

Navigating Tough Terrain: Sound Principles, Good Maps, and Adaptive Learning

The recent slowdown in inclusive growth and global poverty reduction has suddenly intensified into a historic reversal. This turnaround is primarily the result of COVID-19 (coronavirus), which has already precipitated the worst economic crisis in 80 years, but the reversal is being accentuated by violent conflict in some countries and the steadily intensifying effects of climate change the world over. The most urgent challenge is halting the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on lives and livelihoods, even as more familiar development problems remain and are likely to deepen the longer COVID-19 persists. Responding effectively to both COVID-19 and persistent development issues will require devising sound policies, but their successful realization will entail building robust and adaptive implementation systems, while leaders will also need to secure widespread citizen support for response measures that are likely to be contentious and onerous, especially for the poor. Hence, discerning how to ensure the legitimacy of these measures will be vital. The urgency of this moment cannot be overstated: the longer it takes to find and enact effective responses, the harder these challenges will become.

Halting COVID-19 and reversing its economic effects will require a combination of familiar and new approaches. Governments need to act decisively to expand financial support to vulnerable households and small businesses, and to prudently take on the debt needed to pay for this support. The very novelty, complexity, and intensity of this moment, however, mean that much needs to be learned—quickly, effectively, at scale, by everyone. This effort will entail creating space for innovative local responses from communities and firms, widely sharing emerging lessons through communities of practice, and forging a strong sense of collective purpose. Collecting and curating data will be central to tracking the effectiveness of these responses, to allocating scarce resources to where they are needed most, and to equalizing opportunities. The situation underscores the importance of investing in comprehensive prevention, preparedness, and resilience measures to minimize the likelihood that such catastrophic events happen in the first place, and, if they do happen, to ensure that decisive early steps can be taken and that the most vulnerable groups are protected. Global problems ultimately require global solutions, underscoring the need for cooperation and coordination at all levels, and for giving full support to organizations and procedures that are designed to serve precisely this purpose.

Introduction

After nearly a quarter century of steady global declines in extreme poverty to historically unprecedented levels, there has been a sudden reversal. This setback stems overwhelmingly from the effects of a pandemic (COVID-19) and the global economic crisis it has caused. However, in some places the reversal is being accentuated by violent conflict (the effects of which have been accumulating in recent years) and climate change (a slowly accelerating risk that is already driving millions into poverty). In one sense, these challenges are new versions of old calamities. Pandemics—and contagious diseases more generally—have existed since humans began domesticating animals and living in urban settlements, thousands of years ago. Humans have been in violent conflict with each other throughout recorded history and long before. Across the ages, erratic weather, natural disasters, and changing temperatures have led to droughts, famines, floods, plagues, and migrations. Instances of all these challenges are cited in ancient texts, emblematic of the extent to which humans and nature, singularly or in concert, can inflict enormous suffering, especially on those least able to protect themselves.

But the current moment is different. How the world responds to the three major challenges today, especially COVID-19, will have a direct bearing on whether the current reversals in global poverty reduction can be turned around. Effective responses must begin by recognizing what makes these challenges not just different and difficult, but so devastating for the poor. COVID-19 may not be the world's first pandemic, but no previous disease has become a global threat so quickly or been experienced simultaneously in every country in the world; its scale, the uncertainties created, and the pervasive externalities to which it gives rise are without precedent. Never before have the world's poorest people resided so disproportionately in conflict-affected territories and countries, including parts of middle-income economies (Corral et al. 2020). Changes in global weather patterns induced by human activity are also unprecedented, with vastly disproportionate contributions from wealthy countries affecting the

entire world, while the poorest countries and peoples suffer the most. Responding effectively to these challenges requires collective action at all levels (Ferguson 2020).

