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**IMPACT ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 27**

**POLICY-ORIENTED RESEARCH IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT (PORIA) CASE STUDY ON  
THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IFPRI) AND THE  
MEXICAN *PROGRESA* ANTI-POVERTY AND  
HUMAN RESOURCE INVESTMENT  
CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAM**

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## DISCLOSURE

As in most, if not all, of the PORIA studies, the author has been involved in the project being studied. Specifically, Behrman was a consultant for the IFPRI impact evaluation of the Mexican *PROGRESA* anti-poverty and human resource program in 1998–2000, since has been involved as a consultant to the Mexican *Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública* in the evaluation of *Oportunidades* (the renamed and slightly modified program), has been a research consultant to IFPRI on other projects not related to this study, and is a consultant to IPFRI on impact evaluation. The primary disadvantage of these involvements is that they may make it more difficult for the author to be objective, despite his best efforts. In the judgment of the author and apparently of key personnel at IFPRI, there are more than offsetting advantages, including knowing well both IFPRI and *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* and, perhaps most importantly, knowing and having access to many of the key persons for undertaking this study from Mexico, international organizations, academia, and IFPRI.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this study is to attempt to characterize the influence and impact of IFPRI in relation to the Mexican *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* anti-poverty and human resource program with its conditional cash transfers (CCT)—conditional on specific investments in education, health, and nutrition. The paper first describes *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* and estimates of the impact and benefits-to-costs of this program; then discusses the challenges in assessing the influence and impact of IFPRI on and through *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*; and then presents the information sources used in this study to attempt to identify the influence and impact of IFPRI on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* including interviews with 39 key informants as well as various published and unpublished studies and memos, publications in the popular media and on the internet and press releases and other documents. With this foundation it next explores the apparent influence and impact of IFPRI on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* by considering four questions:

1. Was the *PROGRESA* program design influenced by prior IFPRI research?
2. Why was IFPRI chosen to undertake the initial impact evaluation of *PROGRESA*?
3. How did the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA* contribute to the program?
4. Were there spillovers of the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA*?

The conclusions that come out of this investigation include that:

- (1) IFPRI did not directly participate in the *PROGRESA* design. So it would be misleading to claim that a major part of the *PROGRESA* program benefits should be attributed to IFPRI's critical role in the design process. Nevertheless prior IFPRI research and research by IFPRI evaluation team members apparently directly (in the sense of direct citations) and indirectly (in the sense of contributions to evolving conventional wisdom) on topics including food subsidy programs, nutrition, health, gender, intrahousehold allocations, and related policies played some role in the design process. Therefore, it might not be misleading to attribute a very small part of the *PROGRESA* benefits to better design based on IFPRI's prior research contributions on a number of related topics.
- (2) IFPRI presented advantages in terms of (i) type of organization (neither appearing to be a captive of national interests nor identified with structural adjustment or multilateral lending); (ii) reputation and credibility for solid scientific analysis of relevant policy-related issues enhanced by the addition of some prominent academic researchers; and (iii) aspects of management including flexibility, reliability, and relatively low costs. These were perceived to offset the disadvantages in the eyes of some Mexican entities of not being Mexican and the logistic and communication difficulties of not having a Mexican base. The advantages built, in part on IFPRI's prior contribution to the knowledge on which the designers of *PROGRESA* built (see Question 1) and underlay some of the benefits of IFPRI's involvement in the evaluation (Questions 3 and 4). The perceived package of advantages apparently dominated whatever *PROGRESA*

considered the next best option, so early on in the conversation between IFPRI and *PROGRESA* about the evaluation, the focus seemed to be primarily on making mutual adjustments so that the evaluation contract could be worked out rather than strong debates about whether it should be worked out.

- (3) Key persons in the development and implementation of *PROGRESA*, as well as most of those interviewed, international organizations and the more general media seem to agree that the IFPRI evaluation team did make a significant contribution to the short-run and longer-run sustainability and expansion of the program as well as to details of the evaluation and program modifications—probably beyond what might have occurred with some alternative evaluator for reasons that were anticipated in the selection of IFPRI (see Question 2 above). While it undoubtedly remains the case that the basic success of *PROGRESA* is due primarily to those in Mexico who developed, nurtured, and implemented the program, it also seems plausible that some small share of the credit might be attributed to the IFPRI evaluation.
- (4) There have been substantial spillover effects, both in Mexico and internationally, of the evaluation of *PROGRESA* on the culture of policy evaluation in general and on CCT programs in particular. And it seems that some significant share of that is due to IFPRI being engaged in the evaluation because that involvement probably added considerably to both the Mexican domestic and the international awareness of and receptivity to what had been learned about evaluation processes and what had been learned about CCTs through the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA*.

Thus, the evidence summarized in this study suggests that IFPRI probably did have an important significant impact on the direct and indirect outcomes of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, even if this impact was a small percentage of the total impact of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*. There apparently were significant gains from having an international organization undertake the initial *PROGRESA* evaluation that was not viewed as captive to national or international interests and that had a reputation of undertaking objective policy-related research that may have been enhanced by the involvement of several fairly visible academics. Simulations of the benefit-to-cost ratio for IFPRI's involvement, even under conservative assumptions, suggest that the benefits outweighed the costs substantially—and probably by much more with more moderate and more plausible assumptions.

# 1. Introduction and Structure of the Paper

The objective of this study is to attempt to characterize the influence and impact of IFPRI in relation to the Mexican *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*<sup>1</sup> anti-poverty and human resource program with its conditional cash transfers (CCT)—conditional on specific investments in education, health and nutrition. *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* was initiated in 1997, after some pilot explorations of some program components in 1995.<sup>2</sup> Conversations with IFPRI about evaluation were initiated late in 1997 and resulted in a signed contract in the second half of 1998 for the IFPRI evaluation over the 1998–2000 period.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 describes *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* and estimates of the impact and benefits-to-costs of this program. Section 3 discusses the challenges in assessing the influence and impact of IFPRI on and through *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*. Section 4 presents the information sources used in this study to attempt to identify the influence and impact of IFPRI on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*. Section 5 then explores the apparent influence and impact of IFPRI on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* by considering four broad questions:

1. Was the *PROGRESA* program design influenced by prior IFPRI research?
2. Why was IFPRI chosen to undertake the initial impact evaluation of *PROGRESA*?
3. How did the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA* contribute to the program?
4. Were there spillovers of the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA*?

Section 6 concludes with some simulations of benefit-cost ratios.

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<sup>1</sup> *PROGRESA* is an acronym for the original name of the program (*Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación*, Program for Education, Health and Nutrition) introduced in 1997 under the Zedillo government. When the Fox government came into power after the 2000 election, the program was modified in some details (e.g., coverage of upper secondary schooling, extension into more urban areas) and renamed “*Oportunidades*.” The program continues in basically the same form today under the Calderón government.

<sup>2</sup> Levy (2006) summarizes a number of aspects of the establishment of *PROGRESA* and its development. Section 2 below provides a brief summary.

## 2. The Mexican *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* Anti-Poverty and Human Resource Investment Conditional Cash Transfer Program

During the 1994–95 transition from the administration of President Carlos Salinas to President Ernesto Zedillo, the Mexican economy experienced a severe negative macroeconomic shock, which resulted in the largest drop in economic activity in 1995 that the country had experienced in half a century. Among policymakers there was considerable concern about the probable very negative implications of this shock for the poor, but a variety of views about what policy responses were appropriate. Some argued for strengthening the existing programs, including the 15 food subsidy programs, four generalized (e.g., tortilla subsidies for all purchasers) and 11 targeted towards different populations, then in operation. Others argued for new approaches that were better targeted towards the poor; less costly in terms of administration; more transparent and less subject to corruption; based on the insights of academic research relating to the synergies among various forms of human resource investments, the nature of intrahousehold allocations, and the basic transfer characteristic of inframarginal food provision; and subject to systematic evaluations. Out of the discussions about alternatives, a new anti-poverty and human resource investment program, *PROGRESA*, was designed as a major component of the Mexican anti-poverty strategy and introduced in August 1997 initially in small rural communities (populations less than 2,500) and since expanded to cover about 5 million poor Mexican families (or about 30 million poor Mexicans) in all but the most populous urban areas (Table 1). A small group of Mexican social scientists, usually characterized as headed by Santiago Levy (an economist who was Undersecretary of Finance at the time of the development of *PROGRESA*) and the late Jose “Pepe” Gómez de León (a demographer who headed CONAPO, Mexico’s National Commission on Population and was the first National Coordinator of *PROGRESA*) but with important participation of others such as Evelyne Rodriguez (who worked with Levy in the Finance Ministry) and Daniel Hernández (who worked with Gómez de León at CONAPO, was the first Assistant National Coordinator of *PROGRESA* and succeeded Gómez de León as National Coordinator of *PROGRESA*), are generally perceived to have been instrumental in the development and initial implementation of *PROGRESA*.<sup>3</sup>

*PROGRESA/Oportunidades* is known primarily because of its efforts to enhance the human resources of younger Mexicans through conditional cash transfers (CCT) rather than in-kind provision of particular foods (e.g., milk, tortillas) that dominated prior programs, the efforts to assure participation and some degree of empowerment of the more vulnerable members of poor households (e.g., women, infants, children), and the systematic efforts at evaluation noted above. The CCTs are made to the mothers in the household, conditional on behaviors such as children and adolescents attending school, infants receiving micronutrient supplements, mothers

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<sup>3</sup> Levy often has been characterized as the prime mover behind the program (“spiritual father” in Egan 1999, “Progresas’s main architect” in Friedland 1999, “the program’s designer and champion” in Sillers 2003, “In 1997 Mexico initiated Progresas, long advocated by economists like Santiago Levy” in Krueger 2002). Bate (2004) characterizes Levy and Gómez de León as the “fathers” and “chief architects” of *PROGRESA*. Levy (2006), Levy and Rodríguez (2004), and Hernández (2006) provide their viewpoints and recollections about the history of the development and initial implementation of *PROGRESA*. R.M. Rubalcalva (2007), who worked closely with Gómez de León at CONAPO, and Scott (1999) also discuss at some length the initial development of *PROGRESA*.

attending sessions on nutrition and health practices, and all family members having regular health and nutrition checkups. In part because of the nature of the program that includes relatively large CCTs for schooling and CCTs for early-life health and nutrition and in part because of studies on these components of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* have been among the more visible of the studies on the program, *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* is widely known primarily as a schooling program or perhaps focused somewhat more broadly on children from infancy through adolescence. But in fact the initial formulation of the program was motivation to basically make transfers to poor households more effective (with less leakage) and better targeted by shifting from effectively inframarginal in-kind food transfers to cash transfers conditional on behaviors affecting all household members (through the conditionalities on health and nutrition related checkups), with the schooling conditionalities added late in the pre-program development phase (Levy 2006).

*PROGRESA* incorporated data collection and systematic evaluation as an integral component from the start, with an initial experimental design in rural areas with random assignment for the first 18 months of treatment among 506 rural communities (320 with treatment starting in 1998, 186 initial controls with treatment starting in 2000) with over 24,000 households and over 120,000 individuals in the evaluation sample over the 1997–2000 period and with subsequent control samples selected through propensity score matching (PSM) in both rural and urban areas. Indeed one major reason that *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* is so well-known has been the centrality of efforts at serious evaluation from the start—in contrast to other in some cases even larger anti-poverty and human resource investment programs (particularly in Brazil) on which information has not been collected to permit systematic evaluation. IFPRI was contracted by *PROGRESA* to undertake the initial evaluation of *PROGRESA* in 1998–2000, followed by a series of contracts for subsequent evaluations to date by the Mexican *Instituto de Nutrición y Salud Pública*.<sup>4</sup>

*PROGRESA/Oportunidades* has been imitated in some important respects in a number of countries in Latin America, in other developing countries in Africa and Asia, and in developed countries (e.g., a program currently under consideration in New York City is explicitly based on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* and a *New York Times* 2006 Editorial about the New York program emphasizes the rigorous *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* evaluation).

Even though the educational components of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* were added fairly late in the program development, perhaps best known among the many studies of the program are the numerous studies on the impact of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* on schooling, using a range of methodologies, and finding significant and fairly substantial impacts on

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<sup>4</sup> Apparently Nora Lustig, a member of the IFPRI Board of Trustees in 1994–97 and Senior Advisor on Poverty and Chief of the Inequality Unit of the Inter-American Development Bank in 1997–2001, played a major role in facilitating the conversation between IFPRI and *PROGRESA* about IFPRI undertaking the evaluation. See the discussion at the start of Question 2 in Section 5 below.

indicators of completed schooling attainment.<sup>5</sup> There also have been a number of studies of the program impact on health and nutrition particularly of infants and younger children, as well as on other outcomes and on the extent of the program success in targeting households living in poverty.<sup>6</sup>

While there are not estimates of the overall benefit-to-cost ratios of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, there are estimates of the benefit-to-cost ratios through schooling attainment, which are of substantial interest given the relative importance of CCTs related to schooling in the overall program and the emphasis on analysis of the impact of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* on schooling attainment. Behrman, Parker and Todd (2007a) present such estimates under the assumption that the benefits from the program arise from increases in future earnings as a result of the increase in schooling attainment due to the program, ignoring other potential impacts of the program such as that of improved health and nutrition. The estimated benefits thus critically depend on the level of returns to schooling attainment.

They have estimated the impacts of obligatory secondary school education in Mexico in a separate project, which they take advantage of to provide a plausible instrument for schooling attainment and estimate endogeneity-corrected returns to schooling attainment.<sup>7</sup> They use these estimated returns to provide a guide for what the estimated returns to schooling attainment for youth in rural areas are likely to be, and they also provide simulations based on varying levels of returns. Focusing on the sample of men, a simple OLS estimate of returns to schooling attainment gives a value of 7.5 percent per year for this age group (16 to 24), similar across rural (7.2) and urban (7.6) areas. The IV estimate of wages actually increases the value to about 10 percent both for those residing in rural and in urban areas.

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<sup>5</sup> These include a variety of approaches ranging from exploiting the original experimental design to estimate enrollment relations (Schultz 2004) and transition matrices for entering, exiting, progressing and repeating school grades (Behrman, Sengupta, and Todd 2005) to using matching estimators for longer-run effects (Behrman, Parker, and Todd 2007a, 2008) to using sibling estimators to control for unobserved family background (Parker, Todd, and Wolpin 2006) to using structural models based on the baseline data and validated by the experiment to explore counterfactual policies (Todd and Wolpin 2007).

<sup>6</sup> For example, Behrman and Hodinott (2005) and Rivera et al. (2004) present estimates of the impact on early childhood growth. Summaries and reviews of many of the studies undertaken of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* are in Behrman and Skoufias (2006), Skoufias (2004), Levy (2006), and Levy and Rodríguez (2004).

<sup>7</sup> In 1993, lower secondary school (seventh through ninth grade) became obligatory in Mexico. This was a nationwide change, and the main impact of this change appears to have been a very large increase in the construction of lower secondary schools, the majority (80 percent over the period 1993–2000) of which were of the tele-secondary school type, which is a mode of secondary school provided only in rural areas. Thus, the main impact of the change in law and the consequent large construction in schools appears in rural areas. They use the Mexican Family Life Survey (MXFLS) 2002 to construct a schooling history and residence/migration history and link the MXFLS to state level data on tele-secondary school construction from 1990 to 2003, interacted with whether an individual lived in rural areas at the age of 12 as a variable affecting completed schooling in 2002. (Details provided in Behrman, Parker, and Todd 2007b). Since the reform and associated school construction are relatively recent, they are able to focus on the sample of individuals aged 16 to 24 in 2002, which corresponds well with the age groups studied for schooling for *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*.

The resource costs of the *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* program used by Behrman, Parker, and Todd (2007a) include the administrative costs of the program (costs of transferring benefits, conditionality, and targeting) and the private costs associated with participation in the program.<sup>8</sup> The administrative and private costs of participation in the program, including the monetary and time costs of transportation associated with greater school attendance, were calculated by Coady (2000). He estimates that for each 100 pesos transferred, administrative and private costs are equivalent to 11.3 pesos. Coady, however, does not take into account the opportunity costs of spending more time in school or the additional household expenditures, other than transportation, related to schooling that might occur, such as spending on school uniforms. Behrman, Parker, and Todd encompass the opportunity costs related to additional schooling by assuming that program participants enter the labor force after a period of time equivalent to the increase attained in schooling multiplied by 0.75.<sup>9</sup> They also estimate the additional household expenses occurred because of the potential increase in schooling, including school supplies and children's clothing based on earlier evaluations (Hoddinott, Skoufias, and Washburn 2000).<sup>10</sup> Finally, for each peso transferred they assume a 25 percent increase in cost (grants plus administrative) from the distortions associated with raising governmental revenues.<sup>11</sup> The resource costs of the education grants are calculated assuming that each youth receives the grants for six years. Youth in the absence of the program are assumed to begin their working career at age 18 and conclude at age 70. All costs and benefits are discounted to time zero.

They assume a starting salary equal to the average obtained by youth aged 18 in the rural ENCEL areas of 2003, which is equal to US\$163 monthly. This is a conservative estimate of initial earnings opportunities as probably a number of youth will migrate to urban areas, where salaries tend to be higher. They use the estimated schooling impacts for boys aged 15 to 16 that they obtained under the two different matching methods.

Table 2 summarizes their benefit-cost estimates of six years of exposure to *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, under the three different assumptions of the rate of return to schooling attainment (6, 8, and 10 percent) and three potential discount rates (3, 5, and 10 percent). Program benefits are several times higher than program costs under nearly all

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<sup>8</sup> They do not include the budgetary costs of the schooling grants based on the calendar of grants (Table 1 in their paper) because these are transfers, not resource costs (see Knowles and Behrman 2004, 2005). They have been able to find no evidence that school resource costs increased due to the increased enrollment so they do not include a measure of these costs. In an earlier study they also found no evidence of congestion costs or other spillover effects on students in the same schools who were not program beneficiaries, so they do not adjust for spillover costs either (Behrman, Sengupta, and Todd 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Skoufias and Parker (2001) show that the reduction in work of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* in the early years of the program was about 75 percent of the size of the increase in school enrollment.

<sup>10</sup> This probably overestimates the size of additional household resources as they assume the increase in spending on child clothing is entirely due to the conditionality effect whereas part of this impact may be an income or bargaining effect.

<sup>11</sup> The distortionary cost (often called the "deadweight loss") of raising a dollar of tax revenue in the United States has been estimated to range from \$0.17 to \$0.56, depending on the type of tax used (e.g., Ballard, Shoven, and Whalley 1985; Feldstein 1995). Estimates for some other countries range from \$0.18 to \$0.85, depending on the tax (van der Gaag and Tan 1997). Harberger (1997) suggests using a shadow price of \$1.20–\$1.25 for all fiscal flows on a project. They use the upper number in his suggested range.



scenarios, with the exception of a very high discount rate and a low estimated return to education. Overall, then, even if the program were considered as only a schooling attainment program, the estimated overall benefits significantly outweigh the resource costs. Given that there probably also are productivity gains from improved health and nutrition due to the program, moreover, these estimates probably understate the benefit-to-cost ratios even fairly narrowly-defined for the program, perhaps by about 30 to 50 percent.<sup>12</sup> From a broader perspective, almost surely the benefits to Mexico were much greater because of positive spillovers in helping to institute a culture of serious policy evaluation, which was formalized with the institution of *Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social* (CONEVAL, the National Council of Social Development Policy Evaluation). From a still broader geographical perspective, both the concept of CCT programs and systematic evaluation of such programs have been advocated by international organizations such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank and considered, and in some cases implemented, in a number of other countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, as well as at the municipal level (i.e., New York City, St. Louis) in the United States. The World Bank, for example, is preparing one of its major *Policy Research Reports* to be published in 2008 on CCTs (Fiszbein and Shady 2008).

*PROGRESA/Oportunidades* also has been praised by leading economists and others in major English language media, as well as in a number of other journals in various languages. For example, Becker (1999), 1992 Nobel Laureate in Economics, stated in *Business Week*:

“I have been proposing [to give parents a financial incentive to keep their children in school longer] for some time, and the Mexican government has begun such a program, called Progresas, that covers over 2 million very poor families in Chiapas and other rural areas. Mothers whose children attend classes regularly, succeed in getting promoted, and get regular medical checkups that are paid every month by the central government. These payments average about \$25 per family. Most poor Mexican families earn only about \$100 a month. That large a percentage increase should have a noticeable effect on their behavior .... This pioneering Mexican approach appears to be highly successful. An evaluation ... shows that after only a couple of years, Progresas significantly raised the schooling of children in very poor Mexican families. It has also narrowed the education gap between girls and boys and reduced the labor force participation of boys.”

For another example, Krueger (2002), an influential economist at Princeton University, wrote in his periodic column in the *New York Times*:

“The Bush administration is casting about for new ideas for how to use \$5 billion of aid a year for poor countries to achieve accountability and results in economic development. It would do well to look southward, to Mexico’s Progresas program,

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<sup>12</sup> Behrman and Hoddinott (2005), for example, suggest that the increased gain in height z scores for infants and small children would translate into 2.9 percent increases in lifetime earnings given other estimates about the relation between stature and earnings in Latin America and assumptions about height correlations over the life cycle. If there is such an impact that is additional to the schooling attainment impact, it would increase the benefit-to-cost ratios by from about 30 to almost 50 percent.

for a successful model that has reduced child labor, increased educational attainment and improved health and nutrition for the poor .... The International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington has coordinated an extensive evaluation of Progresa ... the evaluation has provided powerful ammunition for advocates of the program to press for its continued existence under the new government of Vicente Fox, and in other countries .... [If the proposed Bush administration aid] could be used to develop and rigorously test programs like Progresa, the knowledge garnered could stimulate more development aid and encourage poor countries to pursue more effective policies.”<sup>13</sup>

Fukuyama (2007), well-known for his very influential 1989 essay on “The End of History?”, provides a third example in the *Wall Street Journal*:

“Some of the newest and most innovative social policy has been designed by economists who, taking ... earlier experiences into account, have tried to design programs that also take incentives into account from the get-go. For example, the Mexican Progresa program of conditional cash transfers pays poor people a stipend on the condition that they send their children to school, recognizing the fact that many poor families see greater benefit in putting their children to work rather than educating them. Built into the program was a way of empirically testing its effects, by deliberately creating control groups that could be used to benchmark its impact. There are by now a host of econometric studies documenting how Progresa raised school attendance rates dramatically, though its final impact on long-term educational outcomes is less certain. Early success led to the program being extended broadly across Mexico as the Oportunidades program, where it now reaches into urban neighborhoods .... Progresa’s success has led to it being copied in other parts of Latin America ....”

*The Economist* (2005) article on “New thinking about an old problem” arguing that CCTs are “a better way of helping the poor than many previous social programmes” is a fourth example. It also refers to evaluation as being important, and refers to studies involving two members of the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation team (described below) as part of the evaluation project:

“The evidence from Mexico, where more evaluation has been done, is that CCTs do work. A June 2004 paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found improvements in the size and health of children participating in the programme. Drop-out rates among secondary-school students are also down—by roughly 5% for boys and 8% for girls, according to a study by Paul **Schultz** of Yale University. That may be an underestimate: a simulation done by Jere **Behrman** and his colleagues at the Penn Institute for Economic Research in

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<sup>13</sup> Krueger gives the IFPRI website in order that readers can examine for themselves the evaluation studies and cites studies by a number of IFPRI staff or consultants working with IFPRI on the evaluation (Behrman, Coady, Gertler, Parker, Schultz, Skoufias, and Todd).

Philadelphia suggests that *Oportunidades* could increase secondary-school enrolment by 19%.” (bold added)<sup>14</sup>

These prominent examples focus on the schooling component of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, characterize the program very positively (“pioneering,” “a successful model,” “newest and most innovative social policy”) and place emphasis on the critical role of evaluation (with explicit emphasis on IFPRI in the Krueger article and on IFPRI evaluation team members in *The Economist* article). And there are other prominent examples as well, such as a 1999 BBC program on “Mexico’s Welfare Revolution” focused on *PROGRESA* (Egan 1999), a 1999 *Wall Street Journal* article (Friedland 1999) that describes the program, in the words of Judith McGuire, a well-known nutritionist at the World Bank, as “pretty revolutionary” because it seemed to be succeeding in delivering improvements to the rural poor, and a 2007 *Newsweek* article about the “bold” new New York City Program—“The experimental program, called Opportunity NYC, is modeled on a 10-year-old Mexican program called *Oportunidades*, which has been so successful in reducing poverty in rural areas that it has been adopted by more than 20 countries” (Kelley 2007).

Another indicator of the visibility of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* is provided by the number of hits on Google: about 1,420,000 on Google and about 12,100 on Google Scholar (Table 3, row 1). Because “progresas” is a word in Spanish and also has been used for other programs in Spanish-speaking countries, some of these do not refer to the Mexican *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* program. But, among the first 50 hits, 82 percent of those for Google and 100 percent of those for Google Scholar indeed do refer to the Mexican *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* program.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, there are a considerable number of hits, though much smaller, on “PROGRESA & IFPRI” and on “PROGRESA & International Food Policy Research Institute” (about 25,200 and 44,900, respectively, on Google, 755 and 1370, respectively, on Google Scholar), suggesting that there is significant identification of the IFPRI evaluation with the *PROGRESA* program (Table 3, rows 2 and 3).

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<sup>14</sup> Bold is used throughout this study to note when others cite individuals who were members of the IFPRI evaluation team or, for studies that may have been antecedents of *PROGRESA* in addition for other IFPRI staff.

<sup>15</sup> References to *PROGRESA* and the importance of systematic policy evaluations also occur in other contexts. For example, in her testimony before the United States’ Congress, Levine (2006, p. 3) stated: “Fortunately, advances in research methods and increasing capacity around the world to conduct such impact evaluations are beginning to surmount these technical difficulties. Interestingly, we have seen how feasible this is through experiences in Mexico, where excellent design of *PROGRESA*, a conditional cash transfer program, illustrated the possibility and the value of introducing rigorous evaluation within the design of a program as it scales up.”

### 3. Challenges in Identifying the Influence and Impact of IFPRI on and through *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*

While the benefit-to-cost estimates cited in the previous section suggest that the gains almost surely outweighed the costs for *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, they do not directly inform the benefit-to-costs for the IFPRI influence and impact on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*.

In the abstract, benefit-to-cost ratios or internal rates of return can be used to estimate the impact of any actual or a prospective project, activity or investment, including the IFPRI relation to *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*. The benefits include the weighted sum of all impacts (I) of the project, with the weights reflecting the present discounted value of the resource gains/savings of the various impacts. The costs include the present discounted value of the weighted sum of all resources (R) used by the project directly or indirectly, private or public. So the benefit-to-cost ratio (B/C) is:

$$(1) \quad B/C = (\sum P_t I_t / (1+r)^t) / (\sum W_t R_t / (1+r)^t)$$

Where  $I_t$  is the benefit (perhaps the sum of a number of benefits in that period) in the  $t^{\text{th}}$  period,  $P_t$  is the price (value) of one unit of benefit in the  $t^{\text{th}}$  period,  $R_t$  is the resource cost in the  $t^{\text{th}}$  period,  $W_t$  is price (value) of one unit of resource cost in the  $t^{\text{th}}$  period,  $r$  is the discount rate and the sums are for  $t$  going from zero at project initiation to  $N$  at project termination (perhaps including some stocks of benefits or resource costs at the end of the project). Though obtaining estimates of B/C for any CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) project is likely to be a challenge, the complications are likely to be another order of magnitude greater for the case being considered in this paper than for the products of most other CGIAR institutions.<sup>16</sup>

For most CGIAR institutions, for example, a stereotypical example would be the development of a new higher yielding variety. In this case the direct impact  $I_t$  of what is being produced might be measured by the added product due to the higher yielding variety,<sup>17</sup> the prices of those impacts  $P_t$  might be measured by prices on the world market for that product,<sup>18</sup> the resources  $R_t$  used are those directly devoted by the institution to develop the new variety plus those used by others to utilize the new variety (e.g., added farmer time or complementary inputs to produce the new variety) plus the distortion costs of raising public resources for such a

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<sup>16</sup> Some of the issues in obtaining good estimates are discussed in Gardner (2007), Ryan (2006), and the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) of the CGIAR Science Council (n.d.).

<sup>17</sup> The indirect impact of interest generally is presumed to be the welfare of poor people who are affected by the products being studied, either as producers or as consumers or both.

<sup>18</sup> The opportunity cost from the point of view of a developing country of the product is its value in international markets and what happens in most developing countries for most products is not likely to change world market prices—but if the country is a big enough producer relative to the world market to affect world market prices then those effects would need to be incorporated into the analysis.

purpose, the prices of most of those resources  $W_t$  might be measured by world market prices, and the project life might be on the order of magnitude of a decade or so, given probable developments of superior new varieties in the future. There are a number of issues that have to be dealt with in such estimates, such as how to measure the distortion costs and what is the appropriate discount rate. And complications could be introduced through changes in product quality (so the relevant prices change) or through considering additional objectives (e.g., empowering women). But as a first approximation in many cases for most of the CGIAR institutions such estimates conceptually are relative straightforward. Most direct impacts and resources used have fairly good price measures and the time period is likely to be relatively short so that the estimates are not likely to be changed radically by different choices of discount rates.

Now consider IFPRI, which is attempting to produce information that leads to better policies. At a general level, to evaluate the impact of IFPRI's activities as of those of other CGIAR institutions, it is necessary to estimate relation (1). But this is likely to be more challenging than estimates of relation (1) for most other CGIAR institutions for several reasons. **First**, while there are likely to be relatively good prices with which to value new varieties, generally it is far from clear how to value directly changed or new policies. Instead, it generally is necessary to go beyond changed policies to evaluate the impact of changed policies on outcomes of indirect, though perhaps more primary interest, such as income or consumption. **Second**, it is rare indeed, and perhaps never happens, that IFPRI's research alone results in any particular policy change. Instead, IFPRI's research is likely to contribute, together with the research of other institutes and individuals, to a changing environment of understanding of how various policies work and which work better than others. **Third**, even if IFPRI research does have a direct impact on the development of new policies in particular contexts, policymakers rarely cite their sources, so evidence of such links is hard to come by. **Fourth**, for many important aspects of food and nutritional policies, important components of the effects of interest pertain to the health and productivity over the life cycle of unborn children, infants and small children. For instance, for the estimates of the benefits from moving children from low birth weight status to above the standard 2.5 kg cutoff in the Copenhagen Consensus paper on hunger and malnutrition, about three-fifths of the estimated benefits with a 5-percent discount rate are from increased productivity 15 to 60 years in the future, and there are in addition 12 percent of the benefits from reduction in chronic diseases in old age and from intergenerational effects (Behrman, Alderman, and Hoddinott 2004). This means that a long time horizon must be used, which makes it all the more difficult to estimate the impacts and to value them, and also makes the results much more dependent on the discount rate. For instance, a \$1000 benefit in 30 years has a present discounted value of \$412 with a 3-percent discount rate but only \$57 with a 10-percent discount rate. **Fifth**, some of the benefits are extremely difficult to price—most notably, averted mortality. The Copenhagen Consensus paper on hunger and malnutrition again gives some examples.

