

DISCUSSION PAPER

# COSTING OF A PACKAGE OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY TRANSFERS AND SERVICES TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CALCULATIONS AND RESULTS



No. 32, November 2019

**MIRA BIERBAUM AND MICHAEL CICHON**

PAPER COMMISSIONED FOR PROGRESS OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN 2019-2020:  
FAMILIES IN A CHANGING WORLD

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# SUMMARY

This paper presents a costing analysis for a set of family-friendly services and transfers: income protection for children, people of working age and older persons; universal health coverage; and early childhood care and education and long-term care services. The social protection and care policies that are included in the costing have enormous significance for families and broader society, and their implementation would have particularly important impacts for women, since they are over-represented among those without income security, they face specific life course contingencies and they take on a highly disproportionate share of unpaid care work. Previous work studied different components of this package more in-depth, often also providing projections for the future. The comparative advantage of the present study is that it looks at an integrated package of family-friendly services and transfers and estimates the costs for a large sample of countries (151 to 166 depending on the scenario).

The costing is based on the basic idea of identifying gaps in a country's current level of protection. The focal question is not so much what countries have already achieved (though this is, of course, indirectly taken into account) but to what extent gaps in protection remain and how much resources countries would have to invest or reallocate to close those gaps. Assumptions for the costing were formulated as far as possible based on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202) (International Labour Conference 2012) and internationally recognized standards. The results of the costing give a rough indication of the order of magnitude of resources that would need to be invested or re-allocated to family-friendly transfers and services to close existing protection gaps. The costing shows that such a package is affordable in many countries. Depending on the scenario, median costs range between 4.6 and 10.1 per cent of GDP. Those countries that cannot finance the full package can initially afford at least some of its critical elements, such as health care or income support.

# RESUMEN

En este artículo se presenta un análisis de los costos de un conjunto de transferencias y servicios orientados a las familias, a saber: la protección de los ingresos para la infancia, para personas en edad de trabajar y personas adultas mayores; la cobertura universal de la salud; y el cuidado y la educación de la primera infancia y los servicios de cuidados prolongados. Las políticas de protección social y de cuidados que se incluyen en la estimación de costos revisten una enorme importancia para las familias y la sociedad en su conjunto. Su implementación podría ejercer efectos especialmente importantes entre las mujeres, pues estas se encuentran sobrerepresentadas entre quienes no gozan de seguridad de los ingresos, enfrentan contingencias específicas en el curso de vida y asumen una carga sumamente desproporcionada del trabajo de cuidados

no remunerado. En investigaciones previas se han analizado en mayor detalle los distintos componentes de este paquete, donde a menudo se ofrece un conjunto de proyecciones. La ventaja comparativa del presente estudio es que en él se analiza un paquete integral de transferencias y servicios orientados a las familias y se estiman los costos para una extensa muestra de países (entre 151 y 166 países según el caso).

La estimación de los costos se funda en la idea primordial de determinar las brechas en el nivel de protección actual de los países. La pregunta central no se orienta tanto a conocer qué logros ya han alcanzado los países (aunque esto, desde luego, se considerará de manera indirecta), sino en qué medida se mantienen las brechas de protección y cuántos recursos tendrían que invertir

o recaudar los países para salvar dichas brechas. Los supuestos para la estimación de costos se formularon, en la medida de lo posible, en función de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, la Recomendación num. 202 de la Organización Internacional de Trabajo sobre los pisos de protección social (Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, 2012) y un conjunto de principios internacionalmente reconocidos. Los resultados de la estimación de costos ofrecen una indicación aproximada de la magnitud de los recursos que se necesitaría invertir o reasignar para

superar las brechas de protección social a través de transferencias y servicios orientados a las familias. De los cálculos se desprende que numerosos países están en condiciones de afrontar los costos de este paquete. En función del escenario de que se trate, los costos medios varían entre el 4,6 % y el 10,1 % del producto interno bruto. Aquellos países que no pueden financiar la totalidad del paquete pueden inicialmente costear al menos algunos de sus elementos fundamentales, como la atención de la salud y el apoyo a los ingresos.

