were in child labour at the beginning of 2020 (ILO and UNICEF 2021). ‘Child labour’ is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It mostly includes work below the minimum age and work under hazardous conditions (see definitions in Annex 1).

Based on global estimates, 160 million children – of which 63 million are girls and 97 million are boys – were engaged in child labour globally at the start of 2020. This accounts for roughly one tenth of all children worldwide – many of whom are in hazardous conditions (79 million children, of which 28.8 million are girls and 50.2 million are boys) (ILO and UNICEF 2021). The vast majority of children (more than 70 per cent) are working in agriculture (commercial and family farms), while 30 per cent work in the remaining sectors, most notably manufacturing, mining and domestic services (ILO and UNICEF 2021). While most regions show declines in child labour, child labour has been increasing in sub-Saharan Africa since 2012. Moreover, even in countries where child labour is declining, there remain pockets or ‘hotspots’ with high prevalence of child labour within countries, for instance in expanding urban slums (Quattri and Watkins 2019).

One in every three children involved in child labour is not in school (ILO and UNICEF 2021). Among children in child labour, 28 per cent of children between the ages of 5 and 11, and 35 per cent of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 14, are out of school (ILO and UNICEF 2021). Early labour-force entry, economic hardship and accompanying school dropout frequently co-occur, with lifelong negative consequences for children, their families and the human capital development of communities where child labour is prevalent (Boutin and Jouvin 2022).

While the above trends were recorded by the start of 2020, the COVID-19 crisis significantly increased the risk of child labour (ILO and UNICEF 2020, 2021;

ILO and UNICEF Innocenti 2022). This risk increased mostly due to health or economic losses, which can increase the demand for child labour as a coping strategy. Prolonged periods of school closures, together with more limited access to child protection services, also increased children’s vulnerability to exploitation (Ko Ko and May Oo 2022).

Insufficient access to school, low school quality, discriminatory practices or equity gaps in class are critical push factors for child labour. In many contexts, school is not seen as a cost-effective and beneficial alternative to child labour. In these settings, children engage in child labour as their households cannot afford the cost of education, because schools are not available locally or school quality is so low that time spent in school is not seen as beneficial by children and their households (Thévenon and Edmonds 2019). Therefore, ensuring accessible high-quality education remains critical to address child labour. Evidence-based policies and programmes making education more affordable, in tandem with social protection, and supply-side interventions improving the quality of schooling can produce sustainable reductions in child labour, in addition to improving schooling outcomes.

In low- and middle-income countries, there is growing interest in the promise of educational policies and legislative reforms along with local and regional education-related programmatic activities to fight child labour. However, despite mounting evidence of the importance of education in the elimination of child labour, to date, only a few evidence assessments have documented the effectiveness of educational policies and programmes with respect to child labour (exceptions include Aslam et al. 2021; Dammert et al. 2018). This is a squandered opportunity, as this information is critical for the design and implementation of effective interventions that can contribute to eliminating child labour.

This rapid evidence assessment (REA) takes stock of the evidence on the effectiveness of educational policies and programmes in addressing child labour in low- and middle-income countries. The REA considers a broad range of labour outcomes including *child work* (i.e., children engaged in economic activities or household chores, not necessarily detrimental) and *child labour*, that is, detrimental forms of work, defined as work below the minimum age or work under hazardous conditions (see details on definition in Annex 1).

The REA focuses on describing the causal impact of schooling programmes and policies on labour outcomes, based on experimental and quasi-

experimental studies, and systematic reviews. To the extent information is available within the considered studies, it also identifies and discusses the main pathways and mechanisms of impact, as well as the programme design features that influence programme effectiveness.¹

1.2 Contribution to the literature

As a first step of the REA, UNICEF Innocenti conducted a preliminary ‘scoping exercise’ to understand the evidence base – including evidence gaps, definitions and key concepts. This showed that most studies focus on the impacts of education policies and programmes on schooling outcomes without considering their effects on child labour outcomes. As a result, most systematic reviews focused on the education domain. Examples include Damon et al. (2019), Ganimian and Murnane (2016), Garcia and Saavedra (2017), Glewwe and Muralidharan (2016), Kremer et al. (2013) and Snilstveit et al. (2016).

Only a few systematic reviews have covered educational policies and programmes with a specific focus on child labour outcomes, including Aslam et al. (2021) and Dammert et al. (2018). However, Aslam et al. (2021) considered the broader link between education and child labour, without a focus on the effectiveness of educational policies and programmes. Moreover, Aslam et al. also analysed the role of factors other than education, such as health and weather shocks, as determinants of child labour. Dammert et al. (2018) focused on studies on the effectiveness of public policy on child labour, but without a focus on educational policies and programmes. The REA contributes to the literature by having a focus on *educational policies and programmes*, and assessing their *causal* links with child labour outcomes. The REA only includes experimental or quasi-experimental studies that allow estimating causal effects on child labour outcomes. As it pertains to policies and programmes, the REA focused on those that have a specific design element related to education and/or an education objective, even if the programme does not have an explicit objective in terms of child labour reduction (see section 3.1 for details on the REA inclusion criteria). Introducing this focus, this REA goes into more detail on the specific *mechanisms* that link educational policies and programmes to child labour outcomes.

Moreover, with respect to Aslam et al., we expanded the reference period to include studies from 2000 (Aslam et al. included studies from 2009), and children’s age group including children up to 17 years of age (Aslam et al. focus on children up to 14 years).

Other literature reviews of interest are those that assess the effectiveness of cash transfers on child labour. As most cash transfers have an explicit objective to improve children’s schooling outcomes, these reviews are relevant for our purposes and their findings are summarized as part of this REA. However, these reviews are limited to a specific type of public policy and do not allow for a broader assessment of the effect of various educational policies and programmes on child labour outcomes. Moreover, most of these reviews do not distinguish between general participation or hours worked in economic activities and child labour for elimination, that is, detrimental forms of work (see Annex 1 for definitions).

1.3 Aims and research questions

Drawing on primary and secondary research studies, this REA seeks to identify, assess and synthesize evidence on the impact of educational interventions (policies and programmes) on child labour in low- and middle-income countries, drawing on an adaptive socio-ecological conceptual framework. The second set of objectives will explore factors that contribute to or hamper the effectiveness of these programmes in addressing child labour. We also aim to potentially document specific child work/labour measures, highlighting those studies analysing child labour for elimination, defined as work below the minimum age or work under hazardous conditions (see details on definition in Annex 1).

The research questions for this REA are:

1. How effective are educational programmes and policies in reducing child labour/work among children aged 5–17 in low- and middle-income countries?
2. What features of educational programmes and policies contribute to their effectiveness or ineffectiveness in eradicating child labour/work in low- and middle-income countries (intervention specifics, population and contextual factors)?

¹ The REA is produced as part of the project *Evidence on Educational Strategies to Address Child Labour in South Asia* (see www.unicef-irc.org/research/child-labour-and-education-in-india-and-bangladesh). Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the project includes two main research streams. Stream 1 reviews recent trends and patterns on child labour and education and their interlinkages, with a focus on India and Bangladesh, and describes the most recent evidence on the impact of educational policies and programmes on child labour. Stream 2 includes primary research to directly study the effects of educational programmes on child labour, and the pathways of impact. The REA is part of research stream 1.

To answer these research questions, this REA: (i) presents a conceptual framework for the relationship between educational interventions and child labour outcomes, thereby elucidating the primary routes and mechanisms of influence; (ii) identifies evidence gaps and priority areas for further research on the impact of educational policies and programmes on child labour; and (iii) seeks to inform policy and programming decisions on effective educational interventions to prevent and eliminate the exploitation of children. The REA will focus on children in low- and middle-income countries, children in hazardous labour and other worst forms of child labour, with particular attention to gender and equity aspects.

The REA is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces the conceptual framework underpinning this REA, showing the primary routes and mechanisms of influence of education interventions on child labour. Section 3 describes the methodology guiding this REA, while sections 4 and 5 present our synthesized results, including an evidence gap map (EGM), and a narrative synthesis of key findings from individual studies and systematic reviews. Section 6 concludes with critical reflections on the main findings. Finally, sections 7 and 8 outline policy and research implications, respectively.

2. Conceptual framework

Our conceptual framework represents the main types of educational policies/programmes and allows us to outline the key pathways linking educational interventions to child labour impacts. The elements of our framework are organized into four horizontal levels, describing interventions, intermediate outcomes, outcomes (short to medium term) and impacts (long term).

Interventions. Following Snilstveit et al. (2016), we acknowledge that schooling and child labour outcomes are determined by a complex set of factors operating across four main levels:

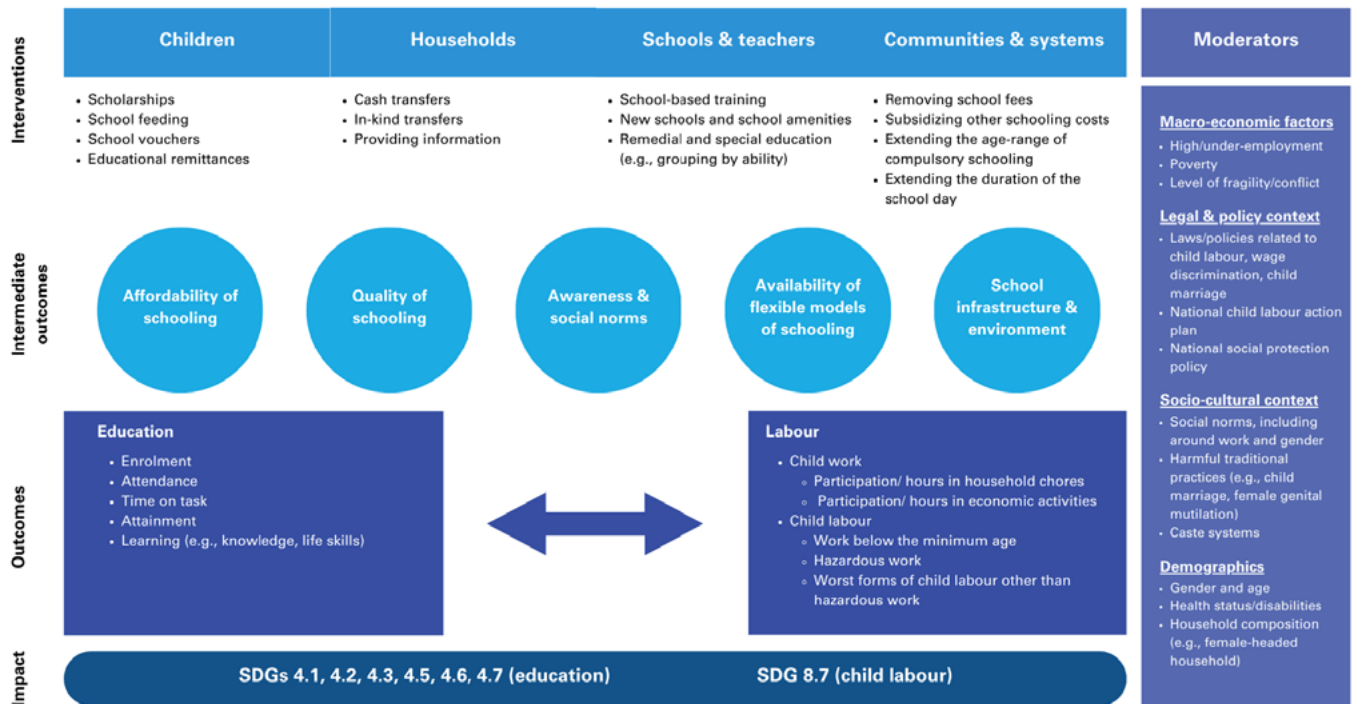
1. child level – including, for example, a child’s health and nutrition status, or a child’s awareness of the importance of education and the hazards related to child labour
2. household level – such as disposable income, or caregivers’ awareness of the relevance of education and the hazards related to child labour
3. school and teacher level – including, for example, availability of schooling infrastructures, or adoption of specific teaching modalities
4. community and system level – such as national education policies and budget.

Hence, this REA distinguishes interventions addressing barriers at these four levels (see Figure 1). Examples of interventions addressing barriers at the *child level* include merit-based scholarships, school feeding, and building children’s agency and awareness on their rights, including gender equity aspects. Interventions at the *household level* may take the form of conditional or unconditional cash transfers, or sensitization programmes through which caregivers are informed of the benefits of education. Interventions at the *school and teacher level* may include the expansion of school infrastructure and gender-sensitive amenities, provision of school materials, teacher training or the introduction of remedial and special education opportunities (such as flexible schooling hours or targeted programmes for out-of-school children). Interventions at the *community and systems level* may include schooling reforms that extend the duration of compulsory schooling or the duration of the school day, removal of school fees, policies subsidizing other schooling costs, and public–private partnerships. However, our REA acknowledges that, in practice, it is difficult to distinguish between these different levels of interventions. For example, most interventions that focus on households also affect their children and vice versa. Therefore, the categorization should be interpreted with some flexibility as a way to organize the multiple types of relevant interventions.

Intermediate outcomes represent those effects triggered as a direct consequence of the intervention. These can be considered as *mediators* or channels through which an intervention produces its outcomes. Key intermediate outcomes include:

- *Affordability of schooling* – interventions increasing household income (such as cash transfers) make schools more affordable and thus allow households to improve children’s school participation. This, in turn, may reduce child labour as children spend more time in school.
- *Quality of schooling* – improvements in the quality of schooling (as determined, for example, by improved teaching modalities, availability of more and better trained teachers, use of more

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



and better-quality resources and availability of flexible schooling models, such as for children with disabilities or children who migrate) can improve both attendance and learning. The same holds for improvements in the broader schooling environment, whereby school is seen as a safe and healthy environment that nurtures well-being. Hence, children are more likely to attend school and progress to higher education levels. This, in turn, can improve child labour outcomes.

- *Attitudes* towards schooling and child labour – programmes such as life skill training or programmes improving awareness of the importance of education and the hazards related to child labour are likely to shift children’s and or caregivers’ attitudes towards schooling and child labour, thus improving schooling outcomes and reducing child labour outcomes.
- *Children’s health* – programmes such as school feeding may improve children’s health, which in turn may increase their participation and learning in school. As a result, child labour may decrease.

Outcomes are the measurable effects of an intervention (what is achieved through those activities). The framework shows outcomes in the two interdependent domains of education and labour.²

Impact refers to long-term and stable changes that may persist even after the intervention is ended.

Moderators can strengthen or weaken the association between an intervention and its outcomes, across all stages of the causal chain, from intervention to impact. Four domains of moderators are considered: (i) macroeconomic factors (such as economic growth, labour migration, high/underemployment, poverty, seasonality of work, labour market outcomes, income and awareness of conditionalities); (ii) sociodemographic factors (such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, caste, disability, discrimination, health status, birth order); (iii) legal and policy frameworks (including laws and policies, and levels of poverty and development); and (iv) socio-cultural factors (including social norms, patriarchal norms, harmful traditional practices such as child marriage).³

² While the REA focuses on child labour outcomes (see REA inclusion/exclusion criteria), our conceptual framework reflects that educational interventions directly influence schooling outcomes. In describing the findings we will cover both domains if schooling outcomes were also assessed in the considered study.

³ These domains were informed by UNICEF’s Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) developed in 2010 as part of UNICEF’s focus on equity and social determinants in the protection and promotion of child rights. We also used the PROGRESS-Plus–Cochrane Equity framework to identify various equity-sensitive moderators that considered social differentiation based on study location, intervention beneficiaries’ age, race/ethnicity, gender, education level, socioeconomic status and disability (O’Neill et al. 2014).

The above mechanisms assume that interventions are designed and implemented so to reach those households and children that are more disadvantaged in terms of access to quality schooling (for instance due to poverty or social exclusion) and that face a higher risk of child labour.

