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Child Poverty Insights disseminates emerging research, practice and thinking on child poverty to a global audience of UNICEF and other UN staff, practitioners and academics.

This edition presents an impact evaluation of a Brazilian NGO, Associação Saúde Criança, which provides holistic and comprehensive support to poor families that have been affected by a health shock.

**Overcoming Illness and Poverty:**

**Evaluating Associação Saúde Criança**

For the poorest and most vulnerable parents, having a sick child can mean a stark choice between care giving and earning an income. This situation can lead to problems paying rent, buying food, providing education, and even caring for the child in need. Severe health shocks to poor families constitute a major channel of the inter-generational transmission of poverty because they impoverish households through costly diagnoses and treatment as well as through the loss of income. Since 1991, Associação Saúde Criança (SC), a Brazilian NGO, has worked in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas (urban slum areas) to break the cycle of poverty that often results from such health shocks. SC addresses poverty alleviation and social inclusion among families with children that have experienced severe health problems by providing comprehensive support in five thematic areas: health, education, income generation, housing, and citizenship. Family members go through a 24-month custom designed programme that provides direct assistance – such as food and medical care – as well as job training, legal advice, housing assistance, and help gaining access to government programmes. The idea behind SC is that families gain skills and are provided with enough support to break the cycle of poverty.

We conducted the first rigorous impact evaluation of SC’s holistic programme using quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the effect that SC has had on the long-term well-being of those who completed the programme.