Every Child in Preschool

Results of an Impact Evaluation of a Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Romania
AGENDA

1. **Fiecare Copil în Grădiniță** (Every Child in Preschool, FCG)

   Vision and objectives, OvidiuRo as the implementing organization, the Romanian education system and its shortcomings, the FCG model as a solution, history of the FCG program, latest developments.

2. **Impact study**

   Research design, main findings, conclusions.
• Founded in 2004.

• Mission: To make quality early education available to every poor child in Romania – so they have a chance to become active members of society.

• Since 2010 implementing the *Fiecare Copil în Grădiniţă* (Every Child in Preschool, FCG) program.

• Objective: Scale up of FCG by 2020.
Fiecare copil în grădiniță

Major Investors:

- aef
- Athénée Palace Hilton
- Cargill
- Carrefour
- CATENA
- DEDEMAN
- FONDATION Carrefour
- gsk
- NN
- PRO TV
- Raiffeisen BANK
- rompetrol

Partners:

- Ministerul Educației și Cercetării Științifice
- Ministerul Muncii, Familiei Protecției Sociale și Persoanelor Vârstnice
- Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile
BACKGROUND: ROMANIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

- Preschool: 3-5 years old, optional
- Primary School: 6-10 years old, mandatory
- Middle School: 10-14 years old, mandatory
- High School: 14-16/18 years old
BACKGROUND: RURAL/URBAN DIVIDE

Numbers on rural/urban facilities

- Urban: 6735
- Rural: 13343

Number of pupils

- Urban: 1932176
- Rural: 1056938
BACKGROUND: RURAL/URBAN DIVIDE
BACKGROUND: LOW ENROLLMENT IN ROMANIA

Preschool

Primary school
BACKGROUND: SHORTCOMINGS OF EDU. SYS IN RO

• Laissez-faire school recruiting
• Inaccurate attendance record
• Low quality of professional training
• Poor infrastructure
• Poor relationship between teachers and (poor) parents
• School supplies are not free
THE FCG MODEL

FIECARE COPIL ÎN GRĂDINIȚĂ
THE FCG MODEL

Eligibility criteria

• Monthly income of max. 150 RON (ca. 34 €) per family member
• Poor living conditions

Costs

• Annual budget OvR (2014):
  • 708,934 € + in-kind donations
  • 68% for FCG direct costs
  • For 2400 children in 43 municipalities

• Annual costs per child:
  • 120 € for food coupons,
  • 15 € for school supplies,
  • 35 € for clothes and shoes
HISTORY OF THE FCG PROGRAM
HISTORY OF THE FCG PROGRAM
LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

• Law no. 248/2015 published in Monitorul Oficial on 2 Nov 2015
• 111,000 children aged 3-5 are supposed to benefit

✔ Risks
• Gouvernemental changes put on hold the drafting of the secondary legislation
• Lack of technical staff and smooth solutions to record and analyze attendance
FCG GOES NATIONAL
What is the impact of the FCG program on children’s enrollment and attendance in school, after they graduate from preschool and the FCG program?
## SOME RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCG working with individual kindergartens, but municipality lowest</td>
<td>Level of analysis is the municipality. Selected only rural and semi-urban municipalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administrative level at which state provides data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure full impact of the program on children.</td>
<td>Selected only municipalities where the program started in 2010 &amp; 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find good comparison municipalities.</td>
<td>Select control municipalities based on data and expert judgement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No individualized data on poverty status available – impossible to</td>
<td>Determine eligibility ratio in FCG municipalities; multiply impact on all children by eligibility ratio to arrive at impact on eligible children (assuming no impact on non-eligible children).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determine would-be eligibility in non-FCG villages or control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>municipalities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Data on Different Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Non-Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Non-Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Non-Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Non-Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Total number of children**
- **Total number enrolled, attendance rates**
- **Eligibility ratio**
IMPACT ON (WOULD-BE) ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

1. Measured impact
2. Assumed: No impact on non-eligible children
3. Impact multiplied by eligibility ratio

Control Program
Eligible children

Control Program
Non-eligible children

Control Program
All children
RESEARCH DESIGN: MEASURING IMPACT

Illustrative data

Program vs. Control Enrollment and Attendance

1. Enrollment

2. Illustrative data

Enrollment, attendance

05/06  06/07  07/08  08/09  09/10  10/11  11/12  12/13  13/14  14/15
RESEARCH DESIGN: DETERMINING CONTEXT FACTORS

172 semi-structured interviews with...

- Decision makers
- Social services
- Teachers
- Parents

...in 16 municipalities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Decision makers</th>
<th>Social Service</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current situation in village</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local educational facilities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions on public education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local stakeholder network</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion on FCG</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAIN FINDINGS: IMPACT ON ENROLLMENT

Enrollment in Preschool for 3-5 year olds (%)

Enrollment in Preschool or School for 6 year olds (%)

Program
Control
FCG has a substantial, positive impact on enrollment and graduation among 6-year olds.

- Enrollment among eligible children increased by ca. 10%.
- Graduation (enrollment minus drop-out) among eligible children increased by ca. 11%.
FCG has a positive impact on attendance.

- Preschool attendance among eligible children increased by ca. 25%.
- Early primary school attendance among eligible children increased by ca. 3% (preparatory year) and 9% (first grade).
1. **Inclusion of poor children wanted and needed for local development?**

- **Semi-urban:** Competition with urban schools & influx of better-off families
- **Enough children & local school mindful of better-off parents' needs**
- **Poor parents' children not needed and not wanted in local public schools**

2. **Working with uncooperative parents understood as a professional duty?**

- **Educational center:** „The best education for those who value it.“
- **Social institution:** „Working hard to provide education to all.“
Parents go abroad, for unskilled work

3 Temporary work migration: More money, less care for children

Children left with relatives
Relatives overburdened

Understanding contracts, driver's license pays off
Willing to invest in basic education

Improve living conditions of family
Hidden costs of education less of a hindering factor
1. Teachers have strong incentives to underreport absences: (a) to secure their jobs, (b) to ensure continued welfare funding of students.

2. Official attendance records for lower primary school report 5 to 6 times lower absence rates.
CONCLUSIONS

1. The FCG program has a significant impact on both enrollment and attendance in preschool and lower primary school.

2. Some local stakeholders have strong incentives to undermine the functioning of the FCG program, while the interests of others align with it. Both sides are able to influence the success of the program in important ways.

3. Official attendance records are not reliable.