## RÉSUMÉ

Ce document présente une analyse du coût des services et transferts favorables à la famille : protection des revenus pour les enfants, les personnes actives et âgées ; accès universel aux soins de santé ; services de soins de la petite enfance et services de soins de longue durée. La protection sociale et les politiques de soins incluses dans les soins revêtent une importance cruciale pour les familles et la société dans son ensemble, et leur mise en œuvre aurait un impact important pour les femmes qui sont sur-représentées dans les catégories de personnes dépourvues de la sécurité d'un revenu, qui doivent faire face à des aléas particuliers et accomplir une charge disproportionnée en matière de soins non rémunérés. Nos travaux précédents ont étudié de manière plus approfondie différentes composantes de cet ensemble de transferts et de services, établissant des projections pour l'avenir. L'avantage comparatif de la présente étude est d'envisager un ensemble intégré de services et transferts favorables à la famille et d'en estimer le coût pour un large échantillon de pays (151 à 166 selon le scénario).

L'estimation du coût s'appuie sur la nécessité d'identifier les lacunes dans le système actuel de protection d'un pays. La question focale n'est pas tant de savoir ce à quoi les pays sont déjà parvenus (bien que cela soit, de toute évidence, indirectement pris en compte), mais dans quelle mesure des lacunes demeurent en matière de protection et combien de ressources les pays devraient investir ou réaffecter pour les combler. Des hypothèses de coût ont été échafaudées sur la base des Objectifs de développement durable, de la Recommandation N°202 sur les socles de protection sociale (Conférence internationale du travail 2012) et des normes internationalement reconnues. Les résultats de l'estimation du coût donnent une idée de la magnitude des ressources qui auraient besoin d'être investies ou réaffectées dans des transferts ou des services favorables aux familles pour combler les lacunes existantes. L'estimation du coût montre que cet ensemble de transferts et de services est abordable financièrement par de nombreux pays. Selon le scénario, les coûts moyens se situent entre 4,6 et 10,1 du PIB. Ces pays qui ne peuvent pas financer l'ensemble des transferts et services peuvent se permettre initialement au moins certains de ses éléments cruciaux, notamment la couverture sanitaire et le soutien au revenu.

## 1.

# BACKGROUND AND BASIC APPROACH

UN Women's flagship report *Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World* aims to answer the question: how can laws, policies and public action support households and families in ways that enable women's rights to resources, bodily integrity and voice? The Report starts from the premise that strengthening gender equality within families is critical to ensure women's rights to resources and income; to bodily integrity; and to voice and agency. Drawing on positive examples from around the world, the report outlines a comprehensive agenda for public action, by states and civil society, that supports diverse families while triggering the kinds of changes in power dynamics, social norms and stereotypes needed for women to enjoy substantive equality.

To implement the recommendations outlined in the chapters of the Progress Report, UN Women advocates that governments need to design a package of family-friendly social transfers and services, aimed at supporting diverse families and protecting women's rights. The importance of this was reinforced by the Commission on the Status of Women which has urged governments to implement family-oriented policies aimed at achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN ECOSOC 2018, UN ECOSOC 2019). The analysis does not cover all the policy elements included in the Report. Those for which established methodologies for estimating the costs do not exist, such as enacting family law reforms; introducing and enforcing laws on violence

greater longevity) and they take on a highly disproportionate share of unpaid care work. A summary of this analysis, as well as information on how countries can mobilize the required resources to implement these policies are included in the *Progress Report* in a section called: 'What will it cost? Financing a package of family-friendly policies to support gender equality and women's empowerment'. This paper provides background information on the methodology that was used and introduces the calculations.

The costing aims to identify the resources that a country would need to invest or reallocate in order to realize a package of family-friendly transfers and services. It focuses on the identification of current

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