

# Evolution of cash transfers in Colombia

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## Abstract

Social protection programmes have become an effective and indispensable tool for improving the living standards of the poor and vulnerable. This article examines the five main cash transfer programmes in Colombia and studies their history, targeting, coverage, operation and the fiscal commitments they demand. It also reviews the impact evaluations of these programmes and their results on various social indicators. The article is a first attempt to consolidate the information that exists on the subject in Colombia, in order to allow a comprehensive understanding of the scope and challenges of these programmes and to identify possible areas for research and improvement.

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## Keywords

Poverty, income, poverty mitigation, family, youth, ageing persons, programmes of action, subsidies, social security, Colombia

## JEL classification

I38, L38, H5

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## I. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Subsidies provided through conditional and non-conditional cash transfers are one of the main tools for combating poverty in the short term and for encouraging behaviours that allow for the increased accumulation of human capital. Conditional transfers are those that require a series of specific requirements to be met before they are disbursed to the beneficiary households in accordance with the targeting criteria set. Usually, the rules require that beneficiaries make some type of investment in human capital: for example, enrolling their children in school and ensuring their minimum attendance. In contrast, non-conditional transfers do not require that beneficiaries meet any additional requirements other than being entitled to them in accordance with the targeting instrument used.

Cash transfers have been adopted across the world, and their success in reducing poverty has been proven. They have also yielded positive outcomes in specific areas such as education and health, although the magnitude of the impact varies according to the programme's context and design (Loeser, Özler and Premand, 2021; Millán and others, 2019). In Colombia, the use of conditional cash transfers as a poverty alleviation strategy began with *Familias en Acción* in 2000, in response to the economic crisis faced by the country in the late 1990s (Urrutia and Robles Báez, 2018). Since then, Colombia has created other programmes that operate in a similar way to *Familias en Acción*. By the end of 2022, five national government cash transfer programmes were in place, which in 2021 covered around 70% of the population living in poverty and represented an annual cost of 1.13% of gross domestic product (GDP).

Despite their positive effects, cash transfer programmes are designed to be one component within a comprehensive public social protection policy. In and of themselves, cash transfers do not solve the structural problems that generate poverty traps, nor do they guarantee that appropriate, quality public services will be provided. Cash transfers should act as insurance to mitigate drops in the incomes of the most vulnerable households caused by unexpected shocks, or as incentives to encourage an increased accumulation of human capital. Transfers must therefore be accompanied by other public policy strategies that provide tools for income generation, and by a supply of accessible and quality social services throughout the territory.

In view of the recent growth of cash transfer programmes in Colombia and other countries, particularly in Latin America, it is important that their scope and potential impact be understood and that the relevance of their continued availability and the ways in which they should be implemented be analysed. Many questions remain to be answered regarding their scheduling, conditions, standardization, targeting, amounts, operation and fiscal sustainability. This study provides a first analysis of the five national conditional and non-conditional transfer programmes in place in Colombia as of 2022, a review of the literature evaluating them and information on their beneficiary numbers, costs and general conditions; it also offers a series of recommendations. The document refers to the programmes in place as of December 2022 and the regulations in force at that time.

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## II. Description and targeting

In 2022, Colombia had 29 social programmes in place, run by 12 national agencies, intended to help improve the living conditions and incomes of the most vulnerable segments of the country's population (Sisben, n/d).<sup>2</sup> Five of those programmes focused exclusively on cash transfers, and they are the ones examined in this study: *Familias en Acción*, *Jóvenes en Acción*, *Colombia Mayor*, *Ingreso Solidario* and *Devolución del IVA*. They can be classified into two categories: conditional and non-conditional transfer programmes. *Familias en Acción* and *Jóvenes en Acción* are conditional transfer programmes, while the others involve non-conditional transfers.

### 1. Conditional transfers

#### (a) *Familias en Acción*

The *Familias en Acción* (Families in Action) programme is intended to bolster the incomes of poor families with children or adolescents through conditional cash transfers. It also aims to foster the accumulation of human capital, so payments are restricted according to the beneficiaries' ages and depend on their school attendance (in primary and secondary education) and on compliance with health checks during the early years of life.

The programme's first pilot experiments took place in 1999 as a temporary response to the economic crisis of the late 1990s, which resulted in sudden drops in the incomes of many Colombian households (Llano, 2014). Since then, the programme has become Colombia's main tool for social investment. In its first version, in 2000, the target group was 300,000 families in some 500 municipalities; that total was later expanded to 627 municipalities, or about 57% of the total number (DNP, 2000). The programme was updated in 2005, when it was expanded to cover 400,000 families (DNP, 2005). In addition to the previously targeted municipalities, this new expansion covered marginal urban areas, capitals of the new departments and specific areas defined by the national government as priority zones (DNP, 2005). Although the *Familias en Acción* programme was at first essentially rural, the 2005 expansion took it into urban areas and allowed it to reach municipalities with no banking services, with which it was able to access areas with lower levels of development.

*Familias en Acción* officially became a policy of the State in 2012 (Colombia, 2012a). In contrast to the initial geographic coverage, the 2012 expansion included all of the country's municipalities, a scope that has been maintained up to the most recent versions. Its coverage prioritizes, in order, dispersed rural areas, rural areas and municipal seats (Colombia, 2019a). According to the programme's most recent update, adopted in 2021, beneficiary families must belong to groups A1 to A5 and B1 to B4 as defined in the fourth version of the System for the Identification of Potential Social Programme Beneficiaries (Sisben IV) (DPS, 2021):<sup>3</sup> in other words, households in extreme poverty (A) and the most vulnerable households within the moderate poverty group (B).

<sup>2</sup> The national social programmes are mainly administered by the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS), the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory. Together, these institutions are responsible for 72% of the programmes' outreach, with the Department for Social Prosperity alone accounting for one third.

<sup>3</sup> Sisben IV classifies the population into four groups: extreme poverty (A), moderate poverty (B), vulnerable population (C) and non-poor or non-vulnerable population (D). These groups are divided, respectively, into 5, 7, 18 and 21 subcategories. Lower digits indicate a lower earning capacity and more challenging living conditions (DPS, 2019).

**Table 1**  
Colombia: bimonthly transfers from the *Familias en Acción* programme,  
average per child, by incentive type, 2022  
(Dollars)

Incentive type	School grade						Monthly average <sup>a</sup>
	Not applicable	Preschool	Grades one to five	Grades six to eight	Grades nine and ten	Eleventh grade	
Health	44.4	...	...	...	...	...	22.3
Education	...	13.7	8.6	20.5	23.9	34.2	8.4

**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS).

<sup>a</sup> The figure for health is calculated as the total transfers per beneficiary in a calendar year divided by 12. The average for education is estimated in the same way, following the school year.

In the 2022 version of the *Familias en Acción* programme, cash transfers are determined as shown in table 1. Paid every two months, the amounts shown indicate the average disbursements distributed according to a differentiated regime that depends on the target group, the grade level or age of the child and the classification of the municipality of residence. Health incentives are only granted to families with children under 6 years of age. The education incentive is aimed primarily at children of school age. It is estimated that the average monthly school incentive per beneficiary is equal to 10% of the 2021 national poverty line, with the health incentive equal to 26%. Each family can have a maximum of three beneficiaries receiving the school incentive. The health incentive, in contrast, is paid per family, regardless of the number of children in the defined age range.

According to figures from the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS), 1.9 million families and 3.3 million children were enrolled in *Familias en Acción* in 2022. Displaced persons accounted for 32.8% of the total number of beneficiary children, with members of Indigenous population groups accounting for 6%.

## (b) *Jóvenes en Acción*

The *Jóvenes en Acción* (Youth in Action) programme was created to encourage and strengthen human capital formation among poor and vulnerable young people and, in addition, to facilitate their incorporation into the formal labour market. This programme's cash transfers are conditional on the beneficiaries' admission to and continued attendance at a school of higher education or in the National Training Service (SENA).<sup>4</sup> *Jóvenes en Acción* aims to enable young people from the *Familias en Acción* programme to make a successful transition to higher education. The programme also provides training in the strengthening of cross-cutting or socioemotional skills.

The version of *Jóvenes en Acción* in force in 2022 was launched in 2012. According to the terms of the last known version of *Jóvenes en Acción*, observed in 2022, beneficiaries must be high-school graduates<sup>5</sup> without a professional degree, aged between 14 and 28 years old and classified by Sisben IV in the extreme poverty categories and the first group of vulnerability. The programme is aimed primarily at students enrolled in SENA or at a public institute of higher education.