Overall, this conceptual framework serves as a heuristic model to categorize the interventions and organize our findings. It is necessarily a simplified and non-exhaustive representation of all relevant interventions and mechanisms at play.⁴

3. Methods

This section describes the REA eligibility criteria, search strategy, screening and data extraction process, as well as the quality assessment of included studies, and the approach to synthesis.⁵

3.1 Inclusion criteria

This REA included rigorous impact evaluations assessing the impact of a wide range of educational policies and programmes on child labour outcomes. We considered exclusively studies using experimental or quasi-experimental designs and systematic reviews including such studies. As reported in the REA protocol (Emezue et al. 2021), single studies on cash transfers are not included, so evidence on these programmes is only assessed based on systematic reviews.

We focused on children aged 5–17 years in low- and middle-income countries.⁶ We considered education policies or programmes with the potential to reduce child labour, including those that were not explicitly designed to address child labour. Necessary conditions for the programme or policy to be included were the presence of an education design component or an education objective. Our primary outcomes of interest were changes in children's participation or time spent in economic activities, participation or time in household chores, as well as 'child labour' as defined by ILO conventions. Programme effects on schooling were also discussed, whenever studied together with child labour outcomes. Only studies conducted in English and published between 2000 and 2021 were considered.

3.2 Search strategy

The search strategy included electronic searches, hand searches of the bibliographies of included studies, and expert recommendations. We also screened studies from an initial scoping exercise that was undertaken as part of the inception of this REA.

Electronic searches were conducted between September and November 2021. Our search strategy aimed at identifying both published and unpublished evidence from various sources – including bibliographic databases, institutional websites, libraries and expert consultations. The key words used in the search are listed in Annex 2 of the REA protocol (Emezue et al. 2021).

We searched in the following academic databases: MEDLINE (EBSCO), Web of Science (Clarivate), APA PsycINFO (EBSCO), Education Resources Information Center – ERIC (EBSCO), Academic Search online (EBSCO), EconLIT (EBSCO) and Cochrane Systematic Reviews (EBSCO).

We additionally searched in five institutional databases and evidence repositories: ILO i-eval Discovery, 3ie database of impact evaluations, World Bank eLibrary, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) iLibrary and Clearing House for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR). We then hand-searched the bibliographies of the studies that met the inclusion criteria, and the bibliographies of other promising primary and secondary studies for unique reports on completed or full impact evaluations. As part of the process, internal and external experts provided further suggestions on relevant studies for inclusion.

3.3 Selection of studies

We used EPPI-Reviewer Web (Thomas et al. 2010) to screen studies and to extract data from those we included. We first screened by title and abstract. Two reviewers independently screened a random sample of 5 per cent (double-blind screening). We reached an inter-rater reliability rate of 98 per cent and then proceeded to single screening of the remaining references. We then screened by full text. Any disagreements and concerns between the two reviewers were addressed through communication. Where there was uncertainty, a third reviewer was consulted. The screening checklist guiding the full-text screening procedure is provided in the published protocol.

4 This framework has been adapted and further simplified from a more complex model reported in the REA protocol (Emezue et al. 2021).

5 Our REA followed methodological guidelines for generating evidence synthesis products by Bakrania (2020). Emezue et al. (2021) describes the methodology in more detail.

6 The set of considered low- and middle-income countries follows the World Bank classification.

3.4 Data extraction and management

A data extraction tool was developed and piloted in EPPI-Reviewer Web. First, we double-blind coded 10 per cent of the studies included at the full text screening stage to ensure coding consistency. Once agreement was reached, the data extraction for each study proceeded in single coding. A third team member additionally reviewed a sample of the extracted data for consistency. Disagreements were then addressed through further discussion. A bibliographic database of the studies included was created and stored in an EndNote reference database. We provide the coding tool used for the data extraction in Annex 2.

3.5 Methodological limitations

Although we aimed at identifying and assessing exclusively rigorous impact evaluations, we acknowledge several methodological limitations of the REA, mostly related to the 'rapid' nature of this evidence synthesis.

First, in comparison with traditional systematic reviews, both the search and screening processes used in this REA were done in an accelerated manner to inform policy and practice as soon as possible. So, there are limits to comprehensiveness and it is possible that we missed studies that would have met our inclusion criteria.

Second, the evidence base on the effects of educational interventions on child labour outcomes, although evolving, remains overall limited, as most impact evaluations of educational programmes and interventions focus on education outcomes. Hence, the findings from this REA have limited generalizability, especially as applied to contexts and countries for which the evidence is relatively scarcer.

In addition, given that we limited our search to 2021, we did not find published studies on the child labour impact of educational interventions in the context of the pandemic. This represents a key gap, considering that the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the exposure of children around the world to hazardous and exploitative work.

3.6 Quality appraisal framework

We used three separate Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) critical appraisal checklists to assess the quality of the evidence base for experimental, quasi-experimental and systematic review studies (Aromataris et al. 2015; Tufanaru et al. 2020).⁷ Each checklist comprised between 9 and 13 questions on a range of methodological quality elements spanning from validity issue to risk of bias in selected studies. Response options to each question were 'yes', 'no', 'unclear' or 'not applicable'. Each study was scored 1 as for 'yes', whereas 'no' and 'unclear' were scored as 0. Following the JBI recommendations, studies were ranked as high quality if they scored 70 per cent or higher, medium quality if they scored 50–69 per cent and low quality if they scored 49 per cent or less. Two reviewers critically appraised the quality of three included studies to establish inter-rater consistency, addressing any disagreements through conversation independently.

3.7 Data synthesis

We used narrative synthesis to analyse and summarize the evidence. Narrative synthesis is often used when statistical meta-analysis or other specialist forms of synthesis are not appropriate. It brings together findings from multiple studies by relying primarily upon the use of words and text to build an overall picture of the current knowledge in a way that tells a compelling story in relation to the established objectives and research questions, aiming to inform policymakers and practitioners (Popay et al. 2006). We thematically organized and summarized the recurring themes and concepts identified across the evidence base. In this REA, we reported on statistically significant results at 5 per cent or 1 per cent significance level (when impacts are statistically significant at 10 per cent we advise caution in interpretation).

Where available, we thus presented age and gender-disaggregated estimates to provide a comprehensive description of impacts. Some of the studies also discussed potential mechanisms and pathways of impact, which allowed us to have a better understanding of the main channels linking education and child labour. This contributed to the refinement of our conceptual framework.

⁷ The three checklists are reported in Annex 3.

4. Overview of the evidence base

This section provides an overview of the evidence base.

4.1 Results of the search

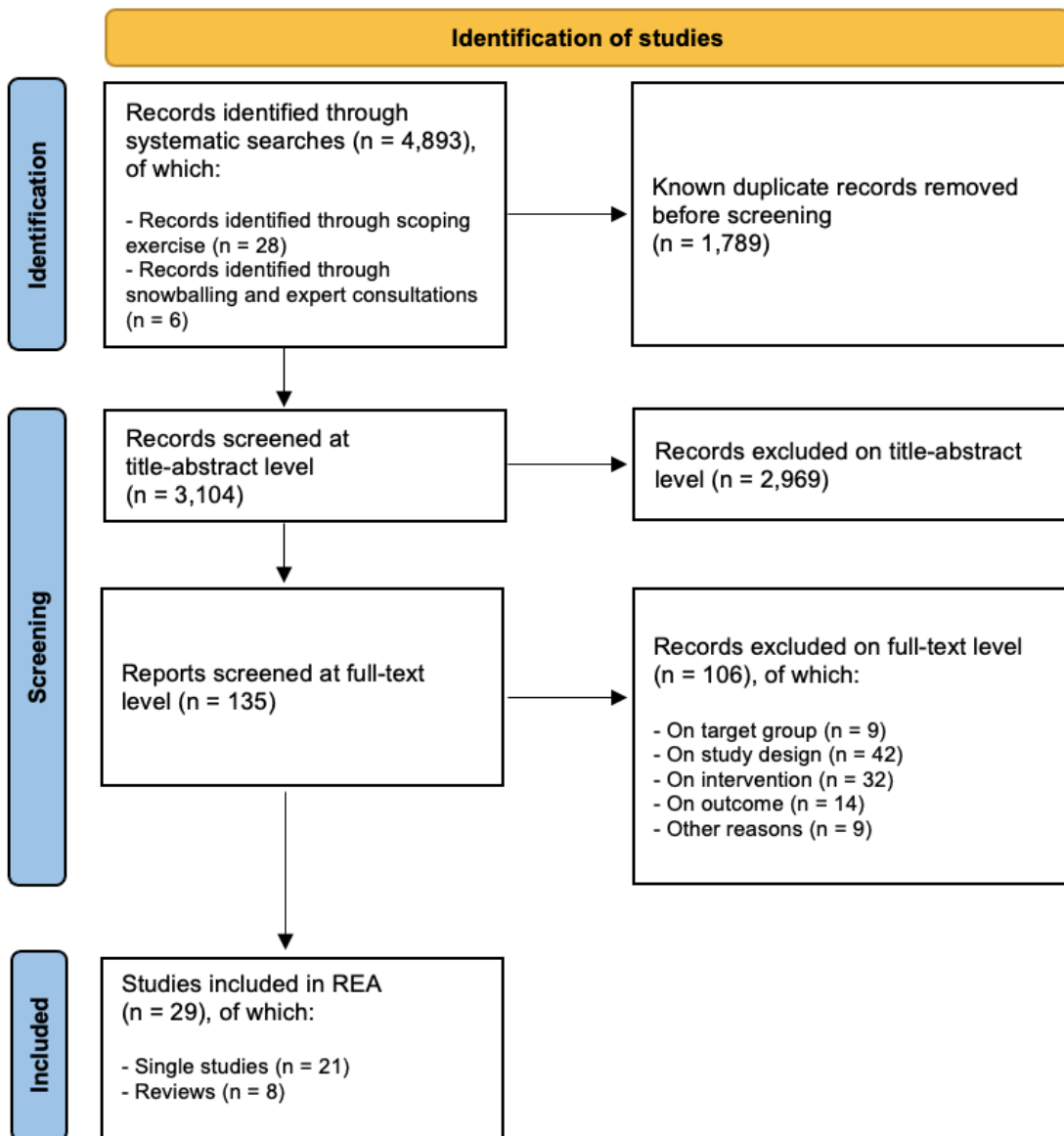
We identified a total of 4,893 records, of which 1,789 were duplicates. After duplicate removal, we screened 3,104 records at title/abstract level and 135 at full-text level. A total of 29 studies met our inclusion criteria – with 8 being systematic reviews and 21 primary studies. Our REA assessed evidence published between 2000 and 2021, with half of the studies

being published in 2017 or before. Figure 2 provides an overview of the literature identification and screening process.

4.2 Included studies and evidence gap map

Twenty-nine studies were included in this REA. Twenty-one were single studies (10 randomized control trials and 11 quasi-experimental studies) and 8 were systematic reviews, of which 4 synthesized exclusively quantitative experimental and quasi-experimental studies, and another 4 included studies with both qualitative and quantitative data.

Figure 2: Identification of studies (PRISMA flowchart: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses)



The 21 primary studies focused on different interventions:

- Ten studies focused on interventions at the child level (four covered scholarships, one covered educational remittances, one covered school vouchers for private secondary schooling and four covered school feeding).
- One study considered interventions at the household level (in-kind transfer).
- Six studies focused on interventions at the school and teacher level (three studies on school-based training, two on expansion of school access, one on increased time in school).
- Four studies focused on interventions at the communities and systems level (two policies removing school fees or providing school subsidies, and two reforms extending compulsory schooling).

Of the eight systematic reviews included, six focused on cash transfers and two covered multiple types of policies and programmes, including cash transfers.

Most studies assessed impacts of these interventions on schooling outcomes, while fewer studies analysed child labour outcomes, which are the focus of this REA. Out of the 21 primary studies:

- 20 reported on schooling outcomes
- 18 reported on children's participation or hours spent in economic activities
- 5 reported on child labour for elimination and 9 reported on household chores.

The evidence gap map (EGM) in Figure 3 provides a more detailed representation of the evidence gaps. In terms of geographical coverage, Latin America and the Caribbean region was the most frequently studied region across both single studies and reviews, followed by Eastern and Southern Africa, and West and central Africa. The least represented region was the Middle East and North Africa followed by Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Figures 4 and 5).⁸ Colombia and Mexico were the most frequently featured countries (appearing in seven studies), followed by Brazil, Honduras and Nicaragua (featuring in six studies each).

4.3 Overall study quality

Seven out of the eight systematic reviews included in this REA were classified as high quality, and one was ranked as medium quality (Rawlings and Rubio 2005). Overall, all eight reviews had explicitly stated research questions, relied on appropriate methods to gather the assessed evidence, and provided policy or research recommendations supported by their findings. In some reviews, key mechanisms for intervention impact were proposed. On the other hand, common weaknesses across studies were the lack of clearly defined data extraction processes and the failure to report publication bias.

Out of 10 experimental studies – all randomized controlled trials (RCTs) – 7 were categorized as high quality and 3 were rated as moderate quality (Gallego et al. 2018; Martinez et al. 2017; Sulaiman 2010). One of these three studies (Gallego et al. 2018) was published as a research brief – only providing an overview of preliminary findings. In addition, some of the RCTs we appraised did not report information on concealment and blinding protocols and contained inconsistencies in assessing primary outcomes.

Of the 11 quasi-experimental studies appraised, 7 were rated as high quality and 4 as moderate quality (Opoku and Boahen 2021; Ravallion and Wodon 2000; Tang et al. 2020; Vuri 2010). Reasons for lower ratings included lack of multiple measures of primary outcomes, and heterogeneity among comparison samples.

Most studies included robustness checks, analysis of heterogeneity of impacts, and tests to shed light on potential causal pathways for intervention effects. Furthermore, most studies used nationally representative datasets. In terms of methodological issues, it was sometimes impossible to determine the similarity between participants in the treatment and control groups and to establish whether participants were exposed to the same intervention. There was also a lack of clarity on the follow-up information. Some studies exploited gradual policy implementation across space and over time to set up a counterfactual. For example, Kozhaya and Flores (2020)⁹ took advantage of the staggered implementation of Mexico's Full-Time Schools programme, while Tang et al. (2020) considered the gradual rollout of China's free compulsory education reform.

⁸ UNICEF regional classification is used: <https://data.unicef.org/regionalclassifications>.

⁹ Kozhaya and Flores (2020) has been published as Kozhaya and Flores (2022).

