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RECOVR Roundup Vol. 21: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

In this twenty-first installment of our 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. Read the [previous installment](#) if you missed it, and [sign up for our mailing list](#) if you'd like to receive this roundup series directly to your inbox.

As always, we encourage you to [write to our team](#) with ideas for features.

New Findings & Analysis

Uganda: What Role Does Trust in Institutions Play in Public Health?

People who trusted in government were more likely to report they complied with health safety rules

Researchers Robert Blair, Travis Curtice, David Dow, and Guy Grossman sought to understand how people's responses to public health emergencies in Uganda are shaped by their trust in state and non-state institutions. The team built on [a previous study that evaluated](#) a program designed to build confidence in the police, extending it to multiple potential targets of trust and surveying participants to understand whether these institutions generate support for, and compliance with, the government's response to the pandemic. **The team found that government endorsements were more effective in generating support for public health restrictions compared to statements by traditional leaders, religious authorities, or international NGOs. Trust in government was strongly positively correlated with compliance with restrictions.** Specifically, trust in the Ministry of Health and in the Uganda Police Force appeared to be especially important predictors of self-reported compliance. [Read more here.](#)

Global: Study Finds COVID-19 Vaccine Acceptance Is Higher in Low- and Middle-Income Countries Than in Richer Countries

Health workers are the most trusted information sources on vaccines

Researchers from IPA and more than 30 other institutions surveyed nearly 45,000 individuals in 10 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), the United States, and Russia between June 2020 and January 2021 on vaccine acceptance and trusted sources for vaccination advice. **The study, published in *Nature Medicine*, reveals that willingness to get a COVID-19 vaccine was considerably higher in developing countries (80 percent) than in the United States (65 percent) and Russia (30 percent).** Health workers (48 percent) were considered the most trusted sources of information about COVID-19 vaccines, followed by government (19 percent) and family or friends (17 percent). The study provides one of the first insights into vaccine acceptance and hesitancy in a broad selection of LMICs. Commentary in *Nature Medicine* argues that the study's findings "**suggest that prioritizing distribution of vaccines to LMICs is justified not only on equity grounds but also on the expectation of higher marginal returns in maximizing global coverage at a faster rate.**" [Read more here.](#)

Global: What We're Learning about Policy Responses During the Pandemic

Results and Analysis section brings together Hub updates

We've updated the Results and Analysis section of the RECOVR Hub to offer readers a curated list of ongoing results and lessons from IPA research and Hub research during the pandemic. Visit the page to read more about best practices for remote research through random digit dialing, mobile payments in Bangladesh, social distancing norms in Mozambique, state engagement with religious leaders in Pakistan, trends and responses to domestic violence in Colombia, and more. We remind our readers that we accept submissions to the RECOVR Hub on a rolling basis, so please submit research projects [here](#), and feel free to suggest it to colleagues!

What We're Reading & Watching

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- A new analysis by UNICEF finds that **pre-primary school closures in 2020 may cost today's young children US\$1.6 trillion in lost earnings over their lifetimes**, with children in middle-income countries affected the most. The paper also points to evaluations of accelerated and remedial programs as evidence for introducing or expanding such early learning programs to mitigate the negative impacts of pre-primary school closures.
 - **Can cash transfers be used to reduce rates of violence against children?** A new study in the Philippines found that a conditional cash transfer program which required

parents to attend a 12-week group-based parenting program was successful in reducing rates of physical and emotional abuse, as well as general neglect and maltreatment, of young children.

- Here are two interesting snapshots of how **Latin American social protection systems responded to the pandemic**. [Colombia has expanded its two major conditional cash transfer programs](#) for families and young people, but in the absence of a firm plan to keep funding these expansions after the end of the pandemic, many new beneficiaries may be cut off in the coming months. Meanwhile, [Ecuador tried to cushion the economic impact of lockdowns](#) with a new Family Protection Grant, but research has found that 82 percent of people polled were still not satisfied with the government's response.
- An insightful [recent paper from UNDP](#) presents **case studies of contributory social protection programs aimed at informal workers** in seven African countries. The paper notes that while contributions from informal workers can help to offset the costs of delivering social protection, most workers can't contribute enough to cover all of their own medical or retirement costs. The authors argue for cross-subsidizing these programs with contributions from higher-paid workers in the formal sector.
- **How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the use of mobile money around the world?** The [GSMA State of the Industry Report on Mobile Money 2021](#) highlights the rapid expansion in the volume of mobile money transactions during this time, based in part on humanitarian cash transfers and a rise in remittances.

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