



# POVERTY AND FREEDOM

RESEARCH REPORT



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**POVERTY  
SOCIAL PROTECTION  
AND EMPOWERMENT**

## **RESEARCH TEAM**

**Written by:**

Agustina Bozzano

Luis Colmán

Noelia Téllez

**Review:**

Juan Carlos Pane

Nancy Ramos

## Executive Summary

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This report is an analysis of the Paraguayan Social Protection System (SPS) and its main objective is to propose alternatives to change the welfarist approach and incorporate a perspective that involves people from the grassroots, empowers them and generates more sustainable changes. To this end, the case of the Tekoporã Program has been studied in order to analyze its protection, prevention and social promotion components and then make recommendations for strengthening the program and the entire SPS. The methodology used corresponds to the documentary-bibliographic method. A review of the general literature on the SPS was carried out, followed by a review of the particular case in Paraguay to later delimit and justify the Tekoporã Program as a case study. This was followed by a budgetary analysis of the Tekoporã program and its components, in addition to a brief discussion of the Tenonderã social promotion program in order to make recommendations for strengthening the Paraguayan SPS. The level reached corresponds to descriptive research and the approach used is mixed, of the concurrent triangulation type. The main result of the research is that the current SPS and its corresponding National Poverty Reduction Plan (NPRP) prioritizes social protection and prevention components over social promotion components. This reflects a welfarist approach, since it only achieves short-term positive impact that do not guarantee a sustainable path out of poverty. Despite the fact that its design contemplates promotion and empowerment indicators, there are limitations that hinder the achievement of this objective. A greater budget allocation to advocacy programs is recommended, together with a participatory process that incorporates the theory of change based on empowerment as the driver of permanent change. That is why it is proposed to generate synergies with civil society organizations, which the necessary tools and trajectory to achieve the promotion of Paraguayans.

# I. INTRODUCTION

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This report was developed with the objective of analyzing the protection, prevention, and social promotion components of the Paraguayan SPS, taking the Tekoporã program as a case study. The latter is the main strategy of the NPRP 2020-2030 of the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) for the creation of a Social Protection Floor (SPF). The program aims to protect and promote people in order to lift them out of poverty. The study aims to explore the design of this program in terms of the elements of prevention, protection and promotion, which are the pillars for the empowerment of people. The combination of these three components is essential to transform people's lives, ensuring a sustainable exit from poverty and the development of people's own capacities to achieve autonomy. In this sense, the Tekoporã case will be used to build an argument on the role of government social programs in empowering people.

This case study seeks to collaborate in the effort to build a Paraguayan SPS that effectively responds to people's needs, providing the necessary tools for them to improve their living conditions. It is the initial kick-off of a series of studies that should be carried out to achieve a better understanding of the real impact of social protection programs in Paraguay as a basis for strengthening them.

## II. LIT REVIEW

The literature review is necessary to inform the theoretical basis of this study, justifying the relevance of the protection, prevention, and promotion components in the SPS. SPS have existed for decades, and the literature developed in this regard presents perspectives and critiques that can be applied to the Paraguayan context for a better understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of existing protection programs. This review is the foundation of the analysis conducted in this study, and provides an informative and structured look at social protection as a poverty reduction mechanism.

The first part of the review is both historical and theoretical, presenting the changes that SPS and its components have undergone within the literature through practical observations. The second part focuses specifically on empowerment and its importance within the SPS. As demonstrated through this review and in the study, empowerment strategies are key to effective protection, prevention, and social promotion in reducing poverty.

### 2.1. Social Protection, Prevention, and Promotion

Globally, social protection programs are gaining increasing relevance due to their promise for poverty reduction and their potential to support countries' economic growth (Gentilini and Omamo, 2011; Sedlmayr et al., 2018). Over the years, the focus of these programs and perspectives about the main components that ensure their success have been a topic of debate.

In the 1990s, most programs focused on so-called *safety nets*, seeking to support sectors of the population that would otherwise fall into severely low living standards and to promote those who have already fallen into poverty to a minimum standard of living that is acceptable (Conway and Norton, 2002). The need to create safety nets through social and economic assistance programs for the most vulnerable sectors of the population gained prominence due to a recognition of the limitations of market policies and the need to achieve more inclusive growth (World Bank, 2000; Jolly, 1991).

In 2000, the World Bank introduced the idea of social protection as a *springboard out of poverty* to ensure that people can recover more quickly from crises and return to an acceptable standard of living (Conway and Norton, 2002). Within the discourse developed since these years, there is a clear debate about whether social protection programs should be aimed at alleviating vulnerability rather than assisting the poorest; whether they should be focused on

risk management and prevention; whether they should be rights-based; and whether actions to protect basic welfare can or should promote economic opportunities (Conway and Norton, 2002; World Bank, 2009).

As early as 2007, Sabates and Devereux (2007) criticized the risk management approach because it disregards the structural nature of poverty and vulnerability and fails to incorporate considerations for long-term poverty reduction. In fact, these authors maintain that poverty reduction occurs through the positive relationship between welfare security and autonomy or empowerment (ibid). They therefore propose the idea of “**transformative social protection**”, which is based on a conceptualization of vulnerability that goes beyond merely economic and temporal considerations. This concept is based on the fact that vulnerability must be approached from the point of view of structural inequalities (ibid).

Rather than focusing on risk as an exogenous factor to be managed, transformative social protection sees vulnerability as a reality inexorably rooted in the socio-political context where exposure to risk is minimized through the transformation of the context (Sabates-Wheeler and Waite, 2003). Therefore, based on this idea, social protection should advocate for the stability of people's economic growth, having four key components: a) protective measures to alleviate poverty, b) preventive measures that seek to prepare people and anticipate situations that may cause them to fall into poverty, c) promotional measures that seek to improve people's real income and strengthen their capabilities, developed through the creation of programs to improve people's quality of life, and d) transformative measures that seek to address issues of social justice and exclusion. This typology, therefore, goes beyond the idea of protection as simple networks or stepping stones, and seeks to develop people's own capabilities for the sustainability of growth. These last two issues are related to the concept of empowerment, which will be discussed later.

Parallel to this debate and in the context of the 2008 financial crisis, the International Labor Organization (ILO) promoted the concept of the SPF which is defined as "a socioeconomic foundation that aims to rebuild the undermined legitimacy of globalization and mitigate its effects on human inequality and insecurity" (Nemiña and Echandi, 2020, p. 58). This concept defines social protection as a mechanism to prevent and alleviate vulnerability and poverty. The SPF was consolidated in the international agenda between 2010 and 2011, when it achieved the endorsement of the Millennium Development Goals Summit, the 100th Session of the International Labor Conference, the Brasilia Declaration signed by Latin American



member countries under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the G20 (ibid). In this way, a process of dissemination of the idea of SPF as a fundamental right began, and coordination among international organizations began to advise national governments on policies to achieve this floor.

Due to this strong international influence, the approach based on the idea of social protection floors as a provision of rights and as a responsibility of the States is one of the most powerful. Meanwhile, ideas about the transformative potential of social protection are slowly being introduced in the field of SPS. Countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia have already developed their social protection programs based on the logic of SPFs, advocating that protection should aim at fulfilling people's rights and addressing indicators of inequality (Devereux, 2010; Maxwell et al., 2010; Gentillini and Omamo, 2011; Schwarser, 2013; Lavigne, 2014). Specifically, programs such as Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs), unconditional Money Transfers (MTs), and graduation programs have been developed within the framework of social protection programs.