Figure 3: Evidence gap map

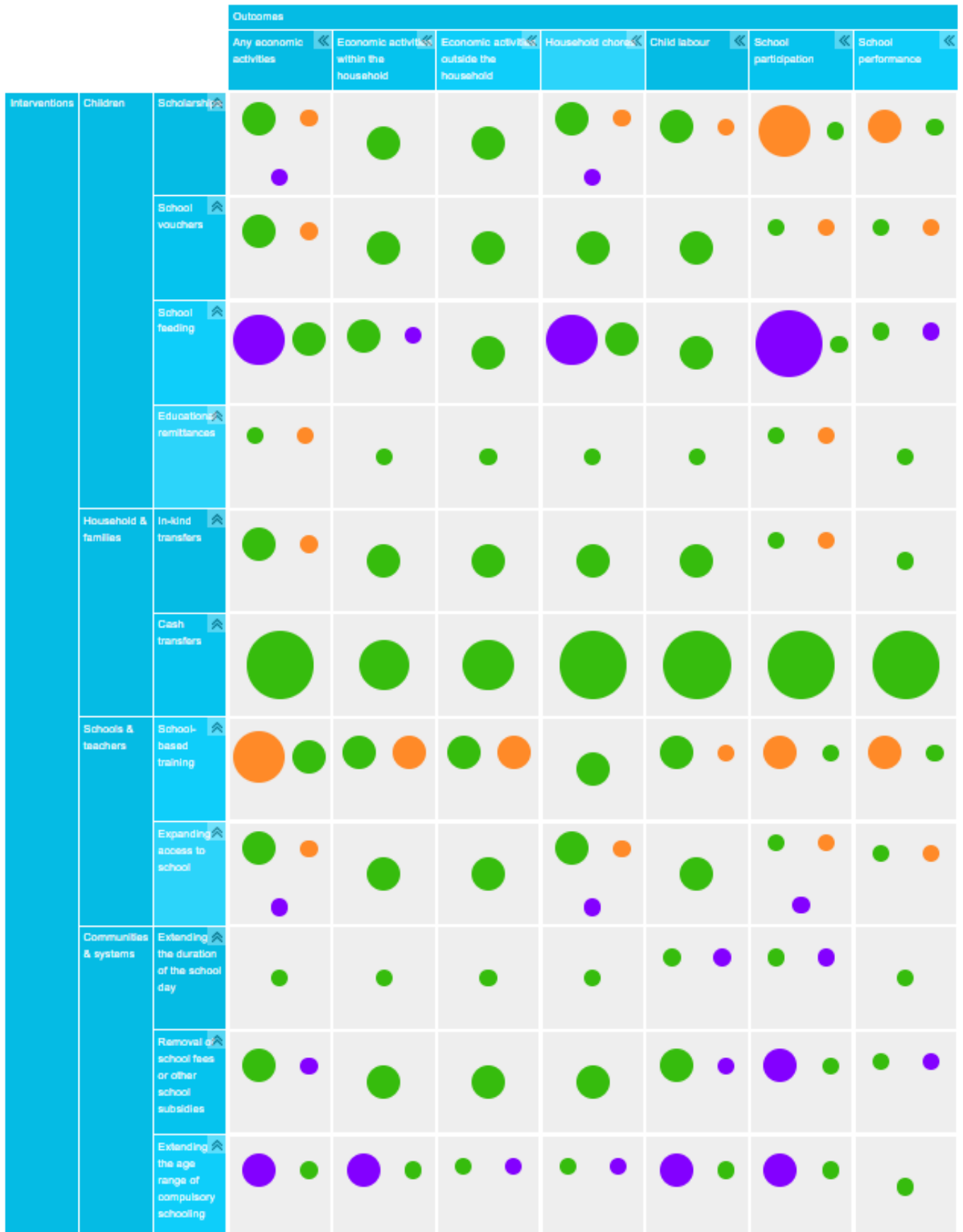


Figure 4: Number of single studies, by region

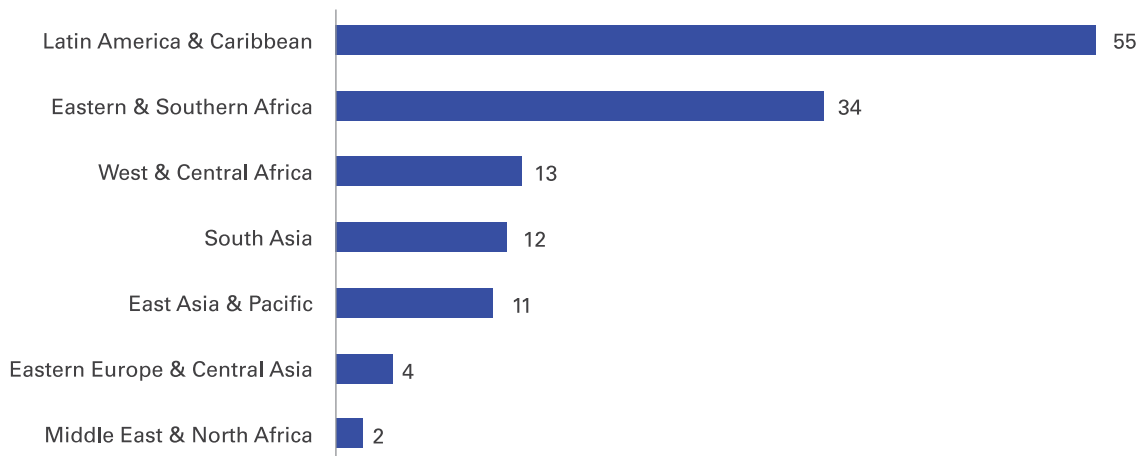


Figure 5: Number of single studies in the reviews, by region

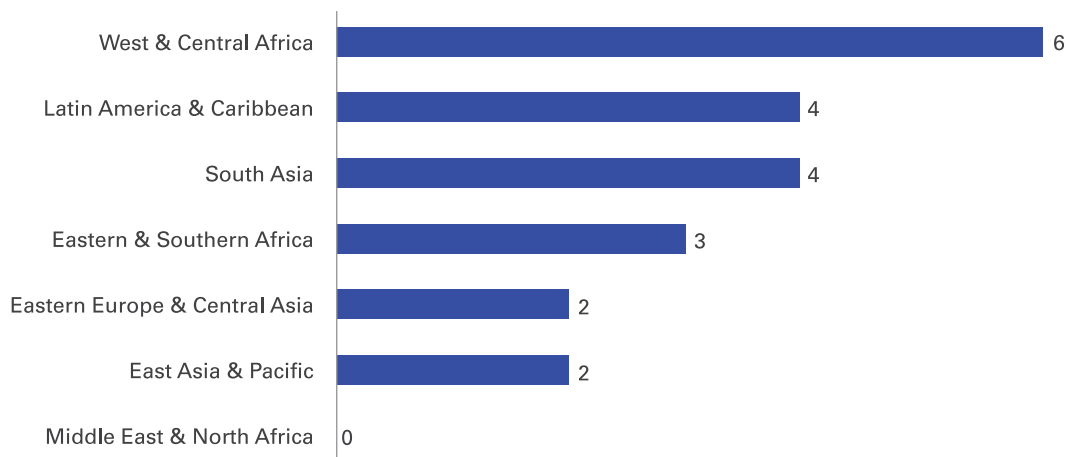


Table 1: List of selected studies

| Conceptual framework | Authors | Region (country) | Programme type | Study design |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Children | Angrist et al. (2002) | Latin America and Caribbean (Colombia) | School vouchers | Randomized controlled trial |
| | Datt & Uhe (2019) | South Asia (Nepal) | Scholarships | Quasi-experimental |
| | Edmonds & Shrestha (2014) | South Asia (Nepal) | Scholarships | Randomized controlled trial |
| | Kremer et al. (2009) | Eastern and Southern Africa (Kenya) | Scholarships | Randomized controlled trial |
| | Sparrow (2007) | East Asia and Pacific (Indonesia) | Scholarships | Quasi-experimental study |
| | Ambler et al. (2015) | Latin America and Caribbean (El Salvador) | Educational remittances | Randomized controlled trial |
| | Aurino et al. (2019) | West and Central Africa (Mali) | School feeding; generalized food distribution | Quasi-experimental |
| | de Hoop & Rosati (2014b) | West and Central Africa (Burkina Faso) | School feeding | Quasi-experimental |
| | Kazianga et al. (2012) | West and Central Africa (Burkina Faso) | School feeding | Randomized controlled trial |
| | Ravallion & Wodon (2000) | South Asia (Bangladesh) | School feeding | Quasi-experimental |
| Household and families | Bastagli et al. (2019) | Multiple regions | Cash transfers | Systematic review |
| | de Hoop & Rosati (2014a) | Multiple regions | Cash transfers | Systematic review |
| | Kabeer & Waddington (2015) | Multiple regions | Cash transfers | Systematic review |
| | Owusu-Addo et al. (2018) | Multiple regions | Cash transfers | Systematic review |
| | Parker & Todd (2017) | Latin America and Caribbean (multiple countries) | Cash transfers | Systematic review |
| | Rawlings & Rubio (2005) | Multiple regions | Cash transfers | Systematic review |
| | Sulaiman (2010) | Eastern and Southern Africa (South Sudan) | In-kind transfers | Randomized controlled trial |
| Schools and teachers | Martinez et al. (2017) | Eastern and Southern Africa (Mozambique) | Expanding access to school | Randomized controlled trial |
| | Vuri (2010) | West and Central Africa (Ghana) | Expanding access to school | Quasi-experimental |
| | Edmonds et al. (2021) | South Asia (India) | Life skill/child rights training | Randomized controlled trial |
| | Gallego et al. (2018) | Latin America and Caribbean (Peru) | Life skill/child rights training | Randomized controlled trial |
| | Berry et al. (2018) | West and Central Africa (Ghana) | Life skill/child rights training | Randomized controlled trial |

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|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| Communities and systems | Tang et al. (2020) | East Asia and Pacific (China) | Removal of school fees or other school subsidies | Quasi-experimental |
| | Opoku & Boahen (2021) | West and Central Africa (Ghana) | Removal of school fees or other school subsidies | Quasi-experimental |
| | Dayıoğlu & Kırdar (2020) | Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Turkey) | Extending years of compulsory schooling | Quasi-experimental |
| | Dinçer & Erten (2015) | Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Turkey) | Extending years of compulsory schooling | Quasi-experimental |
| | Kozhaya & Flores (2020) | Latin America and Caribbean (Mexico) | Extending the duration of the school day | Quasi-experimental |
| Multiple | Dammert et al. (2018) | Multiple regions | Multiple | Systematic review |
| | Aslam et al. (2021) | Multiple regions | Multiple | Systematic review |

5. Effects of the interventions

5.1 Overview

This section reports the findings of a synthesis of 21 primary studies and 8 systematic reviews. Based on the conceptual framework outlined in section 2, studies and findings are organized into four categories of educational interventions focused on children, families and households, teachers and schools, and communities and systems.

Out of the 20 primary studies reporting impacts on schooling outcomes, 16 showed protective programme impacts (i.e., reductions in child work or labour outcomes), 1 study found no impact, 2 studies found mixed impacts and 1 study found adverse effects (for the subsample of girls).

As pertains to the 21 studies including impacts on the overall labour domain (economic activities, child labour for elimination, or household chores), 12 studies found protective effects, 3 found no impact, 5 found mixed effects and 1 study found adverse impacts. Looking at the specific types of activities:

- Of the 18 studies assessing impacts on children's participation or time spent in economic activities, 10 reported protective impacts, 3 showed no impact, 4 reported mixed effects and 1 showed adverse impacts.
- Of the 5 studies that estimated impacts on child labour for elimination, 3 found protective impacts, 1 found no impact and 1 found mixed effects.
- Of the 9 studies assessing impacts on household chores, 3 found protective effects, 2 found no impact and the remaining 4 found mixed impacts.

A summary table outlining intervention characteristics is provided in Annex 4.

For each intervention level, the synthesis that follows is organized as outlined below:

1. First, *key findings* are presented regarding the impact of educational interventions on the outcomes of interest.
2. Then *impacts of each intervention type* on the schooling and labour outcome domains are described in detail, distinguishing where

possible between child work, hazardous work, child labour, household chores, and other time use activities such as leisure and play.

3. Important *moderating and mediating factors* (pathways via which educational interventions affect child labour) are summarized for each intervention level.

5.2 Interventions focused on children

Scholarships and school voucher programmes

Four studies investigated the impact of scholarships on child participation in economic activities and/or household chores (Datt and Uhe 2019; Edmonds and Shrestha 2014; Kremer et al. 2009; Sparrow 2007). Of these, one study compared the effect of receiving scholarships in isolation or combined with a conditional cash transfer (Edmonds and Shrestha 2014). Another study compared impacts between low-value and high-value scholarships (Datt and Uhe 2019). Angrist et al. (2002) investigated the impact of school vouchers on child work and schooling outcomes as part of Colombia's *Programa de Ampliacion de Cobertura de la Education Secundaria* (PACES). Using a lottery system, this programme provided school vouchers for private secondary schooling to over 125,000 pupils from low-income families, conditional on maintaining excellent academic performance.

Impacts on schooling

Four out of the five studies mentioned above included estimates of schooling impacts. All of these four studies reported positive effects on educational outcomes, specifically for school enrolment, attendance, years of schooling completed, grade repetition or test scores. However, schooling impacts varied across age groups, as well as by gender, monetary value of scholarships, and regions (urban versus rural).

In Kenya, the Girls' Scholarship Programme, a merit-based full scholarship programme, improved a range of schooling outcomes, including girls' exam scores and school attendance, as well as teachers' attendance (Kremer et al. 2009). Notably, there were positive spillover effects, as those not targeted by the scholarship also benefited. For example, ineligible boys and girls enjoyed somewhat higher test scores. According to the authors, this is presumably due to the increased teacher attendance and peer effects from within-classroom learning externalities.

Key findings

- Merit-based scholarships, school vouchers for private secondary schooling and school feeding programmes proved effective in improving children's schooling outcomes while lowering the opportunity cost of schooling.
- Educational remittances did not change children's school attendance overall, but increased children's attendance of private schools, as well as overall household expenditure on education.
- Despite the unambiguous positive impacts on schooling outcomes, impacts of the above programmes on children's engagement in economic activities are more mixed.
- School vouchers and educational remittances considerably reduced the likelihood of children working and the total amount of weekly work hours.
- School feeding had mostly protective impacts on children's engagement in economic activities. However, the decline in work participation was generally lower than the increase in school participation.
- Programme design features, and in particular transfer amounts (for scholarships and remittances), are key to determine impacts on labour and schooling outcomes. For example, only scholarships above a certain amount, or provided in combination with other transfers, proved to be effective.
- Overall, half of the considered studies also analysed impacts on children's engagement in household chores, finding mixed effects (no impact for high-value scholarships, and mostly no impact in the case of school feeding, with the exception of take-home rations, which were found to increase participation in chores for the subsample of girls).
- Impacts of scholarships, vouchers and school feeding are likely to spill over to non-eligible children.
- Only one study assessed impacts on hazardous work finding that a programme combining scholarships and cash transfers improved school participation and equally reduced hazardous work. However, impacts did not persist after the programme ended.

Likewise, an RCT in Nepal found that combining scholarships with conditional cash transfers improved educational outcomes for children working in the carpet weaving industry, one of the worst forms of child labour. However, when the scholarships were offered in isolation, schooling outcomes remained mostly unchanged, mostly due to the low value of scholarships (Edmonds and Shrestha 2014). Effects were larger for girls, who were more likely to work in the weaving industry. The combined scholarship–stipend programme reduced the probability that a girl failed her current grade by 66 per cent (Edmonds and Shrestha 2014).

Scholarship programmes proved effective in improving schooling outcomes also in the context of economic crisis. Sparrow (2007) reported that in the aftermath of Indonesia's 1997–1998 economic crisis, the Indonesian Social Safety Net scholarship significantly increased school enrolment. In fact, the programme returned school enrolment rates to pre-crisis levels, particularly for boys, rural students and students aged 10–12 who lived below the poverty line, and so were more vulnerable to the crisis. This result is important as this is generally the age group when children transition

from primary to lower secondary school and so are more likely to drop out.

In their study of Colombia's PACES programme, Angrist et al. (2002) found that, irrespective of gender, voucher lottery winners additionally completed 0.12–0.16 years more schooling, were 10 percentage points more likely to complete eighth grade, were less likely to repeat grades and scored marginally higher on achievement exams. There were no significant changes in enrolment between lottery winners and losers. These impacts are related to a number of factors, including voucher winners being more likely to attend private school, which may offer higher-quality services compared with public schools, as well as winners having an incentive to devote higher effort as failing a grade comes with the risk of losing the vouchers (Angrist et al. 2002).

Impacts on labour outcomes

Of the considered five studies, three assessed impacts on children's participation or hours in *economic activities*, finding protective (Angrist et al. 2002; Sparrow 2007) or mixed effects (Datt and Uhe 2019). When effects were mixed, this depended on the

specific amount of the scholarship. The programme had protective effects if the scholarship had high value, while it had no impact if the scholarship had low value.