The key messages from the preceding three chapters are that (1) poverty is expected to be much higher over the next decade as a result of COVID-19, hence the highest priority needs to be halting the pandemic and resuming inclusive growth as soon as possible; (2) COVID-19 and its associated economic crisis are likely to have uneven impacts on people and places, so measures to prevent widening inequalities are needed, along with inclusive growth; and (3) those falling back into extreme poverty as a result of COVID-19 (the “new poor”) have certain distinctive characteristics (mostly urban, working in services and informal businesses), so targeted policies focused on their specific needs are essential (Nguyen et al. 2020). Previous chapters also stressed, however, that rates of global poverty reduction were declining before COVID-19, that the addition of the “new poor” only partly changes the overall global profile of people living in extreme poverty (who will remain predominantly rural, underaged, and underschooled), and thus that much remains to be done to promote development policies focused on global poverty reduction, inclusive growth, human capital accumulation, and protection against risks.

This moment is also different because COVID-19, conflict, and climate change are the downside effects of processes that make development itself, and thus poverty reduction, possible. The transmission of COVID-19 around the world in a matter of weeks is a product of globalization, which enables rapid, low-cost, high-volume, worldwide exchange of both goods and “bads.” The same mechanisms that enable global trade and travel also spread diseases and generate vast amounts of carbon dioxide, while supporting the flow of weapons, illicit funds, and digital threats (World Bank 2020f). Without effective governance and political will, both within and between countries, navigating between opportunities and risks is harder than ever, making it more likely that the negative effects of the risks will occur more frequently (Rodrik 1999, 2011).

The poorest suffer most from COVID-19, conflict, and climate change

All countries and population groups are experiencing the human and economic effects of COVID-19, conflict, and climate change; but the poor and vulnerable suffer the most. In both the baseline and downside scenarios described in this report, more than 80 percent of the more than 100 million people likely to fall back into extreme poverty in 2020 are projected to come from middle-income economies, reflecting the vulnerability of those who have ostensibly escaped extreme poverty.¹ Even in wealthy countries, it is likely to be the poorest who face the highest incidence of the virus and the highest death rates (Cajner et al. 2020; Hooper, Nápoles, and Pérez-Stable 2020; Yancy 2020). As documented in chapter 3, the effects of COVID-19—as well as climate change and violent conflict—fall hardest on the poor, less because of their exposure to such risks than because of their high vulnerability. Poor people’s vulnerability reflects a lack of access to institutional resilience mechanisms (such as social protection, insurance, and credit), possession of few leveragable assets, and reliance on low-quality public services, among other factors. COVID-19 disproportionately affects the poor because low-income communities around the world have the lowest coverage and quality of medical care, and because choices involved in enacting effective responses are also the most wrenching for poor people (Brown, Ravallion, and van de Walle 2020).

“Stay-at-home” orders, for example, can be devastating for the poor: because most cannot work from home, they may earn far less income and thus struggle to feed their families, especially if food prices rise as a result of disruptions to supply chains. Data from COVID-19 phone surveys in Nigeria suggest that fully 85 percent of households have experienced rising food prices, with half reducing their food consumption as a coping strategy (Siwatu et al. 2020). If sustained, this pattern could have enduring effects on children’s cognitive development and on adult health and productivity.² The places where the poorest work and live are least likely to

be able to accommodate social distancing, home-based work, and remote learning during sustained school closures (Dingel and Neiman 2020; Van Lancker and Parolin 2020). As of August 2020, more than a billion children—about two-thirds of the world’s learners—remained affected by school closures,³ leaving the task of educating and caring for young children to the family. But poorer families are more constrained in the time, resources, and quiet spaces for learning they can provide. The poorest individuals, especially refugees and migrants, may also lack the formal identification and linguistic capacity needed to secure any available government assistance and to protect their basic human rights (Kluge et al. 2020). Stringent lockdown measures are likely to lead women and children to suffer heightened levels of domestic violence (Galea, Merchant, and Lurie 2020; UN Women 2020).