The areas targeted by the programme are municipalities selected according to three conditions. First, the municipality must have the educational infrastructure required for higher education. Specifically, it must have facilities offered by SENA or another technical, technological or professional school recognized by the Ministry of National Education. Second, priority is given to those municipalities with

<sup>4</sup> The National Training Service (SENA) is a public institution that offers free technical and technological programmes and short courses.

<sup>5</sup> Defined in Colombia as a person who has completed secondary education; with the exception of some schools, the final year of secondary education school is eleventh grade.

the highest multidimensional poverty indices (MPI). Third, the areas with the highest percentages of potential beneficiaries are identified (DPS, 2020a). According to the records of the Department for Social Prosperity, in 2022 the programme was available in 493 municipalities and 525,252 young people were participating in it.

The average monthly transfer varies according to the type of educational institution the students attend. If they are enrolled at an institute of higher education, the sum of US\$ 94 is paid at the beginning of each semester. If the student remains in school over the course of the semester, an additional US\$ 94 is transferred, up to a maximum of four transfers per year. If the student obtains the minimum average needed to receive a “excellent” grade,<sup>6</sup> an extra US\$ 47 is added to the semester’s final payment. For SENA students, the incentive is US\$ 94 every two months (DPS, 2020a). Students at schools of higher education receive a monthly average of US\$ 31.30 —and are also eligible for the excellence bonus— while SENA students receive a monthly average of US\$ 47.00 (see table 2). These amounts are equal, respectively, to 37% and 56% of the 2021 national monetary poverty line.

**Table 2**  
Colombia: *Jóvenes en Acción* programme transfers for higher education  
and National Training Service students, by incentive type, 2022  
(Dollars)

Institution	Regular transfer	Incentive for excellence	Monthly average <sup>a</sup>
Higher education institution (quarterly)	94	47	31.3
National Training Service (SENA) (bimonthly)	94	---	47.0

**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS).

**Note:** The number of transfers per year varies according to the type of institution.

<sup>a</sup> The average is calculated as the total amount transferred per beneficiary in a calendar year divided by 12.

## 2. Non-conditional transfers

### (a) *Colombia Mayor*

The *Colombia Mayor* (Older Colombia) programme is intended to protect older persons living in poverty or extreme poverty across the nation by means of cash transfers that, in 2022, were worth US\$ 18.80 per month.

The first step towards this programme was taken in 1993, when the foundations for the Solidarity Pension Fund were set. The programme evolved over time to become what is known today as *Colombia Mayor*, the first version of which was launched in 2003. *Colombia Mayor* has maintained practically the same requirements for potential beneficiaries since its inception. In the version of the programme examined in this study, defined in 2021, the beneficiaries were specified as Colombian nationals who had resided in the nation’s territory for the past 10 years, aged a minimum of three years below retirement age and belonging to Sisben groups A, B and C1 (Colombia, 2021).

In 2022, only 25% of Colombia’s approximately 6.8 million older persons were receiving a pension. Thus, 4.9 million people were excluded from the pension system, and the funds that the government allocated to the *Colombia Mayor* programme in that year covered only 35% of that excluded population. Since *Colombia Mayor*’s coverage fell short of the total potential beneficiaries according to the conditions described above, a process to establish priorities for its recipients was defined (Villar and others, 2020). To that end, potential beneficiaries are ranked according to their socioeconomic conditions. This procedure assigns each person a position, ranging from the most to least vulnerable. Following that order, members of the final beneficiary group are selected until the budget target is reached.

<sup>6</sup> The recipients of the excellence bonus are those who achieve an average grade of above 4.

The *Colombia Mayor* programme is national in scope and therefore covers all the country's municipalities. However, the programme's coverage and transfer amounts have evolved significantly. In contrast to more recent versions, the initial programme prioritized the amount transferred per person over coverage (Villar and others, 2020). For example, between 2008 and 2012 the average monthly transfer amount was around US\$ 21.25, while in 2013 the figure was US\$ 11.75. Until 2020, the average monthly transfer per person varied by municipality and was set at the local authorities' discretion (Colombia, 2012b). This changed with the 2020 update, which defined a standardized nationwide monthly transfer of US\$ 18.80. It should be noted that in some specific cases, joint financing exists between *Colombia Mayor* programme transfers and municipal assistance. This is the case in the capital city, Bogotá, where the national transfer is supplemented with local funds, resulting in higher per-person transfers.

In 2020, the transfer schedule was changed from bimonthly to monthly. In 2022, *Colombia Mayor* benefited approximately 1.7 million older persons and the amount each received was equal to 22% of the 2021 national monetary poverty line.

## (b) *Ingreso Solidario*

The *Ingreso Solidario* (Solidarity Income) programme was created in March 2020 as a result of the crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in consideration of the mandatory preventive lockdown measures implemented and the consequent drop in economic activity. The *Ingreso Solidario* programme ended with its final payment in December 2022. While it operated, the programme provided an unconditional cash transfer to those households (spending units) living in poverty, extreme poverty or vulnerability that were not receiving other transfers. The *Ingreso Solidario* programme was initially to run for three months but, because of the length of the mandatory lockdowns and the significant deterioration of economic conditions, it was extended on several occasions and funded until December 2022.

In terms of its selection criteria, two phases of the programme can be identified. In its initial stage, *Ingreso Solidario* focused on households identified in the Sisben master database as poor or vulnerable, but excluding the population receiving other cash transfer programmes, formal employees and pensioners (DPS, 2020b; Colombia, 2020). The master database was created in 2020 by the National Planning Department (DNP) from updated household information available in the Sisben databases and various administrative records. This database, which enabled cross-referencing with the beneficiaries of other cash transfer programmes, is managed by the DNP (DPS, 2020b).

A second phase began in 2022, during which fundamental changes were made to the programme: the number of beneficiaries was increased and its functioning was temporarily extended until December 2022. This extension was limited to those households classified in extreme poverty according to Sisben IV and without beneficiaries of the *Familias en Acción*, *Colombia Mayor*, *Jóvenes en Acción* or *Devolución del IVA* programmes. In addition, a new formula was defined for calculating transfers, differentiated according to the household's size and its Sisben IV classification (DPS, n/d). This programme does not select its beneficiaries on the basis of the households' geographic location, but rather according to their conditions of poverty or vulnerability.

Payments and scheduling underwent several changes after the programme's creation. In the first version, in effect between 2020 and 2021, monthly amounts of US\$ 37.60 were received. In the final version, in 2022, beneficiary households received a bimonthly amount of between US\$ 94.00 and US\$ 102.20, depending on their Sisben classification (see table 3). Under the latest version of the programme, the average monthly transfer per household was US\$ 48.60: an amount equal to around 30% of the 2021 national per capita monetary poverty line. In 2022, a total of 3.9 million households benefited from this programme.

**Table 3**  
Colombia: bimonthly *Ingreso Solidario* programme transfers, per household,  
by number of persons, 2022  
(Dollars)

Classification according to the System for the Identification of Potential Social Programme Beneficiaries (Sisben)	Number of household members		Monthly average
	1	2 or more	
A	98.7	102.2	50.2
B	96.3	98.7	48.8
C <sup>a</sup>	94.0	94.0	47.0

**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS).

<sup>a</sup> C also refers to the amount received by households not included in the fourth version of Sisben (Sisben IV). The monthly average is calculated as the simple average of payments per household.

### (c) *Devolución del IVA*

The *Devolución del IVA* (VAT Refund) programme not only seeks to alleviate the impact of sales tax (VAT) on the country's poorest households, but also to increase the equity of the tax system. The compensation method was approved in December 2019 (Colombia, 2019b) for gradual implementation over the course of 2020. However, because of the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, its implementation was expedited and it was operational by March 2020. According to the latest 2022 version, the *Devolución del IVA* programme consists of a payment of US\$ 18.80 every two months, primarily benefiting the poorest households in the *Familias en Acción* and *Colombia Mayor* programmes. It functions, therefore, as a complement.