Further, one study estimated impacts on a measure of *child labour* (hazardous work in the carpet weaving sector), finding again mixed effects depending on programme design (Edmonds and Shrestha 2014). In the context of Nepal, the authors found protective effects if the scholarship was combined with cash transfers, and no impact if the scholarship was provided in isolation. They also indicated that the drop in weaving from the combined scholarship–stipend programme matched the increase in schooling throughout the programme year, suggesting that educational support can effectively deter hazardous work. The combined programme reduced the involvement of girls in carpet weaving by up to 75 per cent (Edmonds and Shrestha 2014).

Two studies assessed impacts on *household chores* and found either no impact (Kremer et al. 2009) or mixed effects (Datt and Uhe 2019), again depending on scholarship amount (no impact on chores if the scholarship had high value, and adverse effects with an increase in chores if the scholarship had low value).

In Kenya, Kremer et al. (2009) found no effect of scholarships on household chores for girls and boys, even though the programme boosted academic performance for all recipients. According to the authors, these zero impacts on household chores – the only child labour metric in this study – may reflect that any extra time committed to school activity came at the expense of leisure time or increased effort during school hours. In Nepal, Datt and Uhe (2019) suggested domestic chores were the least responsive to scholarships, mainly because these activities are generally more rooted in social norms and thus impervious to economic incentives.

Overall, the impact of scholarships on child labour outcomes depends on the amount of the scholarship awarded, with relatively higher amounts determining bigger, stronger protective impacts (Datt and Uhe 2019; Edmonds and Shrestha 2014).

Datt and Uhe (2019) found that *low-value* scholarships did not alter participation nor hours worked by children in economic activities. However, *high-value* scholarships significantly reduced both children's

participation and hours worked in economic activities.¹⁰ Importantly, these effects were strongest for girls. For instance, girls who received high-value scholarships worked 7.5 hours less per week than non-funded girls. They found the strongest impact of high-value scholarships in their 'extended-economic work' category, defined as work outside the home that was not a household chore (making mats, knitting, weaving, processing preserved food, and milling were examples of extended-economic work).

As described above, Edmonds and Shrestha (2014) also confirmed that the amount transferred was a key determinant of whether a programme was effective in reducing hazardous work. The authors also estimated programme effects after approximately one year from the end of school support (which had lasted one year), showing that the positive effects had dissipated by then. This raises questions on the effectiveness of transitory schooling support to eliminate child labour (Edmonds and Shrestha 2014).

Scholarships of appropriate amounts also proved effective in reducing child labour during economic crises when demand for child participation in work was particularly high. During Indonesia's severe economic downturn, a nationwide programme had an even greater influence on child labour supply than on school attendance.¹¹ Effects are concentrated among older children, children from poor households, in rural areas and for boys, categories for which work participation is generally higher (Sparrow 2007).

Protective effects of scholarships can even extend beyond the direct recipients. These *spillover effects* benefited non-poor students (Sparrow 2007), boys in programmes meant for girls (Kremer et al. 2009) or students with little chance of winning merit-based scholarships (Kremer et al. 2009).

School vouchers considerably reduced the likelihood of children working and the total amount of weekly work hours, with a larger effect on female voucher recipients (Angrist et al. 2002). Impacts on household chores were not measured.

Educational remittances

Remittances are an important source of family income and long-term human capital investment in some low- and middle-income economies, leading to increases in education spending and reduced child wage labour

¹⁰ High-value scholarships are defined as those with a nominal value of at least 5 per cent of the Nepalese poverty line. Low-value scholarships are less than 5 per cent of the same poverty index.

¹¹ This contrasts with results in other settings, where reductions in child labour were generally lower than increases in school participation; this is likely due to the extreme setting of the Indonesian crisis, where pressure for sending children to work was higher compared with other contexts (Sparrow 2007).

(Acosta 2011; Ang et al. 2009; Aslam et al. 2021; Tabuga 2007).

One RCT by Ambler et al. (2015) examined the influence of the EduRemesa programme on educational spending, school attendance and labour supply for Salvadoran children receiving foreign remittances. Migrants at destination were randomized to one control group and three treatment groups. The control group received only an encouragement to send remittances for education, while the three treatment groups were designed as follows: in treatment group 1 (EduRemesa with no match), migrants received the same information given to the control group, plus they were introduced to the EduRemesa programme; in treatment group 2 (EduRemesa with a 1:1 match), migrants received the same information as treatment group 1, plus they were offered a 1:1 match on every amount sent; in treatment group 3 (EduRemesa with a 3:1 match), every dollar the migrant donated was matched with three dollars in EduRemesa funds.

Impacts on schooling outcomes

Across all treatment groups, EduRemesa had no effect on school attendance or enrolment. However, in the 3:1 group, the likelihood that students attended private school increased by 11 percentage points (a 40 per cent increase over the control group mean of 0.27), suggesting parents valued the higher-quality education private schools offered.

The study also estimated an increase in household education expenditure across all treatment groups. For each dollar of EduRemesa funds received, the household was reported to spend an additional 3.72 dollars on education. Hence, even small-value remittance subsidies appeared to benefit recipient populations, implying a crowding-in of education expenditures in response to this transfer.

Impacts on labour outcomes

Overall, students in the 3:1 and 1:1 match group were 14 and 7.5 percentage points less likely to participate in any work, respectively, and worked 4.4 and 3.2 hours less per week. These effects were substantially large relative to control. Only the 3:1 group was significantly less likely to engage in paid and unpaid work. However, average hours per week in unpaid work decreased in both the 3:1 and 1:1 group.

Female beneficiaries drove these effects, as they were more likely than male beneficiaries to receive EduRemesa (18 per cent versus 11 per cent), despite

male beneficiaries being more likely to work overall and being more likely to be chosen as remittance recipients. The authors speculate that EduRemesa payments may have reduced the need to work, thus allowing recipients more time to dedicate to the increased demands of private schooling. Remittances had no effect on the 'no-match' group.

School feeding

School feeding programmes are popular for lowering the cost of schooling and thus increasing access to education. These programmes are generally implemented as school meals or take-home rations.

Four studies assessed the impact of school feeding programmes on schooling outcomes and children's engagement in economic activities, or household chores, with evidence coming from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Mali (Aurino et al. 2019; de Hoop and Rosati 2014b; Kazianga et al. 2012; Ravallion and Wodon 2000).

Impacts on schooling outcomes

All of these studies reported beneficial impacts of school feeding on schooling outcomes, notably on enrolment, attendance or academic performance. For example, in the humanitarian context of Mali, children receiving hot school meals were 10 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in school and completed an additional half-year of education on average, compared with children not receiving meals (Aurino et al. 2019). In rural Burkina Faso, both hot school meals and take-home rations increased school enrolment. Moreover, take-home rations also impacted boys' enrolment, despite being targeted to girls only (Kazianga et al. 2012).¹²

Impacts on labour outcomes

Concerning the impacts of school feeding on children's engagement in *economic activities*, three of the reviewed studies reported unambiguous reductions in children's work, and one study reported increases in children's work participation (de Hoop and Rosati 2014b). Three of the four considered studies on school feeding also estimate impact on children's engagement in *household chores*. Of these, two found no impact (Aurino et al. 2019; de Hoop and Rosati 2014b), while one found an increase limited to the subsample of girls, who shifted from economic activities to chores (Kazianga et al. 2012).

¹² The authors highlighted that this finding is consistent with other studies that documented positive spillover effects on boys from programmes targeting girls (see, for instance, Kazianga et al. 2010; Kim et al. 1999; Kremer et al. 2009).

Even when schooling improvements were accompanied by reduced work participation, the latter was generally smaller than the gain in school attendance. Ravallion and Wodon (2000) studied the effect of a food-for-education programme providing households with monthly food rations conditional on children's school attendance in rural Bangladesh. The authors found that the reduction in the prevalence of child work by boys (girls) represents about one quarter (eighth) of the increase in school enrolment. So, increasing school enrolment implied reducing other children's time use with modest impacts on earnings from children's work.

In the context of conflict and post-conflict Mali, Aurino et al. (2019) found that school feeding reduced children's participation in work, especially among girls. The authors also estimated the effects of generalized food distribution (GFD) and found that this had the opposite effect of increasing children's work. The negative effect was strongest for boys, who were also more likely to be absent from school (a 20 per cent increase in school absenteeism over boys in households not receiving GFD). The authors attributed this to the higher opportunity cost of schooling for boys who could be otherwise engaged in farm work – vital to family sustenance in conflict situations. An accompanying study, however, found that GFD had larger effects on household food expenditures compared with school feeding (Tranchant et al. 2018). The authors concluded that joint programming of school feeding and GFD can be considered to maximize protective effects, although this approach may be more complex and costly to implement, with implications in terms of lower coverage (Aurino et al. 2019). This shows the important trade-offs to be considered when deciding which type of assistance to implement in a specific setting.

Two studies evaluated school feeding programmes in Burkina Faso, finding mixed effects on children's work. Kazianga et al. (2012) evaluated two food-for-education programmes: fortified in-school meals for boys and girls and take-home rations for girls, conditional on 90 per cent school attendance. They found that these interventions, especially take-home rations, did not reduce overall child work participation (in economic activities or household chores), but shifted the allocation of children's time from economic activities to household chores, which can be more easily combined with improved school participation. These effects were particularly strong for girls receiving take-home rations, but also extended to boys (who were not directly targeted with the rations). De Hoop

and Rosati (2014b) evaluate the BRIGHT programme, which combined primary school construction with school meals for all students and take-home rations for female students only. They reported no impact on children's participation in any economic activities. However, overall participation in economic activities and/or household chores combined slightly increased, for both boys and girls. Moreover, the prevalence of children combining school and work increased after the programme. The authors observed that this is possibly because children started working to support the payment of schooling costs (de Hoop and Rosati 2014b). However, despite the increase in work prevalence, children also improved their learning outcomes (test scores). The improved schooling outcomes appeared to come from reduced leisure time for children (de Hoop and Rosati 2014b).

In sum, school feeding programmes, particularly for agriculture-dependent households, appeared to boost school enrolment. Impacts on regular attendance, academic achievement or learning outcomes were also significant, although relatively smaller. However, improvements in education did not consistently translate to correspondent reductions in children's work participation for low-income households.

Mechanisms of impacts

Several mechanisms of impact were identified in this section:

- Positive *income effects* through direct monetary transfers can reduce the opportunity cost and forgone earning from child labour, and thus increase school participation to eventually reduce child labour (Dammert et al. 2018; Edmonds and Shrestha 2014).
- School voucher lottery winners are more likely to have attended private schools, which may offer higher-quality services compared with public schools. Winners are also incentivized to increase their *effort* as failing a grade can imply losing the vouchers (Angrist et al. 2002).
- *Conditionality* of merit-based scholarships may incentivize parents to maintain the scholarship (or voucher) of high-achieving children, thus reallocating or eliminating hours of work time for this child.
- Remittances for education can raise household income while *motivating beneficiary households* to contribute to schooling themselves.

Moderating factors

Gender, age and societal norms regarding child labour are major moderating factors and a source of heterogeneity in programme effects. Gender imbalances in domestic labour allocation persist, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. These subsequently influence household decisions on the amount and type of children's work. For example, the impact on child labour reduction in Nepal was driven by two major gender-based factors. First, boys in Nepal are less likely to participate in some forms of work, such as the weaving industry, commonly dominated by girls (Edmonds and Shrestha 2014). In addition, boys in Nepal were less likely to work than girls of the same age and were less likely to qualify for merit-based scholarships (Datt and Uhe 2019).

In terms of age, most studies showed higher effects of scholarship programmes on older children, often those above the age of 13. In addition, social norms on child labour participation also influence the opportunity costs for child schooling and parental decisions to use child labour. For example, Edmonds and Shrestha (2014) report that, when compared with other countries, Nepal has a more conducive climate for hazardous work for children, with specific industries sustained by the availability and supply of child labourers, thus raising the opportunity cost of schooling.

Conflict in a humanitarian situation was also identified as a crucial moderating element in child-facing interventions. According to Aurino et al. (2019), the conflict scenario forced some children to contribute to their families' economic activities, with labour-constrained families more likely to employ child labour as a strategy for sustenance.

5.3 Interventions focused on households and families

Conditional and unconditional cash transfers for families with children

Cash transfer programmes generate direct benefits in terms of poverty reduction and consumption smoothing in times of distress and serve as a vehicle for pro-health and anti-poverty policies (Bastagli et al. 2019). As they provide an additional regular source of income to households, cash transfers are expected to improve children's school participation, as parents can afford to send their children to school. Higher income also tends to reduce child labour. However, cash benefits can be (partly) invested in household productive assets, such as livestock or other farm inputs. With the expansion of household microentrepreneurial activities, the demand for child labour within the household may increase (Dammert et al. 2018). Therefore, the overall effect of cash transfers on child labour outcomes is theoretically ambiguous.

Conditional cash transfers include an additional incentive that can further improve education and child labour outcomes. However, this may come at the price of administrative costs and increased burden on poor households to satisfy these conditions (Dammert et al. 2018; Kabeer and Waddington 2015).

Evidence on cash transfers is assessed based on eight systematic reviews (Aslam et al. 2021; Bastagli et al. 2019; Dammert et al. 2018; de Hoop and Rosati 2014a; Kabeer and Waddington 2015; Owusu-Addo et al. 2018; Parker and Todd 2017; Rawlings and Rubio 2005).

Key findings

- Cash transfers for families with children improve school participation and tend to reduce children's work, especially related to economic activities outside the household.
- However, as cash transfers are partly invested in household productive assets, these programmes may increase the demand for children's work.
- The specific design feature of cash transfers, such as transfer amounts, are key to avoid unintended effects and boost protective impacts.
- Reductions in work for pay outside the household are generally stronger for boys, while reductions in chores are bigger for girls. However, impacts on chores remain largely underestimated as relatively few studies measure them.
- The limited evidence on the effects of cash transfers on the worst forms of child labour suggests that cash transfers can also reduce this outcome.

Impacts on schooling outcomes

The evidence shows that cash transfers consistently improve school participation. Bastagli et al. (2019) found significant positive effects on school attendance in 13 of 20 studies reporting impacts on this outcome. Positive impacts were larger at the secondary school level than the primary school level (Owusu-Addo et al. 2018; Parker and Todd 2017; Rawlings and Rubio 2005). Effects on school attendance were higher for urban as compared with rural children, with the largest reduction in domestic work for children in urban areas (Aslam et al. 2021). Some reviews assessed the inverse relationship between child labour and school participation (de Hoop and Rosati 2014a; Parker and Todd 2017). For example, de Hoop and Rosati (2014a) found that each percentage point increase in school participation was associated with a reduction in child labour by 0.31 percentage points, indicating that changes in school participation are not fully mirrored in changes in children's work rates.

The evidence on cash transfer effects on learning is limited and mixed. Bastagli et al. (2019), for example, found five studies reporting on test scores. Of these, three found non-statistically significant impacts, while two reported significant effects, in one case positive (Akresh et al. 2013) and in another case negative (Baez and Camacho 2011).

Impacts on labour outcomes

Overall, the evidence shows that cash transfers have protective impacts on child labour outcomes. Bastagli et al. (2019) assessed impacts from a total of 19 studies reporting on children's participation or time spent in economic activities. All eight studies reporting statistically significant impacts consistently found a reduction in the prevalence and/or intensity of child work. Of the five studies reporting on the intensity of children's work, all reported reductions in the number of hours spent working.

We also found that cash transfer programmes had a gendered impact on child labour. De Hoop and Rosati (2014a) concluded that boys tended to experience a larger reduction in participation in economic activities, whereas girls experienced relatively larger reductions in household chores. However, programme impacts on girls remain underestimated, as most studies do not include measures of participation or time spent on household chores (Dammert et al. 2018).