CCT programs require beneficiaries to comply with certain conditions in exchange for a cash transfer (Gentillini and Omamo, 2011). However, as pointed out by Vera Soares & Britto (2008) who cite Handa & Davis (2006) "there are internal contradictions and potential tensions between elements of CCT programs that have manifested themselves as the implementation of these programs multiplied throughout Latin America". On the one hand, some authors consider that conditionality represents an imposition on beneficiaries (Freeland, 2007), while others argue that it does not force people to change behaviors but promotes co-responsibility between governments and citizens (Adato and Bassett, 2008). Furthermore, as mentioned by Gentillini and Omamo (2011), some studies consider that there are complications in maintaining the administrative and operational requirements involved in these programs in contexts with low capacity in these aspects (Schubert and Slater, 2006; Heinrich, 2007; Soares and Britto, 2007). Therefore, there are institutional difficulties in creating and sustaining these programs.

Cash transfers have also been questioned for their low capacity to achieve structural and long-term changes for poverty reduction, since they have a safety net-like approach, even though they also have positive impacts on people's daily lives. Sabates and Devereux (2013) argue that they are not an adequate instrument for building sustainable lives and making people resilient. While they can be effective in improving consumption capacity and protecting existing assets,

complementary interventions are needed to increase income and assets so that participants are prepared to graduate from the programs (ibid). The World Bank (2009) further notes that MTs, while cushioning some aspects of poverty, lack a focus on long-term investments and do not focus on building people's capabilities, therefore they are not the best approach to eliminate poverty. In other words, in addition to social assistance, a focus on capacity building is needed.

Following this theoretical line, McCord and Slater (2015) add that the focus of social protection should be on making people develop their own capabilities to become independent of transfers through complementary programs that promote access to sustainable jobs. This vision is associated with the idea of transformative social protection mentioned by Sabates and Devereux (2007) in which social protection requires promotion components to achieve people's empowerment and autonomy. Therefore, social protection floors, especially with regard to CCTs, require a transformative approach for the true promotion and empowerment of people.

On the other hand, there is the concept of *graduation* in social protection programs. This term refers to the process of vulnerability reduction through which people are prepared to exit social protection and to build resilient and productive lives (Sabates and Devereux, 2013). Sabates and Devereux (2013) distinguish "threshold" graduation from "sustainable" graduation. The former refers to an administrative indicator, such as the poverty line, which signals the point at which a beneficiary is no longer eligible to continue in the program. While the second is defined as the state in which a person's life has been fundamentally transformed through social protection interventions (ibid). These authors propose that graduation by thresholds fails to ensure overcoming poverty, and that the true measure of a person's readiness to graduate is his or her capacity for resilience and autonomy (ibid). There are indications that the application of thresholds without sustainability considerations tends to lead to graduates falling back into poverty once they leave the program, suggesting premature graduation (ibid). Hence, protection programs need to be complemented with skills and empowerment strategies for people's development in order for the exit from poverty to be sustainable (Sen, 2001; Vij, 2011; Osei-Wusu et al., 2020).

## **2.2. Empowerment and Social Protection Systems**

Empowerment is a concept that is closely related to the SPS in its strategies for promoting people and the structural transformations that keep them in poverty. More specifically, empowerment is a process through which people acquire the individual and collective power to be agents of change in their own lives. (Friedmann, 1992; McGee and Pettit, 2019).

Empowerment is both an "instrument for reducing poverty and an aspect of poverty reduction, because participation in society is a dimension of human development" (UNDP, 2005, p. 61), where people assume their role as subjects or actors of change in their own lives, with the possibility of acting based on awareness of their interests and recognition of their own capabilities (Sen, 2001).

For Rappaport (1984), empowerment implies that we do not conceive people as children with needs or simple citizens with rights that must be defended by an external agent, but as integral human beings with needs and rights, who are capable of taking control over their own lives. Empowerment implies that local people and groups are capable of solving complex and multifaceted problems to a greater extent than external experts who centrally implement policies and programs, since it has been shown that people have the capacity to find solutions to their local problems. In this scenario, experts act as collaborators, who, among other things, learn from the experiences of communities, contribute in creating environments for people to meet, support the empowerment of people to find their own solutions, and disseminate these experiences.

Vetchinova (2020) mentions that empowerment occurs when the capacities of individuals and/or groups to act and believe in themselves are strengthened and, at the same time, institutions are strengthened to enable the participation of other actors and thus generate lasting changes in favor of people living in poverty. Economic empowerment occurs when, as a result of these changes, individuals and/or groups are able to have control over their income generation, access to goods and services, and continuously improve their quality of life. In addition, the study found that some components that help economic empowerment in productive programs are: specialized technical assistance throughout projects; training for decision-making, access to market information, methodologies for innovation, promotion of the generation of collaborative networks with other social actors, accountability schemes, formation of alliances, and strengthening the confidence of participants and desirably accompanying them with access to basic services.

According to the case study carried out in Mexico by Pérez et al. (2004), the attitude that people who experience poverty have about their poverty based on the category "individuation", understood as "the capacity to make decisions based on one's own interests and not on traditional community interests", implies the development of a personality capable of making decisions by and for oneself. For the authors, empowerment is a determining factor in escaping

poverty, and in this, individuation plays an important role as a process of acquiring power over resources and life decisions. In short, "the poor want to become agents of their own destiny" Rosaneli et al. (2015).

Moreover, the support of social promotion processes is essential to achieve true inclusion and participation for empowerment (Coelho, 2016). This support should be characterized by constant collaboration between the parties involved, abandoning ideas of imposition and design of development objectives from behind the desk (Ayston and Joss, 2016; Bonus, 2020; Falbet. al, 2016). Support is a form of follow-up to empowerment processes so that families manage to develop their own skills (Balsells and Vaquero, 2019).

As Rosaneli et al. (2015) establish, it is important to keep in mind that no ruler or external social agent will promote the empowerment of people, but rather it is they themselves who acquire power in the constant search to establish themselves as citizens with rights. In the fight against poverty, empowering the excluded implies allowing their personal capacities to flourish, as well as their community organizations, in order to enable them to attain the status of legitimate interlocutors, capable of participating in the real community of communication. Empowerment, therefore, means the creation of conditions to overcome the barriers that limit the free expression of people in the search to achieve their own decisions, it would be the means to institute new models in the balance of power relations between the members of a democratic society.

According to Romano (2002), empowerment is a means, but also an end, because power is at the essence of defining and overcoming poverty. Empowerment needs to be constantly renewed to ensure that the correlation of forces does not reproduce the relations of domination that characterize poverty.

In short, empowerment is a concept that is closely related to the promotion and transformation that SPS want to promote. This means that empowerment is a key element in the fight against poverty because it goes beyond prevention and social protection, which are only based on the premise of assistance and not promotion and transformation. The empowerment of people is a strategic measure of development because it breaks the vicious circle of dependent subjects who passively wait for others to solve their problems (Alvarez, 2006, p. 46). A process of overcoming poverty that seeks to involve the poor and marginalized cannot be effective if the methodology fosters dependency. Therefore, protection, prevention, and promotion of people

through empowerment strategies are the essence of a successful and sustainable SPS for poverty reduction.