In the first version of the *Devolución del IVA* programme, beneficiaries were selected in a two-stage process. First, the beneficiary municipalities were identified based on an approximation of the MPI estimated from the 2018 National Population and Housing Census. Second, the beneficiaries were identified based on their Sisben classifications and on the households' participation in the *Familias en Acción* and *Colombia Mayor* programmes. According to the latest available version of the *Devolución del IVA* programme, potential beneficiaries are selected by the following criteria: households in extreme poverty that are beneficiaries of *Familias en Acción* or *Colombia Mayor* or not receiving any transfer, and households in moderate poverty that are beneficiaries of *Familias en Acción*.

In 2022, these transfers were received by 2 million households. The average monthly payment per household under the *Devolución del IVA* programme in that year was US\$ 9.40, equal to 10% of the 2021 national monetary poverty line.

## 3. Comparative analysis of transfers

Colombia's cash transfer programmes share a number of common characteristics. First, they are all intended to mitigate situations of poverty and vulnerability among the population. In operational terms, they are similar in that they use similar databases to identify and select their potential beneficiaries and in that, because of budgetary constraints, they apply prioritization strategies. In addition, they were mostly created in response to economic crises and are currently managed by the same institution, the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS).

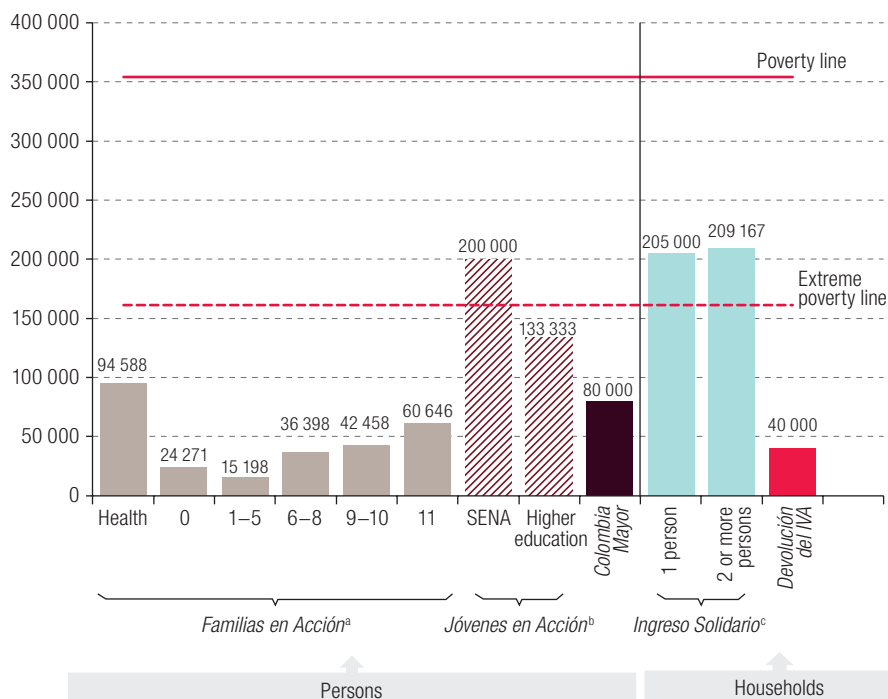
The main difference between the programmes lies in the presence or absence of conditionalities and in their beneficiary selection strategies. In programmes such as *Jóvenes en Acción* and *Familias en Acción*, financial assistance is subject to the fulfilment of certain specific conditions. In contrast, under the *Ingreso Solidario*, *Devolución del IVA* and *Colombia Mayor* programmes, there are no requirements to be met in order for transfers to be received, once the individuals or families have been identified as beneficiaries in accordance with specific targeting criteria. It should also be noted that, in contrast

to the non-conditional programmes, the conditional programmes require a registration process. In other words, an expression of interest is needed and, consequently, awareness of the programmes' existence and requirements. Another distinctive feature of the programmes is the units they identify and the types of beneficiaries they select. The *Familias en Acción* programme identifies families, but the beneficiaries are specific individuals. In turn, the identified units and beneficiaries of the *Ingreso Solidario* and *Devolución del IVA* programmes are all the household's members.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, *Jóvenes en Acción* and *Colombia Mayor* use individual identification.

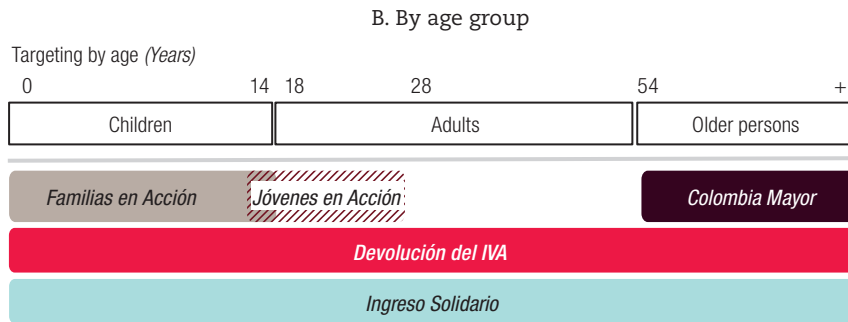
The nation's cash transfer programmes also differ in the population groups they target, and in their disbursement schedules and amounts. Because disbursements under *Familias en Acción*, *Jóvenes en Acción*, *Ingreso Solidario*, *Devolución del IVA* and *Colombia Mayor* are made with different frequencies and directed at different units (individuals, families or households), the transfer amounts cited above are not directly comparable. Figure 1 shows monthly transfer amounts per person or household. *Jóvenes en Acción* has the highest transfer amounts, while those of the *Familias en Acción* programme aimed at school-age children attending preschool through fifth grade are the lowest. Of the transfers targeting all members of a household, *Ingreso Solidario* has the highest monthly disbursements. The average monthly transfer of *Jóvenes en Acción* for SENA students is equal to 56% of the 2021 national monetary poverty line, that of *Jóvenes en Acción* for students at higher education institutions equals 38% and that of *Ingreso Solidario* equals 58.47%. Disbursements under the *Colombia Mayor* programme are equal to 22% of that poverty line, while the value drops to 11.3% in the case of *Devolución del IVA* and, on average, to 12.9% under *Familias en Acción*.

**Figure 1**  
Colombia: average monthly programme transfers, 2022

A. By person or household, according to the classifications of the fourth version of the System for the Identification of Potential Social Programme Beneficiaries (Sisben IV)  
(Colombian pesos)



<sup>7</sup> A household is defined as a person or group of persons who provide for their basic needs by means of a common budget (Decree No. 1082 of 2015).



**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS).

**Note:** Shows the most recent transfer amounts as set in 2022. The relationship between (per capita) poverty lines and (per household) monthly transfers from the *Ingreso Solidario* and *Devolución del IVA* programmes should be interpreted with caution, as they are not strictly comparable. Poverty lines are individual, while some transfers are delivered at the household level.

- <sup>a</sup> Bars indicate transfers subject to health and education conditions, in the latter case according to the child's current study grade between the first and the eleventh.
- <sup>b</sup> Bars indicate transfers to students of the National Training Service (SENA) or institutions of higher education (HE).
- <sup>c</sup> Bars indicate transfers directed to households with one member and with two or more members.

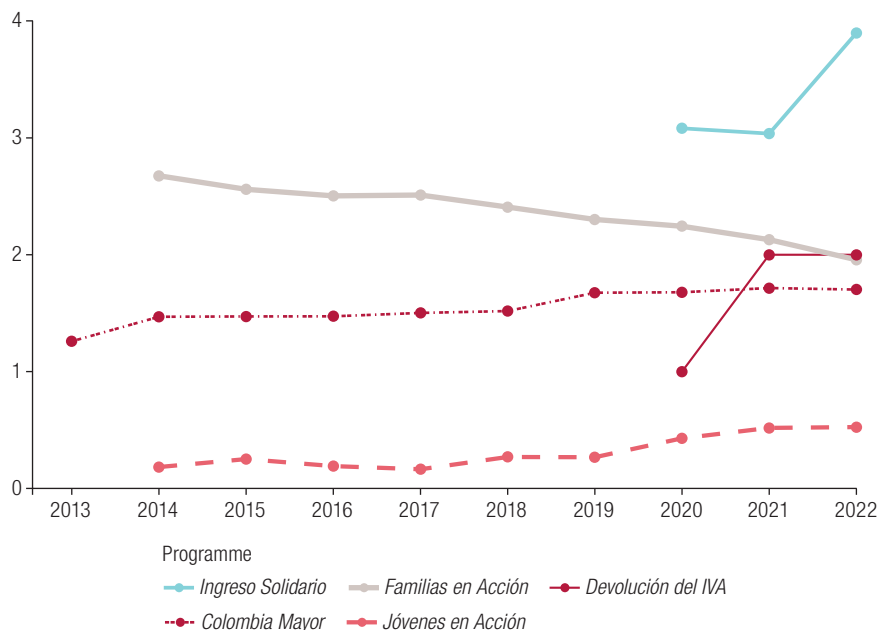
Although the different programmes have a targeting that, taken together, can cover all age groups (see figure 1), there is a clear disparity in the transfer amounts and, therefore, in the probabilities of government assistance helping beneficiaries in different age groups to escape poverty. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, disbursements were targeted at the school-age population (under 28 years old) and older persons (at least three years younger than pension age). With the creation of *Ingreso Solidario*, transfers were made available to population groups of working age. With this, all age groups became potential beneficiaries of a national cash transfer programme.