Several studies evaluated the impact of the Mexican PROGRESA conditional cash transfer programme on education and child labour outcomes. A systematic review by Parker and Todd (2017) described the

protective impact of PROGRESA on education and time use, in addition to other domains such as health and nutrition. Impacts on child labour outcomes differed by gender. Impacts on participation in economic activities and domestic work were stronger among boys, particularly those of secondary school age, with reductions of between 15 and 25 per cent, matching their increases in school enrolment. For girls, the reduction in work participation was smaller than the increase in school enrolment, indicating that some of the increased time in school came from their free time. Meanwhile, boys' leisure time was unaffected.

In the Latin American context, Kabeer and Waddington (2015) found reductions in child labour among homes that benefited from conditional cash transfers, especially for boys (down by 7 per cent on average). The programmes had the greatest impact among poorer households, primarily in lowering children's part-time work rather than full-time employment, implying that those who could afford to still attend school for part of the day benefited the most from these programmes (Kabeer and Waddington 2015). While the above conclusions hold overall, in many instances cash transfers did not change children's time allocation (Bastagli et al. 2019), and in some cases these programmes even increased children's work (Dammert et al. 2018). If households invest part of the benefits in productive assets, such as livestock or agricultural inputs, the demand for child labour within the household may increase, especially if households include few adults who are able to work. This was the case, for example, with Malawi's Social Cash Transfer Programme, which increased children's participation in household chores and their time working on the family farm (Covarrubias et al. 2012). Hence, cash transfers involve risks in terms of child labour. In most cases, unintended effects can be explained by considering the specific design features of cash transfer programmes and how these interact with the context in which the programme is implemented (Bastagli et al. 2019). The effects of cash transfer programmes on child labour also vary depending on whether cash transfers are integrated with different interventions, such as the provision of health or education services (Dammert et al. 2018).¹³

There is still little information to determine whether cash transfers can address the worst forms of child labour, such as work under hazardous conditions or for long hours (Dammert et al. 2018). Nevertheless, we find evidence of a reduction in hazardous work for children in factory work in Edmonds and Shrestha (2014), as discussed above.

13 See also ILO and UNICEF Innocenti (2022).

In-kind transfers for families with children

In an RCT in South Sudan, Sulaiman (2010) looked at a programme that coupled food transfers with a livelihood promotion component including skill development and financial services training to enable households to transition into a regular source of income and to navigate the prevailing economic shocks of a post-conflict setting.

There was no significant effect of the joint food distribution and income generation programme on the total hours spent by the respondents on different earning activities. However, there was marginal gain in farm self-employment for adult family members and a decrease in total hours spent by children in economic activities. In terms of schooling outcomes, the authors reported an increase in school enrolment of girls by about 10 percentage points.

Mechanisms of impact

- Cash and in-kind benefits primarily affect children's work through their income effect, which improves school participation and tends to reduce the demand for child labour. However, cash transfers may also be invested in household productive assets, which may increase the demand for children's work, especially if households have few adults who are able to work.
- Cash transfers also allow households to smooth consumption in the face of negative events, such as income losses or illnesses. This, in turn, can reduce the need to resort to child labour as a coping strategy (de Hoop and Rosati 2014a).

Moderating factors

- The effects of cash transfers on schooling and child labour vary significantly by gender and age group, as well as household socioeconomic status.
- Cash transfers were found to reduce participation in economic activities mostly among boys and reduce participation in household chores mostly among girls.
- Location (e.g., rural or urban) represented another moderating factor in the assessed evidence.

5.4 Interventions focused on schools and teachers

Improving access to school

Key findings

- Improving access to preschool was found to significantly boost school participation; this, in turn, was associated with reduced children's participation in household chores by older siblings for whom the burden of care work was decreased.
- Improving access to primary or middle school also significantly deterred work and encouraged school attendance, but impacts varied by gender and school level. Girls appeared to be relatively more responsive to the presence of primary schools, while boys were relatively more responsive to the presence of middle or secondary schools.
- This REA did not find any studies assessing the effects of better schooling access on child labour for elimination, measured as long hours of work or exposure to work-related hazards.
- School-based life skills and information sessions were successful in changing students' and children's perceptions on the returns to schooling, and thus promoted continuous school enrolment and social skill development. However, impacts on children's engagement in economic activities and child labour were either absent or mixed (i.e., protective for specific subsamples by gender or location).
- Financial literacy training had mixed impacts on children's participation in economic activities, with the risk that children prioritize income-generating activities at the expense of schooling.

Every child has a fundamental right to equal access to high-quality education. Moreover, a substantial body of literature emphasizes the need for investing in early childhood education to strengthen long-term human capital gain, reduce adult poverty and ultimately eliminate child labour (UN 2015; UNCRC 1989; World Conference on Education for All 1990; World Conference on Special Needs Education 1994).

The availability and quality of schooling have substantial implications for our outcomes of interest and continue to be a significant concern for families with school-aged children in low- and middle-income countries. The presence of schools in the community and the distance children commute to these schools might directly impede or promote their participation in economic activities (for an overview, see Bhalotra and Tzannatos 2003; Siddiqi and Patrinos 1995; Thévenon and Edmonds 2019; for studies on the schooling impacts of specific supply-side educational interventions, see, for instance, Burde and Linden 2010; Duflo 2001; Kondylis and Manacorda 2012).

Two studies explored the effects of interventions to improve school accessibility (Martinez et al. 2017; Vuri 2010).

Impacts on schooling outcomes

Both studies found favourable impacts on schooling outcomes.

Martinez et al. (2017) investigated the impact of a low-cost community-based early childhood development (ECD) programme on a broad range of child development outcomes in high-poverty rural areas in Mozambique. The programme included building and equipping preschools combined with monthly meetings with caregivers to discuss child development topics, such as nutrition and literacy.¹⁴ The programme boosted children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development, thus facilitating the transition to primary school. By age 5–9, children who were enrolled in preschool were 8.2 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in primary school and 5.6 percentage points more likely to attend school at the appropriate age (a 12 per cent increase over the control group in each case). Children who attended preschool also spend significantly more time on schooling and homework activities when starting primary school.

The intervention also improved school attendance for older siblings aged 10–14 – a critical period in which children are more likely to drop out of school.¹⁵

Likewise, in Ghana, Vuri (2010) investigated the schooling impact of availability and distance to schools for children aged 7–12. The availability of school infrastructure and travel time appeared to influence

parents' long-term decisions about whether to invest in primary- or middle-school-aged children. The presence of schools – particularly middle schools – encouraged full-time attendance, although the effects differed for boys and girls. For girls, both availability of primary and middle school improved school attendance, while for boys only availability of middle school had such an effect.

Impacts on labour outcomes

Both studies mentioned above found that improving access to school or school quality consistently reduced child participation in economic activities and/or household chores among the children who directly benefited from the intervention and/or their siblings.

In Mozambique, hours spent in work, chores and 'other' activities were not significantly affected for younger children (age 5–9). The same holds for hours spent playing or sleeping. However, estimated coefficients on hours spent in economic activities or chores were negative, while coefficients on hours spent sleeping and playing were positive. This suggests that schooling gains among younger children did not come at the expense of other essential activities for children's development, such as play or sleep (Martinez et al. 2017). Time use significantly changed for older children (age 10–14), who spent fewer hours in household chores, particularly in caring for younger children, consistent with the ECD focus of the Mozambique intervention.

In Ghana, Vuri (2010) found that effects of school availability on children's time use differed for boys and girls and depending on school level. For girls, the availability of primary school in the community had no effect on participation in economic activities, but reduced their engagement in household chores. The availability of middle or secondary schools had instead no impact on girls' engagement in economic activities or chores. For boys, availability of primary schools did not change time use, while availability of middle school reduced their engagement in household chores. For boys, availability of secondary school also mattered, in that it decreased participation in economic activities. Various factors may explain differences in impacts for boys and girls, including gender differences in the returns to schooling, social norms or parental preferences (Vuri 2010).

14 Save the Children provided the seed capital and technical assistance to build and equip the preschools, train instructors and implement a standardized curriculum. Communities donated land, labour and locally available construction materials, and appointed a committee to manage and supervise preschool activities. Given the scarcity of qualified instructors in the area, preschool teachers were not formally trained educators. Instead, instructors were recruited from within communities, provided basic training and supervision by Save the Children, and paid a monthly fee. The programme had a cost of US\$3.09 per child per month.

15 The authors did not find any statistically significant impacts on child health outcomes, and so concluded that the effects of the preschool programme on child development and schooling are unlikely to be driven by improved health as an intermediate outcome.

Once controlling for the presence of a school in the community, the distance between the household and the school had similar effects on boys and girls. Irrespective of gender, distance to a primary school increases child participation in economic activities and reduces school attendance. Distance to middle school significantly increases child engagement in chores.

Overall, the effects of school availability were bigger in magnitude than the effects of distance to school, suggesting that policies should focus on improving access to school rather than improving transport systems across communities (Vuri 2010). Moreover, gender differences in impacts show that girls' and boys' time use may respond differently to policy measures improving school availability, so gender-sensitive approaches are needed to reach significant impacts on time-use patterns for both boys and girls (Vuri 2010).

School-based training or information sessions

The effects of school-based training on children's schooling and time use are expected to vary based on the specific training topics. Life skills training can improve the perceived value of time in school, which is seen as providing more opportunities for learning and socializing. These interventions may also improve girls' agency and enhance their capability to advocate for themselves. Taken together, these mechanisms show that life skills training is likely to improve children's school participation and reduce their work. Training on savings and financial matters (including entrepreneurship) may have an opposite effect on schooling and work outcomes, as it may increase children's propensity to work as a mechanism to accumulate savings (Berry et al. 2018).

When parents are also made aware of the benefits and returns to education, children's schooling and child labour outcomes can further improve. Nudging and behaviour change interventions, as well as advocacy on the harmful effects of certain types of child labour – particularly the worst forms of child labour – can encourage families to make better educational decisions, increasing children's academic aspirations and potentially lowering school dropout. However, impacts can be highly heterogeneous by child or household characteristics (Damgaard and Nielsen 2018).

Three RCTs evaluated the impact of school-based training sessions on schooling and child labour outcomes in Ghana, India and Peru (Berry et al. 2018; Edmonds et al. 2021; Gallego et al. 2018).

Impacts on schooling outcomes

Two out of three studies found significant positive effects on schooling outcomes, while one study found no impact (Berry et al. 2018).

Edmonds and colleagues (2021) evaluated the Girls' Education Programme (GEP), a school-based life skills training and mentoring programme designed to encourage completion of secondary school as well as address low future ambitions, strict gender norms, poor social support and limited decision-making power among women and girls in India. GEP is a seven-year programme targeting girls in grade five to accompany them up to secondary education in selected schools in the Ajmer district of Rajasthan (India), which the authors describe as "among the most gender disadvantaged States in India". Two years after the start of the intervention, girls in the GEP intervention were 4 percentage points less likely to have dropped out and reported a correspondent increase in progression to grade seven. Gains in school progression persisted through grade nine, as assessed using administrative data one year after the end of the intervention. The intervention also improved future planning, positive gender norms and sense of empowerment, as well as social and emotional support. However, test scores were not affected, possibly as learning outcomes can only be improved over longer time horizons (Edmonds et al. 2021). The authors found evidence that the main channel driving the reduction in school dropout was enhanced socio-emotional support. The training sessions represented opportunities for girls to socialize and bond, which increased the perceived value of time in school.

Berry and colleagues (2018) evaluated two different school-based training programmes in Ghana that provided financial literacy training alone or in combination with sessions on children's rights and responsibilities and the dangers of child labour. There was no significant impact on school attendance or academic achievement in either intervention group, possibly because these outcomes were not explicit objectives of either intervention.¹⁶

School-based information sessions proved effective in Peru, where these were implemented in the form of video sessions (telenovela style), conveying messages on the social value of education, earnings for different education levels and fields, and options for financing higher education (Gallego et al. 2018).¹⁷ The programme also included an application-based intervention, whereby similar messages were delivered

¹⁶ While both programmes increased savings at school, neither programme increased students' aggregate savings nor their financial knowledge, risk and time preferences. The lack of impact on savings could be related to the students being too young to save and to the programmes' limited uptake (Berry et al. 2018).

¹⁷ As mentioned in section 4.3 on overall study quality, this study was only published as a brief. While the methodology appears solid, it was not possible to assess the robustness of the results, so these need to be interpreted with caution.

through a tablet application using infographic and interactive activities for both students and their parents (some students interacted with their tablets in their homes, others at school). The video sessions reduced school dropout in both urban and rural areas, driven by the boys' sample. Students' and parents' perceptions on the financial returns to schooling also increased, but only in urban areas. The application-based component had a similar impact on perceived returns to education (impact on dropout rates not reported).

Impacts on labour outcomes

Of the three RCTs discussed above, two showed small and mostly non-statistically significant effects of training programmes on child labour and child work outcomes (Berry et al. 2018; Edmonds et al. 2021), while one reported mixed impacts depending on the subsample considered (e.g., rural or urban, boys or girls) and the specific outcome indicator (e.g., participation or hours worked) (Gallego et al. 2018).

In India, Edmonds et al. (2021) found that life skills training had no impact on a range of labour indicators, including participation in any economic activities, work for pay, work outside the household, hours worked and child labour, measured as engagement in hazardous work or other worst forms of child labour (the estimated impact on child labour outcomes was negative, but not statistically significant).

In Ghana, 'financial and social skills' and 'financial education only' had comparable impacts on a 'work index' accounting for the incidence of work, the intensity of work and earnings (Berry et al. 2018). The 'financial education only' programme led to a small marginally significant increase of 0.2 percentage point in the work index, while impact on the index is still positive but not statistically significant for the 'financial and social skills' programme. However, the authors showed that the differences in work impact between programmes is not statistically significant. The similarity of impacts between the two programmes may also be related to the fact that the 'financial education only' programme was derived from the original 'financial and social skills' curriculum (Berry et al. 2018).

The authors reported that both programmes attempted to foster a savings attitude and actual savings as a life skill, with no intention of increasing children's participation in economic activities. So, the likelihood of working among children increased unintentionally.

In their RCT from Peru, Gallego and colleagues (2018) found that video sessions reduced child work participation in urban areas, but only for girls. Moreover, the intervention increased hours worked for all children who were working at baseline. In rural areas, there was no evidence of impact on children's work participation, nor on hours worked. As for the application-based intervention, the authors found that this reduced work participation in rural areas for sixth graders, but not for the overall sample of rural children.

Mechanisms of impact

- Improving access to preschool *reduced the burden of care work* for older siblings in the household, who benefited indirectly from the programme.
- Life skills training was found to reduce school dropout, mostly through *enhanced socio-emotional support*, which improved the perceived value of time spent in school by adolescent girls, rather than through an improvement in girls' agency or a shift in their perceived returns to education.
- There is suggestive evidence that training in financial literacy may result in children increasing their work participation to *accumulate savings*. Higher work participation may discourage completion of education.

Moderating factors

Social norms on time use in relation to gender appeared a key moderator of impacts. For example, Vuri (2010) found that availability of primary schools affected girls' but not boys' work participation. Additionally, availability of middle and secondary schools only mattered for boys' work.

Another important moderating factor of school-based programme impacts is given by local area characteristics, e.g., rural versus urban. The school-based video sessions implemented in Peru, for example, reduced participation in economic activities only in urban areas, while the sessions had no impact in rural areas.

