

RECOVR Roundup: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

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In our new RECOVR Roundup series, we are sharing new findings and analysis from the RECOVR Research Hub and from our partner organizations—as well as links on what is happening in the Social Protection landscape in response to COVID-19.

New Findings & Analysis

Key Decisions for COVID-19 Social Protection in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

Who Benefits and How?

How should policymakers decide what type of support to provide to vulnerable citizens during the pandemic, and which individuals should benefit? This new [IPA policy brief](#) outlines four key decisions in social protection program design. These choices relate to topics like determining funding requirements, selecting beneficiaries, and deciding whether beneficiaries should receive cash payments, digital payments, or in-kind transfers of food or other goods.

Cash Transfers & COVID-19

Experience from Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

IDinsight released the [first of three reports](#) on how COVID-19 has impacted a refugee community in Uganda. While most households reported being food insecure in July 2020, those who received a US\$1,000 unconditional cash transfer prior to the lockdown had marginally stronger food security and better psychological well-being than households that had not yet received a transfer. However, most respondents expressed feelings of sadness and fear associated with a lack of resources to provide for their households and fear of contracting COVID-19.

Pastoralism & COVID-19

What do you do in lockdown if you're a nomadic herder?

This CEGA [blog post](#) covers the impacts of COVID-19 on pastoralists in Kenya, whose lifestyle and livelihoods revolve around trading, breeding, and herding livestock over hundreds of miles. It's a reminder of the "streetlight problem" in social research, that often the most studied people are those who are easy to get to (not pastoralists). The post describes a crowdsourcing platform for gathering data from pastoralists and tracking their unique challenges. Sure enough, their travel patterns have been disrupted, as have their livelihoods particularly as formal markets were shuttered, but they adapted by relying more on third-party brokers for selling cattle.

The Hidden Impact of COVID-19 on Children

A Global Research Series

Save the Children surveyed 13,500 children and 31,500 caregivers in 46 countries and among many findings [reported that](#) "globally, more than 8 in 10 children felt that they were learning little or nothing at all.... Three-quarters of households lost income as a result of COVID-19, and [96%] of households reported having trouble paying for an essential item or service."

What We're Reading and Watching

- **For the latest social protection research news**, economist Ugo Gentilini is a great person to follow. He does a weekly blog post & newsletter you can find at www.ugogentilini.net and often shares new papers on [Twitter](#).
- **In a new brief, the Center for Global Development investigates how digital payments are being used to extend social protection** during the pandemic, covering India, Pakistan, South Africa, Namibia, Togo, Brazil, and Colombia.
- **What happens when informal workers become unemployed?** Lower-income countries have many more people working "off the books" in informal economy jobs, like waste recyclers and street vendors. When they lose their income, there's no formal unemployment record, so the government doesn't even know who needs help. [This International Labour Organization \(ILO\) brief](#) goes over how governments can help, such as by using health insurance networks to reach people, with positive examples from places like Peru and Thailand.
- **SocialProtection.org is holding a virtual conference (October 5-8) on "Turning the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity: What's next for social protection?"** which is convening hundreds of social protection experts and practitioners for three days of sharing experiences, peer-to-peer learning, and discussions about creative solutions for inclusive public policies.

September 25, 2020