### III. Beneficiaries and costs

The disbursement amounts and beneficiaries of the *Jóvenes en Acción* and *Colombia Mayor* programmes have undergone a particularly notable expansion since 2018. Between 2014 and 2018, the average annual growth rate in the number of *Jóvenes en Acción* beneficiaries was 12.4%, compared to 40.6% between 2019 and 2021. Similarly, the number of *Colombia Mayor* beneficiaries rose by 10.3% in 2019. *Colombia Mayor* also recorded a significant increase in its beneficiary numbers between 2012 and 2013, on account of the adjustments described in the previous section (Villar and others, 2020). In contrast, the number of families benefiting from *Familias en Acción* has, since 2018, fallen at an average annual rate of 2.9% (see figure 2).

The two most recent programmes, *Devolución del IVA* and *Ingreso Solidario*, have expanded very rapidly. Not only were they launched with a high number of beneficiaries —1 million and 3 million households, respectively— but, in addition, their coverage quickly increased (see figure 2). Taken together, Colombia's 2022 cash transfers directly benefited 5.8 million families or households through the *Familias en Acción* and *Ingreso Solidario* programmes and 2.2 million people through *Jóvenes en Acción* and *Colombia Mayor*. When coverage is compared to the size of each programme's target population, it can be seen that the trends are maintained, with the exception of *Colombia Mayor*. In other words, although *Colombia Mayor* has expanded over time, its coverage of the population aged 55 and older is decreasing. It can also be seen that the programme with the highest coverage within its reference group is *Familias en Acción* (see annex 1).

**Figure 2**  
Colombia: cash transfer beneficiaries, by programme, 2013–2022  
(Millions of people)



**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS) and Villar, L. and others, “El pilar no contributivo y su rol en el sistema de protección a la vejez: Colombia Mayor”, *Working Paper*, No. 78, Bogotá, Fedesarrollo, 2020.

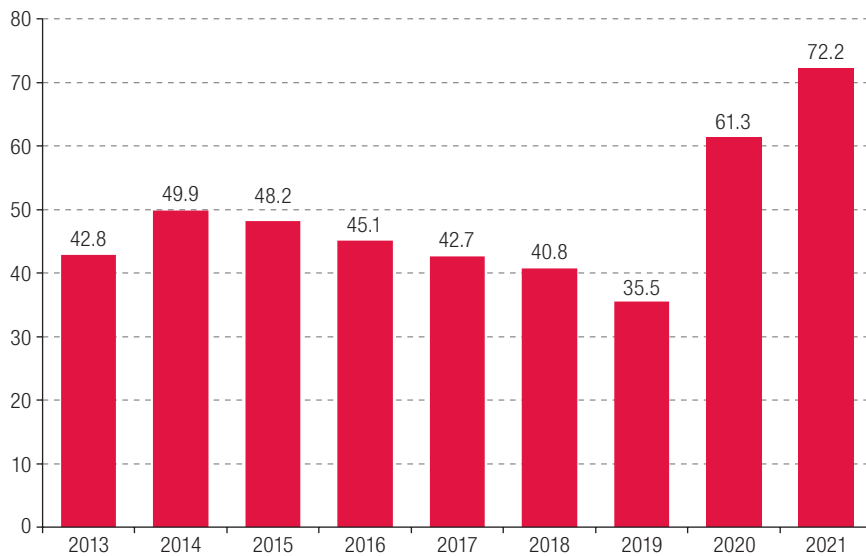
**Note:** The identified beneficiary for *Familias en Acción* is the household, even though the programme targets children.

The accelerated growth between 2020 and 2022 is consistent with the increase in the proportion of people facing monetary poverty who received some cash support during that period (see figure 3). Similarly, the gradual reduction in the number of families benefiting from *Familias en Acción* — Colombia’s main social investment programme until 2019— is consistent with the decrease in the proportion of poor people who received some type of assistance between 2013 and 2019. Between 2014 and 2019 alone, that proportion fell by 14 percentage points. These drops could be the result of the country’s demographic transition: the base of the population pyramid narrowed over the study period and, therefore, a lower participation in social programmes by families with school-age children — the prerequisite for participation in *Familias en Acción* — should be expected.

The creation of the new transfer programmes in 2020 and their recent expansion mean that out of every 10 people living in poverty, 6 benefited from some type of institutional assistance in 2020, rising to seven in 2021. Those results are in sharp contrast to those of 2019. Compared to that year, 3 more people out of every 10 benefited from transfers in 2021.

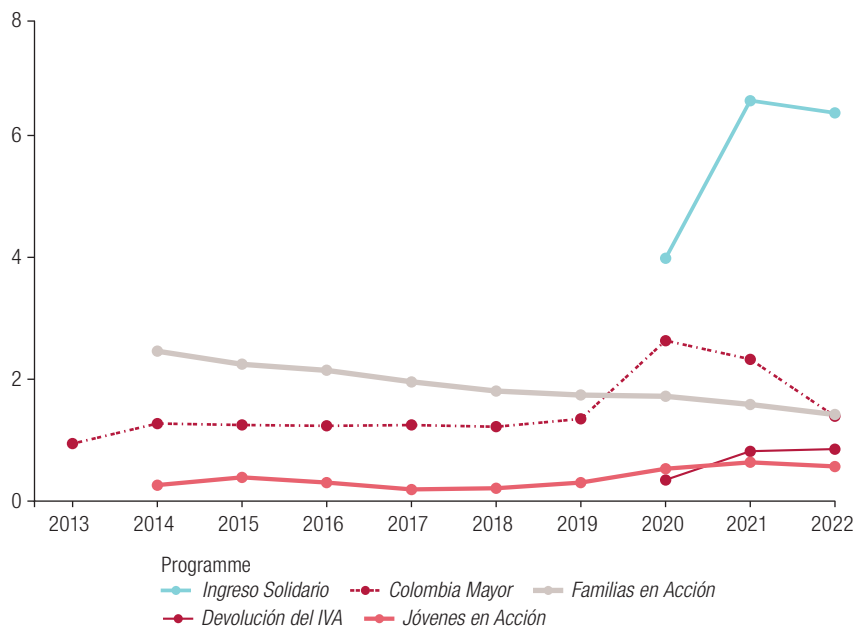
The rising numbers of beneficiaries have naturally been accompanied by an increase in the budget allocated to these social programmes (see figure 4). However, the distribution and growth of participation in each programme evolved differently. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the *Ingreso Solidario* programme became the largest recipient of resources for cash transfers in 2021, accounting for 55% of the total. The second largest recipient was *Colombia Mayor*, ranking higher than *Familias en Acción*, which had historically accounted for the largest share of resources. The lowest levels of funding were reported by *Jóvenes en Acción* and *Devolución del IVA*.

**Figure 3**  
Colombia: proportion of people in monetary poverty receiving some type  
of institutional assistance through transfers, 2013–2021  
(Percentages)



**Source:** Prepared by the authors on the basis of data from the Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH) of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE).