Some of these considerations can be formalized somewhat by noting the impacts  $I_t$  in relation (1) depend *inter alia* on markets  $M_t$ , capital stocks  $K_t$ , a subset of the resource costs  $R_t$ , policies  $Z_t$  and stochastic factors  $U_t$ :

$$(2) \quad I_t = I(M_t, K_t, R_t, Z_t, \dots, U_t).$$

The policy  $Z_t$  in a particular country (e.g., Mexico), in turn, depends *inter alia* on markets  $M_t$ , capital stocks  $K_t$ , the policy history in that country  $Z_{t-1}$ , the balance of political power among various interest groups in that country  $T_t$ , observations about and recommendations concerning “best practice” (or “better practice”) policies in other countries  $Y_t$  that are made by individuals (nationals and internationals) and by international organizations (e.g., World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, IPFRI) and stochastic factors  $V_t$ :

$$(3) \quad Z_t = Z(M_t, K_t, Z_{t-1}, T_t, Y_t, \dots, V_t).$$

The impact of IFPRI research in period  $t-n$ ,  $X_{t-n}$  on the benefit in period  $t$  is the sum of the impacts of the IFPRI research on each of the arguments on the right side of relation (3) times the effects of the policy change on the impacts in relation (2). Therefore, under the assumption that all of the IFPRI research impact on the project benefits are through policies that affect the impacts:

$$(4) \quad \frac{\partial B}{\partial X_{t-n}} = \sum \{ (P_t / (1+r)^t) (\partial I_t / \partial Z_t) [ (\partial Z_t / \partial Y_t) (\partial Y_t / \partial X_{t-n}) + (\partial Z_t / \partial T_t) (\partial T_t / \partial X_{t-n}) + \dots ] \},$$

where the sum on the right, as for relation (1), is for  $t$  going from zero at project initiation to  $N$  at project termination (perhaps including some stocks of benefits or resource costs at the end of the project). Relation (4) gives the benefit of IFPRI research in period  $t-n$ ; the total benefit of IFPRI research on the benefit  $B$  could be obtained by summing expression (4) for  $n = 0$  to  $n = 32$  (the number of years ago that IFPRI was founded in 1975).

The first term in parentheses within the sum on the right side of relation (4) is just the present discounted value of the price of impact  $I_t$ , again as in relation (1) (and under the assumption neither the price nor the discount rate is affected by IFPRI research).<sup>19</sup> The second term in parentheses is the marginal impact of policy changes, the assumed single channel through which IFPRI research has an effect on the benefits of interest. The third term in  $\{ \}$  is the marginal effect of IFPRI research on policies. The first term in  $[ ]$  refers to the impact of IFPRI research on observations about and recommendations concerning “best practice” (or “better practice”) policies in other countries  $Y_t$  which is likely to be the primary channel through which IFPRI research affects policy formation. But even this channel is likely to be difficult to document for two reasons. First, part of the impact of IFPRI research may be through evolving conventional wisdom about policy options that is held by a number of institutions, policy advisors or analysts who may be cited as the proximate source of policy advice rather than IFPRI and the other institutions and individuals who contributed to the conventional wisdom being cited. Second, as noted above, policy advisors and policymakers for the most part do not cite sources in any case. One other important point about the expression in  $[ ]$  is that it reflects that IFPRI research might have impact on a country’s policies not only through observations about and recommendations concerning “best practice” policies in other countries  $Y_t$ , which is likely to be the primary channel, but also in principle through any of the arguments in the policy function in relation (3). To illustrate, the possibility that IFPRI research might affect the balance of

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<sup>19</sup> The assumption in parentheses might not hold if, for example, the relevant price is determined in markets of relatively limited scope rather than, at the other extreme, in international markets.

political power among various interest groups in that country  $T_t$  is included explicitly in relation (4).

If estimates of relation (4) can be made (for all values of  $n$ , the lag in the impact of IFPRI research) and if estimates of the present discounted value of the real resource costs of IFPRI research can be made, the ratio gives the benefit-to-costs for IPFRI research as it worked its way through to affect policies—in this case, the Mexican CCT program. Obtaining the necessary estimates is very challenging, for reasons articulated above. But the rest of this paper is devoted to efforts to ascertain from various sources whether IFPRI had an impact on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* and, if so, at least in qualitative terms, what that impact has been.

#### **4. Information Sources Used to Attempt to Characterize the Influence and Impact of IFPRI on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades***

Statistics do not exist to estimate numerically in some regression sense the partial derivatives in expression (4). Therefore this paper relies on a number of primarily non-statistical sources in order to get some flavor of the relative magnitudes involved. These sources are summarized in this section and the extent to which they suggest influence and impact of IFPRI on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* is summarized in Section 5.

1. ***Documents written by key actors in the development of PROGRESA prior to the establishment of PROGRESA:*** Because the key architects of *PROGRESA* were researchers, examination of their research papers before the establishment of *PROGRESA* may reveal impact of IFPRI and IFPRI-related researchers on ideas related to the development of *PROGRESA*. Particularly potentially valuable in this regard are the papers on poverty programs in Mexico written by Levy (1991a, b, 1994, 2006) and various studies by Gómez de León.
2. ***Documents that discuss the development of PROGRESA but that were written after the initiation of PROGRESA by key actors in the development of PROGRESA and by other knowledgeable informants and observers:*** These include accounts by some of the key actors mentioned in the introductions: Hernández (2006), Levy (2006), and Levy and Rodríguez (2005). They also include papers written by two Mexican social scientists, R Rubalcalva (2007) (who worked with Gómez de León at CONAPO before *PROGRESA* was established) and Scott (1999) (an economist at CIDE in Mexico City), and other studies such as Gómez de León and Parker (1999a, b); Gómez de León, Hernández, Parker (1999); and Gómez de León, Hernández, Parker, and Orozco (1999).
3. ***In-person, telephone or e-mail interviews with 39 key informants who were directly involved with the development of PROGRESA, the implementation of PROGRESA or Oportunidades, other relevant parts of the Mexican government, IFPRI, the IFPRI evaluation of PROGRESA, the subsequent INSP evaluation of Oportunidades, international organizations that facilitated and used such evaluations (the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the Committee on Global Development), or otherwise are knowledgeable about the topic of this study:*** These 39 informants are a subset of the 57 informants who were approached for such interviews. Those whom were interviewed include most of the major participants in *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* and in the evaluation of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, though of course not the late Jose “Pepe” Gómez de León, though several close associates of Gómez de León (e.g., Daniel Hernández, Mónica Orozco, Susan Parker) and his wife (María de la Paz López, a demographer who works for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)). Appendix Table A.1 gives the complete list of those approached including the four who responded that they did not know enough about the IFPRI-*PROGRESA* relation to be able to contribute or otherwise were not able to contribute, seven who said that they would respond but had not done so as of the time of



this version of this paper and six individuals who have not yet responded at all to an e-mail (or subsequent follow ups) requesting their responses. Appendix Table A.2 gives the individuals who were interviewed, self descriptions of the positions that they held since 1994, and their relation to IFPRI.<sup>20</sup>

The procedure that was followed for these interviews was that I sent each of these individuals an e-mail asking if I could interview them with regard to five questions, the first four of which are the questions around which Section 5 is organized and the fifth of which concerned with whom else should I attempt to have an interview on these topics. Appendix A.3 gives the general form of this inquiry (though it was customized in the introduction and conclusion to make it more personal, including that some other key informant(s) had suggested that I contact them if that were the case). For a subset of the most critical informants, I proposed meetings in Mexico City (Daniel Hernández, Mónica Orozco, Evelyn Rodríguez), Washington (Santiago Levy) or Lima, Peru (Nora Lustig) to discuss the questions that I had provided in advance. In these cases, I attempted to follow very strictly the format of the questions in the original e-mail asking for the interview with some addition requests for clarification but attempting not to ask any leading questions. Immediately after the interview I sent the interviewee my summary of the interview and asked for confirmation or suggestions for modifications in my record of the interview; in all cases I received confirmation, in most cases with some small modifications or added thoughts. For all of the others the e-mail inquiry encouraged an e-mail response or, if they preferred, a telephone interview. In all but four cases, e-mail responses were provided. I had telephone interviews with the four exceptions (Mario Fuentes, John Hoddinott, Dan Levy, Michelle Adato), and immediately sent them my summary of their interview and asked them for confirmation and modifications, just as for the interviews held in person—and for all, confirmation possibly with some modifications were received. In a few cases further modifications were made by interviewees in response to the query (second letter in Appendix A.3) regarding their agreement to be interviewed. Appendix A.4 gives the transcripts for these interviews, organized by the five questions that are raised.<sup>21</sup> The first four questions are addressed in Section 5, where individuals are cited by names with 2007 in parentheses when reference is made to these interviews. D. Levy (2007) is used to distinguish him from Santiago

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<sup>20</sup> Some individuals had multiple relevant roles over time. Some examples are: Daniel Hernández was the Coordinator of Evaluation at CONAPO working with Gómez de León in 1994–1997 (working on antecedents of *PROGRESA*), Director General of Planning, Evaluation and Follow-Up for *PROGRESA* in 1997–2000, National Coordinator of *PROGRESA* in 2000–2001, and held various posts in *SEDESOL* (the Ministry of Welfare in which *PROGRESA* is located) in 2001–2006. Juan Rivera discussed first in 1995 with Gómez de León and then with Levy and his team the interventions and actions to be included in the program for the prevention of undernutrition, then was an advisor on and coordinator of a team of experts for the development of food supplements for Dr. Juan Ramón de la Fuente, Secretary of Health during the Zedillo Administration and in 1997 was asked by the Secretary of Health to design and implement the evaluation of the nutrition component which was conducted between 1998–2000, and then participated in the *INSP* evaluation of *Oportunidades* in 2000–2006. Susan Parker was an advisor to Gómez de León in 1998–2000, IFPRI Research Associate in 2000, and a Professor of Economics at CIDE in Mexico City and worked on the evaluation of *Oportunidades* in 2000 to the present.

<sup>21</sup> Because in e-mails a number of people do not capitalize often and spelling errors are widespread, the transcripts were corrected for such typographical errors, but no substantive changes were made. In some cases the interviewees answered one question partly in response to another question or gave answers that were combined across questions.

Levy; B. Hernández (2007) is used to distinguish him from Daniel Hernández; M. Rubalcalva (2007) is used to distinguish her paper from the interview with Rubalcalva (2007).

4. ***Documents written by PROGRESA staff during the IFPRI evaluation period:*** These primarily are studies written by Gómez de León with collaborators but also include a letter from Hernández (2000) to IFPRI at the conclusion of the IFPRI evaluation.
5. ***Reports in the press and other media about PROGRESA/Oportunidades and related materials:*** These include counts in various media (e.g., for Google, Table 3) and some particularly visible articles some of which are noted above (e.g., Becker 1999 in *Business Week*, Krueger 2002 in the *New York Times*, *The Economist* 2005, and Friedland 1999 and Fukuyama 2007 in the *Wall Street Journal*).
6. ***Other relevant documents:*** These include the transcript of a Brookings Institution (2007) Workshop/Press Conference on Levy's (2006) book on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, an Inter-American Development Bank (2002) press release on the awarding of the largest IADB loan to date to *Oportunidades*, and selected e-mails relating to *PROGRESA* (e.g., Haddad 1998, Lustig 1995, 1997a, 1997b).

## 5. Apparent Influence and Impact of IFPRI on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*

In this section I summarize what the six different types of sources that are introduced in Section 4 say about the four questions that have been used to structure the analysis of this paper, including the interviews that were undertaken.

These four questions have some obvious inter-relations. For example part of the reason that IFPRI may have been selected for the initial *PROGRESA* evaluation (Question 2) and part of the reason that IFPRI may have had positive contributions to the evaluation (Question 3) and contributed to spillovers regarding the evaluation (Question 4) all may relate to IFPRI's prior international technical expertise on which the designers of *PROGRESA* may have directly or indirectly built (Question 1). Nevertheless it is useful to consider the four questions as they were asked separately, though with some cross-references, in order to organize a large amount of material and in order to be as true as possible to the interview responses.

**Question 1—“What was the relation between IFPRI and the development of *PROGRESA*? Did the work at IFPRI have any impact, for example, on the decision to allocate the CCTs to mothers or not to choose a more traditional food subsidy or food-in-kind program or on how the evaluation might be planned to be undertaken? Are there any early papers or other documents that document any such influence?”**

The interviewees for this study all agreed that IFPRI did not participate directly in the design of *PROGRESA*. A subset suggested that previous IFPRI research contributed to the collective literatures and evolving conventional wisdom on gender issues, intrahousehold allocations, reevaluating food subsidy programs and interactions among health, education and nutrition on which the designers of *PROGRESA* built (e.g., Adato 2007, von Braun 2007).<sup>22</sup> Haddad (2007), for example, recalls that Levy said that the IFPRI “work on women’s income was influential in the decision to allocate to mothers.” Hoddinott (2007) recalls that in an “early meeting with people at *PROGRESA* about possible evaluation, Santiago Levy said that one of the reasons that [they] wanted to work with IFPRI was IFPRI work on intrahousehold allocation and gender.” Hoddinott also said that he saw an early *PROGRESA* paper that referenced work by Hoddinott or Hoddinott and Lawrence Haddad. Hoddinott also suggested that “food subsidy work, perhaps through Nora Lustig, who had worked on Mexican subsidies and who knew of

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<sup>22</sup> Ryan (2007) also has suggested that IFPRI’s involvement in developing and establishing earlier programs may have affected the development of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*. He suggests for an explicit promising possibility the Bangladesh Food For Education (FFE) program (see Ryan and Meng 2004 for an analysis of the IFPRI involvement in that program), that—like *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*—was developed in part because of concern about leakages in food subsidy programs based in part on previous IFPRI research (explicitly in the case of FFE). While IFPRI’s involvement with the FFE program may have affected the then conventional wisdom about alternative program strategies on which the individuals who developed *PROGRESA* drew, I have not been able to find any references to IFPRI and FFE in the documentation about the development of *PROGRESA* that I have been able to locate.

IFPRI work (in part because she was on [the] IFPRI board)” also was referred in an early meeting between IFPRI and *PROGRESA*. Skoufias (2007) also recalled second-hand and direct statements about the impact of IFPRI on the gender/intrahousehold allocation dimension of *PROGRESA*: “From talking to Agnes Quisumbing, Lawrence Haddad and from various conversations with/remarks by Jose Gómez de León (Pepe), the decision to give the benefits to women was influenced significantly by the previous research of IFPRI on intrafamily allocation of resources. Pepe mentioned that fact to me on at least two occasions. It was clear that he was well aware of this literature and in his words, ‘this was also one of the main reasons IFPRI was chosen to do the evaluation of *PROGRESA*’.”

Levy (2007) suggested that it is difficult to identify an explicit IFPRI impact because in terms of basic constructs that underlay the development of the program, IFPRI researchers and other researchers contributed to the general environment on what policies might work and what did not seem to have worked. However separating out the IFPRI contribution from others to this environment is very difficult because there may have been both direct effects (e.g., a particular IFPRI study or presentation) or indirect effects (e.g., IFPRI studies may have affected the perceptions of or studies of others that had more direct effects). He suggested possible direct or indirect IFPRI contributions to the development of *PROGRESA* included research on: (a) the ineffectiveness of previous food aid strategies (e.g., not well targeted, inframarginal income effects, high transaction and bureaucratic costs of in-kind programs; limitations of supply-side interventions), (b) the importance of intrahousehold allocations and therefore the need to make programs be conditional on benefits received by all household members, (c) related gender concerns, and (d) that food problems are not the same as nutritional problems. He suggested that the most important explicit studies that affected his thinking were Besley and Kanbur (1988, 1990) on food subsidy programs, **Haddad** and Kanbur (1989, 1990) on the extent of intrahousehold inequalities in the distribution of nutrients, **Behrman** and Deolalikar (1987, 1988) on low nutrient elasticities with respect to income, **Schultz** on schooling, Castenea on targeting using the SISBEN in Colombia, and Streeten (1989a, b) on the poverty and on the relations between health and nutrition.<sup>23</sup> Levy (1991b, 1994), in his World Bank paper on “Poverty Alleviation in Mexico” that included many of the ideas that underlay the development of *PROGRESA*, among the 71 references with named authors (others are by institutions such as the World Bank and Coplanmar), included the following 14 citations by IFPRI Staff or IFPRI Board Members (Lustig) or IFPRI affiliates for the evaluation: **Alderman** (1989), **Behrman** (1988), **Behrman** and Deolalikar (1987, 1988), **Behrman** and Wolfe (1984) **Haddad** and Kanbur (1989, 1990), **Lipton** (1988a, 1988b),<sup>24</sup> **Lustig** (1984, 1990), Rosenzweig and **Schultz** (1982), **Schultz** (1981), and Wolfe and **Behrman** (1982). Levy and Rodríguez (2005), in addition to some of the IFPRI-related studies noted above and to a number of IFPRI studies written after the initiation of *PROGRESA* in 1997, cite three further IFPRI-related studies that were written before *PROGRESA* was finalized: **International Food Policy Research Institute** (1995) on women and food security, **Lipton** and Ravallion, (1995) on poverty and policy, and

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<sup>23</sup> The authors in bold, as noted above, were at IFPRI at the time of the study cited or at the time of the evaluation or were part of the IFPRI evaluation team (Behrman, Gertler, Schultz and Todd in addition to IFPRI staff); bold is used throughout to refer to when others cite individuals who were members of the evaluation team. Levy did not give explicit citations to the studies by Schultz or Castenea.

<sup>24</sup> Plus three other related references by Lipton before he was on the IFPRI staff.

**Pinstrup-Andersen** (1988) on policy options for food subsidies. This suggests that, although Levy did not cite these studies before 1997, retrospectively Levy and Rodríguez thought that these studies captured important dimensions of the evolving conventional wisdom on these topics at the time that they were engaged in developing *PROGRESA*.

I have not found any citations by Gómez de León in his studies before *PROGRESA* was initiated to research by the IFPRI evaluation team members or IFPRI more broadly. Two of his 1999 studies with Parker (Gómez de León and Parker 1999a, b), however, do cite seven studies by IFPRI staff or by the evaluation team members that were written before the initiation of *PROGRESA* (in addition to studies that came out of the evaluation): **Haddad, Hoddinott, and Alderman** (1997), **Haddad and Reardon** (1993), **Quisumbing** (1994), and **Schultz** (1990) on gender and intrahousehold allocations; Heckman, Ichimura, and **Todd** (1997) and Heckman and **Todd** (1996) on propensity score matching estimators and evaluation; and Newman, Rawlings, and **Gertler** (1994) on using randomization for evaluation of social policies in developing countries. This suggests that, although Gómez de León did not cite these studies before 1997, Gómez de León and Parker in 1999 at least thought that these studies captured important dimensions of the evolving conventional wisdom on these topics at the time that Gómez de León was engaged in developing *PROGRESA*.

Moreover, there is some evidence of second-round effects. For example the articles that Levy (2007) cites as key in his thinking regarding his contribution to the development of *PROGRESA* include some citations to IFPRI studies—e.g., Besley and Kanbur cite **Scobie** (1983); Behrman and Deolalikar (1987) cite **Pinstrup-Andersen** and Caicedo (1978) and Timmer and **Alderman** (1979) plus a number of citations to **Behrman**; Behrman and Deolalikar (1988) cite **Alderman** (1984), **Alderman and Von Braun** (1984), **Pinstrup-Andersen** (1985), **von Braun** and de Haen (1983)—plus eight citations to studies by **Schultz** and a number of citations to studies by **Behrman**; Streeten (1989a) refers to four studies by **Lipton** (1983a, b, 1985, 1988a) undertaken around the time that he was an IFPRI staff member in the mid-1980s and also refers to a study by **Schultz** to which Lipton (1988a) refers; and Streeten (1989b) refers to **International Food Policy Research Institute** (1986) and Reutlinger and **Alderman** (1980) in addition to one of the **Lipton** studies. Such second-round citations, again, are suggestive that IFPRI and the IFPRI evaluation team had been contributing to knowledge in the relevant areas in the period in which *PROGRESA* was being developed.

**Bottom line:** IFPRI did not directly participate in the *PROGRESA* design. So it would be misleading to claim that a major part of the *PROGRESA* program benefits should be attributed to IFPRI's critical role in the design process. Nevertheless prior IFPRI research and research by IFPRI evaluation team members apparently directly (in the sense of direct citations by Levy) and indirectly (in the sense of contributions to evolving conventional wisdom) on topics including food subsidy programs, nutrition, health, gender, intrahousehold allocations, and related policies played some role in the design process. Therefore it might not be misleading to attribute a very small part of the *PROGRESA* benefits (say, 1–3 percent fairly arbitrarily but perhaps conservatively) to better design based on IFPRI's prior research contributions on a number of related topics. Moreover, IFPRI's reputation as a relatively objective policy-oriented international research institution based on this prior research also underlay one of the important reasons why IFPRI was selected and probably was effective (Questions 2–4).

**Question 2—“Why was IFPRI chosen to be considered for the PROGRESA evaluation? What were the perceived advantages and disadvantages of having IFPRI play this role?”**

In the economics stereotypical abstract perfectly competitive model, *PROGRESA* would be one of many entities seeking evaluations of a certain type and IFPRI would be one of many potential suppliers of such services by entities that were very similar or identical. In equilibrium any of those many suppliers could have provided basically the same evaluation and none of these entities would have market power that permitted them to influence the price or other characteristics of the contract because if they attempted to obtain an arrangement more favorable to them than those provided by almost identical other suppliers (on the IFPRI side) or demanders (on the *PROGRESA* side), they could be replaced by many alternatives.

Though *PROGRESA* considered potential evaluators internationally so that in some sense they included all potential evaluating supply entities in the world and they were competing with all entities wanting (demanding) evaluations in the world, the search and contracting process appeared to have developed quickly into much more of a bilateral bargaining process than a search in an international market approximating perfect competition. Therefore, the particular characteristics of IFPRI that distinguished it from other potential evaluators presumably were important in a way that they would not have been if the relevant market had approximated a perfectly competitive one.

Apparently Nora Lustig, a member of the IFPRI Board of Trustees in 1994–97 and Senior Advisor on Poverty and Chief of the Inequality Unit of the Inter-American Development Bank in 1997–2001, played a major role in facilitating the conversation between IFPRI and *PROGRESA* about IFPRI undertaking the evaluation (Coady 2007, Haddad 2007, Lustig 1995, 1997a,b, 2007, Parker 2007, Schultz 2007). The first documentation that I can find of that contact is an e-mail of 21 June 1995 of Lustig (1995) to Lawrence Haddad at IFPRI apparently responding to an inquiry by Haddad about a staff member working with Santiago Levy who had contacted Haddad about evaluating a Mexican pilot food stamp program (a pilot program for *PROGRESA*) in which Lustig says that she had mentioned Haddad’s name to Levy’s Chief of Staff several months earlier. In mid-1997, Evelyne Rodriguez visited Washington and apparently was encouraged by economists at the World Bank (Harold Alderman, Margaret Grosh, and Emmanuel Jimenez) to consider IFPRI as a possibility for the evaluation that would be viewed as relatively “neutral” and not involved in structural adjustment and related matters (Alderman 2007). On November 11, 1997, Lustig (1997a) sent an e-mail to Haddad, Gary Burtless at the Brookings Institute<sup>25</sup> and 13 staff members of the World Bank (mostly empirical micro economists and policy analysts) inviting them to a workshop on December 10, 1997 to be held at the Inter-American Development Bank under the sponsorship of the Poverty and Inequality Advisory Unit (of which Lustig was the chief) “to discuss evaluation schemes of the recently launched target program in Mexico called *PROGRESA*” (she also noted that “The workshop will start with a presentation by Dr. Jose Gomez de Leon, the Director of *PROGRESA*” and provided a brief summary of the program). Haddad, de la Briere,

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<sup>25</sup> Burtless (1995) recently had published a paper on “The Case for Randomized Field Trials in Economic and Policy Research.”

Quisumbing, and Ruel met with the “Progresa Director and Evaluations Officer” in November 1998 (Haddad 1998). On December 3, 1997, Lustig (1997b) sent an e-mail addressed to Lawrence Haddad, Jere Behrman, Paul Gertler, Paul Schultz, and James Heckman<sup>26</sup> (but not to Burtless or the World Bank invitees in that e-mail) enclosing the program for the meeting on December 10, 1997, and further information and asking for references regarding these individuals’ expertise. Haddad, Ruel, and Quisumbing from IFPRI (Haddad 1998), Behrman, Gertler, and Schultz all attended the meeting (Heckman did not but asked Petra Todd to attend in his place, which she did) and subsequently became increasingly involved (under Haddad’s leadership and with substantial input from other IFPRI staff) in the development of the IFPRI proposal for undertaking the evaluation on which agreement was reached in the late summer of 1998. At least from the time of the December 10, 1997 meeting (and perhaps prior to that meeting), focus seemed to be on developing the IFPRI-*PROGRESA* evaluation relation. Various interviewees (Attanasio 2007, Ruel 2007, Skoufias 2007, Todd 2007) and an internal IFPRI memo (Haddad 1998) mentioned as alternatives the Rand Corporation in Santa Monica, California and some unnamed Mexican entity (with the latter perhaps just being a generic possibility), but these options were not to my knowledge formally pursued to the point that was close to a formal contractual bidding process.

With this background, I return to the question of what were the perceived advantages and disadvantages of IFPRI. The primary sources for answers to this question are the interviews with 33 of the respondents who answered this question, but there also is some relevant information in other sources (e.g., internal IFPRI e-mails, such as Haddad 1998). Table 4 summarizes the information provided in these 33 interviews, with the columns referring to the primary reasons given by various interviewees and the rows giving the names of the interviewees. The interviewees are grouped by my subjective probabilities that they had first-hand knowledge (Group 1): those at or closely related to those at *PROGRESA* at the start or very early in the program (Hernández, Orozco, López, Parker), those elsewhere in Mexico who were extensively involved in the early stages of *PROGRESA* (Fuentes, Levy, Rodríguez, Rivera), Lustig and Birdsall at the Inter-American Development Bank, IFPRI staff (Haddad, Ruel, Hoddinott, Quisumbing, Skoufias, Coady), IFPRI consultants for the evaluation (Gertler, Todd). Others who were more distant from these decisions and mostly were involved (Group 2) in later evaluations with *Oportunidades* (Yaschine) and *INSP* (B. Hernández, Rubalcalva) or at international organizations with substantial activities related to project evaluations, in particular for conditional cash transfer programs (e.g., at the World Bank—Fiszbein). Table 4 indicates with an X if a respondent suggested that the reason in that column was important and with XX if the respondent indicated that this was the most important reason.

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<sup>26</sup> Heckman is a distinguished economist on the faculty of the University of Chicago who has contributed importantly to the literature on techniques for evaluation, among other literatures, and who received the 2000 Nobel Prize in Economics for his contributions. Shortly before the December 10, 1997 meeting (I believe the night before) he requested that his former Ph.D. student and frequent collaborator on developing propensity score matching methods for evaluations, Petra Todd on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, attend the meeting in his place and summarize their joint work on these estimators. Todd accepted, came to the meeting, gave the presentation, and became increasingly involved in the evaluation. I am unaware whether or not there were previous or subsequent efforts to further involve Heckman in the evaluation.

I now summarize the reasons given for IFPRI being an attractive entity for undertaking the initial *PROGRESA* evaluation, with particular emphasis on the first groups of respondents. The characteristics that are emphasized are grouped in three broad categories (as in the table), with subcategories in each case.

### **Organizational Type, Function, Ownership**

***International Organization:*** An international organization was desirable so that it would be credible that the evaluation was not captive or perceived to be captive of Mexican interests or of other country's interests (e.g., United States' interests). An international organization also would increase the probability that any lessons learned would be internationally exportable. A substantial majority of those interviewed (23 out of 33), including most of those closest to the initial decision (17/21), emphasized the advantage of the evaluating entity being an international organization for such reasons.

***Not Involved in Structural Adjustment or Direct Lending:*** *PROGRESA* was developed and instituted, and the evaluation arrangements established at a time in which structural adjustment and international lending were very sensitive issues given the recent and ongoing Mexican financial crisis (see Section 2 above). For this reason it was thought to be of considerable disadvantage to have institutions with roles in lending and/or structural adjustment, such as the Inter-American Development Bank or the World Bank, undertaking the evaluation. While these reasons were mentioned by the interviewees with less frequency than the international nature of the evaluating organization, they were emphasized by some who were very close to the decisions being made (Haddad 2007, Levy 2007, Lustig 2007, Parker 2007), as well as others (Hoddinott 2007, D. Levy 2007, Quisumbing 2007).<sup>27</sup>

***Public Ownership:*** Levy (2007) and Ruel (2007) also suggest that, for similar reasons, there was preference for a public organization. A private organization undertaking the evaluation would have reduced credibility, particularly at the time of great concern about structural adjustment.

### **Research Strength, Reputation, Credibility**

***Reputation for Objective Policy-Related Research on Relevant Topics:*** A large number of interviewees (30 of the 33) suggested that an important factor was IFPRI's prestige and credibility as a serious place for scientific and objective policy-relevant field work and analyses, including in food subsidies, nutrition, health, gender, intrahousehold allocations and poverty. An added dimension suggested by some was a strong record in field work related to various stages of undertaking household surveys in developing countries. A number suggest that IFPRI's reputation was important for credibility. Levy (2006, p. 43) reinforces this point in his book in which, with regard to "—Credibility of the [evaluation] results" he states: "In particular, during

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<sup>27</sup> Alderman (2007) also reports that World Bank economists (Harold Alderman, Margaret Grosh, and Emmanuel Jimenez) expressed considerable interest in the World Bank participating in the evaluation in a meeting with Evelyne Rodríguez in mid-1997, but that she said that the program was too visible and the World Bank's involvement would be viewed as promoting an agenda no matter how much the World Bank participants sought to undertake objective research. Alderman further reports that IFPRI came up in that meeting as one possible collaborator that would be viewed as neutral.



the first three years of the program, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was hired by the Mexican government to perform an important part of the evaluation. IFPRI in turn relied on a team of outside and in-house professionals, including well-known academics from American universities.”

***Capacity for Engaging PROGRESA-Suggested Leading Academic Researchers:*** A smaller number of interviewees, but including some who arguably were in the best place to know such as Haddad (2007), Hernández (2007), Levy (2007), López (2007), and Rodríguez (2007)—as well as others, such as Flores (2007), Gertler (2007), Handa (2007), B. Hernández (2007), Levine (2007), Quisumbing (2007)—suggested that a very important IFPRI characteristic was that it could serve and was willing to serve as a vehicle for engaging some specific internationally known academics—Behrman, Gertler, and Schultz.<sup>28</sup> Levy, López, Rodríguez, Gertler, and Handa suggested, in fact that this was the most important advantage that IFPRI had. An internal IFPRI e-mail by Haddad (1998) to IFPRI staff raising the question of whether IFPRI should compete for the evaluation contract also indicates that the involvement of academics such as these three specific researchers was expected by *PROGRESA*. Their engagement was thought to be very important for enhancing the evaluation and the credibility of the evaluation, in part by leading to more papers in international scholarly journals in addition to the contributions to the “gray” literature that otherwise might be the primary product of the evaluation (Levine 2007). Note that Levy’s (2006, p. 43) quotation in the previous paragraph describing the importance of IFPRI for the evaluation concludes by referring to “including well-known academics from American universities.” Also Levy and Rodríguez (2005, p. 113) note that “IFPRI assembled a team of respected economists, sociologists, nutritionists, and health care experts, including Dr. Jere Behrman of the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Paul Gertler of the University of California at Berkeley, and Dr. Paul Shultz of Yale University.”

