

Analysis of the operation of the CCT 'Oportunidades' at times of disasters in Mexico.

Iliana Yaschine (PUED-UNAM)
Citlalli Hernández (Consultant)

SSN Core Course Session on Safety Nets and Disaster Response

December 9th, 2013



Oportunidades at a glance (1)

- Oportunidades has become the main instrument within the broader targeted social policy of the Mexican federal government since 1997 (formerly called “Progresa”).
- The responsible for its implementation is the **National Coordination of Oportunidades**, a specialized and decentralized agency of the **Social Development Ministry**, with technical autonomy.
- The Program provides bimonthly cash transfers to **5,845,056 households**¹ (slightly more than 25% of the Mexican population).
- The budget allocated to the Program in 2013 is 66,132 million Mexican pesos² (around **5.3 billion USD**),³ 0.4% of GDP.⁴

1. Source: http://www.oportunidades.gob.mx/Portal/wb/Web/historico_cobertura_municipios_localidades

2. Source: http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/PEF_2013.pdf (p. 94)

3. Exchange rate: 12.45 MXP = 1 USD

4. Source: www.banxico.org.mx



Oportunidades at a glance (2)

Development goal

Oportunidades aims to contribute to the **interruption** of the intergenerational **transmission of poverty**, promoting investment in the **human capital** of the beneficiary households.¹

Beneficiary target group

Households whose **socioeconomic and income conditions** prevent increase the potential of their members to **build capacities** in three dimensions: **education, nutrition and health.**²

1. Source: 2012 Oportunidades' Operating Guidelines (p. 3)
2. Source: 2012 Oportunidades' Operating Guidelines (p. 4)

Oportunidades at a glance (3)

Integrated nature of Oportunidades

Component	Benefits	Objectives
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational grants per children enrolled in grades 4–12 (1-12 in rural areas) which increased progressively and are slightly higher for girls after 6 grade • Economic incentive per children that complete high school before 22 years old • Both incentives are provided in cash and are integrated to the total amount of cash-transfers that the household receive 	Increase school enrolment and regular attendance among children and youth, encouraging them to complete the compulsory education



Oportunidades at a glance (4)

Integrated nature of Oportunidades

Component	Benefits	Objectives
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to a “Basic Package of Health Services” (BPHS) which includes educational sessions on self-health care	Promote the use of health services with preventive purposes by all household members, this as part of the adoption of healthy behaviours
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cash–transfers, one specific amount per household and per children under 9 years old, delivered to the mother of the household (so-called “Titular”)• Nutritional complements and nutritional advisory (within the BPHS)	Food security and maintenance of adequate nutritional levels of the households members, with emphasis on children, pregnant and breast-feeding women



Oportunidades at a glance (5)

To meet its intended objectives, it is equally important that the beneficiaries take advantage of Oportunidades' interventions through the **iterative participation** of all the beneficiary households' members in **fulfilling their co-responsibilities** with the Program.



Study objectives

Objectives:

- 1) How does *Oportunidades* operate (or has operated) during disasters generated by natural phenomena?
- 2) How does *Oportunidades* get involved in the implementation of a broader governmental response to such crises?

Research driven by the World Bank (WB) in collaboration with the Center for Learning on Evaluation and Results-Latin America (CLEAR-LA).

Specific goals:

- To contribute to the knowledge on how *Oportunidades* has responded in this type of critical situations. These experiences have not been documented before.
- To analyze in depth an specific study case: the *Oportunidades* intervention during an extraordinary drought that hit the Sierra Tarahumara (ST) (and the entire north of the country) in 2011-2012



Main findings (1)

- Since its inception, *Oportunidades* has had to intervene in crises generated by natural phenomena.
- Historically, **some states that have been the most affected** by disasters: Chiapas, Tabasco and Veracruz (floods and hurricanes), Guerrero and Oaxaca (earthquakes).
- Adverse climatic events demand the involvement of *Oportunidades*, since its **target population is more vulnerable** to them and they are **often strongly affected** by them → **the most affected: rural and indigenous population.**



Main findings (2)

- During contingencies caused by natural phenomena, *Oportunidades* has achieved the following:
 - To **guarantee the continuity of its operational processes**, including the cash transfers delivery to poor households.
 - To **support the broader government efforts** to respond to different disasters, coordinated by the Social Development Ministry.
- *Oportunidades* has become a **protective mechanism to external shocks** (e.g. adverse climate events) of its target population, guaranteeing a minimum level of consumption, school attendance and basic health care services.



Oportunidades' strenghts (1)

- ✓ Its **geo-referenced system**: geostatistical information, service infrastructure and beneficiaries information
- ✓ **Historical learning** on how to respond to disasters caused by natural phenomena: regulations and experience gained by operators
- ✓ Its **operational structure** and its large territorial **scope**
- ✓ A **staff committed** to the Program and the beneficiary population, **trained** in the application of surveys and **familiar** with the context and the communities (heterogeneity of conditions)
- ✓ Certain level of **flexibility** in its operation reflected in its ability to: (a) adjust or reprogram fieldwork activities to face contingencies, and (b) deploy field staff where required



Oportunidades' strenghts (2)

- ✓ An extensive **communication network** with the beneficiary leaders ('vocales'), beneficiaries, municipal liaisons, and other government agencies
- ✓ **Institutional arrangement** for decision-making that allows to reach prompt agreements and amend regulations in emergency situations
- ✓ **Collaboration with stakeholders** that support the operation of the Program at critical moments (Education and Health sectors, paying institutions)
- ✓ The **willingness** to cooperate and coordinate with different government levels (Federal-State-Locality) to jointly deal with complex situations



Challenges and recommendations (1)

- The *Oportunidades*' Operating Guidelines include **provisions** related to program operation at times of disasters, but they **need to be complemented** in order to provide **more certainty to program's staff** regarding the specific actions that can be put in place in such circumstances:
 - **Recommendation:** To develop a **protocol for the operation during a disaster generated by natural phenomena** as part of the regulations of the Program, clarifying the type and level of responsibility of all the stakeholders. Maybe, define **specific protocols** for each entity and / or region of the country according to the type of natural phenomena that most affect them.



Challenges and recommendations (2)

- In some States of Mexico, disasters caused by natural phenomena are **recurrent** and occur **during periods of increased operational burden**, which **complicates the response** of the local program staff.
 - **Recommendation:** To find a middle ground between the standardization of criteria for the planning and operation of the Program, and a certain degree of **flexibility** for adapting other relevant aspects, making possible a **differentiated state and regional planning** that uses **national risk maps** to consider climatic characteristics of each region.



Challenges and recommendations (3)

- It is necessary to **strengthen the coordination between Oportunidades and other governmental institutions** that comprise the Social Development sector during contingencies.
 - **Recommendation:** When it comes to face disasters generated by natural phenomena, **SEDESOL** (the Social Development Ministry) **should further define the attributions and responsibilities** of its different agencies and programs when it comes to face disasters generated by natural phenomena, as well as the **coordination strategy** among them and with the three levels of government.



Thank you!

citlallih@gmail.com