

Tia Palermo, Ph.D., MS

Email: tpalermo@policyresearchsolutions.com

Position: President and Head of Reserach

Based-Country: Buffalo, NY, USA

Country Experience: Bolivia, Cambodia, Chile, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Ukraine, Zambia, Zimbabwe



EXPERTISE

Evidence generation, synthesis and facilitation of uptake related to cash transfers, social protection, food security, gender, and gender-based violence; expertise in impact evaluation, evidence generation and synthesis, mixed methods research, capacity building, and facilitating evidence uptake for policy and programming.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2021-Present **President**, Policy Research Solutions (PRESTO) LLC, Buffalo, NY
- Lead projects commissioned by UN agencies and other development partners related to evidence generation, synthesis, and translation. Topics include social protection, social and behavioral change, adolescent health, nutrition, gender-based violence, and well-being.
 - Led evidence synthesis on cash transfers and various sectors of impact, including poverty, gender, education, health, and adolescents, in project commissioned by UNICEF Western and Central Africa Region.
 - Led revisions to TRANSFORM social protection training modules to make them more gender-responsive and disability-inclusive.
 - Co-facilitated (with colleagues from AIR, University of Ghana, and UNICEF Innocenti) training on impact evaluation to 31 PhD economists from 20 countries in Africa, hosted by African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in Nairobi (July 2025).
 - Co-leading a longitudinal, mixed-method impact evaluation of the Stawisha Maisha (Nourishing Life) cash plus intervention to improve child nutrition in Tanzania, together with national researchers, UNICEF, and the Tanzania Social Action Fund.
 - Conducted evidence synthesis on cash transfers and cash plus programming in project commissioned by UNICEF.
 - Leading Long-Term Agreement for Social Protection with World Food Programme.
- 2024 - Present **Research Associate Professor**, [Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health](#), University at Buffalo (State University of New York), Buffalo, NY
- Member of the following Research Consortia:
- The Transfer Project (<https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/>)
 - The Cash Transfer Intimate Partner Violence Research Collaborative (<https://www.cash-ipv.org/>)
 - Mentor with P3 ENGAGE Africa Mentorship Program (2023-2024)

- 2019-2024 **Associate Professor**, [Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health](#), Division of Health Services Policy and Practice, University at Buffalo (State University of New York), Buffalo, NY
- Lead research examining impacts of social protection, including cash plus programming on gender-based violence, health, and well-being.
 - Taught courses on data analysis, health services, and global health.
 - Mentored students on research.
- 2014-2019 **Social Policy Manager (Social Protection)**, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), [UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti](#), Florence, Italy
- Provided technical assistance to UNICEF country offices around evidence on social protection and child well-being.
 - Secured funding and led Transfer Project impact evaluations of cash transfer programs on health, violence, and economic well-being through a range of RCT and quasi-experimental designs in various African countries.
 - Supervised teams and contracts.
 - Convened global experts on topics related to social protection and violence against children.
 - Synthesized evidence for concrete recommendations for programs and policies.
 - Presented research to non-researcher audiences, including Governments and UN staff members.
- 2010-2014 **Assistant Professor**, Stony Brook University (SUNY), Stony Brook, NY [Program in Public Health](#); Department of Family, Population & Preventive Medicine.
Secured funding and led research examining impacts of social policies, including social protection, on gender-based violence, health and well-being. Taught courses on data analysis, research and evaluation.
- 2009-2010 **Post-doctoral Fellow**, City University of New York (CUNY) [Institute for Demographic Research](#) (CIDR), New York, NY
Projects included investigating the biological mechanisms connecting economic factors to health outcomes and the impact of health on human capital development.
- 2008-2009 **Research and Evaluation Associate**, [Ipas](#), Chapel Hill, NC
Projects included operations research related to reducing maternal morbidity and mortality, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and design and analysis of household surveys for an international NGO. Provided M&E backstopping for Mexico, Central America, Bolivia, and Brazil. Supervised consultants, and liaised with country offices, Ministries of Health, and other partners. Traveled to Zambia, Nigeria, Mexico, and Bolivia to work with local partners.

