

Abstract 2

Title: Interlinking nutrition and workfare during the first 1000 days: A new social safety net in Djibouti

Authors and Affiliations:

Stefanie Brodmann (World Bank)

Florencia Devoto (Paris School of Economics and Jameel Poverty Action Lab)

Emanuela Galasso (World Bank)

Abstract 2 Body

Background / Context:

Description of prior research and its intellectual context.

In **Djibouti**, extreme poverty was 41.9% and relative poverty 79.4% according to the poverty profile elaborated by the national statistical office (DISED) 2012. Malnutrition remains high in Djibouti, and comparable to Sub-Saharan countries, with 29.7 percent of children under the age of five chronically malnourished, 29.6 percent underweight, and over 17.8 percent of children acutely malnourished (SMART survey 2013). Poor families typically face multiple, interrelated challenges, such as un- or under-employment, poverty, and child malnutrition. While the nutrition literature provides extensive evidence on multiple feasible strategies to prevent and remediate growth retardation in low-income countries, there is still no evidence on community-based interventions that attempt to combine the simultaneous promotion of improved nutrition (through behavioral changes) and income increases.

In order to address both issues, the Government of Djibouti is piloting an innovative social protection program that integrates public works and nutrition intervention. The intervention (i) actively involves the main caregiver in a number of ways (nutrition, workfare) to strengthen her role in the household and (ii) makes access to income (workfare) conditional on the caregiver attending regular nutrition promotion activities. The program targets households with pregnant women and children 0-2 years of age in poor areas (urban and rural) in Djibouti.

Purpose / Objective / Research Question / Focus of Study:

Description of the focus of the research.

The aim is to test the cost-effectiveness of combining a public work program targeted to women with a child nutrition program. More precisely, the objective of the study is to evaluate the value added of combining a public works program targeted to women over and above the provision of information and promotion of behavioral change in child care practices. As access to the public works is given only to households where the women has registered to the community nutrition program itself, the program's goal is to leverage the additional cash income (net of the opportunity cost of participation) to enhance the adoption of improved nutrition practices. The ongoing evaluation will provide a test for the interaction effect between income and the information and promotion of behavioral change. A secondary objective of the evaluation is to test whether the benefits of the public works program, if positive, are only contemporaneous to participation to public works, or might have a medium term effect via female empowerment within the household or through activation of her labor supply.

Setting:

Description of the research location.

The program is conducted in poor neighborhoods (quartiers) in Djibouti-ville, other regional capitals outside Djibouti-ville, and several rural areas. The study area is one poor neighborhood of Djibouti Ville (Hayableh).

Population / Participants / Subjects:

Description of the participants in the study: who, how many, key features, or characteristics.

The target population is the universe of all pregnant and lactating women that registered in the program in the target area (Haybleh) and have been assigned to a nutrition session group (*foyer*).

Intervention / Program / Practice:

Description of the intervention, program, or practice, including details of administration and duration.

The program consists of a community-based and workfare component and will be run from 2012 to 2017. Under the community-based program, a group of maximum 20 women come together once a month for three hours. The sessions include measurement of anthropometric data, nutrition education, feeding practices, growth promotion, cooking sessions and distribution of nutrition supplements. If the community workers detect a problem during the sessions, the family will subsequently receive a home visit where the family receives counseling, and/or referral to the nearest health clinic.

For the workfare component of the program, the government employs a family member in various tasks, including garbage collection (mostly plastic bag) and community works, such as helping pave community roads and footpaths. The public works last for 50 days, at a daily wage of 1,000 DJF (corresponding to about 80% of the minimum wage or about 6 USD per day). Participation in the workfare component is only open for households participating in the nutrition promotion component. The public works is given with preferential access to women, who also have the option to delegate to a household member. The household member who participates in the workfare component gets a bank account opened in her/his name where the cash transfer can be withdrawn.

Research Design:

Description of the research design.

We exploit the gradual phase in of the public works program in the target, randomizing the timing of the offer of the public works to women participating in the community based nutrition program. Randomization took place within the nutrition groups (*foyers*) once the baseline survey was administered to all beneficiary women of the *foyer* and their husbands. Households will thus be randomly assigned to 4 groups:

- Group A: public works and services offered in the first quarter of 2014
- Group B: public works and services offered in the second quarter of 2014
- Group C: public works and services offered in the third quarter of 2014
- Group D: public works and services offered in the fourth quarter of 2014

Data Collection and Analysis:

Description of the methods for collecting and analyzing data.

A baseline household survey was administered to all eligible households (belonging to the test and control groups) selected for the study. The survey includes a questionnaire to be

administered to beneficiary women in the Hayableh program, and another questionnaire, shorter, administered to the husbands of these women. Data is being collected using CAPI (computer-assisted maintenance).

Phase 2: Follow-up survey

A short follow-up survey is being conducted *while* the public works are taking place. This survey will allow identifying short-term effects on intermediate and final indicators while the household is receiving income from the workfare component.

Phase 3: Endline household survey

A final survey will be conducted *after* the household has finalized the 50 days of work with the aim of measuring the effects of public works medium term. On average, households will be surveyed four months after the public works have finalized (6 months after they have started). A household questionnaire similar than the one administered at baseline, will be administered to the beneficiary woman and her husband.

Findings / Results:

Description of the main findings with specific details.

The study is ongoing.

Conclusions:

Description of conclusions, recommendations, and limitations based on findings.

The study is ongoing.