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RECOVR Roundup Vol. 26: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

In this twenty-sixth 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

Colombia: How have formal residency permits helped undocumented Venezuelan migrants during the pandemic?

COVID-19 has amplified the needs of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia

Almost a million undocumented Venezuelans are estimated to be in Colombia, which has taken the unusual step of offering formal residency permits, allowing them access to the labor market and many other services. A new brief by experts from the Inter-American Development Bank, Universidad de los Andes, the University of Southern California, and IPA, summarizes a qualitative study of migrants who did and didn't get permits. It explores reasons for migrating to Colombia (such as social networks which could offer concrete assistance after spending most of their money on the journey), benefits of the permit (ability to work and send their children to school), and setbacks during COVID (including loss of work and childcare and xenophobic blaming of migrants for the spread of the disease). The brief suggests avenues for further qualitative and quantitative research.

Read the brief in [Spanish](#) and [English](#).

Bangladesh: The gendered impact of COVID-19 on adolescents' education and school-to-work transitions

Surveys revealed a drop in adolescent girls' ambitions for college education and increases in care work

The extended closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic is having a negative impact on adolescents. Youth in Bangladesh, who already struggle to access the labor market due to limited skills and poor quality education, were absent from in-person schooling from March 2020 to September 2021. This has resulted in a loss of learning, jobs, and income in the short term that has implications for long-term human capital development. As part of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) study, researchers [TM Asaduzzaman](#), [Sarah Baird](#), [Nicola Jones](#), [Shwetlena Sabarwal](#), [Jennifer Seager](#), and [Salauddin Tauseef](#) conducted a three-round survey of 2,000 students in Bangladesh to understand the gender-differentiated impact of the pandemic on adolescents. **Adolescent girls reported less support for education and access to learning materials, and more household and care responsibilities.** They also reported a decline in their ambitions to pursue higher education. The data also indicate learning gaps between rural and urban areas and households with different pre-COVID-19 wealth levels.

What We're Reading & Watching

- In India, many people are not aware that they might be eligible for certain welfare benefits. [Indus Action](#), a nonprofit focused on helping households gain access to benefits, [recently worked with the research firm IDInsight](#) to develop a **machine learning model that predicts which households might be eligible for certain welfare programs**. While the model hasn't been fully deployed yet, this is a promising line of research for other nonprofits seeking to help their clients connect to government welfare programs.
- During the response to COVID-19, [**the combination of digital IDs, digital government payment systems, and interoperable government databases has been called the “transformational trilogy”**](#) that lets countries rapidly scale up their social protection benefits when needed. [This article](#) highlights how the World Bank and the government of the Philippines have been improving the delivery of cash transfers through the transformational trilogy, in the [Beneficiary FIRST Social Protection Project](#).
- Ensuring that access to digital IDs is efficient and equitable can be a challenge. [This research report from Uganda](#) highlights the ways in which **women and older people find it systematically more difficult to register for the country's National Identity Card (NIC)**—and how people without the NIC are often incorrectly excluded from public healthcare or public pension programs.

- **How do multifaceted social protection interventions in Haiti affect risk factors for children's mental health?** [A new study from Roelen & Saha](#) explores the impact of the Chemin Lavi Miyò graduation program. They find that the program's combination of cash transfers, livelihood development, and nutrition coaching reduces rates of corporal punishment for children, but doesn't otherwise lead to a more stimulating environment, or reduce exposure to violence. The authors conclude that social protection programs should be combined with other interventions to achieve better outcomes for kids.

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