More broadly, and beyond COVID-19’s immediate public health and human capital effects, a deepening recession is predicted to result in a global growth decline of 5.2 percent in 2020, the steepest drop in eight decades. The enduring effects of this recession could leave lasting scars (World Bank 2020a)—on investment levels, remittance flows, the skills and health of the millions rendered unemployed, learning outcomes (from closure of schools), and disrupted supply chains. Unlike other recent global economic crises, which spared some regions or had offsetting factors that reduced their severity (such as high commodity prices or sustained growth in China), the current economic recession is truly global and cross-sectoral. Thus, its effects are likely to be widespread and enduring, and recovery slow (Reinhart and Reinhart 2020). As a result of this global recession, inclusive growth is set to decline in the coming years, as noted in chapter 2 of this report, in all but 13 of the 91 economies for which data projections are available. Lessons from the long-term effects of previous pandemics suggest that the scale of COVID-19 will lead to an increase in economic inequality, a decline in social mobility, and lower resilience to future shocks (Hill and Narayan 2020; International Monetary Fund and World Bank 2020).

Conflict also has especially pernicious effects on the poorest. In its most extreme

form, violence can lead to wars that destroy lives, households, assets, and natural resources, leaving a legacy from which a society may take many years to recover. Research conducted for this report shows that widespread violence creates a “conflict debt,” measured by the incidence of poverty over time, which can be “repaid” only if stable peace can be achieved. If conflict resumes, initial gains can quickly be lost. Even after a decade of peace, about a quarter of this conflict debt is likely to remain (Mueller and Techasunthornwat 2020). An assessment of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic between 2011 and 2016 suggests that the country’s gross domestic product declined by US\$226 billion (World Bank 2017b) during this period. As noted in chapter 1, the intensity of recent wars in the Middle East and North Africa has resulted in rising poverty at all levels, with regional extreme poverty increasing from 2.3 percent in 2013 to 7.2 percent in 2018 (Corral et al. 2020). Likewise, the effects of violent conflict on physical and mental health can endure long after peace is established (Ghobarah, Huth, and Russett 2003).⁴

For the poorest small countries, climate change is perhaps the most difficult challenge, and the problem is not of their own making. New analysis presented in this report, refining earlier estimates, indicates that an additional 132 million people may fall into poverty by 2030 because of the combined effects of climate change on productivity, food prices, health, and natural disasters. Human-induced increases in global temperatures and sea levels are almost entirely a product of levels of energy use by high-income nations and large, rapidly growing middle-income economies (Hsiang and Kopp 2018). Poor countries can only adapt, but their efforts stand a better chance of success if rich countries do their part by reducing the intensity of the problem in the first place, providing resources and technical support to facilitate adaptation in low-income economies, and accepting more immigrants (Pritchett and Hani 2020). These actions require sustained global cooperation. Climate change also poses a serious problem of time inconsistency for poor people and cash-strapped governments. Their vastly more pressing concern is to meet basic needs now, rather than making costly sacrifices that will enable

potential benefits to others, but only in the distant future. Despite such tensions, these countries are also the places where children constitute the largest share of the population: making efforts now to reduce climate change is an inescapable moral responsibility to their own future generations.

Because the poorest also reside disproportionately in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa—and, in the latter, in situations of fragility and conflict—efforts in these regions to save lives, protect livelihoods, and ensure basic security are especially important, both during and after COVID-19. The poorest people in parts of certain Sub-Saharan African countries (for example, Cameroon, Liberia) and Nepal are potentially susceptible to all the major challenges discussed in this report at the same time: a pandemic, a recession, current or old conflicts (with enduring effects), and climate change (notably through flood risks). In such “hot spot” contexts, an array of responses commensurate with the scale and scope of these compounding challenges will be needed to advance inclusive growth and sustain poverty reduction.