## **Management Characteristics**

***Administrative Flexibility:*** Given the substantial pressures that *PROGRESA* was facing in trying to implement a rapidly expanding program within a context in which there were substantial and frequent political pressures, having an evaluation entity that could be flexible was a plus. Hernández (2007), who was perhaps the person best placed to know, commented very favorably on IFPRI’s flexibility in such matters as scheduling meetings with short lead times. Six of the

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<sup>28</sup> I have not included my responses to the questions in the interviews because to do so would seem to make it harder to maintain as objective assessment of the evidence as is desirable. But, with no false humility, I was surprised with the emphasis placed by a number of the key respondents on the importance of involving key academic researchers such as Gertler, Schultz, and myself. Of course, since the interview solicited by and sent to (or, in some cases, undertaken by) me, there may have been some tendency on the part of the interviewees to emphasize more strongly this point than would have been the case if some one else were collecting this information. On the other hand, my personal experience is consistent with there being considerable interest in involving me in the evaluation. For instance, Levy (whom I knew since 1987–88 when we both worked on a project in Indonesia, which led to a co-authored paper (Behrman and Levy 1992) but had not seen each other for several years took the initiative to contact me and to arrange that we meet at the American Economic Association Annual Meetings in early January 1997 so that he could describe the evolving *PROGRESA* project and his interest in me becoming involved. Also Gómez de León and Levy took me aside for a private conversation when we all were at IFPRI for a meeting about the possible evaluation in the spring of 1998 before the evaluation contract had been finalized to emphasize their strong hope that I would play a major role in the evaluation.

other interviewees, including López (2007), Orozco (2007) and Skoufias (2007), also emphasized this characteristic as being important.

***Well-Organized and Capable of Keeping to Schedule:*** For similar reasons it was important that the evaluation keep on schedule—in particular, as Levine (2007), López (2007), and Rodríguez (2007) noted, so that *PROGRESA* and its supporters were well prepared for critical regular reports to Congress.

***Relatively Low Cost:*** Conditional on contracting an international organization for undertaking the evaluation, IFPRI was a relatively low-cost potential provider with lower overhead rates than many organizations (Hernández 2007, Todd 2007)

Question 2 also asked about the *disadvantages*, not just the advantages that IFPRI offered. Relatively few of the interviewees responded explicitly with illustrations of disadvantages. Those that did focused on two: First, some Mexican institutions and individuals, perhaps including some individuals at *PROGRESA*, may have resented outside institutions undertaking a task that they thought they could have undertaken as well or better (Adato 2007, Davis 2007, Hernández 2007, Orozco 2007, Yaschine 2007). Second, IFPRI did not have a sufficient presence in Mexico to be involved extensively in day-to-day evaluation and data design and implementation even though some IFPRI staff members were posted at *PROGRESA* for part of the evaluation (Handa 2007, Parker 2007)

**Bottom line:** IFPRI presented advantages in terms of (1) type of organization (neither appearing to be a captive of national interests nor identified with structural adjustment or multilateral lending), (2) reputation and credibility for solid scientific analysis of relevant policy-related issues enhanced by the addition of some prominent academic researchers, and (3) aspects of management including flexibility, reliability and relatively low costs. These were perceived to offset the disadvantages in the eyes of some Mexican entities of not being Mexican (a disadvantage of course for any non-Mexican organization, not just IFPRI) and the logistic and communication difficulties of not having a Mexican base. The advantages built, as noted, in part on IFPRI's prior contribution to the knowledge on which the designers of *PROGRESA* built (see Question 1) and underlay some of the benefits of IFPRI's involvement in the evaluation (Questions 3 and 4). The perceived package of advantages apparently dominated whatever *PROGRESA* considered the next best option, so early on in the conversation between IFPRI and *PROGRESA* about the evaluation, the focus seemed to be primarily on making mutual adjustments so that the evaluation contract could be worked out rather than strong debates about whether it should be worked out.

**Question 3—“What was the relation between the IFPRI evaluation and the evolution and sustainability of the *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* program? Were there dimensions of the program that might have developed differently or with different timing if IFPRI had not been involved?”**

Answering such a counterfactual question is difficult. But that IFPRI seemed to have a combination of characteristics that apparently made it attractive to *PROGRESA* for the initial

evaluation as discussed with regard to the answers to Question 2 means that there well may have been ways in which IFPRI contributed that the next-best alternative entity for the evaluation may not have done as well.

The primary sources for answering this question, again, are the interviews, but supplemented by other sources such as the Brookings Institute (2007) transcript of a press conference on Levy's 2006 book, Levy's (2006) book itself, the Inter-American Development Bank (2002) press release on funding the continuation of the program, a letter from the *PROGRESA* National Coordinator at the end of the evaluation Hernández (2000) to Haddad, and general summaries as well as specific examples of media reports.

These sources suggest that the answer to the question most likely is positive for reasons that mostly can be grouped into four categories that are discussed below.<sup>29</sup> Before turning to that discussion, however, it should be noted that a subset of respondents (e.g., Attanasio 2007, Davis 2007, Gertler 2007, Parker 2007) expressed some ambivalence about how to know what the nature of the IFPRI contributions were and the difficulties of knowing whether some alternative entity could have contributed as much as did IFPRI.<sup>30</sup>

### **Short-Run Sustainability and Expansion of Program**

Almost half (14 out of 33 who responded to this question) of the interviews emphasized that IFPRI played an important role in this regard, as does Hernández (2000) in his thank-you letter to IFPRI at the conclusion of the evaluation. The program impact assessments were available in English and Spanish in a timely fashion for critical governmental debates, reflecting in part the effectiveness of the IFPRI evaluation project management. The evaluations themselves apparently were effective in these political areas because they were viewed as produced by objective researchers who were not captive to Mexican or other national interests or to international multilateral lending agency and structural adjustment interests (Levy's comments in Brookings Institute 2007). The research, moreover, came from an institution known for good policy-related research, enhanced by the active participation of leading academic economists. There also was considerable media attention, including positive assessment in such prominent venues as the BBC (Egan 1999), *Business Week* (Becker 1999), and the *Wall Street Journal* (Friedland 1999) noted above, that probably enhanced the credibility of the evaluation among relevant parties in Mexico. The credibility was further enhanced by international organizations, particularly the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, expanding their

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<sup>29</sup> In addition, there are some other possible benefits mentioned by a few of the interviewees. For example, Hernández (2007) refers to an explicit informal training function from discussing options with the IFPRI evaluation team. In his comments on this paper at the IFPRI conference on November 6, 2007, Santiago Levy also emphasized this informal training function, as well as that the engagement of the IFPRI team in the evaluation of *PROGRESA* enhanced in the views of Mexican policymakers and analysts the importance of serious evaluation.

<sup>30</sup> Gertler's (2007) states that "I think that there were a number of firms that could have done just as good a job as IFPRI." But he distinguished between permanent IFPRI staff and those hired for the evaluation (e.g., Behrman, Gertler, Parker, Schultz, Skoufias, Todd), and suggested that significant contributions were made by the latter earlier in the evaluation (as well as by some permanent IFPRI staff such as Hoddinott but with more of a lag). In contrast, in the present paper I include in the IFPRI evaluation team both permanent staff and short-term staff involved in the evaluation. It is not clear that Gertler would make the same comment were he to use this broader definition of the IFPRI evaluation team.

emphasis on policy evaluation and expanding their support of conditional cash transfer programs, often with explicit reference to the IFPRI-*PROGRESA* model. For example, the World Bank 2000 *Handbook* for poverty program evaluation practitioners authored by Baker (2000) includes a case study on the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA* with explicit reference to the evaluation being carried out by IFPRI (including mention of some members of the evaluation team such as **Haddad, Hoddinott, Quisumbing, Ruel, Behrman, Gertler, and Schultz**). In addition to the contribution of the IFPRI evaluation team to the credibility and objectiveness of the evaluation, some team members talked directly with key persons in the government (e.g., Hernández 2000 thanks the team, particularly **Skoufias**, for this role) and others engaged in preparing reports that were useful for *PROGRESA*. Handa (2007) gives an example of the latter; Davis and he collaborated with *PROGRESA* staff to write a paper that reflected the social gains in Mexico that had been ignored or downplayed in a World Bank report on Mexican poverty.<sup>31</sup>

## **Evaluation Details**

### ***Improved Survey Instruments***

Two of the interviewees, Coady (2007) and Hoddinott (2007), emphasize the IFPRI contribution to improved survey instruments. Coady states: “I think the IFPRI team ... played a crucial role in determining the questions used to elicit information from households. Earlier mistakes/vagueness in survey questions were probably eliminated and other questions refined. Much of this is very topic specific: e.g., one needs to know the best/accepted practice for eliciting health and nutrition information from households.” Hoddinott suggests that substantial IFPRI redesign of surveys probably enriched the evaluation data that were collected and therefore possibilities for analysis. He elaborates: “One of IFPRI's less well-known contributions to the *PROGRESA* evaluation was work done to re-design the household and community questionnaires. The re-design of the household questionnaire was extensive and resulted in a more detailed consumption module, a much better design of questions surrounding income generation as well as additional work on other topics such as households' interactions with *PROGRESA* and their exposure to shocks. Some of these improvements directly helped *PROGRESA* (for example, information on whether there were long waits at health clinics), some informed the initial evaluation of *PROGRESA* (for example, it would not have been possible to discern the impact of *PROGRESA* on diet quality if we had not re-designed the survey) and some were used later by other researchers to uncover impacts of *PROGRESA* (on income generation, see work by Paul Gertler and on mitigating the effect of shocks, see the work by de Janvry and Sadoulet) that were not originally envisaged in the evaluation design.”

### ***Helped Preserve Baseline and Control Data and Reinforced Commitment to Evaluation***

Both López (2007) and Coady (2007) emphasize this contribution. Though the evaluation contract had not been signed at the time that baseline data collection was initiated in March 1998, according to López (2007) IFPRI involvement facilitated a resolution in which the baseline data were collected before program initiation despite great pressures to commence the

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<sup>31</sup> Jim Ryan has suggested that these experiences reinforce the lessons learned from other PORIA studies, as highlighted in Ryan and Garrett (2005).

program in the treatment communities: “I recall that there was a lot of pressure for the starting of the Program, and it was suggested to start without having data for base line, however due to the IFPRI’s team commitment, the work was accelerated and this situation was solved, otherwise a contaminated evaluation could be the outcome.” Coady (2007) makes related points: “I think the IFPRI team helped to reinforce the commitment of the Progresa team to stick to the control/treatment evaluation design .... I think that IFPRI played a key role in ensuring that Progresa maintained committed to the conditionality of transfers and thus to the integrity of both the program objectives and the designed evaluation strategy. Although Progresa realized this, hearing it from IFPRI time and again helped to reinforce this message and thus encourage Progresa to “stick to its guns”. There was continuous political pressure to drop conditionality as well as to include control localities. IFPRI hierarchy ... love to point to “impact”. However, I always thought this was too ambitious and even naive or arrogant. Progresa was already committed to the program design and evaluation design (although IFPRI maybe helped improve the latter) and IFPRI’s role was to support and reinforce this commitment.”

## **Program Modification**

### ***Improved Operations, Targeting, Exit Rules***

Seven of the interviewees stated that IFPRI helped to improve operations, targeting and exit rules. Adato (2007), for example, states that she has heard that targeting and densification (program extension through changing the eligibility criteria) were influenced by Adato (2000) and Adato, Coady, and Ruel (2000)—and Maluccio (2007) gave a similar observation. Though some of the densification was underway before these reports were finalized, the findings had emerged earlier and also reinforced the concerns. Adato also reported hearing that these same reports—that discussed transparency and participation issues—may have contributed to more attention to this in *Oportunidades* (e.g., in which program clients can provide feedback on computers). Handa (2007), Regalia (2007), and Skoufias (2007) also suggested that the targeting method and the cutoff point (related to densification) probably were affected by the evaluation in a way that resulted in more uniform identification of poor across regions rather than assuming similar proportions across regions. Handa further suggested that the original exit rule of three years was relaxed in part because of the evaluation team’s arguments that that was not long enough for a human capital investment program. In addition to the interviews, Levy (2006, pp. 54–55) refers to the evaluations uncovering two serious problems with regard to child nutrition, one of which being “persistent deficiencies in the regular distribution and proper consumption of nutritional supplements” and cites one of the IFPRI evaluation studies (Behrman and Hoddinott 2000) as one of two sources.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Expansion beyond Small Rural Communities***

Four of the interviewees emphasized that the credibility, as well as the positive nature, of the IFPRI evaluation was important in assuring political support not only for sustaining, but expanding the program. López (2007), for example, concludes: “The very first evaluations

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<sup>32</sup> The other problem has to do with inadequacies in the formula for supplements to deal with anemia, but the IFPRI evaluation did not deal with this issue. Instead, it was covered by the *Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública* investigation of nutrition.

carried out by IFPRI team, not only were crucial, useful in order to transcend from one administration to another, but also to prove the convenience of the Programme expansion, and in order to establish the basis for adjustments in its operation.”

### ***Extended Schooling CCT to High School***

Six of the interviewees emphasized the importance of the evaluation in the decision to extend the school transfer program through high school. Levy (2006, p. 60), for example, states that “[i]n light of these results [including **Schultz** 2000a,b from the IFPRI evaluation among others] and of the higher rates of return for students who finish high school, **Skoufias** (2000) suggested extending education grants to this level and linking them to academic performance. That suggestion led program officials to add three additional years of education grants as of 2001, although they were not linked to performance.”

### **Longer-Run Sustainability and Expansion**

A substantial majority of those interviewed (25 out of 33 in Table 5), as well as other sources (e.g., Levy 2006, *The Economist* 2005) emphasized that the IFPRI evaluation played an important role in the program being sustained and expanded when not only was a new president elected (Vicente Fox) but for the first time in seven decades PRI lost the election.<sup>33</sup> The basic reasons that the IFPRI evaluation may have influenced that longer-run sustainability and expansion are the same as those for the sustainability and the expansion of the program within the Zedillo administration discussed above under point 1—the IFPRI participation in the evaluation enhanced the evaluation process in a technical sense and gave it added credibility both in Mexico and internationally (which fed back into added credibility in Mexico). As Friedland (1999, p. 1) noted in the *Wall Street Journal* less than a year before the election, if *PROGRESA* survived the election, “that would be a first in Mexico. Despite the fact that every Mexican president for decades has come from the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, each has retooled social-welfare policy upon entering office. The presidents usually have done this more out of a desire to take credit for the aid than to improve its effectiveness.” Orozco (2007) states that Hernández and Levy played important roles in educating the new government about the program using the evaluation results to help make their case, but also “IFPRI and individual researchers contributed enormously to communicate and develop the second stage” of the evaluation under the new Fox government.

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<sup>33</sup> Ryan (2007) has suggested that, in this regard (as well as perhaps in some others), the contrast to the experience with the Food for Education (FFE) program in Bangladesh might be instructive. He suggests that there are a number of parallels in the evolution of the FFE and *PROGRESA*, such as that both flowed from concerns about leakages in food subsidy programs that had been, documented in previous IFPRI research and that both apparently had relatively positive effects on schooling enrollments but more limited effects on nutrition. But in 2003, after ten years of operation, with a change in the Bangladesh government, FFE was replaced by a CCT program. Therefore, if the IFPRI evaluation of FFE increased the probability of the program surviving the changes in government, it did not do so sufficiently so that the program survived in contrast to the expansion of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* with the change in government in Mexico. Thus, positive IFPRI evaluations of FFE were not sufficient to assure the FFE program’s survival. Of course, it is possible, but beyond the scope of the present paper to investigate, that the positive IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* program illustrated advantages of CCT programs over in-kind programs and therefore accelerated the demise of FFE. See Ryan and Meng (2004) for an analysis of the contribution of IFPRI research and the IFPRI impact on the FEE program.

Levy (2006, pp. 112–113) states that “Two factors played a key role in the transition [from President Zedillo to President Fox . . . . First, the results of the first set of impact evaluations, made public after the presidential election (in July 2000) but before the change of administration (in December), were presented by officials of the outgoing administration directly to President-elect Fox and members of his transition team. Second, the positive opinions about the program held by international financial institutions, particularly the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank, gave Fox independent and credible confirmation of the information received from the officials of the outgoing administration. These factors probably made a decisive contribution to three key decisions made in December 2000: first, to continue the program; second, to incorporate 750,000 additional families in 2002; and third, to extend the education cash transfers for three more years to cover high school.”

Some evidence of the Inter-American Development Bank’s high evaluation of *PROGRESA* and of the IFPR evaluation of *PROGRESA* is available in the IDB (2002) press release of January 16, 2002 entitled “IDB Approves Its Largest-Ever Loan for Mexico: \$1 Billion for Expansion of the Progresa Poverty-Reduction Program: Resources To Consolidate Successful Mexican Program And Expand Coverage To Urban Areas.” If “money talks,” this \$1 Billion commitment says a lot. In addition the press release had high praise for the program and the evaluation: “Due to its innovative characteristics and its concrete means of attacking the problem of poverty, Progresa represents an experience that holds lessons for other countries in our region,” said IDB President Enrique V. Iglesias after the loan was approved . . . . Progresa is one of the few poverty-reduction programs that has been able to prove its impact on the levels of schooling of its beneficiaries, their use of health services, the quality and quantity of their food, and the reduction of child labor,” said the IDB project team leader, Carola Alvarez . . . . An independent assessment of Progresa carried out by the International Food Policy Research Institute concluded that the Mexican program is cost-effective, selects its target population appropriately and has positive impacts in the education, health and nutrition.”

**Bottom line:** Levy in a Brookings Institute (2007, p. 13) press conference was recorded as saying: “the International Food Policy Research Institute, played an important role, because a decision was made that the evaluations would not be carried out by the Mexican government, the evaluations would be carried out by an external agency, and that they had a free check to do with the results whatever they wanted to do . . . . It was a bit risky at that time, but we actually did want to know, is this working or is it not working, and if it’s not working, what should we correct. Evaluation has played an essential role in Progresa because it makes credible the fact that the program is working, not because a government official says it, but because the World Bank says it or the IDB says, but also because academics with no stake and no interest except for the actual pure academic work are also saying that the program is working. But it also helped us to change the program and to improve the program, because many issues were not solved from the beginning. And evaluation plays an essential role . . . .”

Hernández (2000), in his letter to Haddad at the end of the IFPRI evaluation project said: “On behalf of the National Coordination of . . . Progresa, I would like to express [to] you our deepest recognition for the outstanding job the groups of researchers from . . . IFPRI performed for the impact evaluation of Progresa. The robust and rigorous work of the researchers is of the greatest value to address key issues of the program and of Mexico’s social policy . . . . We have

had the opportunity to get the same recognition of the evaluation project both in Mexico and in other countries, and we are sure that it has become an example of how evaluation of social programs should be carried out .... I want to express my personal gratitude for having the unique opportunity of working with such a select group of experts in so many different areas of the social sciences. IFPRI performed with great responsibility and technical skills the very complex enterprise of evaluating ProgresA .... We appreciate all the professional contributions .... We also recognize all the helpful suggestions for the improvement of ProgresA. It has been gratifying to work with such a unique group of experts, full of innovative ideas that enhance the development of new projects and enrich the work of ProgresA.”

Thus, these two key persons in the development and implementation of *PROGRESA*, as well as most of those interviewed, international organizations and the more general media seem to agree that the IFPRI evaluation team did make a significant contribution probably beyond what might have occurred with some alternative evaluator for reasons that were anticipated in the selection of IFPRI (see Question 2 above). While it undoubtedly remains the case that the basic success of *PROGRESA* is due primarily to those in Mexico who developed, nurtured, and implemented the program, it also seems plausible that some small share of the credit—say, 5–10 percent—might be attributed to the IFPRI evaluation.

#### **Question 4—“What was the relation of IFPRI through *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* on other CCT programs and on other program evaluation efforts?”**

Answering this question, of course, involves the same challenge in identifying separately the IFPRI contribution from the *PROGRESA* contribution as is a challenge throughout this paper. In fact there probably were synergies, with the *PROGRESA* contribution probably enhanced and in some ways dependent upon the increased credibility and objectivity that the IFPRI evaluation brought to the interaction—and the IFPRI contribution probably enhanced by the substantial attention that *PROGRESA* attracted, particularly internationally. There also is the apparent reality that positive results tend to “sell” better than negative ones. That is, if the IFPRI evaluation had been equally good, but the results had been largely negative rather than largely positive, there probably would have been much less attention to the evaluation than there was—both internally to Mexico and internationally (which is relevant for Question 3 as well as Question 4).

The information basis for attempting to parcel out the IFPRI contribution once again includes responses of the interviewees (37 in this case, Table 6), as well as a number of documents, media reports, and other sources. The aspects in which the IFPRI involvement may have made a contribution beyond the project evaluation itself (Question 3) are summarized with regard to four possibilities.

#### **Subsequent IFPRI Activities**

About half of the interviewees placed some explicit emphasis on the fact that because of the *PROGRESA* evaluation, IFPRI had increased options, some of which were accepted (e.g., in Brazil, Honduras, Nicaragua, Turkey), to undertake other program evaluations in other



developing countries, primarily through the Inter-American Development Bank and secondarily through the World Bank. In the words of Birdsall (2007) (and echoed by some others) “Progresa helped put IFPRI on the map as the go-to place on CCTs.”<sup>34</sup> Presumably having an increased set of options was a good thing from the point of view of IFPRI. From a broader point of view, however, presumably the question is whether there have been social benefits to IFPRI’s greater involvement in evaluations. Such benefits might occur, for example, if there is important learning-from-experience or economies of scale so that IFPRI became a better provider of state-of-the-art evaluation services.

This might happen to a certain extent at the institutional level, but primarily would seem to happen at the level of individual researchers—which apparently did occur to a certain extent. Maluccio (2007), for example, states:

“First, there was substantial overlap of individuals working on Progresa—with RPS [Nicaragua]: Michelle **Adato** and Ben **Davis**; with PRAF [Honduras]: Dave **Coady** and Agnes **Quisumbing**. **Michelle** directed the social evaluation of RPS, building on her experience with Progresa ... **Davis** was outposted to Mexico and traveled to Nicaragua at the outset of the RPS evaluation, helping design initial questionnaires for enrollment into the program and proxy means tests that were ultimately used for household selection in household targeted areas. I believe the original approach here owed much to the design of Progresa .... Dave **Coady** influenced cost work done in Nicaragua, sharing his experience and expertise from the Progresa case. Second, IFPRI and program sponsored events (such as the external advisory committees for RPS and PRAF) permitted exchange of ideas and performance outcomes among researchers and program functionaries across these programs and to Progresa. One of these, held in Copan in 2001, involved much of the RPS and PRAF teams, as well as Agnes from the IFPRI–Progresa team. Many of the IFPRI evaluation reports ... were used as templates for work done in Nicaragua. In general, the successful example of the Progresa evaluation seems to have made the use of experimental design more feasible in the other evaluations as well as making it advisable so that rigorous evidence would be available.” (Bold added.)

Haddad (2007) adds the important point that in Honduras and Nicaragua IFPRI “probably had a bigger impact on the design and implementation of those programmes, given the weaker capacity of the government’s own analysts (the Mexicans were very good). In Brazil, we had an IFPRI staff member based in Brasilia and this helped in influencing decisions.”

Thus, there almost surely was a gain from IFPRI’s perspective of having a wider set of options due to the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation experience. There also may have been some broader social gain because of the expertise that IFPRI, primarily individual researchers, had obtained that they could transfer to other contexts. However, it appears that only a small proportion of the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation team participated in these other IFPRI evaluations, so this gain was more limited than it might have been. Finally, there may have been

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<sup>34</sup> John Hoddinott, in his discussion at the IFPRI meeting of November 6, 2007 suggested, however, that the IFPRI follow-up was limited and mostly passive in the sense of responding to, but not seeking out, follow-up options.

social gains from having IFPRI undertake more such evaluations for the some of the same reasons discussed above with regard to Question 2—namely because the evaluations had more credibility coming from a relatively disinterested and objective international organization that was not viewed as captive of either national interests nor of interests of major international lending agencies.

### **Policy Evaluation in Mexico**

Over a quarter of the interviewees emphasized that the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation experience helped to change the culture of policy evaluation in Mexico so that objective scientific efforts at policy evaluation became much more important and much more common. This became formalized with the establishment of CONEVAL (Consejo Nacional de Evaluación) in 2006, with the purpose of setting the norms with which all social policy and programs with operational rules must be evaluated and assuring that all projects are evaluated annually with a clear specification of objectives, targets and impacts. To the extent that IFPRI's participation in the *PROGRESA* evaluation increased the credibility of the evaluation and the visibility of the evaluation as suggested above, then it contributed to this move towards more systematic policy evaluations in Mexico.

### **Policy Evaluation Internationally:**

About half of the interviewees suggested that an important contribution of the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation experience was to enhance policy evaluation internationally. In particular it provided an example that serious policy evaluation could be undertaken on important large scale programs, not just at a relatively small scale under the auspices of local NGOs as, for example, has dominated much of the recent economics literature on evaluations. The IFPRI contribution to this impact is related intimately with characteristics related to why IFPRI was selected to undertake this evaluation: an international organization not thought to be captive to particular national or international interests with a reputation for objective scientific social science policy-related research that could involve prominent academics in the analysis. These factors made the evaluation not be easily discounted as results that were obtained by interested parties to satisfy the client nor results that were relegated to reports that would languish in obscurity, as Levine (2007) notes. Some indicators that IFPRI has been widely perceived to contribute to the international culture on policy environment, and not just the *PROGRESA* experience independent of IFPRI, include:

- a. The World Bank website has a section on Impact Evaluation (and the related Development IMPact Evaluation (DIME) initiative, a World Bank-led effort involving thematic networks and regional units under the guidance of the Bank's Chief Economist), which refers to "Handbook" articles by Baker (2000) and Ravallion (2007) for methodological discussions. The former, as noted above, uses the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation as an explicit case example with direct reference to the IFPRI evaluation. The latter refers to at least four papers that are based on the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation (the 2002 version of **Behrman**, Sengupta and **Todd** 2005, **Gertler** 2004, **Schultz** 2004, **Skoufias** 2005).

- b. The Center for Global Development (2007) is taking the lead on the establishment of *The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3IE)* with founding members including the Mexican Ministries of Health and Education, Ugandan Ministry of Finance, UK Department for International Development, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Canadian International Development Agency, African Development Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The basic background document for this initiative is a report by the CGD Evaluation Gap Working Group (Savedoff, Levine and Birdsall 2006), which highlights among developing country evaluations the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation (though without explicit reference to IFPRI):

“Good evaluations do happen, and when they are disseminated, they stand out .... The evaluation of Mexico’s conditional cash transfer program, *Progres/Oportunidades*, has influenced the design of similar programs throughout the world (Morley and Coady 2003). It is striking, in fact, that the few impact evaluations that are widely recognized as adhering to good methodological standards are cited repeatedly and serve as highly visible reference points for our understanding of the impact of social programs.”  
(p. 18)

The impact evaluation of *Progres* in the mid-1990s is widely credited with preserving that social program in the transition to an opposition administration (the program was retained and expanded, and the name was changed to *Oportunidades*). Furthermore, the *Progres* evaluation influenced the adoption of similar conditional cash transfer programs in many other countries (Morley and Coady 2003). (p. 26)

This report also refers explicitly to five studies authored or co-authored by IFPRI *PROGRESA* team members that build on the evaluation analysis (Buddlemeyer and **Skoufias** 2003, Díaz and **Handa** 2004, **Gertler** 2004, Morley and **Coady** 2003, **Todd** and Wolpin 2004).

- c. Another very visible locus of increasing academic research on impact evaluation has been at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Duflo, Glennerster and Kremer (2007) (Duflo and Kremer are major participants in this enterprise and well-known professors of economics at MIT and Harvard, respectively) have written a “toolkit” on “Using Randomization in Development Economics Research.” In this toolkit they refer to *PROGRESA* and its evaluation 20 times. They state “The task of evaluating the program was given to academic researchers through the International Food Policy Research Institute. The data was (sic) made accessible to many different people, and a number of papers have been written on its impact (most of them are accessible on the IFPRI Web site). The evaluations showed that it was effective in improving health and education [see in particular **Gertler** and Boyce (2001) and **Schultz** (2004)]. The *PROGRESA* pilot had an impressive demonstration effect. The program was continued and expanded in Mexico despite the subsequent change in government, and expanded in many other Latin American countries, often including a randomized pilot component” (p. 20, bold added). They also

cite five studies on *PROGRESA* authored or co-authored by members of the IFPRI evaluation team (Buddlemeyer and Skoufias 2003, Díaz and Handa 2006, Gertler and Boyce 2001, Parker, Rubalcalva and Teruel 2007, Schultz 2004), as well as several studies undertaken at IFPRI on subsequent evaluations of CCTs.

- d. There also are a number of media reports, some of the more visible of which have been mentioned above, that link the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation or members of the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation team and the importance of evaluation (e.g., Krueger 2002, *The Economist* 2005). In addition, as also noted above, there are a substantial number of hits on Google and Google Scholar to *PROGRESA* & IFPRI (or International Food Policy Research Institute).

### **CCT Programs Internationally**

Five of the interviewees suggested that the IFPRI participation in the *PROGRESA* evaluation increased the dissemination of the idea of CCT programs internationally, and many of the others who placed emphasis on its effect on the international diffusion of enthusiasm for policy evaluation alluded to the link of such evaluations with CCTs. That IFPRI was perceived to be an objective and known entity in the international community almost surely increased the broad receptivity to the results about the Mexican policy, with probable reinforcement from the inclusion of several well-known academic researchers on the evaluation team. Lustig (2007), for example, suggested that that IFPRI had undertaken the *PROGRESA* evaluation probably gave the evaluation greater credibility for the advocates of expanded CCT programs in debates within the Inter-American Development Bank. Some indicators that the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA* on policy evaluation more generally enhanced interest in CCT programs also is provided by the following examples:

- a. The Inter-American Development Bank (2003) report on “A New Generation of Social Programs” reviews CCTs and evaluation methods and then features the “pioneering” *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* with explicit reference to the IFPRI evaluation: “The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) conducted an independent evaluation of the original *Oportunidades* when it only covered rural areas that provided convincing evidence of a major shift in Mexico’s poverty alleviation programs. In spite of the politically charged environment, the evaluation generated independent and credible measures of program impact that contributed significantly to the continuation of the program despite a change of government in Mexico. The evaluation provided valuable information on the program’s outcomes but it also left some important issues outstanding.”
- b. Two economists at the World Bank, Rawlings and Rubio (2005), published a paper on “Evaluating the Impact of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs” in the *World Bank Research Observer*. Almost half (15 of the 33 references) in this paper are to IFPRI studies, all but one of which were written as part of the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation. The World Bank, as noted above, is featuring CCTs in one of their flagship *Policy Research Reports* (Fiszbein and Schady 2008). Though drafts are not available yet by which to judge the extent to which the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation will be emphasized,

it received considerable attention in the preliminary material and discussions for this volume. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee for this project includes among its seven members three people associated with the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation—**Behrman** and **Gertler** from the IFPRI evaluation team and **Levy**—plus a fourth researcher (Attanasio) involved in the subsequent *Oportunidades* evaluation. In addition **Skoufias**, Head of the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation team, is a contributing author to the volume.

