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RECOVR Roundup Vol. 32: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

In this thirty-second 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

Ghana: Unpacking a multi-part program to build sustainable income for the very poor

Ingredients of a program that work together might not work on their own

Ultra poor graduation programs, which aim to graduate the poorest of the poor out of extreme poverty, have [grown in popularity](#) following evidence for their effectiveness. But the programs, which provide a package of multiple things at once—a productive asset grant (like goats), cash support while they're getting started, coaching, and a savings account—are expensive. So researchers have been working to understand which of the components seem to be the critical ones. [In Ghana](#), [Banerjee](#), [Karlan](#), [Osei](#), [Trachtman](#), & [Udry](#) compared the full model to just getting goats or a savings account. By three years later, while participants who got the full model were doing better, those who just got one of the individual components were not. (Ungated version below. And we have to give credit to the authors for the best "Highlights" summary we've seen in the [online version](#)). **[Read more here.](#)**

What We're Reading & Watching

- Over ten years after the [Social Protection Floor Advisory Group](#) recommended the universalization of social protection floors—minimum sets of social protections available throughout someone’s life—they have yet to materialize. **The UN has called for the creation of a [global fund for social protection](#) to help make universal social protection floors a reality.**
- Adding to the discussion on social protection floors, Martin Evans of the UK think tank ODI Evans [has proposed](#) a focus on older populations, the severely disabled, and children in lone-parent households and others worse off for targeting social floors. **Since these groups do not require any test of income or wealth, he argues that targeting them in the short run would be cheaper and more cost-effective than immediately introducing full universal social protection floors.**
- The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February marked the start of a new displacement crisis. If you’ve been following [the World Bank’s global COVID-19 social protection and labor tracker](#) (Gentilini et al., in version 16 now), then you will be pleased to know that a parallel [“living paper”](#) (version 1) tracking social protection responses in Ukraine and neighboring countries has been released which makes good reading for organizations with a social protection mandate or interest. A new version is scheduled to come out Friday, March 18th, and will probably be [here](#).
- As the evidence base grows, more researchers are trying to understand [what scales effectively](#), including working with governments to test policy changes at scale. Jean Drèze looks at a [case study](#) of a study at a large scale in Bihar, India. He offers a thoughtful critique of the authors’ interpretation, and an invitation to discuss what dangers might arise from researchers working with governments on large-scale studies.
- Take a [world video tour of social protection](#) and journey into the diversity of initiatives underway all over the world. This collective video project “Social Protection for all!” compiles short videos from around the world where people and organizations answer the simple question: **“Why does social protection matter to us?”**

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