### **III. CASE STUDY**

In order to analyze the components and instruments applied by the Paraguayan SPS for social protection, prevention and promotion, this section presents a) the context of social protection programs in Paraguay, followed by b) delimitation, c) characterization, and d) conceptualization of the case study. The latter, the Tekoporã program, will serve as a starting point to understand the way in which social protection is intended to promote and empower people in Paraguay. Through the literature review and the present section, we seek to build the conceptual framework of this study, presenting the precise relationships between the literature and the case study. This will allow for a clear analysis of the Paraguayan SPS, seeking to understand how the concepts of protection, prevention, and promotion are being implemented in both the design and practical strategies of Tekoporã.

#### **3.1. Social Protection Programs in Paraguay**

Social protection programs in Latin America have gained momentum due to the increased vulnerability of countries in the face of growing globalization, which leads to greater exposure to financial and food crises, the consequences of climate change, the adverse effects of urbanization and migration, and the weakening of community networks (Serafini, 2019; Schwarzer, 2013). Following the efforts made to increase and strengthen the design of social protection policies at the international level since the late 1990s and early 2000s, many of the region's countries embarked on the development of programs such as Mexico's *Progres-a-Oportunidades* created in 1997 and Brazil's *Bolsa de Familia* created in 2003 (Serafini, 2019; Fonseca, 2005). For its part, Paraguay began implementing social protection programs, such as Tekoporã, Abrazo, the social tariff of the National Electricity Association (ANDE), and the school breakfast as early as 2000 (Serafini, 2019). However, our country has not managed to approach the social investment average of Latin American countries, and even less the average of countries such as Uruguay or Chile that have strong protection systems (ibid). In recent years, however, the country has made promising changes in its protection policies. This is because international commitments, mainly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have placed greater emphasis on the need to strengthen countries' SPS. This has led

the Paraguayan government to develop new mechanisms for the achievement of the goals and the fulfillment of its commitments (Gabinete Social, 2019).

Within the Paraguayan regulatory framework, in 2000 the Paraguayan SPS discussion process began, which included the National Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty and Inequality (ENREPD), which among its strategic axes established institutional improvement, equitable improvement of human capacities, and sustained and sustainable economic growth. This was a first step for the subsequent creation of the National Strategy to Fight Poverty (ENALP) enacted in 2006, the Economic and Social Strategic Plan (PEES 2008-2013), the National Plan to Fight Poverty, Sowing Opportunities (2013-2018), and the Public Policy Proposal for Social Development (PPDS 2010 -2020).

In 2019, the SPS "Vamos" was created to direct the efforts of the government and other actors towards improving the quality of life of Paraguayans in areas such as health, education, employment, and others. In total, there are approximately 100 programs contemplated within the system. In 2020, the NPRP "Jajapo Paraguay" was presented, which seeks to align the National Development Plan 2030 (PND); the SPS "Vamos," and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is important to emphasize that this strategy was developed by MDS, which was created in 2018 replacing the Secretariat of Social Action "for the design and implementation of policies, plans, programs and projects on development and social equity" (MDS, 2018). Within the NPRP, it seeks to implement social protection programs such as the Abrazo Program, Tekoporã Program, and Senior Citizens Program. Jajapo has as its ultimate goal **"to reduce poverty in Paraguay in all its forms, with emphasis on the most affected population, according to geographical areas"**, and as a general objective "to improve the quality of life of families in poverty, the economic situation of people of productive age, as well as social cohesion in lagging territories and communities", for this purpose specific objectives were established divided into three fundamental axes: social protection, economic inclusion, and social promotion.

**Figure 1:** Objectives of the National Poverty Reduction Plan Jajapó Paraguay 2030.



**Source:** Extracted from PNRP Jajapo Paraguay 2030. Ministry of Social Development, 2020.

These three axes seek the creation of an SPS to overcome poverty in a sustainable manner. According to the plan, the protection axis seeks to protect families from the social risks they face (NPRP, 2020). This axis is complemented by economic inclusion due to the need for families to develop labor and productive skills to improve their own quality of life. The last axis, social promotion, seeks to "rearticulate community relationships weakened by poverty and neglect" in order to develop collective capacities for poverty reduction (ibid, p. 48). In general, the idea behind Jajapo is that:

“By expanding the social and geographic coverage of the Tekoporã program and other protection bonus, progress will be made in the installation of minimum guarantees for the exercise of social rights of the population living in poverty. The goal is that all families living in poverty manage to meet the 34 necessary conditions of the matrix, which make up the basic floor, which implies that the services linked to the different necessary conditions are non-negotiable benefits, which must be available to meet the demand of families living in poverty" (MDS, 2020).

The NPRP, then, seeks to join efforts to consolidate and strengthen existing initiatives towards the achievement of the proposed objectives. Its objectives, as can be seen, are not only aimed at meeting the basic needs of people living in poverty, but also at overcoming poverty through promotional strategies. Therefore, an analysis of the achievement and focus of the strategies developed and the instruments used by the State to achieve this promotion is required.

## **3.2. Tekoporã**

### **3.2.1. Delimitation and Justification**

In order to gain a better understanding of social protection programs in Paraguay, this research will focus on the Tekoporã program as a case study. Tekoporã is a good case study because it is the social protection program that covers the largest number of beneficiaries within the SPS "Vamos" (MDS, 2021). In addition, Tekoporã indirectly addresses the axes of protection, inclusion, and social promotion of the NPRP Jajapo 2020-2030<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, Tekoporã is considered an appropriate case study for the analysis of social protection in the Paraguayan context. Below we describe how the protection, inclusion, and promotion components of the program relate to the conceptualizations of protection, prevention, and promotion under the conceptual framework developed in this study.

The relevance of Tekoporã is not only reflected in the strategic design of the NPRP and the number of beneficiaries, but also in the budgetary investment directed to it. According to data from the MDS (2021), the program accounts for 82% of the total social investment of the Ministry of Social Development, the highest percentage compared to other social protection programs, such as Tenonderã, Assistance to Fishermen, Tekoha, and Abrazo (See Figure 2). In addition, it should be noted that the Tekoporã program has more data than other protection programs and, based on the review conducted in this study, has been the most studied to date. Thus, Tekoporã functions as a focus of study that both reflects the practical approach to poverty reduction strategies in Paraguay and makes visible both political and economic priorities in terms of social protection in the country. Because of this, this study will analyze the Tekoporã program as a driver for making recommendations regarding the improvement of the Paraguayan SPS.

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<sup>1</sup> Tekoporã's objectives are protection and promotion. However, within the program design there is the objective of building family labor capacities and increasing families' financial resources (MDS, 2021), which is considered economic inclusion by Jajapo. Further clarification is provided in Figure 10.



**Figure 2:** Investment in Guaraníes and percentage points in MDS protection programs in 2019 and 2020.

<b>2019</b>		
<b>Program</b>	<b>Investment in Guaraníes</b>	<b>Total investment (%)</b>
Social Management Coordination	42.867.570.160	8%
Tekopora	440.206.368.924	82%
Assistance to Fishermen	7.561.884.830	1%
Tekoha	7.211.980.720	1%
Tenondera	38.044.092.850	7%
Meal program	2.816.018.725	1%
<b>2020</b>		
Social Management Coordination	3.774.518.346	1%
Tekopora	414.149.384.099	89%
Assistance to Fishermen	6.501.211.866	1%
Tekoha	2.912.384.871	1%
Tenondera	33.667.302.858	7%
Meal program	3.774.518.346	1%

Source: MDS, 2021.