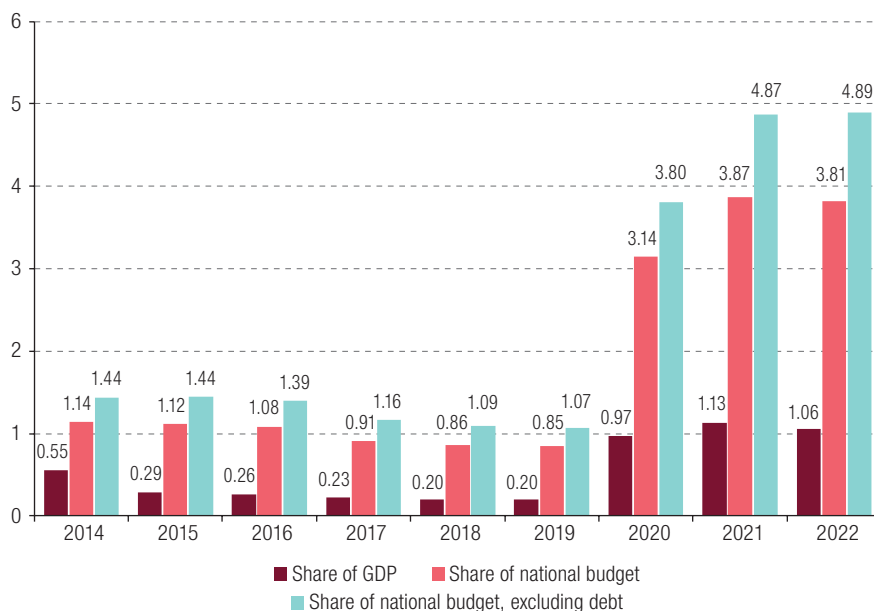
**Figure 4**  
Colombia: budget allocations for cash transfers, by programme, 2013–2022  
(Trillions of real 2018 Colombian pesos)



**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS) and Villar, L. and others, “El pilar no contributivo y su rol en el sistema de protección a la vejez: Colombia Mayor”, *Working Paper*, No. 78, Bogotá, Fedesarrollo, 2020.

Between 2014 and 2019, the average annual total subsidy disbursements amounted to US\$ 822.5 million and represented, on average, 0.99% of the nation's general budget and 0.29% of GDP. That total rose to US\$ 2.162 billion in 2020 and to US\$ 2.796 billion in 2021, and the annual cost for those two years averaged 3.6% of the nation's general budget and 1.05% of GDP (see figure 5).

**Figure 5**  
Colombia: share of total cash transfers in GDP, the nation's general budget  
and the nation's general budget excluding debt, 2014–2022  
(Percentages)



**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS) and the National Administrative Department of Statistics (national accounts) and the Ministry of Finance.

To provide some context on the size of those amounts, comparisons with the budgets of social sector agencies and other subsidies that currently exist in Colombia are presented below. For 2022, the Unit for Victims had a total budget of US\$ 517 million (Unit for Victims, n/d). Another recipient of State assistance is the electricity subsidy, which was designed as a form of cross-subsidy to allow for minimum subsistence consumption with targeting based on the socioeconomic stratification of housing (Public Services Act (No. 142)). This consumption subsidy is received by homes in strata 1, 2 and 3, with stratum 1 receiving a higher percentage of subsidized electricity consumption and stratum 3 receiving a lower percentage. Its funding comes, in part, from a 20% surcharge on electricity rates paid by residential consumers in strata 5 and 6. However, since those funds are not sufficient to cover the full cost, the national government has transferred an annual average of between 0.3% and 0.4% of GDP between 2010 and 2019 to pay for this subsidy (Abdallah and others, 2019; Mejía, 2018). It should be noted that targeting on the basis of socioeconomic strata is seriously flawed, given the presence of a significant proportion of high-income households in strata 1, 2 and 3. In 2017, US\$ 23 million was spent every month on electricity subsidies to households that were not below the poverty line (Eslava, Révalo and Ortiz, 2021).

Another major subsidy is the one applied by the national government to pensions paid by Colpensiones, Colombia's State pension administrator. The Medium-Term Fiscal Framework (Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, 2022) estimates that between 2022 and 2033, the national government

will have to transfer, on average, 1.4% of GDP to Colpensiones to cover the agency's pension liabilities. This subsidy is concentrated among high-income individuals, since pensions worth more than four times the minimum wage are those that benefit the most.

## IV. Documented lessons from the literature

Cash transfer programmes have multiple effects, as demonstrated by rigorous impact evaluations in different contexts. The literature on the effectiveness of these programmes is vast and, in recent years, has been used to adjust the design of many existing schemes. The following paragraphs describe some of the most outstanding results in Colombia documented in the literature and provide specific references to related empirical findings from across the region. It should be noted that the identified papers are only a subset of the copious literature that exists. Annex 2 provides a summary of the data and methodology used in the documents cited.

### 1. Impact on consumption and poverty

The effects of the *Familias en Acción* programme include an increase in food consumption (Urrutia and Robles Báez, 2018), together with a lower probability of suffering from multidimensional poverty (Cáceres, 2021). Among *Ingreso Solidario* recipients, higher spending on health and education has been observed (Gallego and others, 2021) and, in the case of *Devolución del IVA*, a higher probability of buying food (Londoño-Vélez and Querubín, 2020). All this is consistent with the effects of cash transfers on consumption observed in other Latin American countries (Fiszbein and others, 2009; Kondylis and Loeser, 2021). As regards the impact on poverty, *Familias en Acción* was found to have reduced extreme poverty (Urrutia and Robles Báez, 2018). It is estimated that between 2002 and 2013, had Colombia not had these cash transfer programmes in place, poverty would have been four percentage points higher in 2013 (Obando and Andrián, 2016), which is also consistent with observations in the rest of Latin America (Stampini and Tornarolli, 2012; Levy and Schady, 2013).

### 2. Impact on education

Urrutia and Robles Báez (2018) identify increases in enrolment levels, years of schooling, the probability of graduation, mathematics skills and years completed among the effects of the *Familias en Acción* programme. These results are complemented by conclusive data on lower school dropout rates (Attanasio and others, 2021). Similarly, Villa (2018) finds that the programme had positive effects on years of schooling. Other studies measuring the impact of the *Jóvenes en Acción* programme have found indications that graduation is more likely (Kugler and others, 2022) and that more students progress to tertiary education (Kugler and others, 2022; Gómez, 2017). This result with respect to tertiary education has also been seen in the case of the *Familias en Acción* programme (Attanasio and others, 2021). In turn, the *Devolución del IVA* and *Ingreso Solidario* programmes result in higher spending on education (Londoño-Vélez and Querubín, 2020) and more time devoted to study (Gallego and others, 2021), respectively.

It should be noted that although improvements in school performance and graduation probabilities are associated with the *Familias en Acción* programme without distinctions between different areas of the country (Urrutia and Robles, 2018), there are some differences in its effects between rural and urban areas. Rural areas also report improvements in the years of schooling (Urrutia and Robles Báez, 2018). Moreover, Benson (2012) identifies a positive impact on the number of schools in rural areas. However,

he also found that the student-teacher ratio remained unchanged. In contrast, evaluations of the *Familias en Acción* programme in urban areas have detected positive impacts on variables such as literacy, school attendance and dropout rates (Urrutia and Robles Báez, 2018). The positive results of the *Familias en Acción* and *Jóvenes en Acción* programmes in urban areas can be seen in access to tertiary education (Attanasio and others, 2021; Kugler and others, 2022; Gómez, 2017).

### 3. Health impact

Urrutia and Robles Báez (2018) find that progress in the area of health was made among children covered by the *Familias en Acción* programme: mainly in rural areas and with respect to variables such as height and malnutrition. Improvements in the health of other household members, who are not directly related to the transfer, were also observed. Those household members were less likely to be hospitalized and less likely to be in poor health (Contreras and Maitra, 2021). There was also a lower probability of food insecurity in rural areas (Urrutia and Robles Báez, 2018). Under the *Colombia Mayor* programme, lower probabilities of hospitalization and fewer reports of ill health among the elderly were found (Hessel and others, 2018), albeit only with a significant impact on men. Gallego and others (2021) show that the *Ingreso Solidario* programme increases the probability of spending on health but has no effect on food security. In the case of the *Devolución del IVA* programme, positive effects on mental health were found. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it allowed for a reduction of stress-related factors among transfer recipients compared to a control group (Londoño-Vélez and Querubín, 2020). In contrast, higher levels of overweight among children covered by the *Familias en Acción* programme were identified (Urrutia and Robles Báez, 2018); this could be explained by inadequate food education, meaning that households do not necessarily buy foods that contribute to a balanced diet.

