
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.

May 06, 2022