### 3.2.2. Characterization of the Tekoporã Program

Tekoporã is dedicated to "the protection and promotion of families in situations of poverty and vulnerability," with the aim of ending the intergenerational transmission of poverty (MDS, 2021). This is a program aimed at families living in poverty and extreme poverty<sup>2</sup>, whose members are in elementary and high school, pregnant women, people with disabilities or

<sup>2</sup> In 2020, the poverty line for extreme poverty was 272.067 guaraníes in urban areas, while it was 712.618 guaraníes for total poverty. On the other hand, in rural areas, the first was 248.461 guaraníes and the second was 506.201 guaraníes (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2020).

indigenous communities. Tekoporã has two components: the first, socio-family and community support; and the second, CCT (MDS, 2021). Below is a brief description of the access requirements, program components, and graduation criteria.

### **3.2.2.1. Access Requirements**

The program admits people in households identified and classified in a situation of poverty and vulnerability based on current selection instruments, such as the Quality of Life Index up to Stratum II, or as determined by the authorities under resolution (MDS, 2021). These households must have members who are a) Children from 0 to 14 years old and/or - adolescents from 15 to 18 years old, b) Pregnant women, c) Persons with disabilities, and/or d) Indigenous communities.

### **3.2.2.2. Program Components**

In general, CCT programs have two objectives: 1) to promote the accumulation of human capital in poor families, particularly in children, in order to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty; and 2) to alleviate poverty in the short term (Vera Soares & Britto, 2008), and to achieve these objectives, the program has two main components: a) family and socio-community support, and b) CCTs. The first consists of "supporting and visiting households to facilitate the fulfillment of co-responsibilities by families, and providing guidance preferably linked to the improvement of the family habitat, as well as hygiene habits, ideas and actions to improve food quality and health, in addition to guiding families to access various public services and encourage community activities" (Ministry of Social Development, 2021). This support is provided by Family Guides and takes place within the framework of 4 stages, presented in Figure 3. Here we can see the great importance of the role that the guides must play in terms of both protection and promotion.

**Figure 3: Stages of Family Support**

Stage	Year	Objective
I	Year 1	<p>Establishing the link with families and initiating the support process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create bonds of trust and closeness between the Family Guides and family members.</li> <li>● Plan visits for the socialization of the objectives and scope of the program.</li> <li>● Analyze living conditions.</li> <li>● Identify mandatory co-responsibilities.</li> <li>● Identify the starting point around social protection floors.</li> <li>● Organize talks on topics of interest, awareness and information.</li> <li>● Establish a consensual work plan.</li> </ul>
II	Year 2 and Year 3	<p>Initiation of the training process according to the thematic axes established by the program and linkage with existing public services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Initiate the participatory training process according to thematic axes.</li> <li>● Establish a more direct relationship with local institutions to respond to the needs detected at the individual or community level.</li> <li>● Identify services available in the community.</li> <li>● Conduct lectures, workshops or training sessions on topics addressed by the program.</li> <li>● Initiate the first conversations for participation and empowerment in local development and community strengthening.</li> <li>● Conduct training in citizenship and financial education.</li> <li>● Initiate the process of community work, identifying leaders to support Family Guides to collaborate in the installation of the productive component.</li> <li>● Promote production for income generation and self-consumption.</li> <li>● Encourage the formation of productive committees for income generation with the families in the program.</li> <li>● Verify compliance with co-responsibility.</li> <li>● Implement concrete actions to improve living conditions as identified in stage 1.</li> </ul> <p>It is expected to have made progress in strengthening aspects related to quality of life.</p>

III	Year 4 and Year 5	<p>Family and community strengthening. This stage should consolidate the work done in Stages I and II and at the same time strengthen productive initiatives for self-consumption and generation of resources to improve their income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implement concrete actions (on the part of the families) to improve living conditions, according to what was identified in Stages I and II.</li> <li>● Facilitate the education and training of mothers and community leaders.</li> <li>● Conduct training in citizenship and financial education.</li> <li>● Conduct lectures, workshops or training sessions on topics addressed by the Program.</li> <li>● Promote community meetings to work on aspects that affect the community.</li> <li>● Raise awareness that the resources generated are invested in improving the quality of life of families.</li> <li>● Encourage the appropriate use of financial services and resources available to the family.</li> <li>● Articulation with local demand for the commercialization of products generated by the families.</li> <li>● Raise awareness of the importance of compliance with co-responsibility.</li> <li>● Verify compliance with co-responsibility.</li> </ul>
VI	Year 6	<p>Strengthening of the process and evaluation for the graduation of families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Application of an evaluation instrument for the completion of the stages.</li> <li>● Application of an evaluation instrument to assess compliance with the stages.</li> <li>● Development of an improvement plan for indicators that were identified as not being met.</li> <li>● Encourage and generate spaces for the exercise of citizenship of participating families.</li> <li>● Articulation with local demand for the commercialization of products generated by the families.</li> <li>● Raise awareness that the resources generated are invested in improving the quality of life of the families.</li> <li>● Train and raise awareness among families so that they know the importance of saving and implement specific actions on the subject.</li> <li>● Raise awareness of the importance of compliance with co-responsibility.</li> <li>● Verify compliance with co-responsibility.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Tekoporá Operational Manual, 2016; Manual for Family Guides, 2016.

The CCT component, on the other hand, refers to direct and consistent financial subsidies to beneficiaries under certain conditions. These subsidies are delivered bimonthly to the head of household or guardian, prioritizing women as holders (ibid). In addition, "the monetary transfers are composed of a fixed amount, called "Bono Alimentario" and a variable amount called "Bono Familiar", linked to the number of eligible persons in the household, i.e. children from 0 to 18 years of age, pregnant women, older adults, persons with disabilities (mild or severe)" (ibid). Only in the case of families from indigenous communities are they granted a lump sum. As for the amount of these transfers, according to the MDS (2021), it is Gs. 190,000 (approximately USD 28), referring to the year 2021.

In order to receive CCTs, participants must comply with certain conditions or co-responsibilities, which are given within the dimensions of health and education. The family guide is responsible for monitoring the families' achievements with respect to the co-responsibilities. Co-responsibility in health focuses on the vaccination of children and adolescents, gynecological control of women of childbearing age, and prenatal control of pregnant women (Tekopora, 2016). The specific requirements can be seen in Figure 4.