- c. The Center for Global Development under the leadership of Levine et al. (2004, 2007) has published two volumes on *Millions Saved: Proven Successes in Public Health* that have been quite visible. One of the case studies in both is on “Improving the Health of the Poor in Mexico,” which summarizes some of the *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* impact evaluation results, has eight of the 15 references to IFPRI evaluation studies and includes a box on “The Progresa Evaluation” that explicitly describes the role of IFPRI.
- d. The United States National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2005) panel on Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries in preparation for their report went to Mexico and met with Santiago Levy to discuss *PROGRESA*, has a box (pp. 126–127) on “*PROGRESA*: The Effect of School Subsidies for the Poor on Enrollment” that states explicitly that IFPRI was involved in an extensive evaluation, and cites six IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation studies (**Behrman**, Sengupta, and **Todd** 2000, 2002; **Schultz** 2004; **Skoufias** 2001, **Skoufias** and McClafferty 2001, **Skoufias** and **Parker** 2001, **Skoufias** and **Parker** forthcoming).
- e. The Copenhagen Consensus and the Inter-American Development Bank hosted the *Consulta de San José*, Costa Rica (October 21–25, 2007) at which a group of “renowned economists” prioritized lists of 44 programs among 10 problem areas (education, violence and crime, poverty and inequality, fiscal policy, democracy, infrastructure, forests and biodiversity, employment, public institutions, and health) in response to the hypothetical question, “If Latin American and Caribbean governments had \$10 billion to solve their most urgent problems, how should they spend it?” (Inter-American Development Bank 2007). The economists ranked CCT programs fifth out of the 44 programs, suggesting that they importantly could help address problems related to education, violence and crime, poverty and inequality, and health). The 10 papers written by experts on the underlying problems have in their bibliographies 32 papers authored or co-authored (in some cases multiple references in papers on different topics to the same IFPRI-projected related paper, such as **Schultz** 2004) by members of the IFPRI evaluation team and based at least in part on their evaluation studies, including *inter alia* **Adato** (2000); **Behrman** and **Hoddinott** (2000, 2005); **Behrman**, **Parker**, and **Todd** (2007a, 2008); **Behrman**, Sengupta, and **Todd** (2000, 2002, 2005); **Caldés**, **Coady**, and **Maluccio** (2006); **Coady** (2000, 2006); **Coady**, **Grosh**, and **Hoddinott** (2004); **Coady** and **Harris** (2004); **Gertler** (2000, 2004); **Hoddinott** and **Skoufias** (2000); **Parker** and **Skoufias** (2000); **Parker**, **Todd**, and **Wolpin** (2006); **Schultz** (2000a,b, 2004); **Skoufias** (2005); and **Teruel** and **Davis** (2000).
- f. **Lagarde**, **Haines** and **Palmer** (2007) review the literature on CCTs for improving health in developing countries in a very visible *Journal of the American Medical Association*

article. Among the 28 studies that they cite with named authors, seven studies involving seven members of the IFPRI evaluation team were part of or built substantially on the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation (**Behrman** and **Hoddinott** 2001, 2005; **Behrman** and **Todd** 1999; **Gertler** 2000, 2004; **Hoddinott** and **Skoufias** 2004; **Handa** and **Davis** 2006) and another is the survey by Rawlings and Rubio (2005) that (as noted above) draws heavily on the IFPRI *PROGRESA* evaluation.

**Bottom line:** It seems clear that there have been substantial spillover effects on the culture of policy evaluation in general and on CCTs in particular, both in Mexico and internationally, of the evaluation of *PROGRESA*. And it seems that some significant share of that, probably 10–15 percent, arguably might be due to IFPRI being engaged in the evaluation because that involvement probably added considerably to both the Mexican domestic and the international awareness of and receptivity to the what had been learned about evaluation processes and what had been learned about CCTs through the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA*.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Another spillover probably was to the general academic literature on economic development, for which a number of studies beyond those directly related to the evaluation have been undertaken using the *PROGRESA* data (as is reflected in part in the number of hits on Google Scholar in Table 3). This possibility is not included in this discussion of spillovers with regard to evaluation and CCTs, but nevertheless may have been important from a broader perspective than that addressed in this paper. And arguably the IFPRI participation in the evaluation increased such studies by increasing the international and academic visibility of *PROGRESA* and the related data. The broader use of the data also increased the number of independent studies of the program, which probably helped to assure more accurate knowledge of the program's effects and reduced the risk of at least the broader evaluation including such studies in addition to those by the IFPRI evaluation team being "captured" by those with vested interests in particular outcomes (the danger of such "evaluation capture" was discussed within a more general framework by Santiago Levy in his comments at the IFPRI conference on impact evaluation of 6 November 2007).

## 6. Conclusions and Simulated Benefit-Cost Ratios

The evidence summarized in Section 5 suggests that IFPRI probably did have an important significant impact on the direct and indirect outcomes of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, even if this impact may have been a small percentage of the total impact of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*. There apparently were significant gains from having an international organization undertake the initial *PROGRESA* evaluation that was not viewed as captive to national or international interests and that had a reputation of undertaking objective policy-related research that may have been enhanced by the involvement of several fairly visible academics.

I now turn to some simulations to attempt to obtain even a crude handle on what the benefit-to-cost ratios for IFPRI's evaluation might have been in quantitative terms, based on the discussion above.<sup>36,37</sup> For these simulations, benefits and costs are discounted back to 1998 for comparability. Table 7 summarizes these simulations. This table is divided into five parts:

- I. **Impact ONLY through reducing delays in program implementation:** The discussion about Question 3 above suggests that this effect might be important, both because of technical advice obtained from IFPRI and because the increased credibility of evaluation studies by IFPRI (as opposed to feasible alternatives) helped facilitate political agreement for program expansion. In the conservative assumptions in Table 7 this effect is assumed to be that program expansion was three months faster in 1998–2000 than it would have been had IFPRI not been involved in the evaluation.<sup>38</sup> The sensitivity of the simulations to more moderate assumptions that (a) the delay would have been 0.5 years and (b) the delay would have continued for a few years after 2000 until 5.0 million students were beneficiaries (the apparent steady state in Table 1) without IFPRI's involvement are both explored.<sup>39</sup>
- II. **Impact ONLY through improving evaluation and program details and informal training:** The discussion about Question 3 above also suggests that the IFPRI evaluation team helped to improve the evaluation design, improve the program and engage in

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<sup>36</sup> The estimates in Table 7, of course, are *ex post* estimates. And they probably are conditional, as noted above, on *PROGRESA* apparently being a good program so that the evaluation results are positive. In the counterfactual in which it was not a good program, IFPRI may have had equal contributions to the quality of the evaluation, but the whole exercise might have seemed much less effective. Presumably, for example, there would not have been the spillover effects nearly to the degree as apparently occurred. But, if the evaluation was viewed as credible and as a result of the evaluation the program had been modified or abandoned, the resource savings may have still implied the benefits of the IFPRI evaluation outweighed the costs.

<sup>37</sup> I thank Jock Anderson, Alderman (2007), and members of the SPIA/PORIA committee (particularly Ryan 2007), for useful suggestions regarding how to approach these estimates.

<sup>38</sup> Table 1 gives the expansion of number of family beneficiaries and of student beneficiaries. These simulations assume that this expansion would have been delayed by the amounts indicated in the text under the additional assumption that for 1997–1999 the number of student beneficiaries was equal to the number of family beneficiaries (as appears to be approximately the case for 2000–2006).

<sup>39</sup> The idea behind the latter is that the more rapid expansion path facilitated by IFPRI's involvement continued until the program reached its apparently stable enrollment level at about 5.0 million student beneficiaries in 2004.

informal training through interacting with the *PROGRESA* team. In the conservative assumptions in Table 7 this effect is assumed to account for 0.03 of the present discounted value of the *PROGRESA* benefits for the 1998–2000 period. The sensitivity of the simulations to more moderate assumptions that (a) the effect was 0.06 instead of 0.03 and (b) the effect continued on until 2006 through the Fox presidential administration are both explored.

- III. **Impact ONLY through increasing the probability of program continuation after the election of 2000:** The discussion about Question 3 above suggests that this effect might be important, again both because of technical advice obtained from IFPRI and because the increased credibility of evaluation studies by IFPRI (as opposed to feasible alternatives) helped facilitate political agreement for program continuation. In the conservative assumptions in Table 7 this effect is assumed to be that program continuation for 2000 through 2012 was 0.05 more probable because of IFPRI's involvement in the initial evaluation than it would have been if some other feasible entity had undertaken the evaluation. The sensitivity of the simulations to more moderate assumptions that (a) the impact of IFPRI on the continuation probability was 0.10 and (b) the impact on this probability continued through two more presidential administrations until 2024 are both explored.
- IV. **Impact ONLY through spillovers:** The discussion about Question 4 above suggests that this effect might be important, once again both because of technical advice obtained from IFPRI and because the increased credibility of evaluation studies by IFPRI (as opposed to feasible alternatives) helped facilitate dissemination knowledge of and advocacy for CCTs modeled on *PROGRESA*. In the conservative assumptions in Table 7, this effect is assumed to be that the spillover impact of *PROGRESA* was equal to 0.25 of the present discounted net program benefits (i.e., net of program resource costs) at the start of 1998 for the 1997–2000 period and that IFPRI's involvement in the initial evaluation accounted for 0.10 of this spillover (or  $0.025 = 0.10 \times 0.25$  of the PDV of the net program benefits).<sup>40</sup> The sensitivity of the simulations to more moderate assumptions that the spillover impact of *PROGRESA* was equal to 0.50 of the present discounted net program benefits or that IFPRI's involvement in the initial evaluation accounted for 0.20 of this spillover is explored.
- V. **Impact through ALL four of these channels:** Because the four groups of simulations just described each assume that in turn there is only one impact for the total resource costs for IFPRI's involvement, the total impacts of all four is the sum of the impacts of the four individual cases.

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<sup>40</sup> My perception of the sense of at least some of those at the IFPRI workshop in “Impact Assessment” on November 6, 2007 as well as of Alderman (2007) is that, in light of the considerable international attention that *PROGRESA* and the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA* has received regarding policy evaluation and CCTs that is discussed above, as well as the contribution to the scholarly literature on development that is reflected in part in the citations to Google Scholar noted in Table 3, is that this is probably a very conservative assumption (and possibly the most conservative assumption underlying Table 7).



The other critical assumptions are also conservative (though, again, with exploration of moderate assumptions):

1. The direct benefits per child from *PROGRESA* are those indicated in Table 2 for the schooling component for a 6 percent rate of return to schooling (the lowest rate included in that table) and an impact of 0.83 grades (the lower impact considered in that table). For the moderate case, a 8 percent rate of return to schooling (the middle rate included in that table) is assumed.
2. The discount rate is assumed to be 5 percent for the conservative case. For the moderate case a 3-percent discount rate is assumed.
3. Other returns such as the return to improved infant nutrition that Behrman and Hoddinott (2005) estimate to increase the present discounted value of life-time earnings by 2.9 percent are not included in the conservative assumptions. For the moderate case this effect is assumed to increase the earnings/productivity returns by a fifth (a multiplicative factor of 1.2)
4. The total number of children who benefited after 2006 is assumed to be about five million per year under the assumption that there is no further expansion of student beneficiaries beyond the levels experienced in 2004–06 (Table 1).
5. Because it is not clear how to measure the resource costs of the IFPRI contribution to the environment in which *PROGRESA* was developed (Question 1), even though IFPRI seems to have made a real contribution at this stage, it is not included in the benefits for the purpose of these simulations.
6. The real resource cost of IFPRI's involvement is assumed to be the contractual payment to IFPRI for the evaluation plus some direct core funds that IFPRI paid for preparation of the application for the contract with a 25 percent addition for the distortion costs of raising these funds, with the assumption that these costs were spread evenly over 1998–2000 for the discounting, for the conservative case.<sup>41</sup> This assumption about costs is a conservative assumption again because it assumes that if IFPRI had not undertaken the evaluation so the gains due to IFPRI's participation that are discussed in Questions 1, 2, and 4 had not been realized and some other entity had undertaken the evaluation, the resources saved from IFPRI not participating would have been the entire IFPRI costs—implying that the costs of the other entity undertaking the evaluation would have been zero. It also is conservative in that it assumes that costs were as large in 1998 as in the following two years even though the contract for project was only signed in the third quarter of 1998. For the moderate case it is assumed that the additional marginal cost of IFPRI above that that would have been required for whatever alternative evaluator would

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<sup>41</sup> See note 11 above.

have undertaken the evaluation if IFPRI had not done so would have been 50 percent of the resource costs instead of 100 percent.<sup>42, 43</sup>

The first four panels of Table 7 present in the first row the conservative estimates, in the subsequent rows alternative estimates in which one at a time more moderate assumptions are made, and in the last row simulated estimates with all the moderate assumptions. The fifth panel only presents the conservative estimates and the estimates with all the moderate assumptions.

The benefit-cost ratio estimates obviously are sensitive to the assumptions that are made regarding such matters as the discount rate and the rate of return to schooling because the estimated benefits are obtained over the future working life time of students who are in school when they are program beneficiaries. They also are sensitive to the particular assumptions regarding the four impacts considered—how much and for how long IFPRI’s involvement accelerated program expansion, how much and for how long IFPRI’s involvement increased the quality of the evaluation and improved details of the program as well as provided informal training, how much and for how long IFPRI’s involvement increased the probability of program continuation after the 2000 election, and how big and for how long have been the spillovers and what share of them can be attributed to IFPRI’s involvement.

But even under the most conservative assumptions made here, the benefit-cost ratio estimates suggest that the benefits were high relative to the resource costs of the IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA* for each of the four types of benefits considered. These simulated effects are greatest under the assumptions of this table for the increase in the probability of program continuation after the 2000 election, secondly for the acceleration of enrollment, thirdly

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<sup>42</sup> John Hoddinott suggested in his discussion of this paper at the IFPRI conference of November 6, 2007 that actual resources devoted to the IFPRI evaluation probably were greater than covered by the contractual relation with *PROGRESA* because he perceived that the evaluation team members devoted more-than-contracted time and effort to the project, perhaps in part because of the excitement of the project, squeezing the time out of other professional and personal activities. While this may be a somewhat offsetting consideration, it still would seem likely that the “conservative” estimate of the real resource cost of using IFPRI versus some unnamed counterfactual evaluator used in these simulations is, if anything, an overstatement of the additional real resource costs due to IFPRI doing the evaluation.

<sup>43</sup> The evaluation resource costs are assumed to be basically those agreed upon in the IFPRI-*PROGRESA* contract (with an adjustment cost for distortion due to raising the public resources used in the evaluation) independent of whether the program in fact expanded more or less rapidly than envisaged at the time that the terms of that contract were established. That is, the evaluation costs are assumed to be independent of the evolving scale of the program, though the estimated benefits did depend on the scale of the program. This raises a more general question about the relation between scale and evaluation costs and benefits. For a given degree of population heterogeneity, in some important respects many evaluation costs are likely to be about the same independent of the size of the population (e.g., the sample sizes to measure desired effect sizes at given significance and power levels are independent of the size of the population, as are likely to be some of the other resource costs of analyses of the evaluation data). To the extent that this is the case, there are likely to be scale economies in undertaking evaluations for programs that affect larger populations. But typically larger populations tend to be more heterogeneous and logistics and administrative arrangements for them are more complicated, which factors tend to work in the opposite direction. My intuition is that there probably are scale economies, but this exploring such a possibility is beyond the scope of the present study.

for the evaluation and programs improvements, and fourthly for the spillovers.<sup>44</sup> But these estimates suggest that any one of these effects in isolation would justify the program even under the conservative assumptions. The simulated benefit-cost ratios under the conservative assumptions, for example, are 4.9 for the spillovers alone and 5.8 for the evaluation and program improvements alone, and much bigger for the other two impacts alone. And the benefit-cost ratio is much larger if all four effects are considered—84.3 under the conservative assumptions. Moreover, if indeed, as I believe, the moderate assumptions generally are more plausible than the conservative one, then the benefits exceeded the costs by much more. The IFPRI evaluation of *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*, thus, apparently resulted in a substantial international public good with a high return on the resources used to undertake this evaluation.

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<sup>44</sup> But see note 40 above regarding that this simulation probably is based on the most conservative assumption. If the domestic Mexican and international spillovers were about as large as the direct Mexican benefits—which is not a crazy possibility—then, to illustrate, under the otherwise conservative assumptions this impact would be second rather than fourth among those considered in the table.

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Table 1—Number of PROGRESA/Oportunidades beneficiary families and students,  
1997–2006

Year	Number of Beneficiaries (Millions of Families)	Number of Beneficiaries (Millions of Students)
1997	0.3	..
1998	1.6	..
1999	2.3	..
2000	2.5	2.5
2001	3.1	2.3
2002	4.2	4.4
2003	4.2	4.6
2004	5.0	5.1
2005	5.0	5.3
2006	5.0	5.1

Source: *Oportunidades* (2007).



Table 2—Benefits and Costs of PROGRESA/Oportunidades Schooling Program

Impact = 1.0 Grades of School							
		Return to schooling					
		6%		8%		10%	
Discount rate	Costs	Benefits	B/C Ratio	Benefits	B/C Ratio	Benefits	B/C Ratio
3%	500	1801	3.60	2679	5.36	3557	7.11
5%	390	664	1.70	1082	2.77	1499	3.84
10%	215	27	0.13	233	1.08	438	2.04

  

Impact = 0.83 Grades of School							
		Return to schooling					
		6%		8%		10%	
Discount rate	Costs	Benefits	B/C Ratio	Benefits	B/C Ratio	Benefits	B/C Ratio
3%	500	1502	3.00	2231	4.46	2959	5.92
5%	390	556	1.43	903	2.32	1245	3.19
10%	215	28	0.13	198	0.92	363	1.69

Source: Behrman, Parker and Todd (2007a, Table 10), which provides details.

Table 3—Number of Google and Google Scholar hits for PROGRESA, PROGRESA & IFPRI, and PROGRESA & International Food Policy Research Institute (August 1, 2007)

Search for:	Google		Google Scholar	
	Number	% of first 50 relevant	Number	% of first 50 relevant
PROGRESA	1,420,000	82%	12,100	100%
PROGRESA & IFPRI	25,200	100%	755	100%
PROGRESA & International Food Policy Research Institute	44,900	100%	1,370	100%

Table 4—Summary of major reasons given for the selection of IFPRI to undertake the initial PROGRESA evaluation by interviewees

Respondent Group	1. Organizational type, Function, Ownership			2. Research Strength, Reputation, Credibility		3. Management Characteristics		
	1a	1b	1c	2a	2b	3a	3b	3c
Respondent Name	International organization	Not involved in structural adjustment or direct lending	Public ownership	Reputation for objective policy-related research on relevant topics	Capacity for engaging PROGRESA—Selected leading academic researchers	Administrative flexibility	Well-organized and capable of keeping to schedule	Relatively low cost
<b>Group 1—Involved at Start or Very Early in the Evaluation</b>								
<i>At or closely related to those at PROGRESA at the start or very early in the program</i>								
Daniel Hernandez				X		X		X
Maria de la Paz Lopez	X			X	XX	X	X	
Monica Orozco	X			X		X		
Susan Parker	X	X		X				
<i>Those elsewhere in Mexico who were extensively involved in the early stages of PROGRESA</i>								
Mario Luis Fuentes	XX							
Santiago Levy	X	X	X	X	XX			
Evelyne Rodriguez	X			X	XX		X	
Juan Rivera	X			X				
Ana Saniago	X			X				
<i>Inter-American Development Bank initial matchmaking</i>								
Nora Lustig	X	X		X				
Nancy Birdsall	X			X				
<i>IFPRI Staff at or near start of evaluation</i>								
Lawrence Haddad	X	X		X				
Emmanuel Skoufias				X	X	X		
Marie Ruel	X		X	X				
Michelle Adato	XX							
John Hoddinott	X	X		X				
Agnes Quisumbing	X	X		X	X	X		
David Coady	X			XX				
<i>IFPRI consultants for evaluation at or near start of evaluation</i>								
Paul Gertler				X	XX	X		
T. Paul Schultz	XX							
Petra Todd				X				X

Table 4—Summary of major reasons given for the selection of IFPRI to undertake the initial PROGRESA evaluation by interviewees

Respondent Group	1. Organizational type, Function, Ownership			2. Research Strengthen, Reputation, Credibility		3. Management Characteristics		
	1a	1b	1c	2a	2b	3a	3b	3c
Respondent Name	International organization	Not involved in structural adjustment or direct lending	Public ownership	Reputation for objective policy-related research on relevant topics	Capacity for engaging PROGRESA—Selected leading academic researchers	Administrative flexibility	Well-organized and capable of keeping to schedule	Relatively low cost
<b>Group 2—Involved in the Evaluation Later or Not Involved at All But Interested Observer</b>								
<i>PROGRESA/Oportunidades Staff</i>								
Illiana Yaschine	X			X				
<i>INSP evaluation team</i>								
Bernardo Hernandez	X			X	X			
Luis Rubalcalva	X			X				
<i>Other Mexican academics and government officials</i>								
Miguel Szekely	X			XX				
<i>IFPRI Staff added later to evaluation team, primarily working in Mexico, or working on other evaluation projects</i>								
Benjamin Davis				XX				
Rafael Flores				XX	X	X		
Sudhanshu Handa				X	XX			
Dan Levy	X	X		X				
Graciela Teruel	X			X				
Joachim von Braun				XX				
<i>Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, and Committee on Global Development staff involved in evaluations</i>								
Ariel Fiszbein				X				
Ruth Levine				X	X		X	

NB: This question was not addressed by several interviewees, including Attanasio, Maluccio, Regalia, Scott, and the anonymous interviewee. Appendix Table A.2 gives information about the positions that the interviewees who responded have held since 1994 and their relation, if any, to PROGRESA.

Table 5—Summary of major aspects of relation between the IFPRI evaluation and the evolution and sustainability of the PROGRESA/Oportunidades program according to interviewees

Respondent Group	2. Evaluation Details			3. Program Modification			4. Longer-run Program Sustainability and Expansion
	1. Short-run Program Sustainability and Expansion	2a	2b	3a	3b	3c	
Respondent name		Improved survey instruments	Helped preserve baseline and control data, reinforced commitment for evaluation	Improved operations, targeting, exit rules	Expansion beyond small rural communities	Extended schooling CCT to high school	
<b>Group 1—Involved at Start or Very Early in the Evaluation</b>							
<i>At or closely related to those at PROGRESA at the start or very early in the program</i>							
Daniel Hernandez							X
Maria de la Paz Lopez	X		X				X
Monica Orozco	X				X	X	X
Susan Parker	X						
<i>Those elsewhere in Mexico who were extensively involved in the early stages of PROGRESA</i>							
Santiago Levy	X					X	X
Evelyne Rodriguez	X						X
Juan Rivera							X
Ana Santiago	X						X
<i>Inter-American Development Bank initial matchmaking</i>							
Nora Lustig	X				X	X	X
Nancy Birdsall							X
<i>IFPRI staff at or near start of evaluation</i>							
Lawrence Haddad	X			X			
Emmanuel Skoufias	X			X		X	X
Marie Ruel							X
Michelle Adato				X	X		
John Hoddinott		X			X		
Agnes Quisumbing							X
David Coady		X	X				
<i>IFPRI consultants for evaluation at or near start of evaluation</i>							
Paul Gertler	X						
T. Paul Schultz							X
Petra Todd							X

Table 5—Summary of major aspects of relation between the IFPRI evaluation and the evolution and sustainability of the PROGRESA/Oportunidades program according to interviewees

Respondent Group	1. Short-run Program Sustainability and Expansion	2. Evaluation Details		3. Program Modification			4. Longer-run Program Sustainability and Expansion
		2a	2b	3a	3b	3c	
Respondent name		Improved survey instruments	Helped preserve baseline and control data, reinforced commitment for evaluation	Improved operations, targeting, exit rules	Expansion beyond small rural communities	Extended schooling CCT to high school	
<b>Group 2—Involved in the Evaluation Later or Not Involved at All But Interested Observer</b>							
<i>PROGRESA/Oportunidades staff</i>							
Illiana Yaschine	X			X			X
<i>INSP evaluation team</i>							
Orazio Attanasio							X
Lynette Neufeld	X						X
Bernardo Hernandez							X
Luis Rubalcalva	X						X
<i>Other Mexican academics and government officials</i>							
John Scott							X
Miguel Szekely							X
<i>IFPRI staff added later to evaluation team, primarily working in Mexico, or working on other evaluation projects</i>							
Rafael Flores							X
Sudhanshu Handa	X			X			
Dan Levy							X
John Maluccio				X			
<i>Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, and Committee on Global Development staff involved in evaluations</i>							
Ruth Levine							X
Ferdinando Regalia				X	X	X	X

NB: This question was not addressed by several interviewees, including Davis, Fiszbein, Fuentes, Teruel, von Braun, and the anonymous interviewee. Appendix Table A.2 gives information about the positions that the interviewees who responded have held since 1994 and their relation, if any, to PROGRESA.

Table 6—Spillovers of the IFPRI evaluation of the PROGRESA/Oportunidades program according to interviewees

Respondent Group Respondent Name	1. Subsequent IFPRI Activities	2. Policy Evaluation in Mexico	3. Evaluation Internationally	4. CCT Programs Internationally
<b>Group 1—Involved at Start or Very Early in the Evaluation</b>				
<i>At or closely related to those at PROGRESA at the start or very early in the program</i>				
Daniel Hernandez		X		
Maria de la Paz Lopez	X		X	
Monica Orozco			X	
Susan Parker	X			
<i>Those elsewhere in Mexico who were extensively involved in the early stages of PROGRESA</i>				
Mario Luis Fuentes		X	X	
Santiago Levy		X	X	X
Evelyne Rodriguez		X	X	
Juan Rivera			X	X
Ana Santiago				X
<i>Inter-American Development Bank initial matchmaking</i>				
Nora Lustig			X	X
Nancy Birdsall	X			
<i>IFPRI staff at or near start of evaluation</i>				
Lawrence Haddad	X		X	
Emmanuel Skoufias	X			
Marie Ruel	X			
Michelle Adato	X		X	
John Hoddinott			X	
Agnes Quisumbing	X		X	X
David Coady			X	
<i>IFPRI consultants for evaluation at or near start of evaluation</i>				
Paul Gertler			X	
T. Paul Schultz		X		
Petra Todd	X			

Table 6—Spillovers of the IFPRI evaluation of the PROGRESA/Oportunidades program according to interviewees

Respondent Group Respondent Name	1. Subsequent IFPRI Activities	2. Policy Evaluation in Mexico	3. Evaluation Internationally	4. CCT Programs Internationally
<b>Group 2—Involved in the Evaluation Later or Not Involved at All But Interested Observer</b>				
<i>PROGRESA/Oportunidades staff</i>				
Illiana Yaschine	X			
<i>INSP evaluation team</i>				
Orazio Attanasio	X			
Lynette Neufeld		X		
Bernardo Hernandez		X		
Luis Rubalcalva		X		
Graciela Teruel		X		
<i>Other Mexican academics and government officials</i>				
John Scott				
Miguel Szekely				
<i>IFPRI staff added later to evaluation team, primarily working in Mexico, or working on other evaluation projects or other activities</i>				
Benjamin Davis	X		X	
Rafael Flores	X		X	
Sudhanshu Handa	X			
Dan Levy		X	X	
John Maluccio	X		X	
Joachim von Braun	X			
<i>Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, and Committee on Global Development staff</i>				
Ruth Levine			X	X
Ferdinando Regalia	X			

NB: This question was not addressed by Fiszbein and the anonymous interviewee. Appendix Table A.2 gives information about the positions that the interviewees who responded have held since 1994 and their relation, if any, to PROGRESA.

Table 7—Benefit-cost ratios for IFPRI evaluation of PROGRESA under alternative assumptions

I. Impact ONLY Through Reducing Delays in Program Implementation							
	Variations in Some Key Assumptions						Benefit-cost ratio
	Delay in years if not for IFPRI	Delays relevant through	Rate of return to schooling	Discount rate	Health/nutrition effect	IFPRI marginal cost	
1. Conservative Assumptions	0.25	2000	6%	5%	No	100%	16.4
1a. Delay 0.50 years w/o IFPRI	0.50	2000	6%	5%	No	100%	26.9
1b. Delay relevant through 2006	0.25	2006	6%	5%	No	100%	32.4
1c. Schooling return 8%	0.25	2000	8%	5%	No	100%	50.7
1d. Discount rate 3%	0.25	2000	6%	3%	No	100%	101.9
1e. Health/nutrition effect	0.25	2000	6%	5%	Yes	100%	19.7
1f. IFPRI marginal cost 50%	0.25	2000	6%	5%	No	50%	32.8
2. Combined Moderate Assumptions	0.50	2006	8%	3%	Yes	50%	1733.0

  

II. Impact ONLY Through Improving Evaluation and Program Details and Informal Training							
	Variations in Some Key Assumptions						Benefit-cost ratio
	Share due to these effects	Effects continue until	Rate of return to schooling	Discount rate	Health/nutrition effect	IFPRI marginal cost	
1. Conservative Assumptions	0.03	2000	6%	5%	No	100%	5.8
1a. Share 0.06	0.06	2000	6%	5%	No	100%	11.7
1b. Benefits continue to 2006	0.03	2006	6%	5%	No	100%	24.4
1c. Schooling return 8%	0.03	2000	8%	5%	No	100%	18.1
1d. Discount rate 3%	0.03	2000	6%	3%	No	100%	36.6
1e. Health/nutrition effect	0.03	2000	6%	5%	Yes	100%	7.0
1f. IFPRI marginal cost 50%	0.03	2000	6%	5%	No	50%	11.7
2. Combined Moderate Assumptions	0.06	2006	8%	3%	Yes	50%	303.9

  

III. Impact ONLY Through Increasing Probability of Program Continuing After Election of 2000							
	Variations in Some Key Assumptions						Benefit-cost ratio
	Impact on probability of program continuing	Program continues until	Rate of return to schooling	Discount rate	Health/nutrition effect	IFPRI marginal cost	
1. Conservative Assumptions	0.05	2012	6%	5%	No	100%	57.1
1a. Impact on probability continuing 0.1	0.10	2012	6%	5%	No	100%	114.3
1b. Program continues to 2024	0.05	2024	6%	5%	No	100%	91.3
1c. Schooling return 8%	0.05	2012	8%	5%	No	100%	176.6
1d. Discount rate 3%	0.05	2012	6%	3%	No	100%	413.3
1e. Health/nutrition effect	0.05	2012	6%	5%	Yes	100%	68.6
1f. IFPRI marginal cost 50%	0.05	2012	6%	5%	No	50%	114.3
2. Combined Moderate Assumptions	0.10	2024	8%	3%	Yes	50%	5991.6



Table 7—Benefit-cost ratios for IFPRI evaluation of PROGRESA under alternative assumptions

IV. Impact ONLY Through Spillovers							
	Spillovers = 0.25 PDV, with IFPRI 0.10 of spillovers	Spillovers continue until	Rate of return to schooling	Discount rate	Health/nutrition effect	IFPRI marginal cost	Benefit-cost ratio
1. Conservative Assumptions	0.25, 0.10	2000	6%	5%	No	100%	4.9
1a. Spillover = 0.50 or IFPRI 0.20	0.50 or 0.20	2000	6%	5%	No	100%	9.7
1b. Spillover effects last thru 2006	0.25, 0.10	2006	6%	5%	No	100%	20.3
1c. Schooling return 8%	0.25, 0.10	2000	8%	5%	No	100%	15.0
1d. Discount rate 3%	0.25, 0.10	2000	6%	3%	No	100%	30.5
1e. Health/nutrition effect	0.25, 0.10	2000	6%	5%	Yes	100%	5.8
1f. IFPRI marginal cost 50%	0.25, 0.10	2000	6%	5%	No	50%	9.7
2. Combined Moderate Assumptions	0.50 or 0.20	2006	8%	3%	Yes	50%	1133.5

  

V. Impact with ALL Effects: Reduced Delays, Increased Probability of Surviving Election of 2000 AND Spillovers							
			Rate of return to schooling	Discount rate	Health/nutrition effect	IFPRI marginal cost	Benefit-cost ratio
1. Conservative Assumptions			6%	5%	No	100%	84.3
2. Moderate Assumptions			8%	3%	Yes	50%	9162.0

Note: The benefits from schooling are based on the estimates in Table 2 for an impact of 0.83 grades of schooling with the alternative discount rates and rates of return to schooling indicated there. The health/nutrition effect is assumed to increase the benefits by 20% (based crudely on Behrman and Hoddinott 2005). The assumptions about the role of the IFPRI evaluation in facilitating more rapid program expansion and increasing the probability of the program surviving the 2000 election are discussed under Question 3 and the assumptions about the program having substantial spillovers and the IFPRI share in those benefits are discussed under Question 4. The costs include the contractual costs for engaging IFPRI plus IFPRI expenses for the preparation of the proposal all increased by 25% to reflect the distortion costs of raising funds to pay for these expenses. Under the conservative assumptions, all of these costs were devoted to attaining the extra benefits that IFPRI provided beyond those provided by an alternative evaluator. Under the moderate assumption, half of these costs were devoted to attaining the extra benefits that IFPRI provided beyond those provided by an alternative evaluator. All the costs and benefits are discounted to the start of the IFPRI evaluation in 1998.

