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RECOVR Roundup Vol. 29: Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19

In this twenty-ninth 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

Bangladesh: How has the pandemic affected youth living in informal settlements?

Young people living in informal settlements face several challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) study, researchers [Sarah Baird](#), [Nicola Jones](#), [Jennifer Seager](#), and [Salauddin Tauseef](#) conducted three rounds of surveys among 780 adolescent boys and girls in three urban slums in Bangladesh. **The results showed out-of-school adolescents, especially those from poor households, worked more during the pandemic. However, young people looking for jobs reported a lack of adequate employment, possibly due to business closures and stagnant economic activities.** The researchers also note that the shift to digital learning resources may be passing these youth by and merits special attention. [Read more here.](#)

Global: Supporting Women-led Businesses in Low- and Middle-Income Countries through the COVID-19 Crisis and Beyond

With women-led businesses disproportionately affected, governments can prioritize equity-based policies to assist female business owners

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) around the world have been hurt in the COVID-19 pandemic, with women-led businesses suffering disproportionately. A gender-intentional approach to short-term mitigation and long-term recovery could address some of the gender-specific dimensions of these shocks and protect gains made on gender equality in recent years. In a recent brief, IPA has compiled key policy-relevant findings for the short- and long-term recovery from the COVID-19 crisis of women-led businesses in low- and middle-income countries. Policies such as **flexible credit products, targeted information campaigns, facilitating access to large buyers, and soft skills training programs** can help to address long-standing gender imbalances and intrahousehold dynamics while facilitating economic recovery for women-led businesses. These insights may help inform the design of programs and policies to support female entrepreneurs in the context of the current pandemic and beyond. [Read more here.](#)

What We're Reading & Watching

- Bloomberg Businessweek [highlights](#) Togo's experience in building a **fully-digital pandemic stimulus program, Novissi, from the ground up**. Read IPA's recent case study on the program [here](#).
- In response to California's recent \$35 million set-aside for a guaranteed income pilot, New America Foundation [highlights](#) the evolution of guaranteed income programs across the US. Among lessons learned: **providing qualitative stories alongside "hard data" is a powerful tool for addressing cultural stigmas and redefining the narrative around cash assistance.**
- Many social assistance programs in low- and middle-income countries were originally designed to support the rural poor. **How should these programs be adapted to meet the needs of poor individuals in urban settings?** A [recent working paper from ODI](#) explores this question with case studies from Madagascar, Nigeria, and Peru.
- If you'd like to do a deep dive into the key challenges of social protection responses to COVID-19, [this recent edition of Policy in Focus](#) from the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth covers topics including **gender-responsive social protection, inclusion of disabled people, financing options for universal programs, and microsimulation as a tool for studying policy change.**
- India has invested heavily in biometric ID systems, partly in order to streamline the distribution of social protection benefits. However, [a recent data leak](#) which exposed the personal information of 31 million people in Tamil Nadu highlights **the need for governments to build in strong protections for data security and data privacy.**

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