### 4. Employment impact

The literature examining the effects of cash transfer programmes on labour market participation in developing countries — which have highly informal labour markets, comparable to Colombia's — has not found many statistically significant negative effects of interventions of this type (Banerjee and others, 2017; Baird, McKenzie and Özler, 2018; Alzúa, Cruces and Ripani, 2013). Some possible unintended effects of cash transfers in reducing formality have been identified, particularly among women (Bergolo and Galván, 2018; Bergolo and Cruces, 2021), and even a possible disincentivization of labour participation when the amounts involved are high (Verlaet, Todeschini and Ramos, 2023). This relationship has not been proven to be true in all contexts (Gerard, Naritomi and Silva, 2021; Neves and Leite, 2014) and information for countries such as Colombia, where informality can approach a rate of 50%, is needed.

Among their positive impacts, the available data show two desirable effects of transfers of this kind. First, child labour appears to decrease in households benefiting from transfers that require children to attend school, both in Colombia and in other developing countries (Núñez and others, 2011; Behrman, Parker and Todd, 2011; Galiani and McEwan, 2013). Second, cash transfers appear to have a positive effect on women's labour participation and hours of paid work (Alzúa, Cruces and Ripani, 2013; Barham, Macours and Maluccio, 2018).

In the particular case of Colombia, the studies into the *Familias en Acción* programme are not conclusive as to its effect on the labour market because of the presence of compositional effects, given that groups who previously participated in the labour market — such as children and adolescents — are instead in school because of the conditions set for the subsidy (Fiszbein and others, 2009; Attanasio and others, 2010; Núñez and others, 2011; Attanasio, Kugler and Meghir, 2011). However, there are

no relevant statistical effects to indicate that *Familias en Acción* generates disincentives to work among its beneficiaries (Barrientos and others, 2013). In fact, Attanasio and others (2021) establish important findings on the long-term effects of *Familias en Acción* in reducing crime, increasing higher education enrolment among men and decreasing teenage pregnancy among women. These factors facilitate beneficiaries' participation in the labour market and may explain the programme's positive effects on formal male employment rates as documented by Attanasio and others (2023).

Compared to other transfer programmes, Gallego and others (2021) find no conclusive evidence that *Ingreso Solidario* generates disincentives to labour participation among its beneficiaries. The impact assessment conducted by Londoño-Vélez and Querubín (2020) on the *Devolución del IVA* programme found no positive or negative effects on beneficiaries' willingness to work. These results were corroborated by the mid-term impact assessment of the *Devolución del IVA* programme carried out by Econometría, SEI and the University of the Andes (2021), which also found these same results among older men and female-headed households. Nevertheless, that study revealed the existence of information on a reduction in the labour force participation in beneficiary households among women who were not heads of household, although this result was not robust compared to the use of other econometric tools, nor was it generalizable, given the nature of the empirical strategy applied. Pfitze and Rodríguez-Castelán (2015) show that, in the case of *Colombia Mayor*, there were signs that beneficiaries between the ages of 50 and 60 were encouraged to establish microenterprises.

It should be noted that, in its first version, *Jóvenes en Acción* was a vocational education programme for young people, as explained in the previous section. The detected effects were also very positive in terms of the beneficiaries' insertion into the formal labour market (Attanasio and others, 2017; Kugler and others, 2022).

## 5. Other types of impact

Not all the programmes' effects are restricted to consumption, health, education or employment. For example, Urrutia and Robles Báez (2018) and Cardona-Sosa, Medina and Núñez (2017) find that the *Familias en Acción* programme has positive effects on formal savings, access to formal credit and furniture and appliance ownership. Those results are consistent with the long-term positive impact on the consumer credit of the programme's women beneficiaries noted by Attanasio and others (2023). Similarly, Gallego and others (2021) find that *Ingreso Solidario* led to a higher probability of a bank account being opened and higher food consumption among beneficiaries. Moreover, according to Londoño-Vélez and Querubín (2020), there were indications that the *Devolución del IVA* programme improved financial health and decreased the likelihood of beneficiaries selling their belongings.

Finally, with reference to *Familias en Acción*, lower arrest and teenage pregnancy rates in urban areas were also found (Attanasio and others, 2021). Information exists to suggest that the effects of *Familias en Acción* on pregnancy rates are a result of the conditions it imposes. Cortés, Gallego and Maldonado (2016) state that only if the number of years *Familias en Acción* transfers are received is limited can it be unequivocally concluded that the programme contributes to reducing the risk of teenage pregnancy. These results, based on the case of Bogotá, also suggest transfers are more effective if their duration depends on school performance and minimum attendance, as is the case with programmes like *Familias en Acción*, such as the education subsidy.

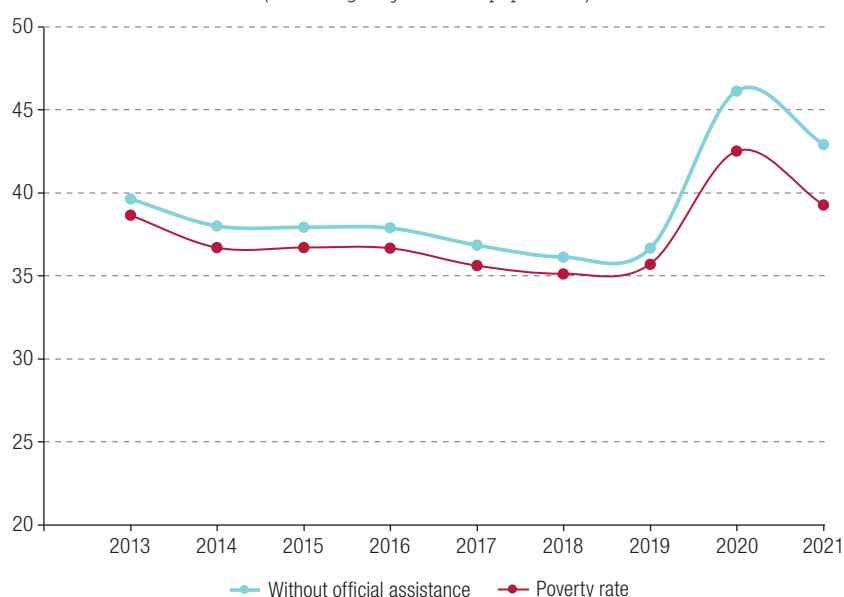
Among other effects, it has been documented that *Familias en Acción* temporarily reduces domestic violence. Camacho and Rodríguez (2020) show that domestic violence decreases in the months when this programme's payments are made and may increase when a payment is expected and does not arrive. The mechanism that would explain this result is that *Familias en Acción* transfers ease the budget constraints of low-income households and this is associated with a reduction in domestic violence.

## V. Immediate impact on income and monetary poverty

Given that subsidies are paid in cash, their immediate effect on income and, consequently, on monetary poverty can be evaluated. To analyse the effect of subsidies on household income, the following exercise artificially removes the institutional assistance component using imputations generated by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), published together with microdata from the Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH).

It estimates that thanks to the government transfers implemented in 2020 and 2021, national poverty was 3.6 percentage points lower than it would have been without them. In other words, because of the transfers received, about 1.8 million people were not in monetary poverty in 2021. This immediate effect on monetary poverty observed between 2020 and 2021 contrasts sharply with the average calculated for the 2013–2019 period, which is estimated at 1.1 percentage points (see figure 6).

**Figure 6**  
Colombia: monetary poverty rate with and without official assistance, 2013–2021  
(Percentages of the total population)

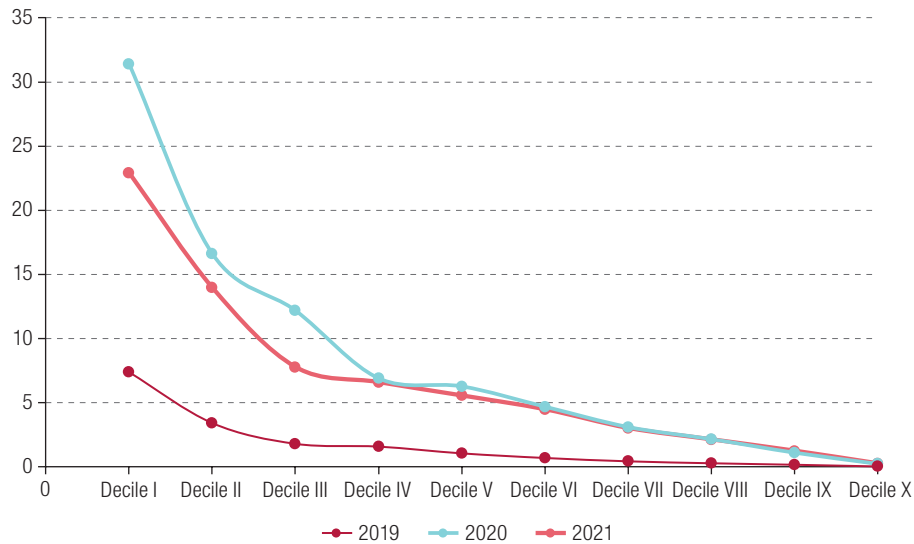


**Source:** Prepared by the authors on the basis of data from the Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH) of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE).