Table A.1—Responses to request for interview related to IFPRI evaluation of the PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* program

Respondent Group	Responded with interview and agreed to be identified by name in this study	Responded that not informed sufficiently about IFPRI-PROGRESA or otherwise not able to respond	Indicated that will respond but has not done so yet	No response to date to initial request or follow-ups
<b>Group 1—Involved at Start or Very Early in Evaluation</b>				
<i>At or closely related to those at PROGRESA at the start or very early in the program</i>	Daniel Hernandez Monica Orozco Maria de la Paz Lopez Susan Parker		Patricia Muniz Rosa Maria Rubalcava Magda Torres	
<i>Those elsewhere in Mexico who were extensively involved in the early stages of PROGRESA</i>	Mario Luis Fuentes Santiago Levy Evelyne Rodriguez Juan Rivera Ana Santiago			Carlos Rojas
<i>Inter-American Development Bank initial matchmaking</i>	Nora Lustig Nancy Birdsall			
<i>IFPRI staff at or near start of evaluation</i>	Lawrence Haddad Emmanuel Skoufias Marie Ruel Michelle Adato John Hoddinott Agnes Quisumbing David Coady	Per Pinstруп-Andersen		Benedicte de la Briere
<i>IFPRI consultants for evaluation at or near start of evaluation</i>	Paul Gertler T. Paul Schultz Petra Todd			
<b>Group 2—Involved in the Evaluation Later or Not Involved at All But Interested Observer</b>				
<i>PROGRESA/Oportunidades staff</i>	Illiana Yaschine		Rogelio Gomez Citlalli Hernandez Concepcion Steta Gandara	
<i>INSP evaluation team</i>	Orazio Attanasio Lynette Neufeld Bernardo Hernandez Luis Rubalcalva Graciela Teruel	Stefano Bertozzi Mauricio Hernandez		

Table A.1—Responses to request for interview related to IFPRI evaluation of the PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* program

Respondent Group	Responded with interview and agreed to be identified by name in this study	Responded that not informed sufficiently about IFPRI-PROGRESA or otherwise not able to respond	Indicated that will respond but has not done so yet	No response to date to initial request or follow-ups
<i>Other Mexican academics and government officials</i>	John Scott Miguel Szekely	Gonzalo Hernandez		
<i>IFPRI staff added later to evaluation team, primarily working in Mexico, or working on other evaluation projects or other activities</i>	Benjamin Davis Rafael Flores Sudhanshu Handa Dan Levy John Maluccio Joachim von Braun			Maximo Torero
<i>Others: Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, Committee on Global Development staff and academics involved in evaluations</i>	Ariel Fiszbein Ruth Levine Ferdinando Regalia Gloria Rubio		Judith McGuire Norbert Schady	Carola Alvarez Jean-Pierre Habicht Chris Paxson

NB: Appendix Table A.2 gives information about the positions that the interviewees who responded have held since 1994 and their relation, if any, to PROGRESA.

## Appendix Table A.2—Interviewees self-identification of positions held in 1994 to date and relation to *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*

**Please list the institutions and positions in those institutions that you held from 1994 to the present and (very briefly) what was your relation with IFPRI or PROGRESA in those positions.**

**Adato:** 1994–May 1996: Cornell University, completing Ph.D. in Development Sociology. May 1996–1998 Rockefeller Foundation Social Science Research Fellow in Agriculture. 1999–2005 Research Fellow, IFPRI. 1999–2000 I was responsible for designing and implementing the qualitative research components for IFPRI’s evaluation of PROGRESA. 2006–present Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI.

**Attanazio:** I am and was a *Professor of Economics* at UCL (*University College London*) and IFS (*Institute of Fiscal Studies*). I started working with PROGRESA when one of my Ph.D. students (Ana Santiago, now at the IADB) came to do her Ph.D. using the original data. At the time I asked Pepe Gomez de Leon (whom I knew) permission to use the data. After granting it, he invited me to visit PROGRESA in November 1999. I did not have any direct contact with IFPRI at the time. *Participated in evaluation of Oportunidades 2000–2008.*

**Birdsall:** October 2001–present: President, Center for Global Development. 1998–2001: Senior Associate and Director, Economic Reform Project, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. August 1993–1998: Executive Vice President, Inter-American Development Bank. August 1979–1993: Director, Policy Research Department; Chief, Environment Division, Latin America Region; Chief, Population and Human Resources Operations Division, Brazil Department; Chief, Policy and Research Division, Population, Health and Nutrition Department; Senior Economist, Country Policy Department; Staff Director, World Development Report 1984; Economist, Development Economics Department, World Bank. 1972–1976: Social Science Analyst, International Communications Program, Smithsonian Institution. 1971–1972: Project Director, TransCentury Corporation. 1971: Project Executive, Overseas Liaison Committee of the American Council on Education. 1969–1970: Research Assistant, Overseas Liaison Committee of the American Council on Education.

**Coady:** I joined IFPRI in late 1998 to work on the evaluation of PROGRESA. I was a Research Fellow. (Prior to that I was an academic in the UK and I left IFPRI in July 2004 to join the International Monetary Fund.)

**Davis:** 1994–1997: Doctoral student, UC-Berkeley. No relation to IFPRI/PROGRESA. 1998: WB Consultant. No relation to IFPRI/PROGRESA. 1998–2000: Postdoctoral Fellow, IFPRI. Outposted in Mexico at the PROGRESA office. 2000: Economist, FAO. Have carried out a number of studies using PROGRESA data.

**Fiszbein:** I have been at the World Bank all the time and did not have any direct involvement with IFPRI or PROGRESA (other than generally following the literature). *Co-Head of World Bank Policy Research Report on CCTs scheduled for 2008 publication.*

**Flores:** *Currently Associate Research Professor, Department of Hubert Department of Global Health, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, involved in evaluating social programs (e.g., helped set up terms of reference for evaluation of Peruvian CCT program). Formerly on IFPRI research staff and inter alia involved in evaluation of Nicaraguan CCT program (Maluccio and Flores 2005). No direct work on PROGRESA/Oportunidades.*

**Fuentes:** 1994–1998: Director of the DIF-National. As so it corresponds to me to align the federal food programs at the beginning of the presidential term. Since DIF coordinates the school breakfast program and the food programs for poor households, I am part of the team that designed PROGRESA. 2000: Director of the IMSS. IMSS is responsible of monitoring the health components of PROGRESA.

**Gertler:** 1994–1996: Visiting Professor, Economics, Harvard University. 1996–Present: Professor, Haas School of Business and School of Public Health, UC-Berkeley. 1996–1997: Informal advisor to PROGRESA (attending meetings on design of program and evaluation in DC at World Bank, IDB, and in Mexico City). 1998–2000: Consultant to IFPRI. 2000–present on Evaluation Advisory Group and worked as consultant on evaluation for OPORTUNIDADES via INSP. 2006: Member Academic Advisory Committee for OPO.

**Haddad:** I was the Director of the Food and Consumption Division at IFPRI from 1994–2004. *Currently Director of Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK*

**Handa:** 1994–1996: Lecturer, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica. 1997–1999: Research Fellow, IFPRI, Maputo, Mozambique. 1999–2000: Research Fellow, IFPRI, Mexico City. 2000–2003: Social Development Specialist, IADB, Washington, DC. 2004–present: Associate Professor, UNC-Chapel Hill. No relationship to IFPRI or PROGRESA since 2000.

**Hernández, B:** I have been working at the National Institute of Public Health of Mexico since 1987. Actually, I got involved with Oportunidades and its evaluation in 2002, when I was Director of Reproductive Health, supporting Dr. Mauricio Hernández in the coordination of the urban evaluation, and later on the overall evaluation. My main role has been to coordinate the work of the advisory group for the design of the evaluation, coordinate data collection, and elaboration of technical documents for Oportunidades. I was also the link between Oportunidades and INSP from 2002 to 2006.

**Hernández, D:** [1] From 1994 (December) to 1997 (June), I worked as Coordinator of Advisers of the National Council of Population (CONAPO). From January 1995, I received the instruction to work on a proposal on conditional transfers for homes in poverty and on patterns of human capital accumulation in Mexico, using the sociodemographic data bases of the CONAPO. From April or May of 1996, I intensified my work in the proposal of what would be PROGRESA, deepening in the construction of questionnaires and statistical models for the identification of homes in poverty (targeting) and participated on the meetings in which different social institutions were involved. [2] From July 1997 and until May of 2000, I was in charge of the General Directorate of Planning, Evaluation and Follow-up of PROGRESA. I was the person in charge to write up the Program, to establish the amounts of the supports and write its rules of operation. I was in charge of the planning of the geographic operation of the program and its expansion in stages, as well as of the budgetary aspects of its operation. I was in charge of the identification of the homes in poverty, and I was the coordinator and the person in charge of the evaluation of PROGRESA. I was contact to IFPRI and I established the agreements for its hiring and each one of the work plans. I followed day to day the work of IFPRI (from questionnaire design to elaboration of reports and recommendations). [3] From May of 2000 to January of 2001, I was the National Coordinator of PROGRESA, I was in charge of the whole program and of preparing the reports of the end of the federal administration 1994–2000 of the program. In this position I proposed the extension of scholarships to high school and to inform to the new administration about the impact of the program and the reasons for which it had to continue operating. [4] From February 2001 to August 2002, I was the General Coordinator of Beneficiaries Registry of Social Programs of the Secretariat of Social Development. I was in charge of the design and update of the Unique Registry of Beneficiaries of Social Programs, which had the Registry of PROGRESA as its main component. I was in charge of the coordination of the preparation of the National Program of Social Development 2001–2006 (Overcoming Poverty: A Task With You) and was in charge of the general planning of SEDESOL for the convergence of social programs, I maintained a close coordination with PROGRESA, because it was the program with the most coverage. I participated in the group that converted PROGRESA into OPORTUNIDADES and elaborated and endorsed the proposals of coverage extension of the program to reach 5 million homes. As member of the Technical Committee for the Measurement of Poverty, I analyzed the importance of PROGRESA/OPORTUNIDADES in the poverty reduction in Mexico. [5] I was Coordinator of Advisers of the Secretariat of Social Development from August 2002 to January of 2006. As the person in charge of preparing and the follow-up of the agreements of the Secretariat and monitor the advances of the social development programs under management of the institution, I maintained close contact with the National Coordinator of the Program. [6] In 2006, I participated in the presidential campaign of President Calderón and I did not have relation with the program. [7] As of December of 2006, I work as Coordinator of Advisers of the Secretariat of Public Education. This ministry is one of the main suppliers to OPORTUNIDADES and I supervise the advances of the program and I review and impulse that other sector actions converge to maximize the impact of the scholarships of the program.

**Hoddinott:** 2002–present: Deputy Division Director/Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC. 2000–2002: Associate Professor of Economics (tenured), Department of Economics, Dalhousie University. Cross-appointment with International Development Studies. 1997–2000: Acting Division Director (2000); Senior Research Fellow; Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC. 1993–1997: University Lecturer (CUF) in Economics and Fellow and Tutor (tenured), Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford. *Participated in IFPRI evaluation of PROGRESA.*

**Levine:** 2007–present: Vice President of Programs and Operations, Center for Global Development, Washington, DC. 2002–2007, Director of Programs and Senior Fellow, Center for Global Development, Washington, DC. 1999–2002: Senior Economist, Latin America and Caribbean Human Development Sector, World Bank. 1998–

1999: Advisor on the Social Sectors, Office of the Executive Vice President, Inter-American Development Bank. 1996–1998: Social Development Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank. 1993–1995: Human Resources Economist (long-term consultant), Eastern Africa Human Development Sector, World Bank. My only real relationship to PROGRESA was: (a) I included the PROGRESA example in a book on global health successes (see: [http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/\\_active/millionssaved/studies/case\\_9/](http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/millionssaved/studies/case_9/)), and I used PROGRESA as an example in work we have done on impact evaluation ([http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/\\_active/evalgap](http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/evalgap)).

**Levy, D:** 1994–1996: Ph.D. in Economics Northwestern University. Summer 1996: Summer Internship at IFPRI; working as a research assistant to help produce PROGRESA’s targeting report. Fall 1997–Summer 2000: Ph.D. in Economics Northwestern University. 2000–2004: Researcher, Mathematica Policy Research. 2004–2006: Visiting Assistant Professor, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. 2006–Present: Lecturer in Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. My only formal relationship with IFPRI or PROGRESA occurred in the summer of 1996.

**Levy, S:** December 1994 to December 2000: Deputy Minister of Finance. December 2000 to October 2005: Director General of the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social. *Currently Chief Economist, Inter-American Development Bank.*

**Lopez:** *Demographer who works for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) Regional Office for Mexico Central America, Caribbean, and Dominican Republic; wife of late Jose “Pepe” Gómez de León.*

**Lustig:** [1] Between 1994–1997: I was a member of IFPRI’s Board. [2] 1997–2001: I became Senior Advisor on Poverty and Chief of the Poverty and Inequality Unit at the Inter-American Development Bank. Jose Gomez de Leon, then director of PROGRESA, and I planned the first meeting to discuss impact evaluation of PROGRESA. The meeting was held at the IDB some time in the Fall of 1997. Jere Behrman was one of the participants. I am pretty sure that Lawrence Haddad was there from IFPRI. The Mexican Government did not want the evaluation done by a multilateral so the IDB could not be in charge of it and that is when IFPRI won the bid. However, the IDB continued to be involved in different capacities. [3] 1999–2000: I was co-director of the WDR Attacking Poverty. We referred to PROGRESA in the report. I believe we cited some of the impact evaluation studies (cannot check because I do not have a copy handy now since I am in between moves). [4] 2001–2005: I was President and Professor of Economics at the Universidad de las Americas, Puebla. Not directly involved with either PROGRESA or IFPRI. [5] 2002–2006: I was President of the Mexican Commission on Macro and Health. We used IFPRI’s and others’ evaluation studies in the report to show how CCTs can be used to improve health and nutrition. [6] 2006–2007: I was Director of the Poverty Group at UNDP New York where I was an advocate of CCTs as an effective instrument to reduce poverty and invest in human capital and used the impact evaluation results (including of course those done by IFPRI) to make my point. [7] 2006–2007: Shapiro Visiting Professor of International Affairs, George Washington University and Research Fellow, Colegio de Mexico.

**Maluccio:** I was Post-doctoral Fellow at IFPRI 1997–2000, Research Fellow at IFPRI 2000–2005, and Assistant Professor of Economics at Middlebury College 2005–present. *Worked on IFPRI evaluation of Nicaraguan CCT program (Maluccio and Flores 2005).*

**Neufeld:** I arrived at INSP in 1998. I was still a Ph.D. student at Cornell University in 1994. I was not involved in any way in the evaluation of OPORTUNIDADES until 2001 when I took over as coordinator of the nutrition related evaluation; I have been doing that since. I am currently Director of the Division of Nutritional Epidemiology.

**Orozco:** In the year of 1994, I worked as adviser to Jose Gómez of León, who was Secretary General of the National Council of Population from the beginning of the government of President Zedillo, the 1st of December of 1994. As one of his advisers, it corresponded to me to participate in the development of a grading system for the identification of poor households in Mexico, using the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH), the idea was to construct a statistical model to identify poor households using a multidimensional measurement of its socio-economic and demographic characteristics during 1995; in 1996, I updated this model with the data of ENIGH 1994. In 1996, this model was adopted for the identification of households for the test pilot of the Programa de Alimentación, Salud y Educación (PASE), Beatriz Traffon and I made the analyses and identified the households. Later, the model was consolidated as the methodology to identify the households for PROGRESA since 1997. During 1996, I worked with the Dr. Gómez de León on various analyses for the design of PROGRESA, such as the estimations of the amount of the scholarships for education and the transfers to buy

food, the levels of attendance and dropout from school by age in populations in conditions of poverty and the desertion by school year and the differentials by sex, among others. In 1997, when Gómez de León was named by President Zedillo National Coordinator of de PROGRESA, I was transferred to the Coordination as Director of Pursuit, where I continued doing that type of studies. From 1998 to 2000, I was Coordinator of Advisers of Gómez de León. In that position I performed the technical functions of the evaluation of PROGRESA in coordination with the team of evaluators at IFPRI. Besides I took care of the methodological and technical definitions inherent in the planning of PROGRESA in coordination with the internal areas of the Program. From 2002 to 2004, I was the General Director of Planning, Evaluation and Monitoring of PROGRESA. I was in charge of developing the strategies to extend coverage and of doing the modifications to the design of the Program.

**Parker:** 1993–1995: Rockefeller postdoc, El Colegio de Mexico. 1995–1997: Advisor to Director of Finance, IMSS. 1998–May 2000: Advisor to National Coordinator PROGRESA. May 2000–November 2000: Research Associate for IFPRI. November 2000 until present: Profesora/Investigadora CIDE (*Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas in Mexico*). Also worked on evaluation of *Oportunidades 2000*.

**Quisumbing:** I was a Research Fellow at IFPRI at the time of the evaluation and was involved in drafting the IFPRI proposal to the Government of Mexico and led the research on intrahousehold/gender issues from the IFPRI end.

**Regalia:** Economist at the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) until he changed employment to work with UNICEF in mid-2007. While at the IADB he participated in the Social Policy Monitoring Network: Conditional Cash-Transfer Programs and was the main contact for several CCT evaluations in Latin America, including, for example, in Nicaragua that was undertaken by IFPRI and one of the main IADB participants in the loan negotiation for *Oportunidades in Mexico after the election of Fox in 2000*.

**Rivera:** I have been at the National Public Health Institute since 1993. I have held different positions as follows: 1994–1995, Area Director on Research in Maternal and Child Health, Center for Research in Population Health; 1995–1997 and 1999–2000, Area Director on Research in Nutrition and Health, Center for Research in Population Health; 1997–1999, Director of the Center for Research in Population Health; 2001–present, Director of the Center for Research in Nutrition and Health. My association with PROGRESA started in 1995 when Dr. José Gómez de León invited me to discuss the interventions and actions to be included in the program for the prevention of undernutrition. Later on I had long discussions with Dr. Santiago Levy and his team on the same topic. At this time the decision to include a nutrition component, different than the cash transfers was made. Later on Dr. Juan Ramón de la Fuente, Secretary of Health during the Zedillo Administration invited me as his advisor in the development of the food supplements. I coordinated a team of experts in nutrition who advised on the development of the supplements. In 1997, I was asked by the Secretary of Health to design and implement the evaluation of the nutrition component which was conducted between 1998 and 2000. At that time my association with IFPRI was marginal, since the evaluation of the nutrition component was conducted under the coordination and support of the Secretary of Health. For more details, you can read a book chapter which includes the role of my Center in the design and evaluation of PROGRESA (Juan Rivera, “Improving Nutrition in Mexico: The use of Research for Decision-making in Nutrition Policies and Programs,” in *Nutrition and an Active Life from Knowledge to Action*. ISBN 9275 11612 1, page 183–204, 2005). Currently member of Mexican Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL, the National Council of Social Development Policy Evaluation).

**Rodríguez:** 1995–2000: General Director of Programming and Budget for Agriculture, Social Development and Natural Resources, reporting to the Deputy Minister for Budgetary Affairs, in the Ministry of Finance. My responsibilities included proposing the budgetary allocations for all federal programs in these areas, the monitoring of each individual program, and the formal negotiation with the different ministries and agencies as well as with the various committees in the Federal Congress. I was a main participant in the design and implementation of PROGRESA since its initial proposal in march 1995, including its evaluation; as well as in the phasing out of generalized and targeted food subsidies that PROGRESA substituted. Formally I was the operational counterpart of PROGRESA in the Ministry of Finance and a member of its Technical Committee of PROGRESA. 2000–2002: Treasurer of the Federation, reporting directly to the Minister. Position appointed by the President and ratified by the Senate. During that time, and although it was not a function that the Treasury had done before; I was the highest official responsible for PROGRESA in the Ministry of Finance. I approved budget, rules of operation, and was member of the Technical Committee of PROGRESA. 2003–2005: Director for Economic and Social Benefits, reporting directly to the General Director of IMSS. Responsible for all economic and social benefits granted by

social security. Although not formally, I was the person who made the follow up of the program and recommended the position that IMSS would take in the different issues discussed in the Technical Committee.

**Rubalcalva:** I had no relationship with IFPRI or PROGRESA. My relationship with the Program started in the year 2000 when it became Oportunidades. From 2000–2006, I was a member of the scientific evaluation team to the Program. *Professor-researcher at the Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas, CIDE, in Mexico.*

**Rubio:** Since April 2004, General Director of Evaluation and Monitoring of Social Programs, SEDESOL. June 2003–February 2004: Researcher at the Institute of Public Policy and Development Studies, Universidad de las Américas-Puebla. January 2002–February 2004: Specialist Consultant on Evaluation and Monitoring, Human Development Department, Latin America and the Caribbean Region, World Bank. January 2002–May 2003: Lecturer, Department of Economics, Universidad de las Américas-Puebla. July 1998–November 2001: Research Analyst, Poverty Reduction Group, World Bank. February–April 1998: Professional Practice, Family Care International, New York. June–August 1997: Professional Practice, UNICEF, Buenos Aires, Argentina. February–June 1996: Consultant, International Trade Division, World Bank, Washington, DC. March–August 1995: Consultant, International Trade Division, World Bank, Mexico. August 1992–September 1994: Lecturer of Agricultural Economics and Research Assistant, ITAM, Mexico.

**Ruel:** I came to IFPRI in 1996. I was then Research Fellow until 2001 when I became Senior Research Fellow; I then became Division Director (of the Food Consumption and Nutrition Division) in 2004. I was involved at the very early stages of the development of the proposal for the evaluation of PROGRESA—I was the first to visit Mexico (with Benedicte de la Briere) to discuss with Daniel Hernandez the possibility of IFPRI conducting such an evaluation. I then was involved with the team in the development of the proposal and design of the evaluation. Once the project started, I was mostly involved in the operations research component and worked on the related report.

**Santiago:** I worked with Santiago and Evelyne since the start of the design process, during the time the idea was taken to the President and the necessary budget modifications were made, as well as during the time when the evaluation was prepared and assigned. *Currently economist at Inter-American Development Bank.*

**Schultz:** I was a researcher working on the original IFPRI contract to evaluate PROGRESA. I undertook the education evaluation section which I drafted for the proposed contract. I have reacted to several draft papers and proposals submitted to PROGRESA/Oportunidades after finishing my papers for IFPRI. These papers were by other anonymous groups or authors. They were sent to me over the internet and I returned them with my comments. You could get the precise dates of my work from both groups if they have the records. I do not have time to locate records of this form. *Currently Malcolm K. Brachman Professor of Economics, Yale University.*

**Scott:** In this period I have been professor-researcher at the Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas, CIDE, in Mexico. My relation with PROGRESA has been as an external consultant, in diverse advisory committees and evaluation studies. No relation with IFPRI.

**Skoufias:** January 2007–present: Lead Economist, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM), Poverty Reduction Group, World Bank. January 2004–December 2006: Senior Economist, Latin American and Caribbean Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (LAC-PREM), Poverty and Gender Group, World Bank. August 2002–December 2003: Senior Research Economist, Research Department, Inter-American Development Bank. July 1998–August 2002: Senior Research Fellow, Food Consumption and Nutrition Division, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). June 1992–June 1998: Associate Professor and Research Associate, University of Colorado at Boulder. January 1988–May 1992: Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Pennsylvania State University. January 1986–December 1987: Researcher, Country Economics Department, Special Studies Division, World Bank. 1983–1985: Research Assistant, Department of Economics, University of Minnesota. 1981–1985: Teaching Associate, General College, University of Minnesota.

On behalf of **Szekely:** Dr. Szekely's relation with IFPRI and PROGRESA was as follows: From 2002 to January 2006, Dr. Szekely acted as Undersecretary of Planning, Prospective and Evaluation in the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL). PROGRESA/Oportunidades depends directly from SEDESOL. During that time Dr. Szekely organized and participated in working sessions with IFPRI and other institutes. The purpose of these sessions was the external evaluation of PROGRESA. Dr. Szekely personally hired IFPRI and set the criteria and guidelines for the external evaluations of PROGRESA. Other positions that Dr. Szekely held that had/have no direct relation with PROGRESA or IFPRI are: 1989–1983, Professor and Researcher at the Center for Economic Studies, El Colegio de México; 1994–1995, Economics for Development Tutor, St. Hilda's College, Oxford



University, UK; 1996–2001, Economics Researcher, Department of Research, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Washington, DC; 2001, Member of the Technical Committee for the Measurement of Poverty in Mexico (Committee's Coordinator since March 2002); 2001, Vice-President of the Territorial Development Policy Committee, OECD, Paris; 2001–2002, Chief of the Regional Development Unit, Presidency of the Republic, Mexico; 2002, Member of the Mexican Microeconomic and Health Commission, Ministry of Health, Mexico; 2002, Member of the External Advising Council of the Political Policy and Development Studies Institute, Universidad de las Americas, Puebla, Mexico; 2002, Member of the Consultative Council of the National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics, Mexico; 2002, Member of the "Panel of Experts" of External Advisors of the UN Program for Development, Human Development Report 2003; 2004, Technical Secretary of the Intersecretarial Commission of Social Development, Federal Government, Mexico; 2004, Member of the Advisor Council of the Human Development Report of Mexico, UN Program for Development; 2004, Member of the Scientific Commission of the Regional Development Project for Latin America, FAO; 2006, Member of the "International Advisory Board" of the Mexican-American Center of Studies, University of California, San Diego; February–November 2006, Advisor in Social Policy for the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), and for the United Nations Program for Development; 2006–present: Undersecretary of Mid-Superior Education, Ministry of Public Education, Mexico.

***Teruel:** Professor of Economics at Universidad Iberoamericana, Santa Fe. Consultant to IFPRI to work on PROGRESA evaluation, 1999–2000. Consultant for the National Institute of Public Health for the evaluation of OPORTUNIDADES. Currently member of Mexican Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL, the National Council of Social Development Policy Evaluation).*

***Todd:** Professor of Economics, University of Pennsylvania. Contributor to economics literature on impact evaluation methodology. Member of IFPRI PROGRESA evaluation team (1998–2000) and of INSP Oportunidades evaluation (2000–2008).*

**von Braun:** 1994–1997: Professor University of Kiel, Germany. 1997–2002: Director, Center for Development Research, and Professor, University of Bonn, Germany. 2002–present: DG (*Director General*), IFPRI. In none of these positions did I relate to PROGRESA

***Yaschine:** 2002–2006: Head of the Evaluation Department at the Human Development Program "Oportunidades". In charge of coordinating from Oportunidades the external impact evaluation of the program. 2001: Adviser in the Presidency's Executive Office, Commission for Social and Human Development, on the following topics: social programs, poverty and poverty alleviation, and gender equity policies. 2000: Visiting Researcher at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Great Britain, working on the institutionalization of participatory approaches and practices for development. 1999–2000: Consultant/Researcher for the IDS. Working on the project "Looking for Changes: the institutionalization of participatory approaches and processes for natural resource management." The Regional Sustainable Development Programs of the Mexican Environment Ministry. Responsible along with other researchers of the methodological and theoretical material for this research/assessment project; of the field work conducted in the state of Guerrero; and of the systematization, analysis and final drafting of the results. 1999: Consultant for the NGO "Servicio de Apoyo Local al Desarrollo de Base" (Saldebas A.C.). In charge of the monitoring and evaluation of development projects financed by the Inter-American Foundation in Mexico. 1999: Head of Department—in the implementation area of the Integrated Communal Services Program of Mexico City's Social Development Ministry. 1999: Consultant to the IDS. In charge of the case study on Mexico for the project: review of participatory work on poverty and ill-being: consultations with the poor, which served as material for the World Bank's World Development Report 2000/01 on Poverty and Development. 1998: Consultant to the IDS, working on the research project "Looking for Changes: the institutionalization of participatory approaches and processes for natural resource management". In charge of the revision of international experiences and bibliography for Latin America on participatory development, institutionalization of participation, natural resource management and decentralization. 1998: Research Assistant in the IDS, working on the drafting and reviewing of the 1998 Human Development Report for Tanzania and documents related to this United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project. 1998: Member of the UNDP research team in charge of the Participatory Diagnosis of Poverty in Tanzania. This diagnosis served as a basis both for Tanzania's government policies against poverty and for the UNDP's 1998 Human Development Report for Tanzania.*

Note: Items in italics added for further identification beyond what interviewee provided.

### **Appendix A.3—General Form of E-Mail Communication, Requesting Interview, and of Follow-up Requesting Permission to Identify Interviewees by Name**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing you to ask you a favor. I agreed to do a short-term project with IFPRI (actually part of a larger project by the CGIAR system) to try to evaluate in some sense the impact of IFPRI on conditional cash transfer programs (CCT) and, in particular, on *PROGRESA/Oportunidades*. Basically I would like to obtain your reflections on five general questions:

(1) What was the relation between IFPRI and the development of *PROGRESA*? Did the work at IFPRI have any impact, for example, on the decision to allocate the CCTs to mothers or not to choose a more traditional food subsidy or food-in-kind program or on how the evaluation might be planned to be undertaken? Are there any early papers or other documents that document any such influence?

(2) Why was IFPRI chosen to be considered for the *PROGRESA* evaluation? What were the perceived advantages and disadvantages of having IFPRI play this role?

(3) What was the relation between the IFPRI evaluation and the evolution and sustainability of the *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* program? Were there dimensions of the program that might have developed differently or with different timing if IFPRI had not been involved?

(4) What was the relation of IFPRI through *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* on other CCT programs and on other program evaluation efforts?