**Figure 4:** Co-responsibility in Health

<b>Life Cycle</b>	<b>Co-Responsibility Indicators</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Children (0 to 14 years)</b>	Vaccination	Permanent, according to the Ministry of Health vaccination schedule
<b>Children (0 to 14 years)</b>	Weight and Height	Once a year
<b>Pregnant women</b>	Pre-natal check-up Institutional delivery	Four times during the gestation period and 1 postpartum visit
<b>Women of childbearing age (14 to 45 years)</b>	Gynecological control PAP Test	Once a year

**Source:** Secretariat of Social Action, 2016.

In terms of education, it is expected that children and adolescents from 5 to 18 years of age are enrolled and remain in educational institutions. In addition, it is expected that they will be promoted from one grade to the next annually. These requirements are shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5:** Co-responsibility in Education

<b>Life Cycle</b>	<b>Co-Responsibility Indicators</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Children (5 to 18 years)</b>	Enrollment	Once a year (at the close of the MEC enrollment period)
<b>Children (5 to 18 year)</b>	School promotion to the next grade, according to the corresponding cycle (Initial School Education, Basic School Education and High School Education).	Once per year (at the end of the school term)

**Source:** Secretariat of Social Action, 2016.

### **3.2.3. Graduation Requirements**

The families can be classified in the following states: active, de-registration, in progress, or graduation. These statuses are decided based on the eligibility criteria previously presented and the Quality of Life Index (ICV), defined through administrative procedures and field visits to families (Tekoporã, 2016). Graduation is linked to the program's graduation concept. This process begins after 4 years of being in Tekoporã, when the First Evaluation of the state of progress of the families is given, "for the purpose of determining the current situation in terms of condition and quality of life linked to the objectives of the program" (ibid). Based on this evaluation, the aspects to be improved in the remainder of the program for the families are determined. In the sixth and last year, the Second Evaluation is carried out, through which the graduation of the families is defined and their possible insertion in other socio-economic assistance programs "depending on the existing public offer" (ibid). If necessary, a reincorporation into the Tekoporã program is provided for an additional 2 years.

### **3.2.3. Conceptualization of Program Components**

Considering the multiplicity of concepts used in relation to the SPS components, it is important to define the relationships between the terminology used by the NPRP Jajapo, the Tekoporã program, and the conceptual framework applied in this research. Figure 6 presents these relationships, making it clear how the definitions of protection, prevention, and promotion will be applied throughout this study.

**Figure 6:** Relaciones entre definiciones de componentes de SPS.

PNRP Jajapo 2020-2030		Tekoporã		Conceptual Framework	
Objectives	Sub-objetives	Component	Approach	Component	Approach
Social Protection	Reach a floor of protection and reduce hunger	CCT	According to the plan, the CCT component is central to the fulfillment of the Social Protection objective, since it seeks to build the SPF, reduce hunger and improve people's quality of life, starting with temporary financial support to families. The co-responsibilities seek to strengthen the health and basic educational and professional skills of the beneficiaries in order to build a life with potential access to decent sources of work in the future, which is also considered a protection strategy within the program.	Protection and Prevention	On the one hand, the construction of a SPF and the reduction of hunger are defined as social protection strategies to reduce or alleviate poverty. On the other hand, the strengthening of basic life skills refers to prevention, since with this strengthening families manage to reduce their vulnerability to risk factors. Under this logic, CCTs protect people by providing financial assistance with co-responsibilities in education and health, and help prevent risks, especially with regard to illnesses and birth complications.
	Strengthen basic life skills				
Economic Inclusion	Facilitate the generation of autonomous income	Family Support	Tekoporã aims to build family work capacities and increase the financial resources of families (MDS, 2021). The Family Guides are in charge of training and coordinating actors to achieve this objective. In addition, one of the activities of the Guides is to raise awareness about the importance of saving and investing income to improve the quality of life of families.	Social Promotion	Income generation and the strengthening of labor and productive skills refer specifically to the development of people's autonomy, which is related to promotion and empowerment according to the literature. On the other hand, and as defined within Jajapo, access to infrastructure and social services accompanied by the strengthening of socio-productive and organizational skills is connected to the idea of community empowerment, this being a social promotion strategy. Regarding the Tekoporã program, this study
	Strengthen labor and productive skills				
Social Promotion	Facilitate access to infrastructure and social services		The program's co-responsibilities focus specifically on access to infrastructure, and health and education services. The fulfillment of these co-responsibilities is corroborated by the Family Guides and administrative processes with the relevant institutions (ibid). In addition, the guides should help families establish a more		

			direct relationship with local institutions based on the needs detected, seeking access to other local services.		
	Strengthen socio-productive and organizational skills.		Through the work of the Family Guides, we seek to promote community organization activities. One of the relevant activities in this regard is the identification of community leaders who will support the guides and participate in the community work groups. In addition, the role of family guides seeks to generate community ties to create collective productivity initiatives.		considers that family support is a promotion component due to the role played by the Family Guides in terms of follow-up, identification of needs, training, and articulation of local actors for the promotion of collective productive activities.

**Source:** Authors' elaboration based on the National Poverty Reduction Plan Jajapo, 2020; Operational Manual of the Tekoporã Program, 2016; Manual for Family Guides, 2016.



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This table of relationships represents the conceptual basis of this study. It should be noted that according to this conceptualization, the "economic inclusion" defined as Jajapo's objective is considered a "social promotion" strategy because it seeks the autonomous development of families. As can be seen in the review, autonomy is key to the empowerment of people, and empowerment is a promotion strategy. Furthermore, in terms of the components of the Tekoporã program, CCTs form a strategy of both "protection" and "prevention". This is because on one hand, this component aims to build a SPP to alleviate poverty and reduce people's immediate needs. On the other hand, through the strengthening of basic life skills, such as education and health, it is possible to prevent risks because people's vulnerability is reduced with temporary economic support. In the case of the family support component, this constitutes a "promotion" strategy, since the Family Guides must carry out follow-ups, identify the needs of the families, train them, and coordinate actors to achieve the development of individual and community productive capacities. In this way, the concepts used under the conceptual framework and their use in the analysis of the case study are established in order to analyze the implementation of protection, prevention and promotion in the Paraguayan SPS through Tekoporã.

#### **IV. STUDY DESIGN AND SELECTED DATA**

The methodology used corresponds to the documentary-bibliography approach where, in the first stage, an exploratory research level was reached through a review of the general literature on the PPS and, in a second stage, a review of the particular case in Paraguay was completed, to later delimit and justify the Tekoporã Program as a case study. The descriptive research level was followed by a budget analysis of the Tekoporã program and its components of Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) and family support, as well as a brief discussion of the Tenonderã social promotion program, in order to make recommendations for strengthening the Paraguayan SPS. A mixed approach was used.

This report was designed based on a case study, Tekoporã, with the objective of exploring its design in terms of the elements of prevention, protection and promotion, which are the pillars for

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the empowerment of people. In this sense, the Tekoporã case will be used to build an argument on the role of government social programs in empowering people. The literature presented above mentions that in order for social protection programs to help people gain power over their own lives and overcome their deprivations, they need to have protection, prevention and social promotion components. The case of Tekoporã is relevant as a focus of study for several reasons. First, it is a social program that is designed with the objective of empowering people to be agents of change in their lives because it has protection, prevention and social promotion components. Second, it is one of the social public policies with the longest implementation time in the country. Third, it is one of the Government's most important social protection and anti-poverty strategies. Fourth, Tekoporã is one of the social programs that receives the largest budgetary investment. Finally, it is the social program with the largest number of beneficiaries.

To analyze the Tekoporã case, secondary data provided by the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) have been used. In addition, a review of academic literature on SPS, Empowerment, and Social Programs in Paraguay has been completed. Finally, grey literature has been used using government information found in official internet sites as well as in other archives whose sources have been mentioned in the analysis section.

