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RECOVR Roundup Vol. 36: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

In this thirty-sixth 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

Alaska: Does a universal income make people work less?

Answer: No

One major question around basic income programs is whether providing people a small predictable living stipend would reduce their incentive to work. In a recently published paper, Damon Jones and Ioana Marinescu look at what happened in Alaska, where since 1982 every full-time resident receives an annual cash dividend—amounting to on average \$3,900 per family. Since it was not an experiment, they don't have a control group but use statistical comparisons with other states to estimate the effects on employment. They find no reductions in Alaskans' full-time work from the program, and an increase (of 1.8 percentage points, or 17 percent), in part-time work, which they attribute to the additional income stimulating the economy. Read the full paper [here](#).

What We're Reading & Watching

- Targeting—getting aid to the right population—is a commonly used, but much debated, policy within global social assistance practice. [This book](#) examines the well-known dilemmas in light of the growing body of experience, new implementation capacities,

and the potential to bring new data and data science to bear. A shorter two-page summary can be found [here](#), and our friends at CEGA [have an initiative](#) devoted to these questions.

- Practitioners will love [this note](#) commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO) and developed by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) which tackles key issues on a range of cash transfer-related choices presented using thematic and country illustrations in a handy matrix articulated by "what," "why," "challenges," and "recommendations."
- We are proud to share initial results from our evaluation of the [impact of a graduation program on livelihoods in refugee and host communities](#) in Uganda. The program had significant positive impacts for both program participants and their households on key outcomes, including food security, nutrition, and self-reliance. All variations of the program also had large positive returns on investment.
- FAO, ILO, and UNICEF, in conjunction with many other UN agencies and development partners, convened a stocktaking exercise to reflect on UN collaboration on social protection. High-level recommendations resulting from the exercise include the need for mainstreaming human rights instruments and other international standards adopted as well as faster and better collaboration within the UN System. Here is the [report](#) and [webinar recording](#).
- Earlier this year, J-PAL launched a brand new sector and initiative to generate rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of social protection programs and to help partners apply evidence to high-level decision-making. Here is a [webinar](#) of the launch!

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