5.5 Interventions focused on communities and systems

Key findings

- Policies subsidizing schooling had mixed impacts on children's work. Removing school fees was effective in reducing child labour in China, but only for boys. The policy had the unintended effect of reducing household expenditure on education for girls.
- Compulsory schooling policies proved to be effective in reducing children's work participation.
- Enhancing school quality, as proxied by extended school days (full-time), increased hours spent by children in schooling activities and reduced engagement in economic activities. Participation in domestic work also declined, but only for girls.
- However, effects vary markedly by gender and regions, consistent with prevailing social norms around gender and time use.
- The absence of gender-sensitive educational policy may exacerbate gender inequities in education and time use.

Reducing the cost of schooling

We shift our focus to interventions operating at the community and systems level. Two quasi-experimental studies evaluated the child labour and schooling impacts of community or systems-level interventions reducing schooling costs in China (Tang et al. 2020) and Ghana (Opoku and Boahen 2021).

Tang et al. (2020) focused on China's Free Compulsory Education Reform, which entitled all rural students of primary and lower secondary school age (aged 6–15) to tuition fee exemptions (students from poor households were further entitled to free textbooks and living subsidies if living in dormitories). Similarly, Opoku and Boahen (2021) studied the Ghanaian capitation grant, which supported parents of children attending public elementary schools to pay for indirect schooling costs like transportation, school uniforms and meals. Such policies are expected to improve child schooling and reduce child labour, mainly through the reduction in schooling costs for households (income effect).

Impacts on schooling outcomes

Of the two above-mentioned studies, one had no effects on schooling for the full sample of boys and girls but negative impacts on girls, the other had positive schooling impacts (impacts by gender not analyzed).

In China, the free compulsory education reform had no effect on school enrolment for the pooled sample of boys and girls (Tang et al. 2020). However, the programme reduced household education expenditure allocated to girls, while no impact was observed for boys' educational expenditure.

In Ghana, the capitation grant increased primary school enrolment 3.3 percentage points. Time in school during the seven days before the survey increased by about three hours, corresponding to a 10.7 per cent rise. In addition, the grant led to improvements in literacy, as measured by ability to read or write in English or Ghanaian, and ability to do written calculation.

Impacts on labour outcomes

One study found protective effects but only for boys, while the other study found no impact.

China's reform significantly influenced boys' (not girls') engagement in child labour. One extra semester of free compulsory schooling reduced child labour by 8.3 percentage points, particularly for low-income and older boys. Local gender norms play a key role in determining these effects, which were indeed driven by a proclivity for educating boys because it is perceived to have higher returns compared with educating girls.

In Ghana, the authors found that while school attendance and enrolment increased, overall hours worked remained unchanged (Opoku and Boahen 2021).

Extending the time spent in school

Three studies assessed impacts of school reforms extending the time in school in Mexico (Kozhaya and Flores 2020) and Turkey (Dayıoğlu and Kırdar 2020; Dinçer and Erten 2015).¹⁸

In Mexico, Kozhaya and Flores (2020) studied the impact of the Full-Time Schools (FTS) programme, which extended the duration of the school day from four hours to a maximum of eight hours. In these cases, impacts on child labour are mostly expected to occur through an increase in the time children spend in school.

In Turkey, Dayıoğlu and Kırdar (2020) studied the 1997 compulsory education reform that raised compulsory

18 Dayıoğlu and Kırdar (2020) has been published as Dayıoğlu and Kırdar (2022).

schooling from 5 to 8 years, while Dinçer and Erten (2015) examined the more recent policy change introduced in 2012 to increase compulsory schooling from 8 to 12 years.

Impacts on schooling outcomes

Of the three studies analysed in this section, two found positive impacts on schooling outcomes, one found mixed impacts.

In Turkey, Dayioğlu and Kırdar (2020) found that the older version of the reform strongly increased school enrolment for all children by 7.4 percentage points (or 10.6 per cent), especially for girls and rural children, with a large difference in impacts across regions. In addition, the newer reform significantly boosted high school attendance (not enrolment) by 3.2 percentage points on average, or 3.8 per cent relative to the mean (Dinçer and Erten 2015). However, Dinçer and Erten (2015) also noted that the policy determined an expansion of vocational high school enrolment, while enrolment in academic programmes declined for girls. The expansion of vocational schooling was obtained mostly by expanding religious schools, which likely reflects the political willingness to expand religious education (Dinçer and Erten 2015). Because religious schools have lower quality on average, learning outcomes may be adversely affected, especially for girls. The results also showed an increase in distance education for girls. As families with socially conservative values are more likely to choose to keep their girls out of co-educational schools, the changes induced by the reform may increase gender inequalities in the long term.

In line with these findings, Kozhaya and Flores (2020) reported a significant increase in hours spent on schooling activities for Mexican students enrolled in the FTS programme. FTS extended daily school hours in primary and secondary schools from four hours (part-time) to six or eight hours (full-time), with the additional hours dedicated to academic activities, cultural activities and sports. The programme had no effect on school enrolment, alleviating the concern that parents in poorer households may decide to pull children out of school following FTS.

Impacts on labour outcomes

All three considered studies found protective effects on the labour domain. The magnitude of the effects varies significantly by gender and age.

In Turkey, the 1997 reform reduced the probability that children work by up 4.8 percentage points (28 per cent from the baseline mean) for children aged 12–17, and by 1.7 percentage points (81 per cent) for children aged 7–11 (Dayioğlu and Kırdar 2020). Crucially, while the prevalence of long hours of work remained unchanged, the likelihood of engaging in hazardous jobs decreased, especially for girls and in rural areas, owing primarily to a drop in work for rural girls (55.5 per cent decline) (Dayioğlu and Kırdar 2020). The reform also reduced the prevalence of long hours in household chores, especially among girls in rural areas. At the same time, the study found a significant increase in the probability of combining schooling and household chores, for both boys and girls in rural areas.

The more recent schooling reform also appeared to benefit older children in Turkey, reducing their participation in wage work, especially in the non-agricultural sectors. The probability that children aged 15–18 work for a wage declined by 2.4 percentage points (a 20 per cent reduction). The prevalence of long hours of work also declined. This was mostly driven by teenagers leaving their temporary seasonal jobs.

In Mexico, switching from part-time to full-time schooling reduced total hours worked by students by 1.6 hours, with the effect being strongest for older children aged 11–14. This impact is mainly driven by a reduction in work participation, while there is no impact on the number of hours worked (conditional on working). In relation to the type of activities, the FTS programme decreased participation in market work among both boys and girls, although impacts are bigger for boys. The programme reduced participation in domestic work only for girls (Kozhaya and Flores 2020).¹⁹

Based on variation on the specific set of services offered at school, Kozhaya and Flores (2020) assessed the role of school meals in reducing children's work, and found no significant impact. They concluded that the additional time spent in school, and not the subsidized meal, is the main driver of the reduction in child work.

Notably, spillover effects were also found in Mexico, where the FTS programme significantly reduced market work participation for older siblings who did not directly benefit from the programme.²⁰

19 These differences in impacts by gender are consistent with previous studies, such as de Hoop and Rosati (2014a), Ferreira et al. (2009), Galiani and McEwan (2013), Kozhaya and Flores (2020) and Skoufias et al. (2001).

20 The programme also had a positive impact on mothers' likelihood to be active in the labour force.

Mechanisms of impact

- One key mechanism discussed in this section is a reduction in the cost of schooling, resulting from policy reforms (*income effect*). This supports parental investment in schooling, improves school enrolment and reduces time available to work. This mechanism was at play in China, as mentioned above.
- In Ghana, however, improved school participation did not translate into a reduction in work participation. Double-shift schooling may have allowed students to attend school in the morning or afternoon while still leaving time in the day for engagement in labour after or before school. This was cited as a reason why school attendance increased without an accompanying decrease in child work. Another possible reason is that school participation of the poorest children – who are more likely to work – was not affected (Opoku and Boahen 2021).
- Turkey’s compulsory schooling policies reduced child labour mostly through an increase in school attendance, which made it more difficult for children to combine school and work (Dayıoğlu and Kırdar 2020; Dinçer and Erten 2015).
- A similar mechanism was at play in Mexico, where the full-time programme retained children in school for a longer time during the day, and correspondingly reduced both participation and hours spent working. Impacts were driven by additional time in school, while the subsidized meal provided at full-time schools did not appear to have a role as a mechanism driving impacts.
- The 1997 compulsory schooling policy in Turkey also included the closure of some schools in rural areas (as these schools were not able to offer all eight mandatory grade levels) and the provision of school buses and boarding schools to ensure children’s school attendance. This contributed to bigger reductions in children’s work participation. As children had to move out from the original village to attend school, it became more difficult for them to combine work and schooling. Indeed, the biggest drop in children’s work participation was observed in rural areas, where the reduction in employment was even higher than the increase in enrolment.
- The more recent compulsory schooling reform in Turkey, as mentioned above, increased distance education, especially among girls.

As this eased girls’ time constraints, this may have the unintended effect of increasing girls’ engagement in long hours of household chores or economic activities for the household.

Moderating factors

As expected, gender and gender norms were key moderating factors. In rural China, the reduction in school fees benefited boys’ education due to son preference (Tang et al. 2020).

Gender and sectoral differences in the tightness of child labour markets (the ratio of jobs available to those unemployed) played a role in how children spent their time under these reforms (Dayıoğlu and Kırdar 2020; Dinçer and Erten 2015). The 2012 reform in Turkey had a sizable impact on male child labour in the male-dominated industrial sector. Girls’ work in the industrial sector was not affected, but girls were less likely to be idle (not in school nor working) as a result of the reform (Dinçer and Erten 2015). As mentioned earlier, the same reform also increased distance education for girls, but not for boys. This was again likely driven by conservative social norms on girls’ mobility and schooling (Dinçer and Erten 2015).

Rural or urban location also played a key role. As mentioned above, the earlier schooling reform in Turkey determined bigger reductions in children’s work in rural than in urban areas (Dayıoğlu and Kırdar 2020).

Household wealth was identified as a moderator of impact. For example, China’s removal of school fees was found to reduce child labour for boys of poor households, while no impacts were observed in richer households (Tang et al. 2020). Considering parental education as a proxy of household income, Dayıoğlu and Kırdar (2020) concluded that in Turkey, it was not children from the poorest families who benefited the most from the reform. Rather, children with an intermediate level of income benefited the most. This highlights the need to complement education policies with interventions benefiting the very poor (Dayıoğlu and Kırdar 2020). A similar pattern was observed in Ghana (Opoku and Boahen 2021) and Mexico (Kozhaya and Flores 2020).

Finally, impacts also varied according to pre-reform levels of school attendance. The lower the pre-reform level of school attendance, the bigger the impact of the reform on enrolment and child labour (Dinçer and Erten 2015).

6. Conclusions

Most studies on the impacts of education policies and programmes focus on schooling outcomes without considering labour outcomes, consistent with educational interventions being primarily designed with educational objectives and seldom including child labour objectives.

This REA focused on studies that also assessed labour impacts, thus filling this gap. Overall, the selected studies show that impacts on schooling outcomes are consistently positive (although with differences by gender, age and location). As for impacts on labour outcomes, out of 21 single studies identified, 12 studies found consistent reduction in child work or labour, 5 studies found mixed impacts, 3 studies found no impacts and 1 study found adverse impacts. When impacts were mixed or adverse, this was often related to programme design features. For instance, in reference to scholarships, high-value scholarships improved child labour outcomes, while low-value scholarships did not affect or even worsened child labour outcomes. As for schooling impacts, labour impacts also varied by gender, age, and contextual factors, such as rural or urban locality.

This REA identified a short list of common mechanisms and intermediate outcomes that bear implications for the design of educational policies and programmes. The key mechanisms include:

- *Income effect:* Several educational policies and programmes reduced child labour through reducing the costs of schooling for poor households (for instance by removing school fees) or providing monetary or in-kind transfers to households and children (such as cash transfers or school feeding). As schooling is less costly, children's school participation improves, which tends to reduce child labour. However, the increase in school participation is unlikely to translate into a 1:1 reduction in children's work participation. In most cases, child labour impacts are smaller than schooling impacts. This could be related to multiple factors, including, among others, the transfer being insufficient to reduce children's work participation to zero, and/or cultural norms by which children's work is an integral part of children's lives.
- Moreover, the evidence indicates that cash transfers to households can allow higher *investments in productive assets*, such as livestock or land. While this is a positive development in relation to long-term poverty

reduction, this also increases the risk of child labour, especially in extremely poor settings where households cannot hire external adult labour due to either credit or labour constraints.

- *Protection from economic shocks:* The evidence collected as part of the REA also shows that programmes providing monetary transfers in support of schooling also have a protective effect in terms of schooling and child labour outcomes in the face of economic shocks.
- *Time spent in school:* Increasing time spent in school proved to be effective in reducing children's work participation, even when this occurred without monetary or in-kind subsidies supporting children's schooling. This is the case, for instance, with broader schooling reforms increasing the years of compulsory education or extending the length of the school day.
- However, the evidence also showed that the *quality of schooling* (e.g., relevance of the teaching curriculum) matters, so it is important to ensure that the additional time in school is dedicated to effective teaching and learning activities.
- Improving *school infrastructure* also proved beneficial for reducing child work or labour outcomes. Access to school at all levels matters, including pre-primary, which can have relevant spillover effects on time use for older children as well as caregivers.
- Addressing *attitudes* towards schooling, gender norms and improving social support through school-based training had relatively weaker impacts on child labour outcomes. This is most likely related to the fact that social norms related to child labour are difficult to change, especially in the short term.

The evidence also suggests that impacts are sensitive to key moderators, including gender and gender-related norms, age, local area characteristics (rural, urban) and poverty levels. In this regard, social norms related to children's engagement in household chores, particularly girls, hinder protective programme impacts on children's engagement and hours spent in this activity. Hence, gender-sensitivity of educational programmes and policies appears to be a key element to ensure effectiveness in reducing child labour. Table 2 below provides a summary of study findings.

Table 2: Summary of study findings

| Category | Intervention (evidence base) | Impact on schooling | Impact on child labour outcomes |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|
| Children | Scholarships & vouchers (5 studies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarships were reported to positively affect school participation and/or learning outcomes in three out of four studies (one study did not assess schooling impacts). One study on school vouchers showed that this programme increased years of schooling completed and reduced repetition rates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three studies assessed children's engagement in economic activities finding reduction (two studies) or mixed impacts (one study). One study estimated impacts on child labour for elimination finding that this was reduced only if the scholarship was combined with cash transfers. Impacts on household chores, assessed in two studies, were either mixed or not statistically significant. The amount transferred appears to be a key determinant of scholarships' labour impacts. The amount must be enough for families to forgo child labour earnings. |
| | Educational remittances (1 study) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remittances that subsidize educational costs had no effect on school attendance or enrolment, but increased household expenditure on education. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remittances that subsidize educational costs reduced children's work participation and number of hours worked, especially for unpaid work. |
| | School feeding (4 studies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficial impacts of school feeding on educational outcomes were reported in all four reviewed studies in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Mali, notably on school enrolment, attendance and academic performance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three studies reported reduction in child participation in economic activities, while one study reported an increase. Reduction in child work participation was generally smaller than the increase in school attendance. Three studies assessed impacts on household chores finding either no impact (two studies) or adverse impacts (one study). |
| Families and households | Cash transfers (8 systematic reviews) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash transfers consistently improve school participation. Yet the evidence on the effects on learning is limited and mixed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash transfers tend to reduce children's work, especially as pertaining to economic activities outside the household. However, when cash transfers are partly invested in household productive assets, they may increase the demand for children's work. Design features of cash transfers, such as amounts, are key to avoid unintended effects and boost protective impacts. Reductions in work for pay are generally stronger for boys, while reductions in chores are bigger for girls. However, impacts on chores are rarely assessed. |
| | In-kind transfers (1 study) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A joint food distribution and income-generation programme for households in South Sudan increased girls' school enrolment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A joint food distribution and income-generation programme for households in South Sudan reduced hours spent by children in economic activities. |

| Category | Intervention (evidence base) | Impact on schooling | Impact on child labour outcomes |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| Schools and teachers | Improving access to school (2 studies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two studies found favourable impacts on school participation, which extend to children not directly benefiting from the intervention. Effects vary by gender and school level. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two studies found reductions in children's participation and/or time spent in economic activities or household chores, including for children not directly benefiting from the interventions. Effects vary by gender and school level. |
| | Providing school-based training (3 studies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two studies found positive schooling impacts, while one found no impacts. Training on life skills (e.g., self-confidence, critical thinking, decision-making) or providing information on the returns to schooling improved schooling outcomes, while financial literacy training did not. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two studies showed small and mostly non-statistically significant impacts on child labour and child work outcomes, while one reported mixed impacts, depending on the subsample considered. There is suggestive evidence that financial literacy training may result in increased children's work participation to accumulate savings. |
| Communities and systems | Reducing schooling costs (2 studies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The limited evidence was mixed, with effects varying by gender. One study showed positive impacts, while the other showed negative effects for the subsample of girls. Social norms represent a key moderator explaining differences in impact by gender. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The limited evidence was mixed, with effects varying by gender. One study found child labour reduction but only for boys, while the other study found no effects on time spent working. Social norms represent a key moderator explaining differences in impact by gender. |
| | Extending time in school (3 studies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two studies found positive schooling outcomes; one study found mixed schooling impacts. The specific provisions of the reform are key to determine impacts for different groups by gender and residency. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three studies found reductions in children's work or child labour. The magnitude of impacts differs significantly by gender and age. |

7. Policy implications

The evidence assessed in this REA suggests that educational policies and programmes at all levels (children, households and families, schools and teachers, communities and systems) can significantly contribute to reduce children's engagement in economic activities, if appropriately designed. Several programme and policy design implications emerge through our analysis.