(5) Whom else would be particularly useful for me to contact and/or what other sources can you think of that would be particularly useful for me to be aware of. (I have already obtained extensive feedback from some of the principal players, including Santiago Levy, Evelyne Rodriguez and Daniel Hernandez. And, of course, I am trying to contact others. But it would be good to have your list of suggestions just to be sure that I am not missing anyone.)

Of course, these first four questions are of a difficult-to-answer counterfactual sort—how would it all have evolved differently if IFPRI had not existed (with regard to 1 and 2) or not been involved (with regard to 3 and 4). I realize that such counterfactual questions are very difficult to answer—but I hope to do as best we can with your help and the help of others.

I realize that you may know much more about some questions than about others though I expect you know a lot about all of them, but anything you can provide on any question will be most helpful.

I also realize that you undoubtedly have a busy schedule without trying to squeeze in an answer to this e-mail, so I appreciate you considering undertaking this request. Also, as is all too often the case, time is somewhat short, so I would be most appreciative if you are able to respond to the above questions in the next 2–3 weeks, if at all possible. Or if you think that it would work

better to talk about these questions over the phone, perhaps we could work out a mutually convenient time for a telephone conversation.

Would you please respond right away to this e-mail to confirm that you have received it and to let me know if you will be able to respond to my questions and, if so, by approximately when.

I hope that you will be able to do me the favor of providing your responses.

Thank you and best wishes,

Jere

General Follow-Up of 15 October 2007 to Inquire About Identifying Interviewees

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

You kindly agreed to be interviewed a few months ago for a study that I am doing on IFPRI and PROGRESA, as did a number of the other principal participants in that experience or individuals who are likely to have an useful and important perspective on that experience. Thank you once again for your contribution. I attach an anonymized summary of the interviews that I received, organized around the five questions that I raised for the interviews. You are number XX. I would like to include this summary as an appendix to the paper and to include some small excerpts from it and references to it in the paper. I believe that most—quite possibly all—of the interviewees will agree to be identified by name, and indeed would prefer that they receive attribution for their observations. All interviewees either provided the text directly or, in the cases in which we had phone or in-person conversations, checked and corrected the notes that I provided. But to be sure, I am writing each of the interviewees an e-mail like this, asking for agreement to use their names in the appendix and in references to the material in the appendix. Please respond by return e-mail indicating whether you agree that I can use your name. I need to know by 25 October, so your immediate response will not only help me bring this project to closure, but preclude me following up with further inquiries on this question. (I expect that the vast majority of the interviewees will agree to have their names mentioned. But should that not be the case, and your initial response is positive, I will let you know so you can reconsider your response.)

Thanks again for your help on this—and hopefully for your quick response. Once this step is finished, I will send you a copy of the paper that I hope you will find interesting.

Best wishes,

Jere

## **Appendix A.4—Responses to Questions Asked in Interviews (When Available—Some Respondents Did Not Answer All the Questions)**

**Question 1—What was the relation between IFPRI and the development of PROGRESA? Did the work at IFPRI have any impact, for example, on the decision to allocate the CCTs to mothers or not to choose a more traditional food subsidy or food-in-kind program or on how the evaluation might be planned to be undertaken? Are there any early papers or other documents that document any such influence?**

*Adato:* IFPRI contribution probably primarily through its contribution to the collective literature on these issues: value of making mothers the recipients of the transfers and related gender issues, evaluation of food-subsidy programs, and interactions among health, education and nutrition. In addition to Santiago Levy, Daniel Hernandez, possible explicit references in IFPRI reports, possibly useful references in Gómez de León, J., and S. Parker (1999). The impact of anti-poverty programs on female labor force participation and women's status: The case of PROGRESA in Mexico. Paper prepared for the 1999 IUSSP Conference on Women and the Labor Market. Maybe explicit references to Haddad, Hoddinott, and/or Quisumbing.

*Attanasio:* I really do not know this. My relationship with PROGRESA started when I met Pepe Gomez de Leon in 1998 while at the same time I had started to advise Ana Santiago who had come to UCL for her Ph.D. straight from Santiago Levy's office where she had worked on PROGRESA (therefore after the beginning of the programme). In June 1999, I had lunch with Pepe at a conference in Paris. At that point I had already asked permission to use the 1998 data that Ana had with her and he had granted it. He then invited me to visit PROGRESA in November 1999, during the collection of the 4<sup>th</sup> wave of the ENCEL. At that point the impression (and story) I got from the likes of Pepe, Daniel Hernandez, etc. was that they had started working on the programme on their own (if I am not mistaken the March 1998 survey was done by them) but that they subsequently contracted IFPRI to work on the evaluation. In addition to Pepe and Daniel in 1999 I had talked with Luis and Chele who were involved, especially Chele, and probably Susan. I also met a young guy from IFPRI who was working with Chele (Ben something I think, I think he has a paper with Chele on transfers). I also had a couple of phone calls with Emanuel Skoufias because I was hoping to write a paper with Chele and from my recollection she needed permission from him. At the time of my visit I also sensed some tensions between IFPRI and the programme. All these are impressions and feelings rather than documented facts. I do not know how influential IFPRI was on the original design of the programme. I had assumed not much because of my understanding that they came in later (in between the March and October 1998 waves, when the programme had already started. But then I do not know whether this is just based on my 'impressions' or is true. What it was clear to me was that IFPRI had been very influential in the design of the questionnaires and the overall evaluation (although the basic scheme with the randomization had already been in place). The impression I had from Pepe and others is that they competently fill in the gaps. And that they provided the HK and knowledge that the guys in Mexico did not have to build a credible evaluation.

*Birdsall:* I don't know. Try Nora Lustig.

*Coady:* All this was before my time. But I do remember one trip where we (surprisingly) thought that they had agreed to add further treatment groups that got unconditioned cash and where the money was to go to fathers. Alas, it eventually was abandoned as an unfeasible approach: one that got away!

*Davis:* I joined IFPRI in August 1998, as the outposted postdoc (and only IFPRI staffer) located in the PROGRESA office in Mexico City. I thus did not play any role in the negotiations regarding IFPRI's role in the evaluation of PROGRESA, nor in the preparation of the project document (which I assume you have), which had already happened. My impression was that IFPRI did not play any role in the design of

the program (and thus the allocation to mothers vs. fathers, or cash vs. food subsidy), nor in the initial design of the evaluation (e.g., the randomization of treatment communities, etc). In fact, the first (March 1998) Encel took place before IFPRI began its work with PROGRESA. IFPRI's primary role, in my view, was to assure that the evaluation was carried out correctly, including all phases of the survey work and the subsequent analysis. Here IFPRI did play a very influential role in assuring that this was done correctly. You may remember the battles over survey design. PROGRESA staff did not have as much experience with household surveys, and particularly with household surveys among rural and agricultural households. Without IFPRI data collection would have been of worse quality, and not all the correct information would have been collected. Suffice to say that subsequent analysis would have been limited.

**Flores:** Relation of IFPRI and the development of PROGRESA. As far as I remember IFPRI did not participate in the planning and design of PROGRESA. IFPRI was called to be an external evaluator of the impact of the Program when already PROGRESA has been designed. The Mexican team developed and implemented the Program. Once IFPRI started to be involved it could have the potential to modify the design. Emmanuel, Ben, and Ashu could verify this. I can tell you that IFPRI did modify the design and implementation of other CCT programs: the Family Allowance Program, PRAF, (Honduras), the Social Protection Network, RPS (Nicaragua) and Bolsa Alimentacao, BA (Brazil).

**Fuentes:** Basis for PROGRESA: In 1995, Zedillo pushed two main ideas to improve social situation: (1) in a crisis and therefore need to protect the poor from the crisis and (2) Solidaridad built on resource offering—needed something more transparent and targeted better towards poor and without large leakages to bureaucracy. Health, education, and nutrition attractive investments. Therefore started to ask whether another way to approach social problems, better targeted, more transparent. Task force from various Ministries (Dr. Jose Naro... (?)—Health, Education; Mario Luis Fuentes, Santiago Levy, Jose Gomez de Leon, CONAPO). Aimed for program that was more transparent (e.g., money conditional on behaviors, new idea; evaluation important); if could transfer resources to communities could strengthen local markets. Pilot in Campeche (poor in services, communication). Also prior idea that organization of people should be a commitment of the state (e.g., Solaridad) was challenged by Zedillo; move towards more individual and family responsibilities and to build individual capacities.

**Gertler:** To my knowledge IFPRI was not involved in the initial design implemented in 1997–98. These ideas were cooked by Santiago, Daniel, Juan Rivera, etc. before they even started looked to do an evaluation. I remember being at a meeting at the World Bank that Evelyn and Juan attended were these design ideas were laid out. No one from IFPRI was present at this meeting or was IFPRI mentioned. I also do not remember IFPRI being present at the meeting at the IDB in 1997 were you, I, Paul, and Jim H (replaced by Petra) participated in the discussion over the evaluation strategy. I seem to remember that IFPRI was brought in later—after us to manage to contracting of the consultants for the evaluation. I do not think that IFPRI had a big role in the design of the evaluation strategy. The basic design of the evaluation came out of the meeting at the IDB with you, me, Paul S., and Petra. Then Daniel and Petra did the randomization and Daniel implemented the spring-98 baseline without much input from anyone. They also contracted INSP directly for the nutrition work. This is one the reasons we do not have great baseline information on most outcomes of interest.

**Haddad:** Very little influence on the design of PROGRESA. Santiago Levy said our work on women's income was influential in the decision to allocate to mothers, but who knows? We tried to get them to implement 2–3 variations on the design, but the Government of Mexico considered this too difficult politically and administratively.

**Handa:** As far as I know and can tell from personal conversations, the original design of PROGRESA was the brainchild of Santiago Levy and some colleagues, and can be traced back to a paper written by him at BU, and which may have been published as a WB working paper (but am not sure). The targeting to mothers may have been influenced by the IFPRI book but I am not sure—one would have to check the timing of the book and the working paper by Santiago. IFPRI did have some influence, through the research results, on subsequent design issues—see below.

**Hernández, B:** The evaluation conducted by IFPRI has had a very important effect on PROGRESA/*Oportunidades*. Keeping aside the sustainability of the program (to which I will refer in 3), I would highlight some changes on the original design of the program that were derived from the evaluation results: [1] Changes to the formulation of the nutritional supplement, especially the iron component. This change was derived from evaluation results on the significant, but smaller than expected, impact of the program on anemia (see paper of Juan Rivera in *JAMA*). Information from this finding comes mainly from the rural evaluation, with participation of INSP and IFPRI, and results from urban areas point in the same direction. [2] Changes in the health component, mainly in the provision of health services by IMSS and Ministry of health. These changes were derived from a bunch of results based on the rural and urban evaluation (including in the rural ones the reports generated by IFPRI and further analysis conducted by INSP and published in the 2004 evaluation documents), that show that although there are positive impacts in reproductive health, utilization of health services and health conditions, the impacts could be larger if the quality of the services provided could be increased.

**Hernández, D:** IFPRI was invited after PROGRESA-*Oportunidades* was first designed. It helped in thinking possible adjustments (especially in the targeting process) and new components. The allocation of transfers to women was proposed many years before we started operations; remember that those years were affected by the Cairo/Beijing “mood” and the influence of gender issues was very strong. The decision to go for a monetary transfers was the result of the accumulated international evidence (divulged by the World Bank or IADB) of problems with in kind transfers. Our own evidence, although not derived from hard studies, showed those problems very easily. I am sending you a text I prepare telling “my history” on how we developed PROGRESA-*Oportunidades*. Sorry it is in Spanish, but if you think is valuable I can try to translate to English in a week or so. The main role of the members of IFPRI was the design of the evaluation and the advice you provided over the years about the general performance of the program. The continuous exchange of ideas (for example, the visits to DC and the opportunity to “talk” about the program’s issues) was very helpful to keep the project with fresh ideas. While asking for different information about the program operation in order to analyze correctly the evaluation data or in order to advance some explanations about the evaluation, IFPRI’s team help the program administration to identify areas of improvement in surveillance and operation. I think there are two critical areas in which IFPRI could have assisted importantly to PROGRESA-*Oportunidades* and did not take advantage: nutrition (paradoxically its most important area) and the macro effects (family businesses opportunities from the increased cash flow in the rural areas).

**Hoddinott:** In early meeting with people at PROGRESA about possible evaluation, Santiago Levy said that one of the reasons that wanted to work with IFPRI was IFPRI work on intrahousehold allocation and gender; JH said saw paper that referenced work by Hoddinott or JH and Lawrence Haddad. Food subsidy work, perhaps through Nora Lustig, who had worked on Mexican subsidies and who knew of IFPRI work (in part because she was on IFPRI board). Addition: The paper I mentioned was written by Santiago Levy sometime in the early 1990s (possibly 1991); I mention this b/c it provides a direct connection/correlation (and possibly causation) between IFPRI’s earlier work on gender, the decision by PROGRESA to provide the transfers to women and possibly PROGRESA’s/Santiago’s knowledge about IFPRI as an institution.

**Levine:** My understanding was that the basic project design, including the transfers to moms and the evaluation concept, came directly from Pepe Gomez de Leon and Santiago Levy. The evaluation in particular was the brainchild of Gomez de Leon, who often hasn’t gotten all the credit deserved because he died of cancer before everything was documented. There’s a nice article on this here: <http://www.iadb.org/IDBamerica/index.cfm?thisid=3049>.

**Levy, D:** Story DL heard was the Mexican government approached IFPRI with concept developed and wanted IFPRI to evaluate the program. Apparently some at World Bank would have like to have done so, but Mexicans wanted some one independent of World Bank. IFPRI had good research record, but no particular history or interest in evaluations. Later conversations with L. Haddad suggested that IFPRI thought of evaluation as sort of a technical job.

**Levy, S:** It is difficult, of course, to identify an explicit IFPRI impact because: (1.1) In terms of basic constructs that underlay the development of the program, IFPRI researchers and other researchers contributed to the general environment on what policies might work and what did not seem to have worked, but separating out the IFPRI contribution from others to this environment is very difficult because there may have been both very direct effects (e.g., a particular IFPRI study or presentation) or indirect effects (e.g., IFPRI studies may have affected the perceptions of or studies of others that had more direct effects. (1.2) In terms of the evaluation itself and the impact of it, it is very hard to separate out the IFPRI contribution from the PROGRESA contribution itself. Chronological Phases of Possible IFPRI Contributions: Development of PROGRESA: (1.1) Ineffectiveness of previous food aid strategies (e.g., not well targeted, inframarginal income effects, high transaction and bureaucratic costs of in-kind programs; limitations of supply-side intervention): e.g., Pinstrip-Andersen (1988) reference in Levy and Rodriguez (2005); possible contributions to milieu in which Besley and Kanbur (1988, 1990) developed their framework for analyzing food programs. (Besley and Kanbur helped shape Levy's early thought about such programs, including the point that inframarginal food provision is basically an income transfer, without marginal price effects.) (1.2) Importance of intrahousehold allocations (i.e., Haddad and Kanbur) and therefore need to make programs be conditional on benefits received by all household members. (1.3) Related gender concerns. (1.4) Food problems not same as nutrition problems (Streeten distinction between nutrition and health).

**López:** As you might recall, the issue of financial resources had a very important role, mainly because of the country economic crisis of 1995. The available resources for any program were scarce and "Hacienda" (Public Treasury Ministry) was very attentive to them and their expenses. I recall conversations with Pepe telling me that *just because* of the shortage of resources it was very important to evaluate the program impacts in the most scientific way as possible. He was thinking to implement such kind of evaluation before PROGRESA, with the National Population Programme and in this way he prepared a very important statistical tool that it was used later as key piece to begin "PROGRESA". One of the most intense technical discussions I recall, was how to prepare the technical-methodological aspects for selection of the eligible population, and later those regarding the evaluation methodology. Pepe, convinced on the importance of a rigorous evaluation of PROGRESA—a task which was absent in the public sector work in Mexico at that time—requested resources to bring together an evaluation group for simultaneous preparation of both methodologies, the one of the evaluation and the one of PROGRESA's operation. He was convinced of the importance of having an international evaluation's group of scientifics, that could not only give the best impulse to the beginning of the Program, but also guarantee the kind of neutrality that only scientifics could ensure.

**Maluccio:** I have no direct evidence about this, though recall from that period influential pieces of research were Thomas's inferential approach JHR paper and also the research funded by IFPRI that led to the Alderman, Haddad, and Hoddinott book.

**Neufeld:** My understanding is that from early on, the idea was to distribute a food. I know that there was a group of experts assembled (including Juan Rivera) to determine what that should be. Initially they talked about a pap that is distributed at the Hospital Infantil de Mexico, but it is not fortified and there was quite a bit of debate about this question. From what Juan has commented, I believe that Santiago Levy was also involved in this stage and vital in the final decision to distribute a fortified food. I know of no papers, except may be some excerpts from Santiago's book that might be helpful here.

**Orozco:** During years 1996 and 1997, I had the chance to participate directly as part of the team of the National Population Council led by José Gómez de León (JGL). By those days, before the relationship with IFPRI was established, the design of the program was practically fully conceived in terms of delivering cash transfers, targeting, and benefiting mothers directly. I would say that the most important contribution of IFPRI became with their proposals in terms of methodology and technical advice in the way the evaluation was going to be conducted. It was definitely IFPRI's capacity to include and coordinate experts in different topics with a high technical profile that promoted the development of a quasi-experimental design and, from my point of view, the interest and singular technical capabilities of the team at PROGRESA that made a successful delivery in a sense that the operations, the design and



implementation of information systems and standardization of processes were developed with the influence of the evaluation conception, to make comprehensive its results and facilitate the follow up. From my perspective, the whole picture of the PROGRESA project has been understated or not enough disseminated in terms of the importance of having expert teams in strategic places: in PROGRESA, SHCP, SSA, SEP, and IFPRI. There were high technical capacities as well as political will to assume risks altogether that make it a successful effort, conciliating the social perspective with the economic view of better subsidies and solid evaluation. That is why I think that the counterfactual issue is less relevant given the existence of other possibilities to conform the evaluation team with other institution, but what I would say is one of the most important legacies from the three- year intense collaboration with IFPRI is the possibility to form and consolidate domestic technical professionals who have been involved in evaluation processes, planning, and policy design in recent years. It is hard to make a counterfactual, but the learning process would maybe very low in absence of IFPRI's team disposition to learn and teach. The evaluation developed by IFPRI stated a benchmark in Mexico, and I would say internationally, to promote better practices. After the evaluation of PROGRESA the evaluation of social programs became mandatory by law, and although no experience like that has been documented in recent years, academic involvement from national institutions and researchers is now an extended practice and considerably higher related to past years.

**Parker:** I arrived after the program design had largely been chosen. But my impression is that there was not too much, if any, influence of IFPRI on the design. Certainly IFPRI has been a proponent of giving money to females rather than males, but I am not clear that there was any direct influence or contact of IFPRI prior to the evaluation.

**Quisumbing:** Initial discussions with Pepe claimed that the intrahousehold literature (to which IFPRI has contributed) was instrumental in the decision to allocate the transfers to mothers. There is an early paper by Susan Parker and Pepe de Leon (presented at PAA I think) that stated this. I am not sure whether it cites IFPRI publications per se, but it cites the intrahousehold literature as being very influential in the decision to award transfers to mothers. I am not sure why they considered cash rather than food subsidies.

**Regalia:** I don't think IFPRI had any influence on the development of PROGRESA at the program design stage. To my knowledge, IFPRI work did not have any direct influence either on the decision of allocating transfers to mothers or on choice of transfer instruments (food subsidy, food-in-kind program, and cash). As far as I know, these decisions were all taken by the small group of technocrats working on the conceptualization of PROGRESA. IFPRI had a key role in the definition of the evaluation strategy and planning for its implementation. IADB (Nora Lustig at the time) facilitated the contact and dialogue between the Government of Mexico and IFPRI.

**Rivera:** I was involved in the since the early stages of the design of PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* on the development of what became the nutrition component of the program, particularly on the need of such a component in addition to the cash transfer and the identification of the need of food supplements and their definition and development; but not other components. To the best of my knowledge, IFPRI did not influence any of the components in which I was involved.

**Rodriguez:** Background: [a] In 1992 SL became head of regulatory group Ministry of Trade and Industrial Promotion and working with ER. Evaluation of PROCAMPO (subsidies to corn producers), Liconsa (milk) and Tortilla program—raised questions about in-kind transfers (inframarginal nutrition benefits), and targeting (exclusion, inclusion) (this last point was done in the Ministry of Finance. [b] 12-4: SL appointed to Hacienda, crisis, Jaime Sierra Minister but resigned so SL key in allocations. [c] Jaime Sierra tried to remove generalized tortilla subsidy and improve the targeted one when he was minister of trade. [d] SEDESOL not very sympathetic, but chief of advisors to the Minister, Gerardo Huerta, central to SEDESOL willing to go along; [e] ER to DC (in 2005?) encountered skepticism (i.e., Nora Lustig, Shanta Devarajan, Ravi Kanbur) because thought that 36,000 pilot far too large and doubtful about cash transfer). [f] Pilot with food basket conditional on attendance to health clinics (in Levy-Rodriguez book?). Evaluation by ITAM and nutrition by ? (maybe Laura Martinez who worked for ER?) Pilot in 10/05, evaluation ready by 3/06. Pilot had a lot of operational problems, went badly because of technology problems (e.g., using smart cards). Recipients valued cash and women valued conditionality on attending health clinics. [g] Carmen Hamman (World Bank human development specialist in Mexico) helped to set

up meeting in DC; Judith McGuire very helpful in discussing program design, organized meeting and suggested Paul Gertler, and perhaps IFPRI; Isabel Vial—Chilean experience with monitoring monetary conditions (?). Also ER and group of Mexicans visited Washington and reviewed programs using food stamps and smart cards.

**Rubalcava:** I think IFPRI had an impact by means of bringing on board international scholars that new about literature on intrahousehold allocation (I am thinking of you, Paul Schultz, and Agnes). To my knowledge there are no early papers or other documents that document any such influence. I am sure Daniel Hernandez can elaborate more on this.

**Rubio:** I'm afraid that I cannot be of much help with questions 1–3.

**Ruel:** I have been looking through their original documents which describe the program and they do not include any references whatsoever. They do say that the program targets women as beneficiaries, but do not cite any literature to support this decision. Will keep looking ....

**Santiago:** During the conception of the program—early as 1995—Santiago, Evelyne, and some of the persons that worked with them came to Washington on a few occasions to meet with persons at the IADB, World bank, IFPRI, etc. The trips and subsequent interchange of papers and other information, was to provide evidence on what had been done, if it worked, etc. I would certainly say the idea behind the fact that the subsidy was given to mothers came from those meetings, but I would certainly not attribute them to one place or person as we spoke to many persons then, and I know Santiago and Evelyne also spoke to others. This was also the case for the evaluation. Probably in that sense I would say both IADB and IFPRI and more influence. I am sure a lot of it came from previous academic interchange of Santiago (you can see this in his Ph.D. thesis). I have never seen early papers of the influence, mostly it was meetings, then we prepared PowerPoint presentations for Santiago to take to the President and other cabinet members, but no official documents at that stage. The equivalent in those days of SEDESOL was against the creation of the program, so things were mostly presented during meetings with the President but never made public until the decision to go ahead was granted. By then we had completed a little “secret” pilot in Campeche (in three types of communities) and presented results.

**Schultz:** I saw no indication the IFPRI had a role in designing PROGRESA or determining that the CCTs would go to mothers. That was part of the PROGRESA design from the outset and not part of the evaluation task. Indeed, it was one of the frustrations of the evaluation that this distinguishing feature of the program could not itself be separately evaluated, which would only have been possible if part of the treatment population were provided the CCTs going directly to the father instead of to the mothers or to some combination of parents. This difficulty of not being able to decompose the effects of the program elements and evaluate each separately is an unavoidable limitation of most social experiments, unless the size of the samples involved can be increased substantially.

**Skoufias:** I was hired in May 1998 and joined IPFRI in July 1998, so the development of PROGRESA had already taken place before that. Pretty much everything had been decided by then, regarding the evaluation design, the structure of the program, the timing of the baseline survey and the start of the distribution of the benefits. All I can offer on this question is hearsay rather than personal experiences. From talking to Agnes Quisumbing, Lawrence Haddad, and from various conversations with/remarks by Jose Gomez de Leon (Pepe), the decision to give the benefits to women was influenced significantly by the previous research of IFPRI on intrafamily allocation of resources. Pepe mentioned that fact to me on at least two occasions. It was clear that he was well aware of this literature and in his words, “this was also one of the main reasons IFPRI was chosen to do the evaluation of PROGRESA.” The other institution the PROGRESA administration had considered (and interviewed so to speak) as a candidate for the evaluation was RAND. IFPRI was chosen by the Mexicans because it appeared to have a more solid record on research (especially on intrahousehold allocation) and it seemed more capable/flexible at putting together a good research team on a short notice .... I think more solid information on this could also be obtained from Agnes Quisumbing and Lawrence Haddad.

**Székely:** I might not be the best person to answer them, since I was not really involved so much in the process at the initial stage. I actually was at the IDB when all this was evolving.

**Teruel:** I am not sure. I was under the impression it had been Santiago's idea.

**Todd:** My sense was that PROGRESA had already decided to allocate the CCTs to mothers before IFPRI participated, but I am not 100% sure about that. I am pretty sure that the initial plans were to give cash and not an in-kind subsidy. I remember them saying that the purpose of doing the randomized evaluation was to see what families spent the money on, because many people were skeptical that poor people might spend the money on tobacco and alcohol. PROGRESA had already done the randomization prior to IFPRI's involvement, so I think the randomized design was already set in place, but I think IFPRI did play a strong role in other aspects of the evaluation and contributed to the designs of the questionnaires.

**von Braun:** I believe the gender insights from the food subsidy research, the gender research from the commercialization research and the intra-household research influenced this approach.

**Yaschine:** [a] What was the relation between IFPRI and the development of PROGRESA? I was not aware that IFPRI had had an influence on the development of PROGRESA's design. During my time at *Oportunidades*, all mentions related to IFPRI had to do with the evaluation. The influences on design I heard of were more related to other programs in Latin America, particularly the Chilean programs, and also discussions with international organizations, particularly World Bank (WB). These last influences mainly through the involvement of Santiago Levy who had previously been working at the WB. [b] Did the work at IFPRI have any impact, for example, on the decision to allocate the CCTs to mothers or not to choose a more traditional food subsidy or food-in-kind program or on how the evaluation might be planned to be undertaken? I don't know. I heard much on this initial discussion, but I did not know that IFPRI had been involved. [c] Are there any early papers or other documents that document any such influence? I never came across any papers of this sort. The only papers related to IFPRI that I saw were related with the evaluation. That may be because other papers related with the design of the program were kept in other offices.

## **Question 2—Why was IFPRI chosen to be considered for the PROGRESA evaluation? What were the perceived advantages and disadvantages of having IFPRI play this role?**

**Adato:** One advantage was that IFPRI would be viewed as independent as opposed to a Mexican institution that might create partisan perceptions in its selection. Subsequently this became problematic in that later argument was made that Mexican institutions should have this opportunity rather than an international organization, would better know context, etc. Best sources likely to be Santiago Levy, Daniel Hernandez, Lawrence Haddad, Emmanuel Skoufias, and Patricia Muniz.

**Attanasio:** I recently learned that there was a tender that involved several large organization (RAND bid). That was what I had assumed, but I had never asked why IFPRI nor I had thought about it.

**Birdsall:** I don't know but imagine IFPRI chosen for its technical excellence and because it was outside Mexico and could be independent and viewed as such.

**Coady:** Again before my time. My understanding was that Lawrence Haddad had good "contacts" with Nora Lustig at the IDB and the IDB persuaded the Mexican government to consider IFPRI for the evaluation. Although an "outsider", the IFPRI team gave credibility to the evaluation as being free from political influence. IFPRI also had a reputation for expertise in designing and implementing household surveys for the purposes of policy evaluation and also had a broad set of expertise in issues relevant to the program and in both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods.

**Davis:** I think IFPRI was chosen because of its reputation, but I don't know why it was chosen over other institutions. The perceived advantages were the quality of IFPRI's work, and its experience in field work. IFPRI would be considered as a neutral analyst whose objectivity could not be questioned. The disadvantages were that the PROGRESA staff did not really like to have IFPRI there (at least that is how I felt), were distrustful, and thought they could probably do themselves. I always had the feeling that IFPRI was imposed to a certain extent by levy.

**Fiszbein:** I honestly don't have much knowledge on this. I was not involved with PROGRESA so I really don't know the 'inside story'. In all our discussions and reviews of documents for Mexico, the references to IFPRI (at least what I've seen) do not really address these very interesting 'process' issues. What we always hear is the standard story on how IFPRI brought credibility to the evaluation in a country/context in which there was a natural tendency to discount anything the government would say regarding the program's performance. But I have not seen any good discussion on how exactly the relationship developed.

**Flores:** Why was IFPRI chosen and perceived advantages and disadvantages? Because its credibility (international reputation). At that time IFPRI did not have experience on evaluating CCTs. Being a nonprofit small research institution was an advantage as well as having a smooth administration (not too much bureaucracy). I also think that IFPRI had the power to convene distinguished researchers

**Fuentes:** Defined in vice-Ministry (Levy, Gomez de Leon). Advantage of international organization seen as more independent.

**Gertler:** IFPRI was brought in sometime in 1998 to be a vehicle to get around difficult contracting rule for Pepe and Daniel to hire whom they wanted—you, me, Paul, Petra, and eventually Susan (I think). Pepe told me that he needed an outside group to hire in order to get around contracting issues in Mexico. He knows IFPRI and felt comfortable working with them. He also needed a group with a good reputation so that he could single source to them. In the interest of time and to make sure that it went to someone he trusted that would follow his instructions, he did not want to have a competitive bid. IFPRI agreed to hire us as part of the deal. I think that the main advantages of IFPRI was that they were known to Pepe, had a good reputation in terms of quality demographic/nutrition work, and that they were willing to play ball in terms of hiring who Pepe wanted to do the key work. I do not think that ex ante they perceived any downsides. The one concern mentioned was that IFPRI was weak in terms of economics, but given that they were told to hire us, that was not perceived to be a big deal. I think that PROGRESA viewed IFPRI as an infrastructure that could (1) contract the support and manage the consultants that PROGRESA wanted to use, (2) find people to fill the other roles, and (3) take responsibility for delivering a quality product on time. I think that IFPRI did a good job in terms of these roles and the PROGRESA was happy. The decision not to use them again was based on the fact the PROGRESA then *Oportunidades* realized or thought they could do just as good a job managing the consultants, they could save quite a bit of money, that while IFPRI did a good job, that they brought nothing special to the table, and that it would like better to have a national organization (i.e., INSP) to be the lead institution rather than international firm.

**Haddad:** Apart from the women's income point above, I suppose we were seen on the same technical level as the WB, but with less baggage. We had a good reputation for evaluations, especially in the area of food and nutrition. Nora Lustig was on our Board at the time, I think, and she may have helped give Levy confidence in us.

**Handa:** I came in too late to know about why IFPRI was chosen. The advantages were the technical expertise and credibility (indeed, the Mexicans insisted that Behrman, Schultz, and Gertler be part of the evaluation team for academic credibility). The drawback, which was only recognized later, was that IFPRI ended up being somewhat less engaged in day-to-day design issues and implementation, mostly because of the delay in outposting two staff members as was part of the original agreement. I was recruited late and only stayed for one year; Davis spent two years but he had a rocky relationship with IFPRI management, and ended up being somewhat marginalized by IFPRI which reduced his potential impact. Because there was such a large team, there were a lot of mixed messages and it was difficult to coordinate the TA and

eventual impact. The fact that the team leader was NOT in Mexico was a major drawback for the potential impact of IFPRI's assistance, and lead to somewhat reduced level of engagement.