The immediate effect on monetary poverty is more noticeable in rural areas than in towns and cities. In the absence of official cash supports, an average poverty rate for urban areas 2.7 percentage points higher than that observed between 2020 and 2021 was estimated. That result rises to 6.8 percentage points in rural areas. The estimates by area type reveal that if transfers were excluded, rural monetary poverty would have risen between 2019 and 2020, a behaviour contrary to the trend actually observed.

Another notable feature of official cash transfers is their rising weight in household income as household vulnerability increases (see figure 7). In households located in the lowest deciles (those with the lowest incomes), the share of official assistance in total monthly income is much higher than that observed in higher-decile households. This feature provides partial evidence that the transfers are being targeted correctly. It also obeys the fact that, by definition, incomes are higher in the higher deciles.

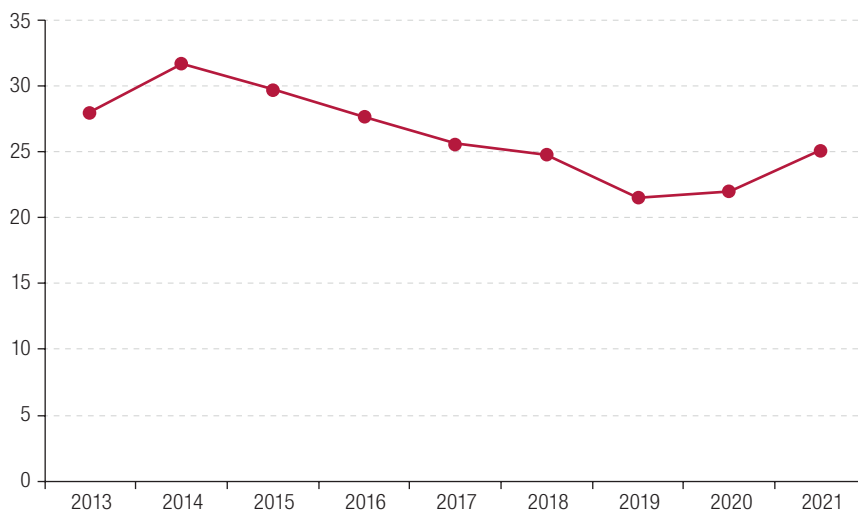
**Figure 7**  
Colombia: share of official cash assistance in household income,  
by income distribution decile, 2019–2021  
(Percentages)



**Source:** Prepared by the authors on the basis of data from the Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH) of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE).

These results do not allow possible inclusion or exclusion errors to be ruled out in the programmes' current targeting. Although between 2013 and 2019 the targeting error followed a downward trend,<sup>8</sup> from 2020 onwards there is a significant increase (see figure 8). Future studies could explore mechanisms to reduce these risks and to identify the characteristics of households with targeting errors.

**Figure 8**  
Colombia: targeting error rate of cash transfer programmes, 2013–2021



**Source:** Prepared by the authors on the basis of data from the Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH) of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE).

**Note:** The targeting rate can be between -100 and 100, where 100 indicates perfect targeting.

<sup>8</sup> According to Galasso and Ravallion (2005), the targeting error is calculated as the difference between the proportion of people living in poverty who receive subsidies and the proportion of non-poor people receiving them.

The significant increase in Colombia's social spending between 2020 and 2021 is also reflected in the change in household incomes' dependence on official assistance. Whereas in 2019 official assistance accounting for a share of between 2% and 7% of the incomes of households in the first five deciles, in 2020 the figure rose to between 6% and 31% (see figure 7). That share peaked among the first decile of households in 2020 (31%), when household incomes fell and transfers were increased on account of the pandemic.

Taken together, the estimates indicate appropriate and improved targeting. A high and growing proportion of people living in poverty benefit from official transfers, and the share or importance of those funds increases with the economic deprivation of households. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement in targeting and in the prioritization of beneficiaries.

## VI. Proposal for the design of social transfer programmes

Despite the abundant literature on public poverty reduction policies in general and on the effectiveness of cash transfers in particular, defining and implementing social protection programmes remains a complex undertaking. This paper's conclusions suggest that transfer programmes in Colombia should take account of three key elements, which could also be useful in other contexts: cohesion, conditionality and targeting. The starting point for the redesign of social protection policies must be the fact that a solid foundation of programmes in this area already exists, and that those programmes have an adequate operational infrastructure and are reporting positive results in relation to their objectives. Conditions in Colombia —a country with high levels of poverty, information challenges and budgetary constraints— leave little room for a discussion on a universal basic income.

### 1. Interconnections

Colombia has a range of programmes that run in parallel and, in some cases, target the same families. Gains in efficiency could be secured by unifying them into a single platform or programme. However, the conditionalities dependent on the life cycle must be maintained. Cohesion would also prevent the existence of different conditions for similar beneficiaries under different programmes, as can happen with *Familias en Acción* and *Ingreso Solidario*. This would prevent asymmetric payments being made to families with similar compositions and in the same socioeconomic situations. Transitioning from one programme to another as the age thresholds are met, in a process that begins in infancy and extends into adulthood, could allow for the incentives for children and adolescents to accumulate human capital to continue.

Integrating the transfer payments would also reduce operating and administrative costs. In some cases, households receive transfers that use different payment schedules and methods. For example, the *Devolución del IVA* programme operates as a supplement to *Familias en Acción* and *Colombia Mayor*, but follows different payment cycles.

### 2. Conditionality

Although the opinions in the literature do not agree on whether subsidies should be conditioned or not, the information available leads to the conclusion that imposing conditions encourages a greater accumulation of human capital. It has also been shown that the effects of non-conditional programmes tend to dwindle over the long term (Baird, McIntosh and Özler, 2011; Artuc and others, 2020). Some

of the arguments in favour of non-conditional transfers hold that the inability to meet the requirements may exclude the most vulnerable population groups, and that this would be a questionable cost of conditionality (Ladhani and Sitter, 2020; Levasseur, 2021). In designing the conditions, the available findings suggest that careful consideration be given to household composition (Heracleous, González and Winters, 2016) and to the amounts transferred (Levasseur, 2021), ensuring that they outweigh the (direct or indirect) costs of conditionality observance.

In the case of Colombia, no indications were found of the risks of non-compliance with programme conditions and, therefore, of the risk of exclusion. Studies that explore the risks of the most vulnerable segments of the population in relation to conditionalities must be conducted. For example, it would be important to assess whether children and young people belonging to the poorest families are at greater risk of dropping out of school and, consequently, of being excluded from programmes such as *Jóvenes en Acción* and *Familias en Acción*.

### 3. Targeting

Targeting can also be improved by adjusting the age ranges set for the current transfers. For older persons, the range defined by the *Colombia Mayor* programme could be brought into line with official pension ages. With this strategy, coverage could be expanded to include those persons of pension age who have been excluded owing to budgetary constraints. Currently, payments under *Colombia Mayor* begin three years before the official retirement age. In the age ranges defined for the *Jóvenes en Acción* programme, higher age limits could be considered for people in technical or higher education depending on their place of residence: given that young people living in less developed areas have higher rates of overage,<sup>9</sup> the age ranges of young people in those areas can be expected to be higher than the national average (Otero and others, 2023).

## VII. Summary and lessons learned

Cash transfers, conditional and non-conditional alike, are a key element of social policy in Colombia. In 2022, the national government's *Familias en Acción* and *Ingreso Solidario* transfer programmes had 5.8 million participating families and households, while *Jóvenes en Acción* and *Colombia Mayor* provided assistance to 2.2 million people. The beneficiaries received regular payments that, depending on the programme conditions and the family or household structure, ranged from US\$ 3.50 to US\$ 47.00 per month. In 2021, approximately 72% of the Colombian population living in poverty received at least one type of transfer.

