

# Human Development and COVID-19: A Reference Guide

## Evaluative Resources and Evidence to inform the COVID-19 Response

This reference guide contains information on the following IEG Reports:

During times of crisis, the reactive response of policy makers and the affected population is unsurprisingly to address the impact and specific causes of the crisis at hand. However, this tunnel vision effect or silo approach misses the opportunity to build resilience in a comprehensive and more durable manner. **(A)** This reference guide collects lessons from evaluations produced by IEG between 2013-2019 to provide practical knowledge to international development practitioners during COVID-19 responses.

### Health Sector Preparedness in Pandemic Responses

Attention to pandemics and other major health emergencies can benefit from shifting from the approach grounded in crisis response towards incorporating risk reduction and risk management into ongoing operations. Attention to building long-term capacity should complement emergency relief support to build systems

resilience to manage different stages of the pandemic response. It is important to build-in the risks from zoonotic diseases and pandemics by building support for animal health systems, human health systems, and the links between them into agriculture, livestock, and human health interventions. **(E)**

In pandemic situations capable health systems are a necessary ingredient to mount a successful response to deadly virus outbreaks. These require adequately staffed health services, a supply of essential personal protective equipment, capacities for laboratory diagnosis, clinical management, and surveillance for quick diagnosis and

rapid contact tracing. **(F)** To succeed in this effort, the World Bank Group institutions could seek to ensure that project financing and analytical and advisory services are not one-off responses outside the client country's health system as well as mainstream pandemic preparedness and control into its operations. **(F)**

### Role of Social Safety Nets

Countries that had developed safety net programs or institutions during stable times could scale up better during crises than those that had not. Steady engagement through lending, analytic and advisory work, and dialogue for an extended period before the crisis enabled countries to develop well-functioning social safety net institutions and the World Bank to develop a deeper understanding

of country dynamics, both of which can help countries respond effectively to shocks. Research shows that the two most common constraints for support during the crises were weak country institutions and inadequate data. **(A)**

A crisis period can create opportunities for broader reform of an existing social protection system through projects that adequately balance short and long-term

objectives. Countries like El Salvador saw the limitations of their social protection systems on the onset of the economic crisis and their desire to protect affected groups was limited by their tax revenue. This showed the need for more sustainable social programs that are cost-effective. Incorporating longer-term support to build universal social protection system provided the government with the institutional framework and tools that, if sustained, would

enable a more rapid response in the face of future shocks. **(B)**

Clearly define objectives and assess benefits, costs, and feasibility of policy alternatives to ensure the most appropriate use of Social Safety Nets. Comparing alternative options for reaching the specific objective(s) is particularly important in contexts of high poverty and tight budgets and encourages specific SSN objectives. **(G)**

### Local Capacity Development & Citizens' Participation

In countries with weak capacity, partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector can play an important role in augmenting capacity and delivering services rapidly and at scale. **(H)**

An early lesson from IDA's Crisis Response Window, which aims to achieve

rapid response, transparency and predictability, support for resilience in natural disaster response, and supporting long-term development objectives, is that the program benefits from regular community consultations which can guide the appropriate choice of investments and generate practical improvements to increase impact during Crisis Response. **(D)**

In fragile context, the use of civic technology tools, such as social media or online consultation, can be a critical tool to reach the citizens. For instance, the Bank Group strategically used social media in Myanmar, where it was reengaging after a long time, and in the Republic of Yemen, where it is striving to engage citizens despite the ongoing conflict and political

uncertainties. There, the team held a series of online consultations with approximately 20,000 respondents drawn from different segments of the Yemeni civil society. **(C)**

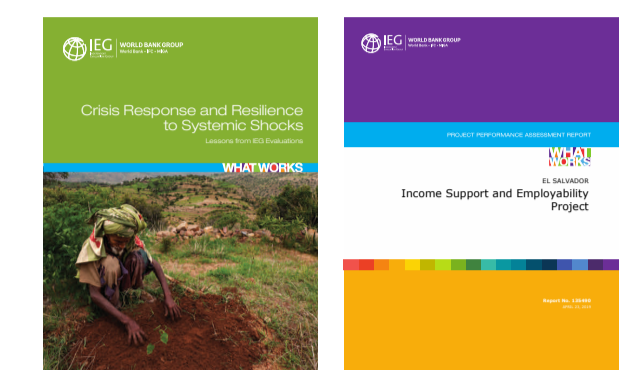
### Project Design and Implementation

As learned from the context of the fragile countries, early focus on results and monitoring is necessary and feasible, even with travel restrictions and security constraints. The Afghanistan program

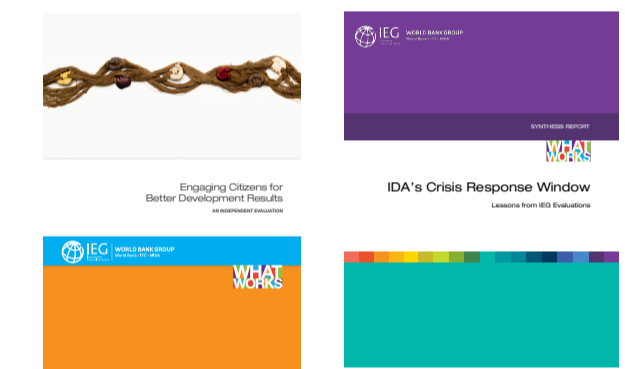
made effective use of third-party monitoring in several sectors to compensate for the lack of in-country capacity and travel restrictions. **(H)**

It is important to have good project design that includes advance analytic work and technical design in addition to addressing client capacity. A well-defined results and adaptive management of results to tailor crisis response to country situation. **(D)**

Assessing the impact of communications and public awareness programs is critical to determining the extent to which the public changes their behavior and to informing any necessary course corrections to the communications strategy. **(E)**



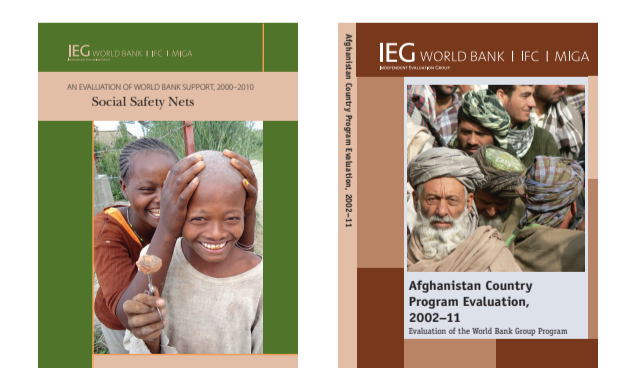
**A. Crisis Response and Resilience to Systemic Shocks: Lessons from IEG Evaluations**



**B. El Salvador - Income Support and Employment Project (PPAR)**



**C. Engaging Citizens for Better Development Results**



**D. IDA's Crisis Response Window**



**E. Responding to Global Public Bads**



**F. World Bank Group Support to Health Services**



**G. Responding to Global Public Bads**



**H. World Bank Support to Social Safety Nets**