## **V. ANALYSIS OF THE TEKOPORA PROGRAM**

This section presents the analysis of the protection, prevention and promotion components of the Tekoporã program in order to make general recommendations for the strengthening and improvement of the SPS in Paraguay. The focus of the analysis is to determine the potential of the strategies and practices carried out within the program in regards to these components. As previously mentioned in the conceptualization of the case study (Figure 6), Tekoporã addresses the three objectives of protection, inclusion, and promotion of Jajapo, being a key element in the poverty reduction strategy of the Paraguayan State. For the purposes of this study, the CCT (protection and prevention) and family support (promotion) components will be scrutinized based on their strategic design, budgetary investment, available evaluation results, and data on their practical applications. By differentiating the protection, prevention, and promotion focus of these two components, and understanding the strategies and practical realities of both, a clear analysis

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of the areas prioritized by the SPS will be achieved, including its weaknesses and its potential for strengthening it towards the empowerment of Paraguayan families.

This section begins with a general analysis of the budgetary investment in the Tekoporã components. This analysis becomes relevant because the budget investment visualizes which component is being prioritized and is an initial deduction element to understand how the program's strategies and design are reflected in the field. The financial resources available to these components significantly influence the results obtained through each of them; and provide key information to understand whether the Paraguayan government prioritizes more the protection, prevention, or promotion of people. With this precise understanding, an analysis of these three elements is carried out, with CCTs (protection and prevention) and family support (promotion) being the objects of study. In this analysis of components, the budgetary analysis is deepened and an analysis of the strategies and practical applications of each one is presented. In addition, through this study, the Tenonderã Program was identified as a significant complement for the achievement of promotion and empowerment of people, so a brief analysis is made at the end of this section.

### **5.1. Analysis of Budgetary Investment in Tekoporã's Components**

One way to understand the strategy (what is intended) versus the field intervention (what is being developed) of Tekoporã in terms of protection, prevention and promotion is to analyze the investments in the two components, CCT and family support, of Tekoporã.

The analysis of secondary data shows that the government has placed greater emphasis on the provision of transfers (protection and prevention) than on strengthening the family support component (promotion and empowerment). See Figure 7 for budget investment in guaraníes for the CCT and family support components of Tekoporã.

**Figure 7:** Budgetary Investment in Guaraníes in the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) and Socio-family Assistance Components of the Tekoporã Program

Year	Component	Beneficiary Families	Total investment in guaraníes	Total investment by percentage
2018	CCT	167.514	359.948.913.802	88.75%
	Socio-family assistance <sup>3</sup>	113.131	45.606.874.712	11.25%
2019	CCT	160.000	374.193.514.200	88.45%
	Socio-family assistance	110.000	48.829.315.498	11.54%

**Source:** Authors' elaboration. Source. Ministry of Finance, 2021.

Figure 7 shows that in both 2018 and 2019, the Ministry of Social Development invested 88% of the resources allocated to the program in CCTs, and in counterpart, only 11% of the budget in socio-family support.

As demonstrated in the conceptual framework, cash transfers should be strongly accompanied by advocacy strategies to achieve empowerment and consequent autonomy of individuals. The budgetary difference between the CCT and family support components shows that within the Paraguayan SPS there is greater emphasis on the provision of financial assistance, leaving the family support component with very low budgetary capacity. Given that this component is central to the promotion of individuals, these data show the welfarist approach of the government's social protection policies. In order to make social protection "transformative" (Sabates and Devereux, 2010), cash transfers are an important step that needs to be complemented with mechanisms that lead to empowerment to promote better living conditions. This welfarist approach of the Paraguayan SPS means that the budgetary effort would not be sufficient to achieve people's empowerment. A more detailed analysis of CCTs and Socio-familial Support is presented below.

<sup>3</sup> Socio-family assistance refers to the family support component according to the MDS (2021). (2021).

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## 5.2. Social Protection and Prevention: Conditional Cash Transfers

CCTs in Tekoporã constitute a form of protection and prevention because they aim to build a floor of protection and strengthen basic life skills. On one hand, transfers function as an instrument for poverty alleviation, while co-responsibilities seek to develop human capital. This means that they are intended to provide a basis for families to be protected, have access to better food, education, and make use of health services. Prevention and protection are key elements in the co-responsibilities of CCTs because by improving basic competencies in education and health, families, especially children, adolescents and women, reduce their levels of vulnerability and prevent possible risks. This is demonstrated in the positive impacts of these transfers in terms of food, health, and education (FAO 2008; DIPLAND, 2011; Rossi, 2016). The SPF, PPS, proposed by Jajapo, having Tekoporã as its basis, is shown in Figure 8, below.

**Figure 8:** Protection Floor for families using the program as a platform.



**Source:** Extracted from Jajapo, 2020.

As can be seen, the PPS is based on the dimensions of Health and Self-Care; Education and Learning; Food and Nutrition; Housing and Environment; Income and Employment; and Coexistence and Participation. This platform is very important because it considers several dimensions of the lives of the people to whom it is addressed. In addition, there is an explicit approach strategy by the Tekoporã Program where the first three dimensions are related to the CCTs and the last three are addressed from the role of the Family Guides. This is important because, as highlighted in the literature review, in order to achieve promotion in people's lives, programs such as Tekoporã must address different dimensions and work on people's capacities so

that they themselves can be agents of change in their lives. Therefore, the design of the SPF functions as an important instrument for the development of an SPS that truly empowers people, having indicators for protection and prevention (first, second, third and fourth dimensions), as well as for promotion (fifth and sixth dimensions). However, its practical implementation must be questioned. The CCTs, on the other hand, are only the basis for the development of the empowerment process.

### 5.3. Social Promotion: Family Support

Through family support, Tekoporã aims to foster family work skills and collective productivity by forming Productive Committees and providing training—activities that are key to promoting Paraguayan families. This role also responds to the fifth and sixth dimensions of the PPS (Income and Employment, and Coexistence and Participation). In addition, the Guides must make observations and follow-ups on the housing and environment in which families live, responding to the third dimension (Housing and Environment). The PPS, therefore, is largely addressed by this component, being a basic instrument in the design of the poverty reduction strategy in Paraguay and comprising protection, prevention and promotion indicators.

It is important to understand how the Guides should address social promotion within program design. Therefore, an analysis of the Manual for Family Guides (SAS, 2016) has been conducted, identifying the specific activities that refer to social promotion. These are presented in Figure 9.

**Figure 9:** Activities relevant to the inclusion and promotion objectives of the NPRP 2030 and Tekoporã.

<b>Activities Related to Social Promotion</b>
Organize lectures, workshops or training sessions on topics addressed by the program.
Initiate the first conversations for participation and empowerment in local development and community strengthening.
Conduct training on citizenship and financial education.
Initiate the community work process, identifying leaders to support Family Guides to collaborate in the implementation of the productive component.

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Promote production for income generation and self-consumption.
Promote the formation of productive committees for income generation with families in the program.

**Source:** Author's elaboration and modified from SAS, 2016.

It is evident that family guides play a central role in the promotion and consequent empowerment of families. By forming productive committees and developing their own capacities through training, families are expected to generate their own income, which is essential for empowerment and a sustainable exit from poverty, as argued by McCord and Slater (2015). However, the socio-family assistance component faces several challenges to achieve its consolidation, effectiveness, and full coverage of families. As noted above, the low budgetary investment in this component is a major challenge to achieve promotion through support. The Tekoporã program has a welfarist approach, based mostly on protection and prevention, and directs the vast majority of its resources to cash transfers and family support. This becomes clear when analyzing the family support component, which presents several complications so that the Guides can truly collaborate with the promotion and empowerment of the beneficiaries.