**Hernández, B:** I'm not very well informed about this decision. Anyway, as long as I know, it was necessary to have an external evaluator, with academic prestige, and it may have influenced the selection of IFPRI.

**Hernández, D:** IFPRI is an institution that combines 2 perspectives: a strong technical expertise and a strong public policy orientation. Those 2 features provided a “non-exclusive” academic perspective to the evaluation and help to keep a productive dialogue with the program's team in charge of operating a large public intervention. Also the ample scope of topics in which IFPRI had worked over the years (not only poverty, or nutrition, or health) made it attractive. Another advantage was the disposition of IFPRI to “invite” external experts to take part in the project. And also IFPRI was very competitive in terms of cost and overhead (in comparison to other alternatives, like RAND). The willingness of IFPRI to help was clear to us from the first meeting we had. I remember arriving one afternoon ( and later José Gómez de León arrived) with only a very general phone conversation a couple of days early and there was a team ready to talk to us and willing to explore different ideas. The main disadvantage of choosing IFPRI was the reaction of several local “poverty experts” who felt they were excluded from the possibility of taking part in the evaluation because we chose IFPRI. The truth is that they were never considered because they lack the technical expertise to cope with a project like PROGRESA-*Oportunidades*. One of the most important effects of IFPRI's work was the training of a large group of technicians who had the opportunity to learn how to perform a very complex evaluation. The generosity of IFPRI's team to work together with young Mexican professionals allowed the country to develop a “critical mass” of young specialists in evaluation with a public policy perspective. And it also showed the advantage to involve good technical work in the design and operation of social policy.

**Hoddinott:** Viewed as independent, impartial, not Mexican, had logistics and management capacity, sufficiently competent to do the work, experience with household survey design and implementation. Technically had to tender for it, but did so under favorable conditions and apparently with PROGRESA predisposed towards selecting IFPRI.

**Levine:** This would be a good question for Santiago, who can be reached at [santiagolevya@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:santiagolevya@prodigy.net.mx). I Once spoke with Santiago about this, and he emphasized the need to have a us institution with an unimpeachable reputation for quality. I Believe the IDB also provided some advice on this. The person to be in touch with is Carola Alvarez, [carolaa@iadb.org](mailto:carolaa@iadb.org). A major advantage that I have seen from the involvement of IFPRI as well as the broad set of academics, yourself included, who participated is that this helped to create a body of published literature on PROGRESA—the evaluation didn't end up just being a report in the grey literature.

**Levy, D:** IFPRI more independent. Perhaps did not want program linked to World Bank. IFPRI had good research track record. Does not know if some personal connections played a role.

**Levy, S:** Why IFPRI selected for evaluation? (In response to the question, what would have been the next best alternative, Levy said that there was no close alternative, probably no international organization or private organization that would have made sense. Probably the next best choice would have been some U.S. university.) [2.1] International organization (not captive of Mexican interests, increased credibility, made internationally exportable). [2.2] Not associated with structural adjustment (very sensitive issue at time given Mexican financial crisis) as would have been, e.g., World Bank. [2.3] Not involved in direct lending as would have been, e.g., World Bank or IDB. [2.4] Nor private organization, which would have reduced credibility, particularly at time of concerns about structural adjustment. [2.5] Prestige as a serious place for policy-relevant analyses. [2.6] Vehicle for engaging international academics to enhance evaluation and credibility of evaluation (e.g., Behrman, Schultz mentioned as explicit examples).

**López:** At that time in Mexico, there were no experts in this matter, neither intentions of serious evaluations in any program. Because of that, he looked for expertise among foreign universities, institutes, and international organizations who could support this initiative. He had important references from IFPRI, but

the most important for him was the academic background of IFPRI collaborators and the quality of their work; this was what made him insist on their contracting. I recall about the resistance of high-level government employees on engage IFPRI because of the concern, at that time, on the high cost of the evaluation. They suggested to engage individual experts. However, Pepe was considered much more convenient to count on the support of an institution like IFPRI. For him, the wide recognition of IFPRI, was also an investment for the sake of the sustainability of the Programme during the change of public administration (end of Zedillo administration). Pepe was able to handle the evaluation costs as part of the operating costs of the Program, by the way, one of the lowest even among the social programs of minor dimensions. You already know this history of the IFPRI side. But I will tell you something I clearly recall: after having a meeting with colleagues of IFPRI, Pepe and myself were walking down to the hotel, and then he told me about his great concern at that moment, for convincing Santiago and the team of “Hacienda” about the importance of having “the best” experts on the field of evaluations. He knew about the resistances on contracting foreign experts, but mainly on the cost of the evaluation program. Some key actors were not willing to allocate “too many” resources to an effort addressed to evaluate the programme instead of invest on the population living in poverty situation. What they don’t see—Pepe said—is that this is an investment and the guarantee that we would not return to the old practice of disappearing programs when an administration finishes and nothing is known about the program’s impacts, this is a really waste of resources; particularly in the case of a program that is aiming to show results in the medium and long term.

**Lustig:** Nora Lustig to IADB in 9/77 with intent of improving data and impact evaluation. Conversation with Pepe Gomez de Leon about program when NL at, or about to join, IDB in 9/97 (they had known each other since Colegio de Mexico, 1977). Pepe about to accepted (or just had accepted) position as PROGRESA Director. NL’s concern that such programs only lasted as long as governments. To give legitimacy desirable to have evaluation. At that point no baseline. Meeting set up for discussion about potential evaluation at IDB in late 1997. High regard for IFPRI (had been on board). Lawrence Haddad at meeting. Also Paul Gertler, Jere Behrman, Paul Schultz, Petra Todd standing in for Jim Heckman. Also probably some World Bank people. (Ariana Legovini may have been there and may know). At IADB meeting, still open that IADB might do evaluation but in next months clear IADB not eligible from Zedillo’s perspective because Gomez de Leon said Zedillo did not want multilateral (IDB, World Bank) involved since it would politicize process. Had to go through bidding. Options from Mexico. Pepe preferred IFPRI because of trust in IFPRI’s objectivity and technical qualifications. Pepe had prior affiliation with IFPRI (probably through Lawrence Haddad). External to Mexico more neutral. Knowledge of international and applied economics. Model different—IFPRI sought out, not need to “sell” itself. Not returns to IFPRI resources. Low overhead in comparison at least U.S. universities.

**Neufeld:** Sorry, no idea.

**Orozco:** To my understanding, there were some aspects that contributed to this decision. The evaluation was important in order to demonstrate the viability of the project in an objective way from the point of view of JGL at PROGRESA and also from Santiago Levy (SL) at SHCP, there was a necessity to go beyond the classical approaches of documenting results of programs in terms of budget expenditure, coverage and perception, to the social impact measurement. There was an agreement that the evaluation project should be developed as an integral effort instead of isolated activities of evaluation, and there were no institutions, public or private, in Mexico with proved expertise to conduct such an evaluation, although universities and academic centers had different fields of good skills, there were no documentation of sustained practices involving national and international partnerships and researchers from several institutions. (In fact, the second stage of evaluation by 2002 would demonstrate the complexity of the process in terms of developing multidisciplinary teams from different institutions and technical degrees). The expertise and active participation of JGL and his team in academic and research issues at national and international level, as well as SL, determined the conception of the researchers they needed involved in the project and IFPRI resulted a solid institution to achieve this. There were also other institutions like WB, IDB, RAND with expertise and disposition to include researchers from different fields of expertise, but at the end costs and persons were also definitive. From my point of view some advantages came from the fact that IFPRI researchers, with high technical profile would permit to isolate the evaluation from personal or institutional ideology in terms of what the evaluation would have to be or if positive/negative results would represent agreement or disagreement with government policy. Definitely the empathy with the PROGRESA project

in terms of a good policy practice and the technical conjunction to evaluate it was a key issue. A huge advantage was the possibility to preserve as much as possible the evaluation project from political changes, and also to project it internationally as a good practice. The major disadvantage came from the criticism of national researchers and public servants in the way that according to them a deep knowledge of local conditions was precondition to evaluate the program, and in this sense local researchers could do better, but at the end there were really minor and isolated complaints.

**Parker:** I believe that Nora Lustig suggested IFPRI and that Pepe thought it was a good idea. The seminar that was arranged seemed to go well and I imagine that in some sense sealed the idea. IFPRI had the advantage of being a serious place but could be viewed as an external entity to Mexican policymaking, unlike for instance the World Bank. Disadvantages were perhaps IFPRI had no experience in Mexico (or dealing with Mexican policy makers) and was perhaps a bit naïve in some areas.

**Quisumbing:** PROGRESA wanted to be evaluated by an external agency with an independent international reputation, but it had to be a research agency and not a donor agency. Interestingly enough, the Government of Mexico (GoM) paid for the evaluation (unlike other evaluations we've done that were paid for by the IDB). I think they did not want to be beholden to a donor agency in commissioning the evaluation themselves. They also did not want to be seen as “evaluating themselves” which is why it was important that an external agency did the evaluation. I was not sure why they did not ask a university to do the evaluation. I think they wanted to assemble a team of experts from different universities and IFPRI had the capacity to fulfill that role. One thing I must mention is that Nora Lustig was an important matchmaker between GoM and IFPRI. I remember a meeting at the IDB which Nora convened just to make sure that the possible players met each other. Following the IDB meeting, we had some meetings at IFPRI before the final proposal to GoM was written.

**Rivera:** I remember discussing with José Gómez de León the advantage of having a non Mexican, international institution with excellent reputation regarding objectivity and scientific excellence, to ensure the credibility of the evaluation. I do not remember the specific reasons for selecting IFPRI as opposed to other institutions.

**Rodriguez:** [2a.] Not good Mexican option. [2b.] International important for credibility and to attract the best scholars to do the evaluation. [2c.] IFPRI was well known and open to range of options (since PROGRESA, etc. had some definite ideas about some of the participants (Behrman, Gertler, Schultz) and about critical components of program—e.g., random experiment as proposed by Pepe, targeting and statistical approaches). [2d.] Some relevant background though some concern about to what extent relevant for socioeconomic evaluation. [2e.] Some IFPRI staff (Haddad, Ruel, Quisumbing, Hoddinott). [2f.] Most important: mechanism for involving Behrman, Gertler, Schultz (reports and presentations emphasized IFPRI who hired JB, PB, and PS). (Need for some Mexican input, INSP and others.)

**Rubalcalva:** There was a political decision since the beginning of the planning of the Program that its implementation had to be accompanied with an objective evaluation. This was a change in attitude in the way social policies were planned in Mexico. The decision was made at the Presidential level. One of its consequences was that PROGRESA was launched as an entity in some way independent from SEDESOL. In the effort of making the evaluation credible, and because there was no previous experience in Mexico, the government assigned it to IFPRI.

**Ruel:** I found an email from March 1998, where I summarize IFPRI's first visit to Mexico to discuss with Daniel Hernandez the evaluation of the program. Benedicte de la Briere and I were the two people from IFPRI who participated in this first visit. I mention in my email to the IFPRI team the following: “The reasons why “they” (PROGRESA) are interested in having IFPRI conduct this evaluation are that: (1) IFPRI is prestigious; (2) neutral politically speaking; and (3) is not American government. They believe that IFPRI has all it takes to do this and we just need to justify it in the proposal” (email from Marie Ruel, Tuesday March 3, 1998, 9:23 am to Lawrence Haddad, Agnes Quisumbing, and Benedicte de la Briere). My original emails also mention that they were planning to invite two other firms to compete: RAND and 1 national (Mexican) institution. Subsequent emails seem to indicate that they eventually decided against this (or other firms did not submit a proposal) and that we did not compete in the end.

**Santiago:** From what I could perceive from working with the team, Santiago had a good opinion of the persons working at IFPRI and wanted them to work on the evaluation, but I am not sure how the original decision came from. What was clear from the beginning was that it had to be an external entity to ensure the evaluation would be independent of whatever was going on in Mexico at the moment about whether to go ahead with the program or not.

**Schultz:** A group of researchers wrote components of the evaluation proposal given what we knew about the planned program. Each researcher designed components of the evaluation, such as my proposal to review the effect of the PROGRESA program on the enrollment of children in school. These research components were assembled into an overall evaluation proposal by IFPRI and submitted to Mexico in the international competition for the evaluation contract. The group of researchers who ultimately used IFPRI to coordinate their proposals had been informed about the general need to evaluate the Mexican innovative CCT program through a small conference at IADB, which was coordinated by Nora Lustig.

**Skoufias:** I was hired in May 1998 and joined IFPRI in July 1998, so the development of PROGRESA had already taken place before that. Pretty much everything had been decided by then, regarding the evaluation design, the structure of the program, the timing of the baseline survey and the start of the distribution of the benefits. All I can offer on this question is hearsay rather than personal experiences. From talking to Agnes Quisumbing, Lawrence Haddad and from various conversations with/remarks by Jose Gomez de Leon (Pepe), the decision to give the benefits to women was influenced significantly by the previous research of IFPRI on intrafamily allocation of resources. Pepe mentioned that fact to me on at least two occasions. It was clear that he was well aware of this literature and in his words, “this was also one of the main reasons IFPRI were chosen to do the evaluation of PROGRESA.” The other institution the PROGRESA administration had considered (and interviewed so to speak) as a candidate for the evaluation was RAND. IFPRI was chosen by the Mexicans because it appeared to have a more solid record on research (especially on intrahousehold allocation) and it seemed more capable/flexible at putting together a good research team on a short notice .... I think more solid information on this could also be obtained from Agnes Quisumbing and Lawrence Haddad.

**Székely:** I guess that IFPRI gave some kind of technical background and credibility, which not many other institutions could have given, and this is the main value added. In fact, perhaps technically there are other institutions that could have done the same kind of job, but the value added of IFPRI was a kind of “moral authority” that not many others have.

**Teruel:** I believe there was not much previous experience conducting serious evaluations in Mexico. There was a belief that there was no human capacity in Mexico to conduct a rigorous, evaluation. In addition, hiring an external and international institution would help by credibility. At the end, I believe this was true. The first round results were used to make the case that PROGRESA was useful and that it should continue. It did not only through a new administration but also through a change of party. I believe the fact the IFPRI conducted the evaluation was key for this.

**Todd:** I think there were a number of firms considered, including RAND, but that IFPRI was the lowest bidder. IFPRI had a lot of international experience, but as I did not participate in choosing the firm, so I do not know what all the perceived advantages were.

**von Braun:** Reputation

**Yaschine:** [a] Why was IFPRI chosen to be considered for the PROGRESA evaluation? I don't know why. [b] What were the perceived advantages and disadvantages of having IFPRI play this role? Advantages: it was an international institution with previous experience with evaluation and therefore the results would be legitimate and solid. Disadvantages: I believe some people disagreed with having an international institution doing the evaluation. However, I don't know about this for sure since I was not in PROGRESA at that time.



**Question 3—What was the relation between the IFPRI evaluation and the evolution and sustainability of the PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* program? Were there dimensions of the program that might have developed differently or with different timing if IFPRI had not been involved?**

**Adato:** It is always difficult to establish causality, but these are likely areas [i] Targeting and densification: Densification was already underway before IFPRI evaluation and there may have been additional reasons for densification, but IFPRI interim findings on problems related to targeting exclusions had been reported earlier and concerns reinforced by final reports—Michelle Adato, “The Impact of PROGRESA on Community Social Relations” and Michelle Adato, David Coady, and Marie Ruel report on “An Operations Evaluation of PROGRESA from the Perspective of Beneficiaries, Promotoras, School Directors, and Health Staff.” IFPRI study was not the only evidence of the issue but documented it strongly and systematically. Heard that subsequently the exclusions problems have been much less salient, but don’t know. [ii] Transparency: It may be that these same reports that discussed transparency and participation issues may have contributed to more attention to this in *Oportunidades* (e.g., can provide feedback on computers). [iii] Extend to urban areas—I’ve heard that the IFPRI evaluation had something to do with this but I don’t know how. (David Coady would know—talk to him regarding targeting in urban areas.) [iv] I just saw in the Levy 2006 book that he has a page or so on the changes that came about after the evaluation recommendations. (b) Audience for evaluation results: Worked very closely with PROGRESA in presenting results and helping to think through the implications at workshops and meetings. There was an audience interested in the findings for impact evaluations (also true for Nicaragua, Turkey). Some tension because when one works closely with a government and develops a relationship over time there is a tendency to want to come out with “good news” so researchers have to be careful to give a candid, honest assessment, while also being cognizant of the implications and using good judgment in how findings are reported. (c) Program survival: One hears that the IFPRI evaluation played an important role in the decision to continue program in Fox administration. Useful to talk with Fox advisor?

**Attanasio:** I am not sure. It is clear to me that the evolution of the programme especially after 2000 depended crucially on the presence of the evaluation and its credibility. I also think that IFPRI had been instrumental to the evaluation. The counterfactual is difficult though. If some incompetent organization had run it, things would probably have been quite different. If RAND had run it ... I have no idea. They might have done as good a job.

**Birdsall:** My understanding is that the existence of a well-known and clearly independent evaluation, with peer-reviewed publications already out and with visibility in the international community, helped ensure the sustainability of the basic idea of PROGRESA from one administration to the next.

**Coady:** I think the IFPRI team helped to reinforce the commitment of the PROGRESA team to stick to the control/treatment evaluation design and also played a crucial role in determining the questions used to elicit information from households. Earlier mistakes/vagueness in survey questions were probably eliminated and other questions refined. Much of this is very topic specific: e.g., one needs to know the best/accepted practice for eliciting health and nutrition information from households. This I realize refers to the evolution/sustainability of the evaluation as opposed to the program. I think that IFPRI played a key role in ensuring that PROGRESA maintained committed to the conditionality of transfers and thus to the integrity of both the program objectives and the designed evaluation strategy. Although PROGRESA realized this, hearing it from IFPRI time and again helped to reinforce this message and thus encourage PROGRESA to “stick to its guns”. There was continuous political pressure to drop conditionality as well as to include control localities. IFPRI hierarchy (admittedly much smaller in number and more malleable than the current one I’m dealing with) love to point to “impact”. However, I always thought this was too ambitious and even naive or arrogant. PROGRESA was already committed to the program design and evaluation design (although IFPRI maybe helped improve the latter) and IFPRI’s role was to support and reinforce this commitment.

**Davis:** I am sure that there were some subtle changes that are due to IFPRI, but I can't think of any at the moment! Sorry. I can't make up my mind as to the role that IFPRI played in the sustainability of PROGRESA. While in later years the evaluation, and IFPRI's role in it, certainly increased the prestige (though primarily international) of the program, when I was there we were a well kept secret, in the sense of our role was not made common knowledge in Congress, etc. because they were scared that there would be a reaction. In fact, in those days, PROGRESA itself had a low profile in the country. So it is not clear how important IFPRI was in the political sustainability.

**Flores:** Evaluation, evolution and sustainability. The external impact evaluation of PROGRESA was a determinant factor for the decision of the PAN government to continue with the Program (they changed the name to *Oportunidades*). Later on the impact evaluation was also determinant for the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) in the planning and design of the loan to the Mexican government. In addition the evaluation taught the Mexicans the importance and value of program evaluation and they decided to use their own researchers and continue (up to now) with the evaluation process of *Oportunidades*. The Program constantly uses the evaluation results to adjust and improve operations. I do not know about the dimension question, again Emmanuel, Ben, and Ashu can comment on this.

**Fuentes:** Advantage of being international. Main advantage of PROGRESA was that commitment to evaluation from the beginning—very forceful. Commitment of Zedillo to program, transparency, targeted, not overly bureaucratic, evaluated very important.

**Gertler:** I guess that I do not see IFPRI as being key in any of this. The evaluation itself was critically important in terms of documenting the success of the program. However, IFPRI was not key in the design of the evaluation, the data collection, nor writing most of the key papers. Most of the key papers were written by us sometimes with IFPRI coauthors and Susan Parker. David Coady, John Hoddinott, and Emmanuel did some nice work, but they all got involved later. In addition, IFPRI did not really run the data collection as that was done by PROGRESA themselves under Daniel's direction. Moreover, when it came time to brief the policymakers, it was mostly the non-IFPRI folks who did the presentations. However, IFPRI recruited Emmanuel and he was not really an IFPRI person that they brought to the table. I think that there were a number of firms that could have done just as good a job as IFPRI.

**Haddad:** Probably a lot of the administrative and operational issues were influenced by Ben Davis who was based in Mexico, but I am not sure what these were. The evaluation was very positive—across many dimensions—and that probably helped the programme politically.

**Handa:** While I was there, there were several substantive design issues that the outposted staff had the opportunity to raise repeatedly, and which had an impact on the later design of the program: (1) the technical flaw in the targeting algorithm which had geographic specific cut-off points designed to identify the same proportion as poor (eligible). This meant that some ineligibles in poorer communities were actually worse off than some eligibles in less poor (later) communities. This was discussed many times with the Director of Evaluation and the team and led to, for example, the unified model; (2) The exit rules were discussed many times; originally PROGRESA had a re-certification after 3 years. We 'convinced' the team that for a long term human development program this did not make sense, and forced them to engage in a discussion of alternatives, some of which are now being implemented. Our influence was to have them recognize that the 3 year exit rule was inconsistent; (3) during this time the WB came up with a poverty paper on Mexico which highlighted the fact that Mexico had erased 20 years of gains in poverty in one year when the tequilazo crisis occurred. The Mexicans did not want to release this; they also felt that the paper was unfair because substantial gains had been made in social development which allowed Mexico to recover quickly from the crisis, and this was not reflected in the WB paper. We (Davis and Handa) were asked to write a paper which reflected this and that provided a counter-argument to the Bank paper. This paper was written with PROGRESA staff, and was subsequently published in CEPAL Review. The WB paper was never officially endorsed by the government. This story highlights the importance of the outpostings to PROGRESA, and the benefit of daily interactions with counterparts. These I felt were valued and had an impact on thinking and subsequent iterations of the program.

**Hernández, B:** I think the main contribution of the IFPRI evaluation was the continuity of the program itself with the change of federal administration in 2000. The “survival” of a program like this from one administration to another is something outstanding, and I have heard anecdotal references mentioning that without the rigorous evaluation and the positive evaluation results, the program could have been cancelled.

**Hernández, D:** From all the work that IFPRI provided to the program, I have come to think that the most important was the short summary document developed in the mid-2000. I still remember the meeting I had in DC with my colleagues to discuss what were the best options to communicate in a political efficient way the results and impacts of PROGRESA in order to “convince” the politicians that it should continue into the new administration and that it should be expanded. I was introduced to the IFPRI expert in this topic. She showed me different examples of the type of product I was looking for and then she helped prepare the short document that we used to inform about the evaluation (with the 9 volumes of reports). I still think this is one of the most important issues in public policy and I consider that by learning it I have been able to help in the success of the social development policy over the last years by replicating (in different ways) this idea. By showing strong effects on school enrollment, it helps the decision of expanding the scholarships to 10–12 grades. This evaluation exercise, in comparison to others that took place since 2000 for other programs, had the advantage of a close dialogue between managers and evaluators, and the benefit of the experts providing their knowledge from the implementation of other programs, and not only restricting their interaction to providing the evaluation results. I think many members of the evaluation team can provide a list of the ideas we discussed over the years and some of their proposals of change in the program. Why those were not implemented or which ones are now part of the program is a very promising area of research that we could explore.

**Hoddinott:** Substantial redesign of surveys, probably enriched data and therefore analyses possibilities. Addition: Its important to note that IFPRI cannot claim credit for the decision to randomize. That decision was made by the Mexicans. [21-9-07: For example] One of IFPRI’s less well-known contributions to the PROGRESA evaluation was work done to re-design the household and community questionnaires. The re-design of the household questionnaire was extensive and resulted in a more detailed consumption module, a much better design of questions surrounding income generation as well as additional work on other topics such as households’ interactions with PROGRESA and their exposure to shocks. Some of these improvements directly helped PROGRESA (for example, information on whether there were long waits at health clinics), some informed the initial evaluation of PROGRESA (for example, it would not have been possible to discern the impact of PROGRESA on diet quality if we had not re-designed the survey) and some were used later by other researchers to uncover impacts of PROGRESA (on income generation, see work by Paul Gertler and on mitigating the effect of shocks, see the work by de Janvry and Sadoulet) that were not originally envisaged in the evaluation design.

**Levine:** Basically, the evaluation was undertaken partially (perhaps primarily) as a strategy to permit a large social program started under one administration (Zedillo) to survive under a subsequent one (which turned out to be Fox). As you probably know, the historical pattern in Mexico is for large upheavals of the social program strategy with every new administration; even good programs are tossed out just for the sake of starting afresh and having new ribbons to cut. Gomez de Leon and Levy thought that they could protect against this by having a visible, internationally recognized, A+ evaluation, so they tried to make the evaluation as bullet-proof as possible. On what might have happened differently without IFPRI—that of course is the counterfactual we don’t have. Informed people on this would certainly include Levy, and perhaps also Stef Bertozzi, who is in charge of the *Oportunidades* evaluation (reachable at [inspbertozzi@hotmail.com](mailto:inspbertozzi@hotmail.com)). Stef can be helpful in indicating how the evaluation results from PROGRESA informed the design of *Oportunidades*.

**Levy, D:** Conventional story is that PROGRESA persisted into next government, in contrast to most programs, given the perceived success documented by IFPRI evaluation. Tempered with two considerations: (i) what would have been the effect if the evaluation had said the program not successful, with implications for CCT programs and for evaluations more generally (e.g., the Mexican mandate for annual evaluations of programs). (ii) Conversation with Santiago Levy led DL to understand that it took a

lot of deals and political maneuvering for Fox to agree with continuing, which makes the story about the impact of evaluation a little less romantic.

**Levy, S:** Key influences: particularly Besley and Kanbur on analyzing food programs, Schultz on schooling, Haddad and Kanbur on intrahousehold inequalities, Behrman and Deolalikar (low nutrient elasticity with respect to income), Tarcio Castenea (targeting, SISBEN in Colombia). Impact of evaluation on Mexican program: [3.1] Persuading Zedillo (very analytical). [3.2] Persuading congress (meetings in which evaluation summarized). [3.3] Program changes (e.g., extend to 12th grade). [3.4] Persuading Fox directly to continue with program. [3.5] Obtaining support of key persons in international community for continuation of program (e.g., Iglesias in part through Birdsall at IDB and IDB loan, David de Ferranti at World Bank).

**López:** The work of the IFPRI team was very valuable. It helped to formulate a very rigorous evaluation work that allowed to convince about the possibilities of a precise monitoring of the Programme, and to count on the absolutely necessary statistical instruments. I still recall the reports on long days and hours of discussion on the contents of the evaluation instruments. One of the most serious difficulties faced by the elaboration of “PROGRESA” was to construct the evaluation machinery, the framework of the evaluation, at the very beginning of the Program. Not all the arguments on the discussions were economic; not all the actors involved were willing to question a program of this kind, to put the programme to the test. PROGRESA overcome most of these difficulties. It had benefits from previous work elaborated in CONAPO (by Rosa María Rubalcalva and an expert team), and from that on, the Programme produced its own data for evaluations. At that time—economic crisis time—this work was considered almost nonsense, however, nowadays could be considered as its best investment. But it was required to convince those who did the national budget and had responsibility of funds for programs on the eradication of poverty. In my opinion, the strength of the Programme was placed on its programme evaluation design. The very first evaluations carried out by IFPRI team, not only were crucial, useful in order to transcend from one administration to another, but also to prove the convenience of the Programme expansion, and in order to establish the basis for adjustments in its operation. Were there dimensions of the program that might have developed differently or with different timing if IFPRI had not been involved? I would say yes. For example, in matters of education it was clear that distributing differentiated scholarships for children at different levels of education could be considered at that time, a complex logistical aspect; also, monitoring of co-responsibility seemed to be a huge task. I recall that there was a lot of pressure for the starting of the Program, and it was suggested to start without having data for base line, however due to the IFPRI’s team commitment, the work was accelerated and this situation was solved, otherwise a contaminated evaluation could be the outcome.

**Lustig:** How would evaluation been different if IFPRI had not been involved? IFPRI played role as facilitator, with some external involvement; had to attract good people, good management; IFPRI experience in handling research by request; independent setting but grounded in need to follow timeline, etc. Evaluation contribution included: (a) sustainability (Zedillo to Fox), (b) expansion (beyond original rural communities), and (c) program modification (9–12 grades covered). [NL mentioned first.]

**Maluccio:** My understanding is that with respect to the program, one of the more influential pieces of research in terms of program operations was likely to be that done by Adato, Coady, and Ruel, referred to as the operations Report (or some such title).

**Neufeld:** I know that the evaluation as such was extremely vital, particularly for sustainability of the program. At the time that the evaluation was done, there was not a lot of know-how in program evaluation in Mexico so as far as I know, the key aspect of IFPRI’s involvement there was to lend credibility to the evaluation results.

**Orozco:** It was a very important issue the fact that JGL planned with IFPRI and made possible the development of the process to deliver results in strategic moments: at budget discussions each year at the Congress and for the final evaluation results, just before the new administration came when Daniel Hernández (DH) took the lead. SL also supported with his full involvement to provide with resources from

SHCP on time and conciliate with political actors, and of course as you already know with his contribution to the discussions. SL and DH played an important role in making the learning process and results accessible to decisionmakers from the new administration in 2000, but also IFPRI and individual researchers involved in the evaluation contributed enormously to communicate and develop the second stage, to expand the coverage and improve the design. IFPRI provided a very important document by the end of the evaluation, a summary of results and policy recommendations in a fully accessible language that considered the technical strength of the process but at the same time included real possibilities of improvement. Those recommendations were practically all incorporated. By 2001, even when the contract with IFPRI was done, the institution and researchers were extremely generous in providing information, advice and participate in sessions with the new government public servants and consultants, I think this disposition of IFPRI created incentives for better timing in decisionmaking about the program.

**Parker:** Hard to say. Presumably if IFPRI had not been hired some other competent place would have been hired, such as RAND so I am not clear the evaluation results (e.g., of more schooling, expenditures) would have been much different. Although I do not wish to take the IFPRI results for granted. I think IFPRI was a successful choice in the sense that it was viewed as independent and competent, so I do not recall for instance anyone trying to criticize the results saying the evaluators were biased etc. during the actual process, there were a number of moments of tension between IFPRI/PROGRESA which are perhaps normal in such a large effort.

**Quisumbing:** I think that the generally positive evaluation of PROGRESA led to its being expanded (instead of scrapped) when the new administration took over. I am not sure whether the program might have developed differently. But I think the fact that there was a randomized evaluation in the field might have prevented (or at least delayed) political pressure to expand the program into the control communities.

**Regalia:** In my opinion, IFPRI evaluation results helped a great deal to keep the program on track (meaning with little or no changes) during the transition from the Zedillo administration to the Fox administration. In the first semester of the Fox administration, the new team managing PROGRESA was looking for introducing many operational changes that could have hampered the program's operation and therefore effectiveness. IFPRI evaluation results played a key role as supporting evidence for those who instead advocated that the program still needed sometime to mature and no radical changes were needed. The overall results of the evaluation also pushed the GOM to consider expanding *Oportunidades* to urban areas. The results of PROGRESA's impact on grade progression inspired the GOM to consider extending the education grants to upper secondary. The results of the targeting analysis inspired changes in the *puntaje* model (from a regional to a national system, sistema unico de puntajes). These are just some examples of dimensions of the program that were influenced by IFPRI results.

