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RECOVR Roundup Vol. 25: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

In this twenty-fourth 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

Philippines: Beneficiary experiences with a new digital cash transfer

While recipients were highly satisfied with their withdrawal experience, a survey found a need to increase awareness among beneficiaries

Researchers [Yoonyoung Cho](#), [Ceci Cruz](#), [Julienne Labonne](#), [Kate Glynn-Broderick](#), and [Rebecca Rouse](#) surveyed recipients of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), an emergency cash transfer for low-income households in the Philippines implemented in response to the pandemic. Between July and November 2020, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) introduced digital payments to beneficiaries via six participating financial service providers. Researchers surveyed 5,000 recipients of digital transfers to better understand the beneficiary experience using this new transfer method. The survey found that recipients were generally satisfied with their withdrawal experience of digital cash transfers, with 90 percent reporting high satisfaction with the digital payment process. However, just 31 percent could correctly recall which provider disbursed their allowance, and **only 16 percent had awareness that an account had been created for them and that they could use it for other purposes, such as saving, sending money, or receiving remittances.** This lack of awareness may limit the program's potential to leverage these digital payments for financial inclusion.

What We're Reading & Watching

- A new paper [examines](#) Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), a quarterly unconditional cash transfer delivered to female family representatives, and finds that the cash transfer increased grade promotion among boys but not among girls. In the short run, **the BISP substantially reduced school dropout for boys but increased dropout rates substantially for girls. In the medium to long run, the transfers help to reduce child labor among boys and girls.**
- Did the fast expansion of cash-based programming in poor countries increase international migration by easing financial constraints? The answer may be yes. A [paper](#) of a cash-for-work government program in Comoros, in which selected households were offered up to US\$320, found that **the migration rate among beneficiary households increased from 7.8 percent to 10.8 percent.**
- A [new analysis](#) by the Center for Global Development finds, of the social protection policies implemented by over 200 countries and territories in response to the pandemic, **only 22.8 percent are gender-sensitive (i.e., address the impacts of the crisis on women and girls)**. The majority (53 percent) of gender-sensitive measures fall under social assistance, 26 percent constitute social insurance, and 20 percent are focused on unpaid care.
- A [review](#) of 53 low- and middle-income countries' cash-based social assistance responses during the pandemic recommends strengthening shock responsiveness by **harnessing existing data and infrastructure from social registries, digitizing programs, and strengthening national identification coverage.**
- For two years, the nonprofit OnePGH in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania [will transfer US\\$500 a month to 200 randomly selected low-income households. The program is focused on households led by Black women](#), though others can qualify. With guaranteed income increasingly visible in the US policy discourse, take a deep dive into the **history of UBI in the US** [here](#).

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