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RECOVR Roundup Vol. 35: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

In this thirty-fifth installment of our RECOVR Roundup series, we are sharing new findings and analyses 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

Niger: Combining psychosocial and economic approaches to alleviating poverty

A large evaluation found valuable additions to a government-led multifaceted intervention for the extremely poor

Evidence has been growing for the efficacy of multifaceted programs, which offer the extremely poor a package of complementary assistance. In Niger, a number of researchers, including from IPA and the World Bank, tested the effectiveness of combining such a program with several additional interventions, including psychosocial ones. Starting with over 22,000 households enrolled in a national cash transfer program, participants received a multifaceted package of training and savings programs. Some groups also received either another lump sum payment, a psychosocial support intervention at the individual and community level, or both. All of the programs had positive effects on economic and psychosocial well-being, and on women's empowerment—though in somewhat different ways—with the psychosocial intervention arm being the most cost-effective. This is the first of four such large-scale evaluations which will be conducted in the Sahel region. Read more on the [Development Impact Blog](#), or the full study in *Nature*, [here](#).

What We're Reading & Watching

- This [Brookings blog article](#) explores **how AI could radically improve the efficiency and quality of public service delivery** in social protection and other sectors. The article highlights the risks involved and the consequences of algorithmic biases and errors on people's lives.
- The World Bank's latest [Africa's Pulse](#) big picture economics outlook points out the continent's vulnerability to rising food and commodity prices just as it was starting to recover from the COVID shock. It highlights the **importance of expanding social protection programs beyond safety nets** to strengthen economic resilience.
- The [IMF's new fiscal monitor](#) sets out a number of considerations for **using social assistance to soften the impact of spikes in energy and food prices** resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- A new UNHCR report helps provide a **roadmap for improving social protection systems** for displaced people and other populations of concern in the Horn, East, and Great Lakes regions of Africa.
- A [new WFP report](#) systematically reviews evidence from quasi-experimental and experimental studies conducted in low- and middle-income countries on the **impact of humanitarian assistance programs on household outcomes**.

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