Before the pandemic, the existing transfer programmes differed in that their target populations were at different points in the life cycle. *Familias en Acción* targets preschool and school-age children and adolescents, *Jóvenes en Acción* benefits young people of higher-education age, while *Colombia Mayor* is aimed at older persons. All the programmes focus on the poor and vulnerable population, as indicated by the different instruments used to identify beneficiaries. In addition, *Familias en Acción* and *Jóvenes en Acción* are transfer programmes that require beneficiaries to meet certain conditions in order to receive disbursements. These conditions are intended to encourage the accumulation of human capital by children and adolescents.

In 2020, on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, cash transfer coverage was significantly expanded through two new programmes: the launch of the *Devolución del IVA* programme was brought forward, and *Ingreso Solidario* —targeting households not covered by the existing programmes— was created.

<sup>9</sup> Defined as the mismatch between actual age and the expected average age for a given school grade.

During its existence, between 2020 and 2022, *Ingreso Solidario* was the largest programme in terms of both its beneficiaries and its budget. The adoption of these new programmes allowed people living in poverty who were not in the age ranges set for *Familias en Acción*, *Jóvenes en Acción* or *Colombia Mayor* to receive some type of a subsidy, enabling all age groups to be potential beneficiaries.

The effectiveness of transfers in improving different aspects of the beneficiary households' lives has been extensively established in the literature. In the case of Colombia, empirical information indicates positive impacts on consumption, health, education, employment and other areas. Moreover, there is no conclusive information that receiving transfers discourages labour market participation.

Cash transfers undoubtedly have a significant fiscal cost. In 2022, they accounted for 1.13% of GDP. This does not mean, however, that the existing transfer programmes are unsustainable. In particular, it should be noted that the number of transfer beneficiaries ran high between 2020 and 2021, on account of the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the country's economy recovers, however, the number of subsidy recipients can be expected to fall, if strict targeting criteria based on the Sisben classification are maintained.

The lessons that can be drawn from two decades of cash transfer programme implementation in Colombia suggest that despite their success as support mechanisms, in mitigating declining consumption among the poorest households and as an incentive to encourage behavioural changes that allow children and young people to accumulate human capital, it would be useful to review the current status of the programmes as a whole, in light of their rapid growth since 2020.

Discussions about the possibility of introducing a universal basic income in the country are futile, given the current fiscal deficit, which is above the limits recommended by the Autonomous Fiscal Regulations Committee (CARF, 2022). This article discusses the usefulness of unifying the social transfer programmes into a single platform, with clear criteria for targeting and conditionalities according to the life cycle and households' socioeconomic conditions. A model with unified criteria could be considered, which would allow for a single transfer programme targeting children in primary and secondary education, young people in tertiary education and un pensioned older persons. Additionally, consideration could be given to a hybrid model that integrates the current conditionalities with non-conditional transfers targeting households with children and single-person households of pension age that are without social security, living in extreme poverty and unable to comply with the current requirements.

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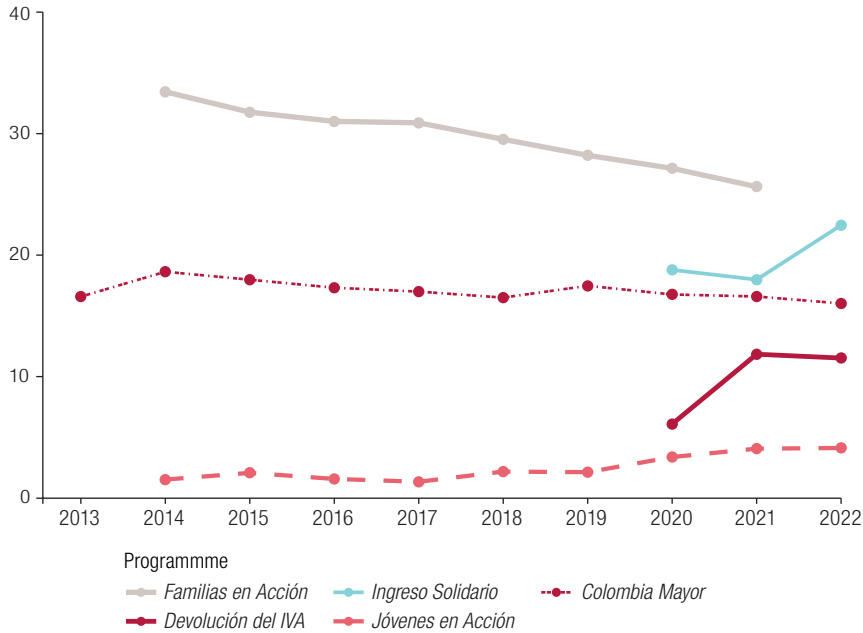
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## Annex A1

**Figure A1.1**  
Colombia: proportion of beneficiaries in relation to their reference group,  
by programme, 2013–2022  
(Percentages)



**Source:** Prepared by the authors.

**Note:** In all cases, the reference groups are taken from Colombia's census-based population and household projections; the exception is the *Familias en Acción* programme, where the number of households with children was estimated on the basis of the Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH). The reference group for the *Ingreso Solidario* and *Devolución del IVA* programmes is the total number of households; for the *Colombia Mayor* programme, it is the total number of people aged over 54; and for *Jóvenes en Acción*, it is the number of young people aged between 14 and 28. The beneficiary identifier for *Familias en Acción* is the household, even though it targets children.

## Annex A2

**Table A2.1**

Colombia: summary of data and methodologies used in social programme impact assessments

Reference <sup>a</sup>	Data source	Data type	Methodology
Attanasio and others (2010)	Random survey based on <i>Familias en Acción</i>	Administrative records and surveys	Difference in differences
Attanasio and others (2017)	Survey based on <i>Jóvenes en Acción</i> and Integrated Contribution Settlement Form (PILA)	Administrative records and surveys	Difference in differences
Attanasio and others (2021)	Administrative information from <i>Familias en Acción</i> and Sisben	Administrative records	Regression discontinuity
Attanasio and others (2023)	Administrative information	Administrative records	Regression discontinuity
Attanasio, Kugler and Meghir (2011)	Random survey based on <i>Jóvenes en Acción</i>	Administrative records and surveys	Difference in differences
Barrientos and others (2013)	Sisben and other administrative records	Administrative records	Regression discontinuity
Benson (2012)	Censuses	Population censuses	Matched difference in differences
Cáceres (2021)	Sisben and the National Quality of Life Survey	Administrative records and surveys	Regression discontinuity and correspondence based on propensity score
Camacho and Rodríguez (2020)	Administrative information from <i>Familias en Acción</i> and the National Institute of Forensic Medicine and Science	Administrative records	Event study
Cardona-Sosa, Medina and Núñez (2017)	Survey based on <i>Familias en Acción</i> , Sisben and Financial Superintendency of Colombia (SFC)	Administrative records	Regression discontinuity
Contreras and Maitra (2021)	Administrative information from <i>Familias en Acción</i>	Administrative records	Difference in differences
Cortés, Gallego and Maldonado (2016)	Behaviour survey and attitudes about sexuality among school-aged children and adolescents (Bogotá)	Surveys	Difference in differences
Econometría/Sistemas Especializados de Información (SEI)/University of the Andes (2021)	Survey by experiment and administrative records	Administrative records and surveys	Regression discontinuity
Gallego and others (2021)	Telephone survey	Surveys	Difference in differences
Gómez (2017)	Databases of the Colombian Education Evaluation Institute (ICFES), the Higher Education Dropout Prevention System (SPADIES) and the National Training Service (SENA)	Administrative records	Regression discontinuity
Kugler and others (2022)	Survey by experiment and database of the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (ICFES)	Administrative records and surveys	Difference in differences
Londoño-Vélez and Querubín (2020)	Survey by experiment and Sisben	Administrative records and surveys	Difference in differences
Núñez and others (2011)	Administrative information from <i>Familias en Acción</i>	Administrative records	Matched difference in differences
Obando and Andrián (2016)	Great Integrated Household Survey (GEIH) and National Quality of Life Survey	Surveys	Decomposition analysis
Pfütze and Rodríguez-Castelán (2015)	National Quality of Life Survey	Surveys	Regression discontinuity
Urrutia and Robles Báez (2018)	<i>Familias en Acción</i> survey	Surveys	Difference in differences and regression discontinuity
Villa (2018)	Administrative information from <i>Familias en Acción</i>	Administrative records	Difference in differences

**Source:** Prepared by the authors, on the basis of the cited publications.

<sup>a</sup> For complete information on the references cited, see the bibliography.