This family support component has existed within the design of Tekoporã since its inception, although in the early years there were practically no guides or sufficient resources allocated to provide support (Ministry of Finance, 2015). It was only in 2014 that there was a strengthening in this aspect of the program, accompanied by greater resources. Although there is not much data available regarding the number of guides and families that have made use of this service within the program, the existing data show that greater emphasis on this component is required to achieve Tekoporã's objectives. In 2015, there were only 43,000 families with family guides, while the total number of beneficiary families was between 110,000 and 130,000<sup>4</sup> (ibid). Furthermore, in 2019, 82,870 families on average received family support on a monthly basis (National Government, 2019). This is only 49% of the 167,075 beneficiary families that year. In 2016, Serafini (2016) was already suggesting a greater emphasis on the socio-family assistance component due to the fact that this service does not reach all families and that there are not enough resources. This deficit in

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<sup>4</sup> While data from the Ministry of Finance stated that there were 110,000 families in the program, data from the Ministry of Social Development provided the figure of 131,159 families.

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human resources not only threatens the fulfillment of the promotion and inclusion objectives, but also presents challenges for the achievement of protection due to the lack of corroboration and lack of support in the fulfillment of the program's co-responsibilities.

In addition, although the maximum number of beneficiaries assigned per guide is 130, "in practice, several cases of Guides with up to 200 families under their responsibility were found" (Nickson, 2018). Regarding visits, the maximum number of visits allowed per month is 130, however, "visits are made "in rotation" (i.e., every two months) and individual visits are usually replaced by group meetings" (Nickson, 2018). According to the Manual for Family Guides (2016), an average of 10 annual visits per family should be conducted, having a clear plan of concrete activities customized for each family. On one hand, the goal of 10 visits is not being achieved by many of the guides, and on the other hand, according to the literature, a high frequency in the interaction between guide or mentor and participant is required in order to achieve the objectives of the program (Curie et al., 2001). The last point would require a revision of the program objectives.

Considering the overload of the guides and the consequent inability to reach the established average number of visits, family support cannot be carried out for all beneficiaries. Therefore, the objectives of training and the formation of productive committees for the development of their own capacities cannot be effectively met. Regarding the last point, there is very little information about the productive committees and family training. This is a sign of poor systematization of program results, which is connected to the fact that "even though there is an excellent Manual for Family Guides in the Tekoporã Program, there is no methodology for reporting observations on home visits" (Nickson 2018, p. 19). While the guides are required to make reports about their visits, these fail to report on the conditions of the families in detail. Gonzalez (2015) writes "these documents present difficulties for the quantification and qualification of the situation of beneficiary families, as they lack detailed descriptions of follow-ups." There are also no annual records detailing their living condition from entry into the program until their exit, which occurs after having received 72 payments in concept of transfers" (p. 32).

The lack of systematization is a major obstacle to the effective implementation of social promotion strategies since the same requires monitoring the transformations in the living conditions of



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families during the program (Haskins and Margolis, 2014). In addition, the lack of impact evaluation studies of the program in all its components (short-term poverty alleviation and human capital) in the short, medium and especially in the long term is evident. This lack, in this case the family support in the Tekoporã program, makes it impossible to study the impact on people. Therefore, there is a theoretical vacuum about its functioning, effectiveness and the aspects to be improved so that the social policy can be efficient and effective.

It is therefore evident that family support requires significant strengthening in order to become a strategy for social promotion and empowerment. With only 11% of the total budget, the barriers that exist in terms of human resources and distribution of the family support service are a clear consequence of the welfarism that currently prevails in the program. In the design of both the PPS and the development of the family support component, there is great potential to achieve promotion. However, in practice this is not reflected because promotion has yet to be incorporated as a priority component for the government. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that for support to be truly empowering, clear tools and mechanisms are needed that seek the inclusion and participation of people (Bozzano, 2020). Therefore, the strengthening of the family support component should also be scrutinized with a view to developing clear empowerment strategies in its design.

In other words, social promotion is present in the Tekoporã program in its design; however, its implementation is still a pending issue, starting with the budgetary prioritization of this component. This does not mean that the role played by CCTs is not important, but that in order to generate a positive and long-term impact, it is necessary to strengthen the promotion axis, having as a starting point the family support in combination with the financial resources available to the beneficiaries.

### **5.3.1. The Tenonderã Program for Promotion and Empowerment**

Considering the challenges to achieve the true promotion of people in Tekoporã, the program has a "graduation" system, which is based on promotion and empowerment indicators called Tenonderã. For the purposes of this study, it is important to analyze the strategies and implications of the latter, since it complements the Tekoporã's social promotion function. Tenonderã "is a program of Support for Socioeconomic Promotion and Inclusion, it proposes a strategy for the increase of assets, mainly productive, that contribute to the social promotion of families in

situations of poverty and vulnerability and to the sustainable exit of the families participating in the Tekoporã Program" (MDS, 2021). It is through this program that the sustainability of the Tekoporã graduates' exit from poverty is sought. Tenonderã works in the areas of Professional Qualification, Technical Assistance, Entrepreneurship, Employability, Production, Inclusive Businesses, Seed Capital and Articulation, and Timely and Accessible Loans. The program has great potential for the empowerment of families and the generation of their own resources to overcome poverty.

Tekoporã graduates, however, do not always enter the Tenonderã program, because this depends on the public offer at the time of graduation (SAS, 2016). This offer is affected by the program's budgetary capacity. Figure 10 shows the comparison in terms of number of beneficiaries and budgetary investment between the Tekoporã program and the Tenonderã program from 2014 to 2020.

**Figure 10:** MDS budget investment in the Tekoporã and Tenonderã programs.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of beneficiaries</b>	<b>Investment in guaraníes (2014)</b>
<b>2014</b>	Tekoporã	101.440	185.028.395.000
	Tenonderã	1.418	2.972.900.000
<b>2015</b>	Tekoporã	131.159	256.074.950.000
	Tenonderã	4.227	9.350.940.000
<b>2016</b>	Tekoporã	140.865	302.339.300.000
	Tenonderã	5.669	13.020.054.500
<b>2017</b>	Tekoporã	152.132	334.385.390.000
	Tenonderã	6.860	16.215.971.500
<b>2018</b>	Tekoporã	158.257	352.136.700.000

	Tenonderã	8.417	20.115.215.000
<b>2019</b>	Tekopora	167.075	399.074.565.000
	Tenonderã	9.924	29.994.600.000
<b>2020</b>	Tekoporã	-	414.149.384.099
	Tenonderã	-	33.667.302.858

**Obs:** Data from 2014 to 2020 were extracted from the MDS Management Report 2019. 2020 data on number of beneficiaries were extracted from documents provided by MDS to Fundación Paraguaya.