**Rivera:** Although my response is speculative, I think that IFPRI's evaluation was key in the fact that *Oportunidades* was sustained during the Fox Administration, despite the fact that Fox belonged to a Political Party that was different from the one that ruled during the previous administration (during the previous seven decades!) with a very different ideology.

**Rodriguez:** [3a.] Very high quality in terms of analysis (though subsequent to IFPRI became more heterogeneous). [3b.] Very high quality in terms of maintaining schedule, etc. (important giving the timeliness of reports for congress, and for incoming president, etc).

**Rubalcava:** IFPRI involvement in the evaluation was crucial to the evolution and sustainability of PROGRESA. The evaluation gave to the program a lot of credibility. So important it was that it was the first social program in Mexico that survived not only a change of administration but also a change of a political system.

**Ruel:** My perception is that IFPRI's research was key in the continuation and scaling up of PROGRESA into *Oportunidades*. This was clearly described to me by Santiago Levy who recalls having sat down with the incoming president with all of IFPRI's evaluation results—which he said was in Spanish, which also helped—and explaining to him all the positive impacts of the program on poverty reduction. According to

Santiago, these results were crucial in terms of ensuring the continuity of the program from one administration to the next.

**Santiago:** I personally believe it was crucial for the program to continue beyond the first phase, to increase budget and expand so fast. Further, I would say the sustainability of the program beyond a presidential election—and worse even, change of party—had a lot to do with the first evaluation results. The exposure beyond Mexico and academic interest helped a lot as well. Mexico had never had a similar program that spanned more than one presidential term, nor one that had been expanded at such speed. The media constantly quoted the evaluation results, congress members used them for their budget negotiations. It was important, that Mexico has (since 2001) a law stating that all programs that use Federal resources have to be evaluated and results presented to congress, this came from the utility that congress members and the Audit office gave to the PROGRESA evaluation process/results. I think the first evaluation results helped maintain some of the features of the program. There was a lot of discussion on whether it was useful to give more money to girls than boys, whether giving the subsidy to the mothers would create a huge increase in domestic violence or alcohol use, increase fertility, etc. Having a serious external evaluation took the discussion to a more impartial level, less opinion-based. Having sat in those very heated cabinet discussions, I would say that without the evaluation results—having a different timing—some of the original features may have been modified. Then again, we do not have a counterfactual.

**Schultz:** The concern voiced by various Mexicans I talked to, some of whom were running PROGRESA, was that if the program was successful, it was likely that the next Mexican administration, regardless of its party, would disown the program of the previous government, and advance their own solution to the poverty problems in Mexico. Santiago Levy seems to have been aware that having an outside of the Mexican government competitively let contract to evaluate the PROGRESA program might demonstrate to the subsequent government what features of the program had worked, and which features needed to be restructured or redesigned going forward. This forethought by the Mexican government leadership led to out outsourcing of the evaluation project.

**Scott:** I think the most important impact of the IFPRI evaluation was the political sustainability of the program after 2000, across the administration-, party- and indeed regime-change. This was unprecedented in Mexico's recent history even within the PRI regime, for example Salinas' flagship (but opaque and unevaluated) Pronasol program was immediately scraped by Zedillo. The temptation to scrap PROGRESA and improvise something new was strong in the first months of the Fox admin, and I think the national and international credibility due to the evaluation was indispensable for its survival (I remember an infamous early meeting where some of us had to defend the program, citing the evaluation, against the first, highly skeptical Fox-appointed PROGRESA director, citing newspaper reports!). On the other hand, I think the evaluation had no significant impact on optimizing the original design of the program. I think this was an important limitation of both the design of the evaluation (which was designed to confirm the original design, rather than identify optimal reform opportunities), and its use by the program's administration.

**Skoufias:** I am quite confident that the evaluation of PROGRESA by IFPRI played a key role in the continuation (and expansion) of PROGRESA. The timing of the release of the results of the IFPRI evaluation was very well orchestrated and the involvement and the contribution of the famous academics from the US (I think you know who these are) was played up to its maximum potential benefit. I think it is very hard to pinpoint exactly what were the specific contributions of the findings of the IFPRI evaluation in the design and structure of the next of stage of PROGRESA (*Oportunidades*). The following two I think are two changes that can be loosely attributed to the evaluation though I have some serious doubts about this: (i) The targeting method and/or cutoff point were revised and (ii) transfers extended to cover children attending secondary school. In my humble opinion, both of these changes had been determined before hand. It is just that the IFPRI evaluation provided a good and timely justification for implementing these "improvements" in the program.

**Székely:** My impression (which I do not know if it will be useful or not) is that the evaluation of PROGRESA has had enormous impact on the way in which social policy is done in Mexico, and as you say, it is difficult to assess the effect of the IFPRI being involved in it. Besides, if you look at the list of

researchers participating in the project (e.g., you, Petra, etc.), not many actually work full time at IFPRI. As far as I can recall, it was basically Emmanuel and David based there and coordinating all the research, and some others (in fact, my wife worked there as an RA at some stage), but the core of the high quality-high visibility-high profile people, like yourself, were collaborating with this institution only for this specific project. One question is what lead you to join IFPRI in this, and again, perhaps the answer is its “moral authority” and perception of being a serious, committed, professional, and credible institution.

**Teruel:** I am not sure.

**Todd:** It seems that the results of the evaluation results played a strong role in convincing President Fox to keep and extend the program. As the main design of the program is randomized, the evaluation methodology was pretty simple and any firm other than IFPRI would probably have adopted the same kind of evaluation approach. There is no doubt that the results from the Mexican evaluation had a strong influence on adoption decisions by other Latin American countries. The IDB seems now to be sponsoring PROGRESA-like programs in many countries.

**von Braun:** I could only speculate.

**Yaschine:** (a) What was the relation between the IFPRI evaluation and the evolution and sustainability of the PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* program? The evaluation coordinated by IFPRI had an important incidence in the sustainability of PROGRESA. Without the evaluation the program may not have been able to continue. This was mainly the case because: (a) The results of the evaluation showed that the program had positive impacts on the beneficiaries and that it was well targeted (although it recommended improvements in targeting). The fact that the evaluation was done by an independent academic institution with international recognition and experience made the results credible and legitimate. It was a means for transparency and accountability. It was the first time that an evaluation of this sort was done in Mexico, so it gave much credibility to the program. (b) Were there dimensions of the program that might have developed differently or with different timing if IFPRI had not been involved? I think that what was relevant was the fact that the external evaluation was done at the time when it was done. As I said before, if there had not been positive evaluation results in 2000, PROGRESA might not have continued. However, I could not say whether this would have been different if another institution had done the evaluation. I think IFPRI had the merit of doing a good job with the evaluation; but the same outcome could have come if the evaluation was done by another good institution (we just don’t know this counterfactual).

#### **Question 4—What was the relation of IFPRI through PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* on other CCT programs and on other program evaluation efforts?**

**Adato:** One spillover of PROGRESA evaluation was IFPRI being asked to do other evaluations. IADB for LAC (Ferdinando Regalia) and World Bank for Turkey (Jeanine Braithwaite, Ph.D., Turkey Social Risk Mitigation Co-Team Leader, Human Development, Europe and Central Asia The World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433, phone (202) 458-2724 fax (202) 614-1611, email [jbraithwaite@worldbank.org](mailto:jbraithwaite@worldbank.org)) would be sources with regard to influence of IPFRI-PROGRESA evaluation on decision to make evaluation part of loan and why IFPRI was chosen.

**Attanasio:** It seems to me that IFPRI was linked (and rightly) to the PROGRESA evaluation and that that was crucial in them getting other work in places such as Honduras, etc.

**Birdsall:** PROGRESA helped put IFPRI on the map as the go-to place on CCTs. I asked Sam Morley to do a book on CCTs for CGD and he co-authored it with Coady—not a coincidence that both were at IFPRI.

**Coady:** I think that the PROGRESA evaluation removed much of the nihilism regarding whether ambitious programs and rigorous evaluations can be undertaken in real life and real time. It put a dent in the all too convenient attitude that “it can’t be done” and only naive academics would think otherwise. But the IDB

played a big role in expanding the program in the region. I also think that the PROGRESA evaluation really reinforced the growing argument that program evaluation was crucial to improving the effectiveness of public expenditures and foreign aid. The IFPRI experience also pointed to the fact that good evaluations need to be incorporated into the beginning of the program and that sufficient background analysis on existing data is important. Designing and implementing surveys requires expertise and experience as well as commitment to good practice.

**Davis:** Most definitely the experience with PROGRESA led to IFPRI to participate in evaluations of other programs, such as RPS in Nica (my last six months in Mexico I worked on this), Honduras, and Brazil. This came from the IDB bringing IFPRI on board as part of its loans. IFPRI was fundamental in design of those evaluations, from the beginning. Here you should talk to John Maluccio and Rafael Flores for more info.

**Flores:** IFPRI through PROGRESA on other CCT programs. Once IFPRI got the PROGRESA evaluation the IADB offered the PRAF evaluation a year later, then IFPRI competed for the RPS evaluation in Nicaragua and also got it and the next year the Ministry of Health of Brazil invited IFPRI to evaluate the BA program. These were the first CCT programs in Latin America. The PROGRESA evaluation opened the door to IFPRI to participate in many more CCT evaluations throughout the world.

**Fuentes:** The whole idea of evaluation of social programs was reinforced very much even though other programs did not have the same extent of resources and researchers became more integrated in the process. Became part of the way of thinking.

**Gertler:** I believe that the evaluation was a big boost to getting other countries to evaluate their CCT programs. Part of this was because the evaluation was seized upon the IDB and World Bank as something worth while. They used it to push of the evaluations in Central America. However, I believe that evaluation happen because Santiago, Pepe, Daniel, and others wanted it to happen and wanted it to be high quality. I think that it would have happened with or without IFPRI. In this sense, I do not believe that IFPRI's role was the critical element.

**Haddad:** We also worked on RED/Nicaragua and PRAF/Honduras and Bolsa/Brazil. In the first two we worked closely with the IDB and the governments and probably had a bigger impact on the design and implementation of those programmes, given the weaker capacity of the government's own analysts (the Mexicans were very good). In Brazil, we had an IFPRI staff member based in Brasilia and this helped in influencing decisions.

**Handa:** Am not in a position to judge this. Secondhand information suggests that the PROGRESA evaluation opened IFPRI up as 'the' firm to go to for the evaluation of other evaluations.

**Hernández, B:** I think PROGRESA-*Oportunidades* has been sort of milestone on the culture of evaluation of social and health programs in Mexico. When started, the evaluation design of PROGRESA-*Oportunidades* was by far stronger than the ones of other programs (some of them did not include an evaluation plan). The idea of including an evaluation component since the inception of the program has been included in most social and health programs after PROGRESA. In fact, by law all social programs in Mexico are subject to an evaluation, and the National Evaluation council has been established to provide general guidelines for the evaluation (talk with Gonzalo Hernandez, Juan Rivera or Chele Teruel about this council, they are members).

**Hernández, D:** Of course, most of these questions are of a difficult-to-answer counterfactual sort—how would it all have evolved differently if IFPRI had not existed (with regard to 1 and 2) or not been involved (with regard to 3 and 4). We realize that such counterfactual questions are very difficult to answer—but we hope to do as best we can with your help, in addition to Santiago's, being key being key. I think the evaluation influenced 3 areas of social policy since 2000 (additionally to help maintaining the Program itself): (1) it gave strong evidence of the importance of good targeting and help the final decision to close the "Tortilla in kind transfer" (and also a strong revision of the milk list of beneficiaries); (2) it provided evidence on the benefits of the nutritional supplements and help the decision of "enriching" the milk



provided by the milk program (after 50 years of operation of this program); (3) through the discussions of targeting, it help to develop a geographical targeting scheme that its one of the three main elements of the urban anti-poverty strategy of HABITAT. But another important outcome was the evidence that big reforms were possible in the social policy, traditionally an area unenthusiastic to changes because of the risk of social unrest and protests. Two areas took advantage of the opportunity to transform things: the health sector (with the Seguro Popular) and the housing sector. Paradoxically, one sector in which I would think IFPRI would have strong influence, like the agriculture sector, with very large transfer programs, practically did not change anything, keeping a very regressive allocation of resources.

**Hoddinott:** Undeniable, but hard to identify IFPRI components from PROGRESA/*Oportunidades*. JH at IADB meeting, Argentinean minister suggested not going to be outshone by Mexico/IFPRI with regard to evaluating social programs. Demonstrated possibility of doing good evaluations, etc.—induced greater interest in, say IADB, World Bank and elsewhere.

**Levine:** The PROGRESA evaluation, without doubt, set a new standard for evaluation of large social programs and is invoked habitually now, by us among many others, as an example of how it's possible to undertake a rigorous evaluation in real-world settings. It certainly made it close to impossible to do a CCT program without including a fancy evaluation, so there are a lot of those out there. (CCTs wouldn't be so popular at all without PROGRESA and the positive evaluation results.) Someone who has looked at virtually all of these is Amanda Glassman (aglassman@brookings.edu); she wrote a working paper for us on the CCTs, and the first draft had a long part on the evaluation components, much of which was cut in the final but you might find it useful—you could get it from her. Ariel Fiszbein at the World Bank might have some useful comments on how and why the CCT programs were so influenced by the PROGRESA example.

**Levy, D:** Strong impact of IPFRI evaluation on evaluation culture in Mexico and on evaluations of other CCT programs in Latin America. Surprised at radical intensification of evaluation in Mexico—given constraints on what could be done realistically. Also huge effect in demonstrating that big governmental program evaluation possible—thus followed by others. That IFPRI did the evaluation helped because IFPRI had stature for doing good research in the developing world. Helped also by having top academics such as JB, PS, PG associated with evaluation—gave more visibility. That big governmental program also helped a lot—rather than small NGO experiment.

**Levy, S:** Broader impacts: [4.1] Programs in Nicaragua, Honduras, Brazil etc. (partly through IDB?). [4.2] Precedent for CCT and for systematic evaluation. [4.3] Committee on Global Development Evaluation Initiative.

**López:** Thanks to the evaluations, the Programme has acknowledgement of the multilateral agencies, and the Programme is now replicated in several countries in the Latin American region and other regions as well. I have been in contact with some delegations from other countries that there were designing similar Programs and they requested information about IFPRI evaluation, the selection process, the comparative advantage of its work versus other research centers work. Among others, I recall delegations of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Even, there were visiting experts in Mexico from Canada and UK requesting me information on the IFPRI evaluations on gender, an issue that you know was less investigated. But even so, the one available, it has been very much requested.

**Lustig:** Spillovers: PROGRESA became famous because of evaluation (Economist, NY Times, Gary Becker wrote an op-ed, NY city)—example of program and somewhat of evaluation. Evaluation key for persisting into Fox administration. IADB Burke Dillion (VP IADB) wanted to stop all IDB financial support for CCT because of apparent corruption in Nicaragua: NL used PROGRESA as example to persuade her not to.

**Maluccio:** I am probably best informed about (4) with respect to the evaluation we did in Nicaragua (RPS) and to a lesser extent Honduras (PRAF). I believe there are a few ways in which the IFRPI evaluation of PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* influenced other CCT programs. The influence was concentrated, but not limited to their evaluations. First, there was substantial overlap of individuals working on PROGRESA—

with RPS: Michelle Adato and Ben Davis; with PRAF: Dave Coady and Agnes Quisumbing. Michelle directed the social evaluation of RPS, building on her experience with PROGRESA (I presume she will/can share more details). Davis was outposted to Mexico and traveled to Nicaragua at the outset of the RPS evaluation, helping design initial questionnaires for enrollment into the program and proxy means tests that were ultimately used for household selection in household targeted areas. I believe the original approach here owed much to the design of PROGRESA. (Household targeting was part of the design of RPS as agreed between IDB and the government of Nicaragua.) Dave Coady influenced cost work done in Nicaragua, sharing his experience and expertise from the PROGRESA case. Second, IFPRI and program sponsored events (such as the external advisory committees for RPS and PRAF) permitted exchange of ideas and performance outcomes among researchers and program functionaries across these programs and to PROGRESA. One of these, held in Copan in 2001, involved much of the RPS and PRAF teams, as well as Agnes from the IFPRI-PROGRESA team. Many of the IFPRI evaluation reports (done by experts like yourself) were used as templates for work done in Nicaragua. In general, the successful example of the PROGRESA evaluation seems to have made the use of experimental design more feasible in the other evaluations as well as making it advisable so that rigorous evidence would be available. The IFPRI evaluation of RPS, among other evaluations carried out, were used by Nicaragua to provide evidence of the success of the program thereby permitting expansion of the program and an extension to the second tranche of the original IDB loan, in 2003 (see Maluccio & Flores Research Report 141 for more details).

**Neufeld:** Again, that fact that the *Oportunidades* evaluation has been so well documented and presented in so many different venues has contributed to the emphasis that we know see on program evaluation. I do not know, however, how much of this can be attributed to efforts of IFPRI, versus IDB, World Bank and others.

**Orozco:** During the past years PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* has received visitors from many countries, being the evaluation experience one of the highlights, some Latin American countries have established contact either with IFPRI or researchers of the evaluation team after knowing the experience. The evaluation was published in Spanish and English, and much information about it has been spread in Spanish through international visits to policy makers and government officials in Latin American countries who might not speak English, which I think has helped to make more familiar the possibility to go for a similar effort.

**Parker:** I don't know much other than what I have followed externally, e.g. Honduras and Nicaragua. Certainly, the *Oportunidades* project gave IFPRI a jumpstart in the field of CCTs, although I am not sure whether they are still pursuing evaluations in this area.

**Quisumbing:** IFPRI acquired quite a good reputation because of PROGRESA, and I think because of this experience, was commissioned to evaluate PRAF in Honduras and RPS in Nicaragua. Ask John M. I also think that the positive evaluation of PROGRESA had an impact on getting other programs to turn towards cash instead of food. I am not sure that this impact was necessarily good in the short run. For example, I heard (from Patrick Webb, shortly after the decision was made) that Bangladesh's Food for Education program was being converted to a cash program because of the findings from PROGRESA, which the World Bank had taken to heart. At that time, there was a concern that Bangladesh did not have the necessary infrastructure to handle a cash program, although the cash stipend program has now been operating for many years (Akhter Ahmed has done many evaluations of this). There is still a heated debate within Bangladesh (and the donor community there) about food vs. cash transfers, and at our last workshop in Dhaka (for which I missed snowy Middlebury); IFPRI was being criticized as favoring food transfers. Akhter's rejoinder was that we have, in fact, evaluated many cash transfer programs! BTW, I am not sure this is what you're asking in Question 4!

**Regalia:** I would say that the evaluation of PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* gave IFPRI a great hedge to compete for and win new contracts for the evaluation of a number of CCT programs right when CCTs were being designed and implemented in LAC and other regions (I believe since 2000, IFPRI has been involved in the evaluation of Nicaragua, Honduras, Brazil and more recently Turkey and El Salvador). IFPRI experts (many of them now gone) have also played.

**Rivera:** It is difficult to separate the effect that PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* had on other CCT programs in Central and South America and on Evaluation efforts from the effect of IFPRI. I would say that PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* had a high impact on CCT in Latin America and that the evaluation by IFPRI was very important since it showed that the programs had effects and also showed the importance of evaluation.

**Rodriguez:** [4a.] Evaluation more broadly in Mexico, including establishing Consejo Nacional de Evaluacion de la Politica de Desarrollo Social de Mexico (this is very recent). All programs must be evaluated annually with clear specification of objects, targeting, impact; this was done in 1998. PROGRESA's evaluation and data bases created for this purpose have contributed very much to its international prestige. [4b.] International (e.g., Egypt, Palestine, Brazil): ER thinks over focused on evaluation and under focused on policy and procedures (e.g., why have a CCT?, how large such transfers be, how implement pilots). [4c.] Desire to induce more research more broadly, new scholars (ER says limited success).

**Rubalcalva:** When the administration changed from Zedillo to Fox. IFPRI reports on the evaluation of PROGRESA were very helpful to the discussion of whether the program had to continue. Aside from that, my understanding is that IFPRI was not anymore involved in *Oportunidades*. However, the team of experts continued.

**Rubio:** I can give you some examples of the influence of PROGRESA evaluation on other CCT programs or evaluation efforts, but as you mentioned, it is hard to tell whether that would have happened even without IFPRI involvement. I was involved in the planning of the Jamaican CCT program evaluation and the PROGRESA/IFPRI experience was very influential on defining the scope and terms of reference of the Jamaican CCT impact evaluation. Unfortunately, I was not able to follow up the evaluation through the end, but Dan Levy might give you a sense of the influence throughout the whole evaluation process. The Nicaraguan CCT program was also evaluated by IFPRI, and of course, there was an influence from the PROGRESA evaluation. IFPRI reports on PROGRESA were a major input on the review of CCT program evaluations that Laura Rawlings and myself wrote a few years ago. Today, PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* remains the best example of a government program rigorously evaluated in Mexico. It is the "gold standard" for Mexican social programs in terms of evaluation; at SEDESOL we aim at having all major programs as rigorously evaluated as PROGRESA. These are some of the factors that, I believed, made the PROGRESA evaluation so influential. Rigorous evaluation design, recognized by academics worldwide. Reports publicly available and easy access to databases for further analysis or replication. Very good international dissemination strategy, especially among international organizations and U.S. academia.

**Ruel:** I only have anecdotal evidence here that our work with PROGRESA was crucial in IFPRI receiving call for proposals for evaluations of similar programs in the region, i.e. PRAF (Honduras), RED (Nicaragua), Bolsa (Brazil), and even beyond Latin America (e.g. in Turkey).

**Santiago:** I think the relation of IFPRI through PROGRESA on other CCT programs was very important. The evaluation results provided evidence on the results of the CCT "formula" that was taken to other Latin American countries and other areas but I am not so sure about how much PROGRESA influenced those per se. I also think that played an important role in those countries being willing to assign resources for their own evaluations.

**Schultz:** I was not directly involved in subsequent reevaluation efforts coordinated through IFPRI to study *Oportunidades* or other programs in Central and South America. A program administrator in Mexico asked me to review the evaluation proposal for the Mexicans, and to review the progress reports that were subsequently produced (presumably by IFPRI) for the *Oportunidades* program.

**Skoufias:** I think IFPRI's evaluation of PROGRESA, was key for IFPRI to be chosen to do the evaluation of PRAF in Honduras, and the evaluation of Red de Proteccion Social in Nicaragua, and the evaluation of the CCT program in Turkey. The latter two evaluations (I think) were determined through international competition and bidding. It should be noted that the PROGRESA evaluation was not awarded through

bidding. The POGRESA administration visited RAND and IFPRI and then asked IFPRI to send in a proposal (*ex post*).

**Teruel:** In Mexico, the evaluation of *Oportunidades* was definitively an example to follow in the sense that the value of having results was perceived and its usefulness for continuation of programs. Since then there has been efforts within the ministries to evaluate all social programs. The CONEVAL (Consejo Nacional de Evaluacion has been created) 2006, with the purpose of setting the norms with which all social policy and programs with operational rules must be evaluated. I believe *Oportunidades* was a precursor to all of this.

**Todd:** I am not sure about the role of IFPRI in particular. I know IFPRI also did an evaluation for Nicaragua, which was also randomized, so I am sure they had a strong role in that country.

**von Braun:** The recognition gained by IFPRI had a direct influence on IFPRI's later involvement in CCTs Brazil, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Turkey.

**Yaschine:** [a] What was the relation of IFPRI through PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* on other CCT programs and on other program evaluation efforts? After the success with the evaluation of PROGRESA, IFPRI went on to evaluate several other cash transfer programs in Latin America. I think the PROGRESA evaluation was like a platform for IFPRI; it gave it international recognition. International organizations like IDB and World Bank probably had much to do with this since they were involved in promoting PROGRESA like programs in the region. There have been many international cash transfer conferences organized by WB or IDB in which IFPRI researchers that were involved in the PROGRESA evaluation participated as evaluation experts. This was the case even long after the 2000 evaluation was published and IFPRI was no longer involved in the evaluation of *Oportunidades*.

**Question 5—Whom else would be particularly useful for me to contact and/or what other sources can you think of that would be particularly useful for me to be aware of. (I have already obtained extensive feedback from some of the principal players, including Santiago Levy, Evelyne Rodriguez and Daniel Hernandez. And of course I am trying to contact others. But it would be good to have your list of suggestions just to be sure that I am not missing anyone.)**

**Attanasio:** A person I talked quite a bit when I first went to PROGRESA was the deputy director, a woman called Patricia Muniz who was very close to Pepe. She was very knowledgeable about the program at the time (not as much as Liana or Monica but she knew a lot). At the time I found her very useful. My understanding is that after Pepe's death she left the program. I think she was working at Sedesol in some other program. My ex-student Ana Santiago now at the IADB was Santiago Levy's envoy in PROGRESA, so she knows a lot about the early design (she went to the communities for the early pilots, she even tried the nutrisano). She is very nice but VERY discreet so I am not sure how much you can get out of her!

**Birdsall:** Ruth Levine. Nora Lustig. Others at IDB?

**Coady:** Comment: from PROGRESA, Monica. From IFPRI: Lawrence Haddad, Emmanuel S., John H, and Agnes Q.

**Davis:** Ashu Handa, Magda Torres. Obviously Susan Parker, whom I am sure you have talked to, and Monica Orosco.

**Fiszbein:** Of the people currently at the World Bank, I suspect Emmanuel Skoufias is probably the best source of information, and you seem to have already covered the key people in Mexico.

**Gertler:** I think that Susan Parker knows a lot and you might try Monica Orazco. I would also talk to Emmanuel Skoufias.

**Haddad:** Susan [Parker]??? Cannot remember her name, but an American based in Mexico was close to or part of the Mexico team. Benedict de la Briere, who I think spent quite a bit of time in Mexico as an IFPRI staff member. Emmanuel Skoufias of course. Nora Lustig would be good to contact too.

**Hernández, B:** I think you have spoken with key people already. I would suggest only Concha Steta, Mónica Orozco, and Liana Yaschine, whom you may have already contacted.

**Levine:** Oh, just got to this list! Obviously Paul Gertler would be helpful; the Mexicans really depended on him a lot, I gather. If you are feeling brave, talk with JP Habicht at Cornell, who thinks it was a terrible evaluation with lots of conceptual problems—[jh48@cornell.edu](mailto:jh48@cornell.edu). Emmanuel Skoufias at the World Bank, who was at IFPRI at the time, I think.

**Levy, D:** Skoufias, Haddad, B. Davis.

**López:** There are several documents, not specifically on the IFPRI's influence, but I believe that the subsequent work, and the research done by the Mexican government and by the multilateral agencies, is valuable sources. I have been looking for media articles on PROGRESA's background that could be useful for you. In order to have the documents you indicate it will take perhaps more time, because there is need to look into Pepe's archives that we still have. But if you need documentation please let me know.

**Maluccio:** In addition to Rafael Flores (especially for PRAF) and Ben Davis (especially for early RPS work) whom I presume you have contacted, I would suggest two people at IDB who were involved at different stages in PROGRESA/*Oportunidades*. In part, I suggest them since I know that their view of IFPRI's work has been mixed. Moreover, since they were consumers of the IFPRI research and part of the design team for the RPS & PRAF programs, they may have other insights into how IFPRI research had an impact as you ask in (4). Ferdinando Regalía ([ferdinandor@iadb.org](mailto:ferdinandor@iadb.org)); Carola Alvarez ([carolaa@iadb.org](mailto:carolaa@iadb.org)).

**Neufeld:** As I mentioned, definitely Juan Rivera, Tere Shamah, Jorge Rosado from the Universidad of Queretero was very much involved in the development of the supplements, but I am not sure how much he was involved in the discussions around the evaluation. I would also suggest Paul Gertler and Carola Alvarez from IDB.

**Orozco:** By the time the evaluation team was formed I was in Chicago for my master degree, but to my knowledge Nora Lustig gave good support to JGL and DH to do it, maybe you could talk to her. Also Susan might know a good part of that story.

**Parker:** I don't know much other than what I have followed externally, e.g. Honduras and Nicaragua. Certainly, the *Oportunidades* project gave IFPRI a jumpstart in the field of CCTs, although I am not sure whether they are still pursuing evaluations in this area.

**Quisumbing:** Nora Lustig? People at the IDB?

**Rivera:** You have contacted the key players. In the health sector the key players were Dr. Juan Ramón de la Fuente (then Secretary of Health, now President [Rector] of the National University [UNAM]), Dr. José Robles (then undersecretary of health and now Director of the Faculty of Medicine, UNAM), and Dr. Manuel Urbina (I think he was Director General, currently working with *Oportunidades*). Daniel Hernández Franco who was always close to José Gomez de León will have a lot of information on discussions that he had with JGL.

**Rodriguez:** [1a.] For weekly meetings of preparatory group, wrote short 1–2 memos on various program components. ER wrote one on women and intrahousehold allocations and explicitly referred to

Quisumbing's work on this topic. [1b.] ER not aware of other direct references, etc. Not to her knowledge IFPRI studies on Mexican agriculture and studies that were examined as basis for proposed changes.

**Rubalcava:** I cannot think of somebody else. (Susan, of course). At that time Carlos Rojas was the secretary of SEDESOL. My understanding is that he never supported PROGRESA, but may be enrichful to have his opinion.

**Rubio:** I would suggest that you contact Monica Orozco; Concepción Steta (Oportunidades); the IDB staff involved in the loan preparation for *Oportunidades* (Ferdinando Regalia and Carola Alvaro); and Dan Levy (evaluator of the Jamaica CCT program)

**Ruel:** In addition to the IFPRI people I mentioned to you, it may also be useful to contact some of our IDB contacts, like Ferdinando Regalia, who was our main contact for the evaluation of the Red de Protección Social in Nicaragua.

**Santiago:** I would also try to contact Monica Orozco who has excellent memory and worked very closely with the team (she worked at PROGRESA so she can tell you more about the relation between IFPRI and the program).

**Schultz:** I did not directly interact with Levy, but came to think of him as the intellectual godfather of the program, and Zedillo as its protector at a time when oil export prices were falling in Mexico. Hernandez was helpful in informing me of the program's progress and helped me through many conversations to understand the structure of the program's implementation, and the limitations of the data I was using and why obtaining test data from the schools would be difficult to match to students, or for that matter why the health programs were not likely to cooperate and provide us with local health records to facilitate health evaluation efforts. I originally wanted to relate to the educational enrollment and progression rates to the health impacts of the program on the children and their families.

**Székely:** I do not know if this is of much use, but hope so. Perhaps someone you could contact for a good flow of information is Nora Lustig, who, as you surely remember, was at the IDB and organized a first series of meetings on evaluation with Jim Heckman, and others.

**Teruel:** Susan Parker, Emmanuel Skoufias.

**Todd:** These are the main people that I talked to. Susan was also there from the beginning. I suppose you also have already talked to former IFPRI people (such as David Coady, Emmanuel Skoufias). Maybe also Paul Schultz, since he was heavily involved in the schooling part of the initial evaluation.

**von Braun:** You may like to call on Per Pinstrup-Andersen and Lawrence Haddad with your questions.

**Yaschine:** I can't think of any other contacts besides the ones I sent you before.

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