When designing educational policies and programmes it is important to identify and leverage the potential pathways through which the programme can influence child labour, beyond schooling outcomes.

In this sense, the framework provided in section 2 and the description of the key mechanisms at play provide useful guidance. In many low- and middle-income countries, child labour is still prevalent, especially in rural settings. Because of its close linkages with schooling, child labour should be considered in designing policies and programmes related to schooling. Moreover, it is advisable that educational policies and programmes are monitored and evaluated, not only as they relate to educational outcomes, but also in reference to child labour outcomes. Effects should be monitored both in the short and long term.

The amount of monetary transfers matters in determining whether a programme is effective or not in reducing child labour.

This result was found both in reference to cash transfers and in reference to scholarships. Hence, it is important that transfer size is appropriate in relation to the specific context where children live. The transfer should cover not only the direct costs of schooling (e.g., school fees, transport), but also the indirect costs due to foregone earnings from children's work.

Programmes should be gender- and age-sensitive, especially in reference to norms on time use.

Social norms around children's time use still play a crucial role as moderators of impacts, both as they relate to schooling outcomes and to child labour outcomes. In particular, social norms appear to hinder the protective impacts of educational programmes, especially for girls. Acknowledging this disadvantage in specific settings and designing programmes to compensate for this can enhance protective impacts.

Potential unintended programme impacts need to be considered.

This REA also highlighted potential unintended consequences of programmes providing subsidies to poor households, such as cash transfers. As mentioned above, cash transfers also improve

household income-generating activities, which may increase the demand for child labour. While cash transfers are mostly protective in reference to child labour and represent an essential element of poverty reduction strategies, it is important to monitor their child labour impacts. Moreover, combining cash transfers with sensitization or awareness-building on child labour can enhance their positive impact and avoid any unintended negative effect on child labour.

Consider changing contexts. As contextual characteristics are an important determinant of programme effectiveness, it should not be assumed that beneficial outcomes of a specific programme will be replicated across borders and communities. Rather, programmes need to be adapted to the specific context, for instance as they relate to specific eligibility criteria, dose and duration of the intervention. As for the duration of interventions, it is important to stress that programmes that challenge social norms may require longer duration (at least in the medium term) to bring about significant changes in behaviour.

8. Research gaps and priorities

Overall, this REA showed that rigorous evidence on the child labour impacts of educational policies and programmes is limited. This section identifies several research priorities to complement gaps identified in our REA.

Expand analysis of impacts on child labour and household chores.

As highlighted in the EGM (section 4 above), there is a lack of analysis on programme effects on child labour for elimination (i.e., work below the minimum age, long hours or exposure to work-related hazards), as well as on household chores.

Improve consistency of indicators to measure children's time use.

The REA has found a great variety of indicators and measures used. To improve comparability across studies and contexts, it is important to follow international and national guidance in constructing child labour indicators. A related point concerns social desirability, which implies that adult family members and employers of children are likely to underreport child labour, especially hazardous work. Complementing surveys with modules directly asked to children allows to test the robustness of results to such forms of bias.

Provide more evidence on specific programme types.

Evidence on child labour impacts of educational

policies and programmes was relatively more limited for specific programme types, including, for instance, expanding access to school and improving the quality of education.

Expand evidence from specific geographic regions. Evidence from specific regions appears especially limited, including, for instance, South Asia, which is one of the regions with the highest numbers of children in child labour.

Assess heterogeneity of impacts according to key dimensions, such as gender, age, locality and poverty levels. Most studies that conducted analyses specific to subsamples identified across these dimensions found differential impacts. So, it is crucial to conduct such disaggregated analysis and plan for this at the start of any primary research on the topic. This will ensure an equity-focused lens, such as the PROGRESS-Plus–Cochrane Equity framework that guided this REA.

Better assess the role of contextual factors in moderating impacts. For instance, cultural norms, gender roles, work and policy environments, and seasonal labour demand vary across and within countries, making it critical to research the effects of interventions for uniquely defined populations. Dammert et al. (2018) and McKee and Todd (2011) also proposed micro-simulations of programme impacts in different contexts (such as in conflict and humanitarian crises).

Assess long-term intervention effects. Most studies in the REA identified short-term effects, so impact evaluations are needed that provide critical evidence on long-term and intergenerational impacts of educational policies and programmes on child work and child labour. Longitudinal studies following households and individuals over time are key for assessing long-term effects.

Map critical pathways. Future research will also need to identify critical pathways by which interventions work (or do not work) to determine the most effective and efficient approach. Furthermore, it would be of interest to investigate how these programmes are linked to proximal and distal outcomes, such as the employability and lifetime earnings gains of children as they grow into adults. A clear visual of these pathways, actual and hypothesized, will be a vital resource for both researchers and policymakers.

Most available studies focused on enrolment, attendance and time in school, but it is important to understand how learning outcomes (literacy, numeracy, life skills gained, or not, as measured by standardised assessments) interrelate with child labour.

Qualitative studies are needed to understand lived experiences. Dammert et al. (2018) recommended a combination of study design not limited to experimental and quasi-experimental approaches. Qualitative methods help contextualize and explore the channel of impacts since participants are asked to describe who benefits from existing programmes and why. Qualitative study designs – such as community-based participatory research or participatory action research – may also better reach marginalized groups, such as without traditional families (Aslam et al. 2021). Qualitative study designs may also be appropriate to evaluate the worst forms of child labour other than hazardous work, which remain mostly undetected by traditional quantitative surveys.

Expand evidence on child labour in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The evidence on the influence of the pandemic on child labour participation is still emerging. Only the review by Aslam et al. (2021) reported on the current COVID-19 crisis and its links to child well-being, child labour and work. They uncover that the pandemic has exacerbated vulnerabilities and disparities among those who have experienced severe interruptions to traditional avenues of support and intervention. Furthermore, worsening economic circumstances and school closures may draw children out of school who will not return after the pandemic (Bakrania et al. 2020). Children already working before the pandemic may experience worsened labour conditions, due to factors such as work reallocation and displacement, with significant consequences for their health and safety.

Provide evidence of cost-effectiveness. Studies that emphasize the cost implications of educational policies and programmes in relation to their effectiveness in improving schooling and labour outcomes are required to direct governmental and non-governmental organization efforts to eliminate child labour.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Definitions

Child work

Child work (or children participating in work) are defined as children engaged in any activity falling within the general production boundary as defined in the 2008 System of National Accounts. This includes children below 18 years of age engaged in any activities to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for own use (ILO 2018). Activities include:

- *Economic production*, including all market production and certain types of non-market production. Includes both formal and informal production, as well as activities inside and outside the household.
- *Non-economic production*, including unpaid household services (domestic and personal services by a household member for consumption within the household, such as learning, preparing meals and taking care of other household members).

The only activities that are not considered in the definition of child work are non-productive activities such as education, leisure and rest.

Child labour – definition

According to international standards, **child labour** is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development (ILO 2018). It refers to **work that**:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or
- interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Whether or not particular forms of ‘work’ can be called ‘child labour’ depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, and the conditions under which it is performed. Child labour legislation can also vary by country. Therefore, the precise answer may vary from country to country and among sectors within countries. At a minimum, compliance of national laws with international conventions is an important

consideration. International conventions define two main forms of child labour:

1. work below the minimum age; and
2. worst forms of child labour.

Work below the minimum age

The general minimum age for work shall be no lower than the end of compulsory education, generally 15 years of age, based on ILO Convention No. 138, Article 2. A higher minimum age of 18 is set for work which, by the nature of the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morale of young persons, usually referred to as *hazardous work* (Article 3). The convention includes flexibility clauses to the discretion of national authorities (for example, developing countries may specify a lower general minimum age of 14). Moreover, national laws may permit work by persons aged 13–15 if it is not likely to be harmful to their health and does not prejudice education (*light work*). The lower age limit for light work can be 12 for developing countries (Article 7).

Worst forms of child labour

As defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182, all of the following are considered worst forms of child labour (irrespective of age, that is, up to age 18):

- a) All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Point (d) above is referred to as hazardous child labour or hazardous work. This is work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions that could result in a child being killed or injured or made ill as a consequence of poor safety and health standards and working

arrangements. It can result in permanent disability, ill health and psychological damage. Often health problems caused by being engaged in child labour may not develop or show up until the child is an adult.

Because their bodies and minds are still developing, children are more vulnerable than adults to workplace hazards, and the consequences of hazardous work are often more devastating and lasting for them. Hence, it is important to go beyond the concepts of work hazard and risk as applied to adult workers and to expand them to include the developmental aspects of childhood. Because children are still growing, they have special characteristics and needs. In determining workplace hazards and risks, their effect on children's physical, cognitive (thought/learning) and behavioural development and emotional growth must be considered.

Guidance for governments on some hazardous work activities which should be prohibited is given by Article 3 of ILO Recommendation No. 190:

- work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;
- work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels or vibrations damaging to their health;
- work under particularly difficult conditions, such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

Annex 2: Data extraction coding tool

Study type and information

- Experimental (randomized controlled trial)
- quasi-experimental (e.g., propensity score matching, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity design)
- systematic review
- data collection timeline
- aim and research questions
- other information: title, funder, commissioning agency, etc.

Population

- sample size
- location (urban/rural)
- race/ethnicity/culture/language
- age
- gender
- religion
- other personal characteristics (e.g., disability)

Interventions: Educational policy or programme

Children

- scholarships
- school voucher programmes
- educational remittances
- school-feeding

Households and families

- cash transfers
- in-kind transfers

Schools and teachers

- improving access to school
- providing school-based training

Communities and systems

- reducing schooling costs
- extending time in school

Other information on the intervention

- Eligibility criteria
- Programme uptake
- Duration: short (1–2 years), medium (2–5 years), long term (more than 5 years)

Comparison/control

- comparison/control intervention
- duration of comparison intervention

Outcomes

- child work and child labour (see Annex I for definitions)
- schooling (enrolment, attendance, time on task, attainment, learning)
- other time use (leisure and friends, play, sports, rest)

Measure of change

- Estimated impacts on probability (percentage point, percentage change) and other effect size measures.

Mediators (intermediate outcomes)

- affordability of schooling (reduced opportunity cost of education, reduced cost of school)
- quality of schooling
- awareness and socio-cultural norms related to children’s schooling and labour
- availability of flexible schooling models
- school infrastructure and broader schooling environment
- child health

Moderators

- macro-economic factors
- legal and policy context
- socio-cultural context
- demographics

Annex 3: JBI critical appraisal checklists

Annex 3.

1: JBI critical appraisal checklist for randomized controlled trials

Reviewer _____ Date _____

Author _____ Year _____ Record Number _____

| | Yes | No | Unclear | NA |
|---|-----|----|---------|----|
| 1. Was true randomization used for assignment of participants to treatment groups? | | | | |
| 2. Was allocation to treatment groups concealed? | | | | |
| 3. Were treatment groups similar at the baseline? | | | | |
| 4. Were participants blind to treatment assignment? | | | | |
| 5. Were those delivering treatment blind to treatment assignment? | | | | |
| 6. Were outcomes assessors blind to treatment assignment? | | | | |
| 7. Were treatment groups treated identically other than the intervention of interest? | | | | |
| 8. Was follow up complete and if not, were differences between groups in terms of their follow up adequately described and analyzed? | | | | |
| 9. Were participants analyzed in the groups to which they were randomized? | | | | |
| 10. Were outcomes measured in the same way for treatment groups? | | | | |
| 11. Were outcomes measured in a reliable way? | | | | |
| 12. Was appropriate statistical analysis used? | | | | |
| 13. Was the trial design appropriate, and any deviations from the standard RCT design (individual randomization, parallel groups) accounted for in the conduct and analysis of the trial? | | | | |

Overall appraisal: Include Exclude Seek further info

Comments (Including reason for exclusion)

Annex 3.

2: JBI critical appraisal checklist for systematic reviews and research synthesis

| | | | | |
|----------------|------------|---------------------|--|--|
| Reviewer _____ | Date _____ | | | |
| Author _____ | Year _____ | Record Number _____ | | |

| | Yes | No | Unclear | Not applicable |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Is the review question clearly and explicitly stated? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Were the inclusion criteria appropriate for the review question? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Was the search strategy appropriate? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Were the sources and resources used to search for studies adequate? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Were the criteria for appraising studies appropriate? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Was critical appraisal conducted by two or more reviewers independently? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Were there methods to minimize errors in data extraction? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Were the methods used to combine studies appropriate? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Was the likelihood of publication bias assessed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Were recommendations for policy and/or practice supported by the reported data? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Were the specific directives for new research appropriate? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Overall appraisal: Include Exclude Seek further info

Annex 3.