CONSULTING (Selected 2020-Present)

- 2024 **Consultant**, UNICEF Ghana, Accra, Ghana
Summarized evidence from impact evaluations and peer-reviewed literature on

Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) and LEAP 1000 cash transfer programmes to support advocacy efforts.

- 2024 **Consultant**, Oxford Policy Management (OPM), United Kingdom
Lead landscaping analysis to understand existing trainings and resources aimed at capacity building around gender/disability and social protection. Project commissioned by Social Protection Technical Assistance, Advice and Resources (STAAR) Facility.
- 2023 **Consultant**, Social protection Technical Assistance, Advice and Resources (STAAR), through DAI Global UK Ltd, London, UK
Conducted a rapid mapping exercise to understand and identify gaps in current efforts of global development agencies in collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data in social protection.
- 2022-2023 **Consultant**, Evaluation Office & Health Section, UNICEF, New York, NY
Supported proposal development related to impact evaluations of shock-responsive social protection interventions. Led systematic review of combined economic and health strengthening interventions targeted to adolescents on HIV and risk factors.
- 2019-2024 **Consultant**, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, Italy
Principal Investigator on Tanzania Adolescent Cash Plush Study examining effects on gender-related outcomes; responsibilities include study oversight, participating in data collection training, analysis, writing, dissemination, and liaising with UN and Government partners.

EDUCATION

- 2009 Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, *Public Policy*
Pre-doctoral trainee in Demography, Carolina Population Center
- 2005 M.S., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, *Economics*
- 2002 B.A., State University of New York at Geneseo, *Economics and Spanish*
Magna Cum Laude

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES (Selected out of 79 total)

Link to full list of Publications: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/8z3sguj0hz96cpz5epvt2/Tia-Palermo-List-of-Publications-August-2024.pdf?rlkey=7nq2y35j38je87en7kaallgcn&dl=0>

1. **Palermo T**, Logan-Greene P, Lima SM, Grooms K, Lillvis D. (2024). Systematic review of the impacts of US Social Safety Nets on child maltreatment. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 67(3): 444-454. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2024.05.019>
2. Cirillo C, **Palermo T**, Viola F. (2024). Non-contributory Social Protection for Adolescents in

Lower- and Middle-Income Countries: A review of government programmes and impacts. *Oxford Development Studies*, 52(2), 179–194.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2024.2376613>

