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RECOVR Roundup Vol. 34: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

In this thirty-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

More evidence on cash transfers and child nutritional outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis

The content of behavior change communication (BCC) matters for program effectiveness

There has been a bounty of new cash transfer studies in recent years, and it can be hard to keep track of all of the different effect sizes and outcomes. In *BMJ Global Health*, Manley, Alderman, and Gentilini have a meta-analysis, looking at 129 studies of how cash transfers affected child nutritional outcomes. They find statistically significant effects on height z-scores (.024 effect size), stunting (1.35% less), and wasting (1.31% less), though not for weight. In diet, they find statistically significant increases in animal-source foods (6.72%), dietary diversity (.55 effect size), and less diarrhea incidence (by 1.74%). Some programs studied added a Behavioral Change Communication component, and the ones focused on water, sanitation, and hygiene were more effective at reducing stunting and promoting dietary diversity. [Read more here.](#)

What We're Reading & Watching

- India, the second-largest country in the world by population, hasn't released official poverty numbers since 2012, so measurement has been difficult. **According to two new papers, India has either completely eradicated extreme poverty, or poverty is higher than earlier projections.** [Justin Sandefur is skeptical of both accounts.](#)
- Cloutier, Harborne, Isser, Santos, and Watts present a fascinating set of case studies from Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, and South Africa in [a new book on social contracts in the region](#). The book argues **how social protection can influence citizen-state relations via formalization, state partnership, conditionality, and targeting.**
- On the back of a massive global surge in economic inclusion programming led by developing country governments, **a World Bank blog post by Arianna Legovini and Michal Rutkowski explores, "[What do we need to learn to effectively scale-up government-led economic inclusion programs?](#)"**
- The Max Planck Institute will hold **a workshop on the methodological and conceptual challenges of comparative social protection analysis.** The workshop will explore the potentials and limits of social policy comparison, and address the question of how a meaningful and constructive South/North dialogue on comparative social protection analysis can take shape. [Details here!](#)
- **J-PAL will host their [Evaluating Social Programs course](#) from June 13-17.** Participants will learn why and when randomized evaluations can be used to rigorously measure social impact and how findings can inform the design of evidence-based policies and programs.

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