3: JBI critical appraisal checklist for quasi-experimental studies (non-randomized experimental studies)

Reviewer _____ Date _____

Author _____ Year _____ Record Number _____

| | Yes | No | Unclear | Not applicable |
|---|-----|----|---------|----------------|
| 1. Is it clear in the study what is the 'cause' and what is the 'effect' (i.e. there is no confusion about which variable comes first)? | | | | |
| 2. Were the participants included in any comparisons similar? | | | | |
| 3. Were the participants included in any comparisons receiving similar treatment/care, other than the exposure or intervention of interest? | | | | |
| 4. Was there a control group? | | | | |
| 5. Were there multiple measurements of the outcome both pre and post the intervention/exposure? | | | | |
| 6. Was follow up complete and if not, were differences between groups in terms of their follow up adequately described and analyzed? | | | | |
| 7. Were the outcomes of participants included in any comparisons measured in the same way? | | | | |
| 8. Were outcomes measured in a reliable way? | | | | |
| 9. Was appropriate statistical analysis used? | | | | |

Overall appraisal: Include Exclude Seek further info

Comments (Including reason for exclusion)

Annex 4: Summary of programme parameters

| Programme name & type [study] | Programme objective, design and eligibility |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Programa de Ampliacion de Cobertura de la Educacion Secundaria (PACES)</i></p> <p>vouchers for private school</p> <p>[Angrist et al. 2002]</p> | <p>Objective: Support households in accessing private schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 125,000 pupils provided with vouchers covering more than half the cost of private secondary school ■ Vouchers renewable as long as students maintain satisfactory academic performance ■ PACES vouchers worth US\$190 at the time of the survey (maximum value initially set to cover the average tuition of low-to-middle-cost private schools in Colombia's three largest cities; schools charging less than the voucher value received only their usual tuition). <p>Eligibility Targeted low-income families by offering vouchers only to children residing in neighbourhoods classified as falling into the two lowest socioeconomic strata (out of six strata).</p> |
| <p><i>Nepalese school scholarships</i></p> <p>scholarship (high value, low value)</p> <p>[Datt & Uhe 2019]</p> | <p>Objective: Allow parents to meet the direct costs of education.</p> <p>Design</p> <p><u>Any scholarship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The mean value of all scholarships is NPR 755 per year, with a std deviation of NPR 2,558 and a median of NPR 300. ■ Most scholarships are of a very small amount (24% are an annual payment of NPR 200 or less, and 84% are payments of less than NPR 500). <p><u>High-value scholarships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5% of the poverty line or greater (equal to a minimum annual payment from Rs. 800 in rural eastern Terai to NPR 2,047 for urban Kathmandu). <p>Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three main categories of scholarships: for girls (32%), for Dalits (31%) and for the 'poor and talented' (29%); the remaining 8% is split among minor scholarships. ■ 72% of all scholarship recipients are girls. |

| Programme name & type [study] | Programme objective, design and eligibility |
|--|--|
| <p><i>Schooling Incentives Project Evaluation (SIPE)</i></p> <p>scholarship, scholarship + stipend (conditional on school attendance)</p> <p>[Edmonds & Shrestha 2014]</p> | <p>Objective: Reduce worst forms of child labour in the carpet sector.</p> <p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Scholarship</u>: Each child's schooling-related costs (e.g., fees, tuition, books) paid or reimbursed up to NPR 3,950 per year (sufficient to cover schooling costs in community or government schools). ■ <u>Scholarship + stipend</u>: additional stipend conditional on 80% school attendance (food rations valued at NPR 1,000 per month). <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Children whose guardians worked in establishments that were licensees for Nepal GoodWeave Foundation (NGF), an NGO that certifies carpets as child labour-free and provides scholarships and other services.</p> <p>NGF identified children who (a) had attended school in the previous 18 months, (b) had not received other education support, and (c) were in families at high child labour risk (based on household size, income and siblings' school attendance).</p> |
| <p><i>Girls' Scholarship Programme (GSP)</i></p> <p>merit-based scholarship</p> <p>[Kremer et al. 2009]</p> | <p>Objective: Improve academic performance, possibly with beneficial impacts on other students (not direct beneficiaries of the scholarship).</p> <p>Design</p> <p>Award for the next two academic years. In each year, the award consisted of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A grant of US\$6.4 (KSh 500) to cover the winner's school fees, paid to her school. ■ A grant of US\$12.8 (KSh 1,000) for school supplies, paid directly to the girl's family. ■ Public recognition at a school award assembly. <p>These amounts were substantial considering that Kenyan GDP per capita is only US\$400 and most households in the two districts have incomes below the Kenyan average.</p> <p>Although the programme did not include explicit monitoring to ensure parents purchased school supplies, the public presentation in a school assembly generated some community pressure to do so.</p> <p>Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two rural Kenyan districts. ■ Scholarships awarded to the highest-scoring 15% of grade 6 girls in the programme schools within each district. |

| Programme name & type [study] | Programme objective, design and eligibility |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Indonesian Social Safety Net Scholarship</i></p> <p>scholarship</p> <p>[Sparrow 2007]</p> | <p>Objective: Keep enrolment rates for primary and secondary education at pre-crisis levels.</p> <p>Design</p> <p>Monthly scholarships = Rp 10,000 for students in primary, Rp 20,000 for junior secondary and Rp 25,000 for senior secondary.</p> <p>Monthly household expenditure on education per student was Rp 9,562, Rp 27,682 and Rp 53,243 (February 1999 prices) for primary, junior secondary and senior secondary, respectively.</p> <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Locations decided based on poverty. Students selected based on household wealth, composition and distance from school.</p> |
| <p><i>EduRemesa</i></p> <p>Educational remittances</p> <p>[Ambler et al. 2015]</p> | <p>Objective: Stimulate migrants' remittances for education purposes by providing subsidies in the form of matching funds. Other examples: Mexican <i>Tres por Uno</i> (each \$ invested by migrants at origin is matched by \$3 from the Mexican government).</p> <p>Design (three groups)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ no match: migrants offered the EduRemesa product without matching funds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o EduRemesas available in fixed amounts of \$300 or \$500 for secondary students and \$600 or \$800 for tertiary students o Migrants who took up the EduRemesa chose the target student, who received an ATM card to withdraw 10 equal monthly amounts every month of the academic year. ■ 3:1 match: each \$ contributed by migrants was matched with \$3 in project funds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o in order to send \$300 EduRemesas, migrants would send \$75 and the project would send the additional \$225 ■ 1:1 match <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o in order to send \$300 EduRemesas, migrants would send \$150 and the project would send the additional \$150 <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Migrants from El Salvador and households in the home country that are connected to those migrants. EduRemesa allowed migrants to channel funds towards the education of a student of their choice in El Salvador. EduRemesa beneficiary students in El Salvador received an ATM card and were told that the money was for expenditures related to their own education.</p> |

| Programme name & type [study] | Programme objective, design and eligibility |
|--|---|
| <p>School feeding (government, WFP, other partners)</p> <p>General food distribution (GFD)</p> <p>[Aurino et al. 2019]</p> | <p>Objective: Enrol and keep children in school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>WFP intervention</u> included two main operations: 1) drought relief (late Jan 2013–2014); 2) GFD (2015–2016). Household ration of cereals, pulses, vegetable oil and salt, along with fortified super cereal. ■ <u>School feeding</u>: Beneficiary children in school receive school feeding throughout the school year: daily hot lunches of cereals, pulses and vegetable oil, complemented with local condiments. ■ WFP food assistance in Mopti also included targeted supplementary feeding and food-for-work initiatives, although coverage was limited relative to school feeding and GFD. <p>Eligibility</p> <p><u>School feeding</u> (government, WFP and other development partners):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Before the crisis: all primary school children in the country's 166 food-insecure communes; targeting was also based on low enrolment rates (of girls, particularly) and distance to school. ■ During the crisis: WFP and other partners relied on the government's geographical targeting, which rendered programmatic delivery and implementation feasible. <p>The exact targeting mechanism of villages and households is unclear – targeting and coverage may have been implemented based on the viability of the delivery of assistance, which was often impeded by armed groups that delayed or blocked access to roads in certain areas.</p> |
| <p><i>BRIGHT</i></p> <p>in-kind + school building, school meals, other incentives (books, etc.), take-home rations (THR) for girls</p> <p>[de Hoop et al. 2014b]</p> | <p>Objective: To increase school participation and learning, particularly for girls.</p> <p>Two main components (advocacy measures also took place):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A school was built in each of the intervention villages. ■ School kits, textbooks and school meals for all pupils, and THR of dry rice for girls with a monthly attendance rate of 90%+. <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Ten rural provinces with the lowest girls' primary school completion rates.</p> |
| <p><i>Food-for-Education Programme (FFE)</i></p> <p>in-kind school meals, take-home rations (THR)</p> <p>[Kazianga et al. 2012]</p> | <p>Objective: Improve educational and nutrition outcomes.</p> <p>Design</p> <p>Two different FFE interventions (both conditional on school attendance):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School meals (canteen) – lunch served on each school day. ■ THR: monthly food rations provided for eligible households (conditional on 90% attendance). <p>Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School meals: boys and girls were eligible (15 schools). ■ THR: each month, every girl would receive 10 kg cereal flour (15 schools). |

| Programme name & type [study] | Programme objective, design and eligibility |
|--|--|
| <p><i>Food-for-Education Programme (FFE)</i></p> <p>in-kind food rations</p> <p>[Ravallion & Wodon 2000]</p> | <p>Objective: To keep children of poor rural families in school.</p> <p>Monthly food rations to households, conditional on their children's school attendance (85% of classes monthly).</p> <p>Eligibility Households from economically backward rural areas.</p> |
| <p><i>Food-for-Training and Income Generation (FFTIG)</i></p> <p>in-kind + livelihood food transfers, entrepreneurship training, introduction of agricultural extension</p> <p>[Sulaiman 2010]</p> | <p>Objective: Sustainable change in the livelihood of beneficiaries through protection (food transfers) and promotion (other components).</p> <p>Design Combination of 'protection' and 'promotion' aspects of safety net; combining food transfers with skill development and financial services to enable the households to move into a regular source of income and to build an asset base to cope with minor shocks.</p> <p>Eligibility Based on a household score (female headship, living conditions, dependants per earner); households not already participating in microfinance programmes.</p> |
| <p><i>Community-Based Early Childhood Development Programme (ECD)</i></p> <p>[Martinez et al. 2017]</p> | <p>Objective: To help address the lack of development services for preschool-aged children in rural Mozambique. To improve children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development, thus facilitating the transition to primary school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building and equipping preschools, training of instructors and implementation of standardized curriculum. ■ Preschools operated 5 days a week for 3 hours and 15 minutes per day, following a structured daily routine designed to stimulate child development through play and learning. ■ Parents and caregivers of enrolled children participated in monthly meetings to discuss child development topics, such as health, nutrition and literacy. <p>Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three districts of the Gaza Province. ■ Rural communities with 500–8,000 residents, located within geographic proximity for programme field teams. ■ Children 3–5 resident in the eligible 30 communities (voluntary enrolment). ■ While in principle the programme was targeted to the poorest and most vulnerable children, children who enrolled were more likely to speak Portuguese, scored higher on some child development indicators and tended to have more favourable nutritional status. |
| <p>Availability of and distance to school</p> <p>[Vuri 2010]</p> | <p>Availability of primary, middle and secondary schools, the distance from primary and middle schools, and the school costs.</p> <p>Eligibility Primary school-aged children in the target rural area.</p> |

| Programme name & type [study] | Programme objective, design and eligibility |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Full-Time Schools (FTS) Programme</i></p> <p>extension of time in school</p> <p>[Kozhaya & Flores 2020]</p> | <p>Objective: Improving the quality of public basic education in Mexico.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extension of daily school hours from part-time (4 hours) to full-time (6 or 8 hours) in primary and secondary schools. ■ The additional hours are dedicated to academic activities, cultural activities and sports. ■ Participating schools are given technical support to develop strategies to adapt the syllabus to the longer hours, and receive a subsidy to cover the additional costs. <p>Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Eligible schools had to: (i) cover all grades of the corresponding school level, (ii) operate only one shift, (iii) have an appropriate infrastructure for the extension of the school day, and (iv) attend vulnerable population. ■ Participant schools selected by educational authorities at the state level (Autoridad Educativa Local) before each school year. |
| <p><i>Girls' Education Programme (GEP)</i></p> <p>School-based life skill training and mentoring</p> <p>[Edmonds et al. 2021]</p> | <p>Objective: Encouraging girls to complete secondary school (reduce dropout) and develop life skills.</p> <p>Seven-year programme beginning in grade 6 and continuing through secondary school. Social mobilizers (SMs) provide (twice a month):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Life skills training</u>: sessions during school hours (16 conducted in both grades six and seven). Grade-based curriculum emphasizing 10 life skills: self-confidence, expressing and managing emotions, empathy, self-control, critical thinking, decision-making, perseverance, communication, relationship building and creative problem-solving. Also applying these skills to simulations involving time management, education, physical protection and rights, health and community involvement. ■ <u>Mentoring</u>: student-led small group discussion sessions, for the life skills taught by SMs. <p>Eligibility</p> <p>All female students enrolled in grade 5 at baseline (January 2016) – Rajasthan</p> |

| Programme name & type [study] | Programme objective, design and eligibility |
|--|---|
| <p>Information about the financial and social benefits of education</p> <p>Nudging and behaviour change</p> <p>Telenovela-style video series, tablet-based information campaign</p> <p>[Gallego et al. 2018]</p> | <p>Objective: To target false perceptions about the returns to education.</p> <p>Two innovative information campaigns provided information about the financial and social benefits of education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Policy pilot</u>: telenovela-style video series whose plot conveyed messages about the social value of education, real earnings information for different education levels and fields, and options for financing higher education. Students watched these videos in their schools. This campaign was implemented in schools. ■ <u>Application-based intervention</u>: similar messaging through a more intensive, tablet-based information campaign, built into an app-based survey which used infographics, interactive activities and in-depth presentations to present information to students and parents. Some students interacted with the tablets in their homes and others at their schools. This campaign was also implemented in both rural and urban areas across Peru. <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Across 24 departments in urban areas of Peru, as well as in the rural areas of Cusco and Arequipa.</p> <p>In primary schools, the videos were projected for 5th and 6th graders, while in secondary schools, the videos were projected for all grades (7th through 11th).</p> |
| <p><i>Aflatoun Programme and the Honest Money Box (HMB) Programme</i></p> <p>School-based life and financial skills training</p> <p>[Berry et al. 2018]</p> | <p>Financial and social education either integrated into the regular curriculum or conducted as an after-school activity.</p> <p><u>HMB</u></p> <p>Voluntary after-school savings club and financial skills sessions. Focus on conveying the importance and process of savings.</p> <p><u>Aflatoun</u></p> <p>Sessions on encouragement of savings (stronger focus on changing behaviour, by making children feel good about savings), plus personal exploration, children's rights and responsibilities, highlighting the pitfalls of youth labour (e.g., forgoing school for work, risk of dangerous working conditions).</p> <p>Both programmes provided the schools with a metal padlocked savings box which was used to safeguard children's deposits.</p> <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Primary school (grades 1–6), junior high (7–8) and 'basic' (combined primary and junior secondary).</p> |
| <p>2006–2007 Free Compulsory Education Reform</p> <p>[Tang et al. 2020]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All rural students entitled to tuition fee exemptions. ■ Students from poor families are provided with free textbooks and living subsidies if they live in dormitories. <p>Eligibility</p> <p>All primary and junior high school students in rural China by the fall of 2007.</p> |

| Programme name & type [study] | Programme objective, design and eligibility |
|--|--|
| <p>The capitation grant policy (2005)</p> <p>Grant to schools covering all schooling costs other than fees</p> <p>[Opoku & Boahen 2021]</p> | <p>Objective: To relieve parents from the burden of school costs for children.</p> <p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cancellation of the out-of-pocket costs incurred by parents with children in publicly owned basic schools (e.g., PTA contribution, school repairs, stationery, cultural and sports kits). ■ Students received 30,000 Ghanaian cedis (or US\$3.30) per year in direct costs (\$ received by the headmaster). <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Every student in a public basic school in Ghana.</p> |
| <p>The 1997 Compulsory Schooling Reform</p> <p>[Dayıoğlu & Kırdar 2020]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Compulsory schooling extended from 5 to 8 years. ■ Improved schooling infrastructure via (i) bussing students in small villages to larger villages/towns, and (ii) construction of boarding schools. ■ Increased number of classrooms. ■ More teaching staff hired. |
| <p>Education Law 6287/2012</p> <p>Compulsory education, reintegration of religious education, distance education</p> <p>[Dincer et al. 2015]</p> | <p>Objective: To undo the effects of the 1997 reform by revitalizing junior high schools and expanding religious high school programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Compulsory schooling extended from 8 to 12 years. ■ The option to attend religious junior high schools (removed from the 1997 reform) was reinstated. ■ An additional option to attend distance education after grade 8 was included. <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Individuals born after January 1998.</p> |

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