The budgetary difference between the two programs is vast, as shown in Figure 10. The investment of the Tenonderã program represents approximately 5% of the investment of the Tekoporã program; similarly, the number of beneficiaries of the Tenonderã program represents approximately 4% of the Tekoporã program. This, again, shows that promotion is not yet a priority for the Paraguayan government. Furthermore, the number of Tenonderã beneficiaries compared to Tekoporã beneficiaries is significantly lower. Therefore, while Tekoporã expands in volume, focusing mainly on the CCT component, as mentioned above, the Tenonderã program does not grow accordingly. Consequently, the latter fails to meet the need to develop the sustainability of the graduated families in its entirety due to significant budgetary constraints. Thus, it is only a fortunate few who have access to inclusion and promotion processes for the development of their own capacities through Tenonderã. Although Tenonderã has great potential to promote Paraguayan families and empower them through the development of autonomy, the limited budgetary capacity, as in the case of the family support component of Tekoporã, hinders the achievement of the objectives. It is indeed important to have programs such as Tenonderã, but these should be a priority for the government, and require a solid structure and resources to address empowerment.

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## VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study makes visible the welfarist approach of social protection policies in Paraguay. Through the analysis of Tekoporã and especially the budgetary priorities with respect to its components and in relation to promotion programs such as Tenonderã, it is observed that the State emphasizes the provision of assistance for social protection while neglecting promotion instruments. It is clear that cash transfers have acquired great relevance for the State. It has sought to expand the CCT program without first developing the follow-up and support capacity necessary for all beneficiary families to not only cover their basic needs on a temporary basis, but also to initiate collaborative work for their empowerment.

Although there are positive changes linked to the co-responsibilities of these transfers in terms of food, health and education, the shortcomings in socio-family support represent a major obstacle to the achievement of the "transformative social protection" referred to by Sabates and Devereux (2007). The socio-political causes of this welfarist approach to public policy are beyond the scope of this research. However, the data make evident the growing need to strengthen the empowerment strategies of the Paraguayan SPS. Considering the temporary nature of the achievements attained and the lack of clear and solid mechanisms for the achievement of overcoming poverty in the long term, the Tekoporã program runs the risk of being considered a program of non-transformational welfarism or "threshold" graduation, applying the typology developed by Sabates and Devereux (2013). Through welfarism, the State manages to increase certain quality of life indexes of families, even in terms of the poverty line, but there is no developed and consolidated State mechanism to ensure that these increases are reflected in the long term.

The lack of monitoring is also a major challenge for this program. In the absence of a well-systematized monitoring system, it is not possible to determine whether the Tekoporã program perpetuates the dependency referred to by Rosaneli et. al (2015) or whether there is some degree of development of family autonomy, especially in cases where family support does occur. As long as the focus of the Tekoporã program and the State's budgetary priorities are not devoted to the improvement and transformation of promotion and inclusion strategies for the true empowerment of people, poverty cannot be overcome in a sustainable way. This means that people will be less

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likely to develop the self-capacities and resilience needed to overcome poverty in the long run, as argued by Vij (2011), Sabates and Devereux (2013), and Osei-Wusu and colleagues (2020).

In addition, a clear theory of change is required in terms of the design of the components of social protection programs so as to ensure that empowerment is the ultimate goal and the basis of these initiatives.

Since the program does not focus on the development of the autonomous capacities of families, even though the co-responsibilities linked to the transfers promote access to public services such as health and education, there is a risk that the positive impact of these will not last over time. In other words, the opportunity cost for families of receiving a CCT in exchange for making use of public educational and health services disappears once the program ends. Therefore, only through capacity building will these changes become permanent and generate a real growth in human capital for overcoming intergenerational poverty.

As long as families do not have the necessary skills to achieve economic empowerment, they will remain in a situation of vulnerability that prevents them from planning their future and taking actions to improve their lives. Achieving this objective will only be possible through institutional mechanisms that foster critical, collective agency and, as a result of this process, generate changes in the system. In this way people will be able to make the best decisions to address poverty-related problems.

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## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

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This study has shown that the Paraguayan SPS is fundamentally welfarist and does not invest in the promotion and empowerment capacities of Paraguayans. Therefore, recommendations are here made for strengthening the Paraguayan SPS based on the analysis carried out.

- I. The budgetary emphasis should be redefined, making clear the importance of protection strategies such as CCTs, and at the same time prioritizing social promotion instruments such as the family support component of the Tekoporã program. This will ensure that, while families receive financial support to cover their basic needs, they can also count on a guide to ensure that this support is truly beneficial and fruitful in the long term.
- II. It is necessary to carry out consultation processes in the communities in order to understand what mechanisms are necessary to respond effectively to the needs of the people. These processes should also be aimed at identifying and characterizing the needs of the people and the local capacities that can be strengthened to achieve not only individual but also collective development. True empowerment is that which involves the beneficiaries, making them take their place as active agents in the construction and improvement of their lives.
- III. In order to build empowerment strategies, a review of the objectives and components of existing social protection programs should be carried out with a focus on collaborative and participatory strategies. In this way, the design of each program will be based on inclusive processes that promote the improvement of people's living conditions from a realistic and informed perspective regarding the communities in question. For example, social promotion components such as the family support component of the Tekoporã program should not only be strengthened within the institutional structure in terms of budget and human resources, but should also be designed based on an empowering theory of change. In this sense, Fundación Paraguaya has the Poverty Stoplight, which was created based on institutional experiences in the areas of microfinance, entrepreneurship and training. Both the measurement tool and the methodology are grounded in theory and evidence: the way

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of conceptualizing multidimensional well-being was informed by a broad literature base, and the method of working with families to overcome poverty is inspired by the theories and research of authors such as Amartya Sen, Paulo Freire, Albert Bandura and Joseph Grenny. Recently, this set of theories and experiences has been formalized and condensed into a new one: "The Theory of Change".

- IV.** Create systems that help documentation, systematization and georeferencing through the incorporation of technological tools that facilitate the processes developed in the field. This will make it possible to visualize the impact of programs in the short and long term, making the necessary interventions and changes to adjust the instruments of protection, prevention and promotion in order to ensure the exit from poverty and a "sustainable" graduation (Sabates and Devereux, 2013). The Poverty Stoplight would play an important role in this sense, since it systematizes the information received from the families, allowing a study of the changes and transformations that occur in their lives during the program. In addition, it offers a geo-referencing tool that would help to collect accurate data on the public supply of services and needs by geographical areas. In this way, it will be possible to: collect data about the structural context in which families find themselves; provide crucial information for the development of structural solutions in terms of the provision of services needed in each area for empowerment; and strengthen local capacities. This relates to the need to create transformative SPS that address vulnerability by taking structural inequalities as a starting point (Sabates and Devereux, 2007). It is important that institutions are strengthened in parallel to the functioning of protection programs in order to achieve lasting changes for poverty eradication, as argued by Vetchinova (2020).
- V.** Collaborate with Civil Society organizations that have a track record working in the promotion of Paraguayans throughout the country. The experience of local organizations will be of great help because they have already built empirical knowledge about the most appropriate strategies to achieve the promotion of people. Collaboration is positive, not only in terms of learning from experiences but also for coordinating efforts among different sectors of society that are also interested in a more empowered Paraguay.

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These recommendations are only the starting point to achieve the empowerment for social promotion to become a reality in Paraguay. This study has contributed with an analysis of the components of protection, prevention and promotion in the Paraguayan SPS using the Tekoporã program as a case study. Our results have shown that State policies, in terms of social protection, are focused on welfare and not on the promotion of people. However, we suggest further investment in research on the impact, strengths and weaknesses of these programs in the Paraguayan context. In this way, we will be able to define an increasingly clearer path towards the elimination of poverty in Paraguay, based on the importance of promotion and empowerment as priorities.



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