3. LaPointe S, Mendola P, Lin S, Tian L, Bonell A, Adamba C, **Palermo T.** (2024). Impact of cash transfers on the association between prenatal exposures to high temperatures and low birthweight: retrospective analysis from the LEAP 1000 study. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.17761>
4. Maara J, Cirillo C, Prencipe L, Angeles G, Lima SG, **Palermo T.** (2023). Impacts of cash transfer and “cash plus” programs on self-perceived stress in Africa: a multi-country study. *Social Science and Medicine – Population Health*, 22(101403). <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S235282732300068X>
5. Novignon J, Prencipe L, Molotsky A, de Groot R, Adamba C, **Palermo T.** (2022). The impact of unconditional cash transfers on morbidity and health seeking behavior in Africa: Evidence from Ghana, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. *Health Policy and Planning*, 37(5): 607–623. PMID: 35157775. doi: [10.1093/heapol/czac014](https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czac014)
6. Otieno P, Quiñones S, Angeles G, Novignon J, van Halsema V, **Palermo T.** (2022). Health services availability and readiness moderate cash transfer impacts on health insurance enrolment: Evidence from the LEAP 1000 cash transfer program in Ghana. *BMC Health Services Research*, 22:599. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-022-07964-w>
7. Barrington C, Peterman A, de Miliano M, Akaligaung A, **Palermo T,** Aborigo R. (2022). ‘Poverty can break a home’: Unpacking mechanisms and program design factors linking cash plus programming and intimate partner violence in Ghana. *Social Science & Medicine*, 292, 114521. PMID: 34750015. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.11452 1
8. Mussa EC, Otchere, F, Vinci V, Reshad A, **Palermo T,** on behalf of the ISNP Evaluation Team. (2021). Linking poverty-targeted social protection and Community Based Health Insurance in Ethiopia: Enrolment, linkages, and gaps. *Social Science & Medicine*, 286: 114312. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114312>
9. Prencipe L, Houweling TAJ, van Lenthe F, **Palermo T,** on behalf of the PSSN evaluation team. (2021). “Do Conditional Cash Transfers Improve Mental Health? Evidence From Tanzania’s Governmental Social Protection Program.” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 69(5): 797-805. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1054139X21002305>
10. Handa S, Daidone S, Peterman A, Davis B, Pereira A, **Palermo T,** Yablonski J. (2018). “Myth-busting? Confronting Six Common Perceptions about Unconditional Cash as a Poverty Reduction Strategy.” *World Bank Research Observer*, 33(2): 259-298. <https://academic.oup.com/wbro/article/33/2/259/5127165>
11. De Groot R, **Palermo T,** Handa S, Ragno LP, Peterman A. (2017). Cash Transfers and Child Nutrition: Pathways and Impact. *Development Policy Review*, 35(5):621-643. doi: 10.1111/dpr.1225. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dpr.12255/abstract>

12. Peterman A, Neijhoft AN, Cook S, **Palermo T.** (2017). Understanding the linkages between social protection and childhood violence: A review of the evidence. *Health Policy and Planning* 32(7): 1049-1071. [doi:10.1093/heapol/czx033](https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czx033)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

- April 18, 2024 Panelist for “TRANSFORM: Towards Gender-Responsive and Disability-inclusive Social Protection Systems in Africa.” Hosted by socialprotection.org.
- March 13, 2024 Panelist for Social Protection for Women & Girls panel hosted by UNICEF Social Policy Unit at Commission for the Status of Women (CSW) 68, United Nations, New York, NY.
- Jan. 10, 2024 “Myth-busting the effects of cash transfers on human behavior in development aid.” Presentation (co-presented with Sudhanshu Handa) to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Behavioral Insights Network, Hague, Netherlands.
- Dec. 5, 2023 “Gender and Social Protection.” Social Protection Panel, World Food Programme Impact Evaluation Forum, Rome, Italy, December 5, 2023.
- June 22, 2023 “Tanzania’s ‘Ujana Salama’ adolescent cash plus program.” Presented at the Transfer Project Workshop, June 22, 2023, Nairobi, Kenya
- Sept. 5, 2022 Systematic review of bundled interventions for reducing HIV risk. Presentation to UNICEF HIV/AIDS Global Network Meeting, New York, NY.
- March 13, 2019 “Impacts of Ghana’s government cash transfer programme on intimate partner violence: Evidence from LEAP 1000.” [Commission on the Status of Women 63](#), Side Event on “Leveraging Cash Transfers to Reduce Intimate Partner Violence at Scale.” Co-hosted by UNWOMEN, Sida, and the Prime Minister’s Office (United Republic of Tanzania), New York.
- May 14, 2019 “A Lifecycle Approach to Social Protection.” Presentation at National Social Protection Conference: Social Protection for Inclusive Development. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. [Presentation to Government Ministries, UNICEF and Development Partners]
- December 2017 Presentations on social protection and cash plus. Presented to Sida staff from various embassies across Africa, Swedish Embassy in Lusaka, Zambia.

OTHER INFORMATION

- Citizenship: USA
- Computer: Stata, EndNote, Mac, PC
- Languages: English (Native), Spanish (Professional fluency), Italian (Intermediate), French (Beginner), Portuguese (Beginner)