

RECOVR Roundup Vol. 8: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

By [Luciana Debenedetti](#), [Jeff Mosenkis](#), and [Rachel Strohm](#)

In this eighth 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 [first](#), [second](#), [third](#), [fourth](#), [fifth](#), [sixth](#), and [seventh](#) installments if you missed them, 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

Bangladesh: Chores & Child Marriage? A Cautionary Tale on the Pandemic's Effects on Girls in Low-Income Countries

A new paper warns that girls could bear a long-term brunt of the pandemic's fallout in terms of lost study time and marriage expectations

Economists Momoe Makino, Abu Shonchoy, and Zaki Wahhaj surveyed households in Gaibandha, a rural area of Bangladesh, to find out how school closures and lockdowns were changing kids' lives. [They found](#) that children spent more time doing household chores, at the expense of study time, with girls impacted more than boys. In a country and region with already high child marriage rates, school closures also appeared to increase the risk of child marriage for girls. The findings are a reminder that this crisis will likely change the course of many kids' lives in poor countries.

What We're Reading & Watching

- **In Sri Lanka, the government moved quickly to implement a cash transfer program** which directly or indirectly supported an estimated 69 percent of the population during the pandemic. However, the program did face some challenges reaching the most vulnerable, as [one study estimates](#) that **58 percent of the most**

vulnerable citizens were mistakenly excluded from receiving benefits.

- **Do cash transfers make people happier?** A recent [meta-analysis](#) combs through data from 38 studies in 21 low- and middle-income countries, and finds that **cash transfers consistently improved recipients' mental health outcomes**, but more evidence is needed on long-term (5+ years) impacts and effects on non-recipients.
- In Bolivia, [a new paper from the IADB](#) finds that **people who became eligible for an old-age pension from the government during the COVID-19 pandemic were 40 percent less likely to go hungry** compared to people who didn't receive the pension.
- If the recent [IPA study on UBI in Kenya](#) interested you, you can take a dive into **the history of UBI since the late 1700s** at the [Huffington Post](#), or bookmark the new [Center for Guaranteed Income Research](#) at the University of Pennsylvania for future research on the topic.
- A [new study](#) commissioned by the International Chamber of Commerce finds that **wealthy countries would absorb half or more of worldwide economic losses, in the trillions of dollars, if poorer countries are largely shut out of vaccine distribution** over the next year. Though many narratives equate vaccine sharing with charity, the study drives home the reality that "[equitable distribution of vaccines is in every country's economic interest.](#)" (As if there weren't already [enough compelling reasons](#) for rich countries to consider how vaccines are distributed globally.)

January 28, 2021