Poverty cannot be fully understood in monetary terms alone. As documented in chapter 1, deprivations in other dimensions such as education, health, housing, and infrastructure are also pervasive and often as damaging to poor people. The multidimensional nature of poverty in countries such as Burkina Faso and Niger, where the effects of income poverty are exacerbated by deprivations in access to basic infrastructure and education, highlights the importance of implementing policies that can address the many obstacles blocking people’s efforts to escape from poverty. As part of its response to COVID-19, Niger has announced the Learning Improvement for Results in Education project, which seeks to reach children unable to attend school and develop an online platform to enhance teacher training. In a country where, before COVID-19, half of children between ages 7 and 12 were not in school at all, or completed primary schooling but with few basic skills, the Learning Improvement for Results in Education project has the potential to help families manage the COVID-19 crisis while also modernizing Niger’s education system.⁵

Familiar development challenges persist

Although addressing COVID-19 and its associated economic crisis must be the priority now, countries should also remain focused on the obstacles that most poor people face most of the time. These more familiar development challenges do not go away during an emergency; indeed, they are only likely to intensify as a result of the stresses imposed by the pandemic itself and the claims it makes on finite fiscal resources and political attention. It is important to recognize that 80 percent of the world's poor reside in rural areas—and that rural poverty will predominate in the post-COVID-19 recovery period. Chapter 3 documents that the poorest are also primarily children and youth, female, and less educated, which makes it essential to continue long-standing efforts to increase agricultural productivity, expand rural infrastructure and employment options, improve public services (especially health and education), and build better systems to anticipate and manage everyday risks. Such investments are the foundation upon which societies can forge the shared resilience, generate the necessary public resources, and acquire the organizational capability to better anticipate and respond to major challenges in the future. Redoubling efforts on such issues is crucial for reversing the slowdown in global poverty reduction that was already underway before COVID-19, and that will need even stronger support once it has passed.

An enduring development challenge for poor people, especially in rural areas, is that they live in poor places (Hausmann et al. 2014). In such settings, economic returns to people's work and skills are low, assets slowly accumulate but can quickly erode, vulnerability to risks is high, social and physical connections to markets are few, discrimination is common, people's ability to influence broader policy decisions is weak, and public services are of low quality.⁶ The consequences for human capital accumulation are often severe. Before COVID-19, for example, a child born in Sub-Saharan Africa could expect to achieve only 40 percent of her potential productivity as an adult worker, given shortfalls in health and education in the region,

meaning that an African child would grow up to be just 58 percent as productive as a child raised in Europe and Central Asia (World Bank 2020c). The isolation of poor places may mean that they are initially spared the worst effects of external forces such as pandemics and armed conflict, but, should such forces eventually arrive, recovery from them in poor settings may also be slower, further eroding the community's resilience, especially if young people, service providers, and business leaders depart for better opportunities elsewhere.

Less dramatic but familiar events can precipitate negative changes in the lives of vulnerable communities. Beyond armed conflict, for example, other forms of conflict also routinely ensue from changes in the norms, rules, and incentives governing everyday life that are brought about by development itself (Barron, Diprose, and Woolcock 2011). These more frequent forms of social conflict include domestic violence (Hoeffler and Fearon 2014), contested claims to land and inheritance, and disputes with mining and logging companies (Berman et al. 2017). The provision of basic education can be socially disruptive if it creates an intergenerational literacy divide and alters expectations of career options, gender relations, marital choices, and familial obligations (see Berry [2015] on Rwanda). A major economic crisis can expose and exacerbate these underlying social fault lines, potentially leading to conflict and mass migrations if effective social protection measures are not in place to mitigate the tensions.

These twin imperatives—of responding to both the novel but urgent needs generated by COVID-19 and the more familiar but important development problems—should be regarded as complementary rather than competing challenges. Lessons emerging from each can fruitfully inform the other. The sections that follow briefly explore the mix of familiar and innovative policy responses to COVID-19 that have been deployed in different countries. Only with the passing of time will it be clear which of these efforts have had lasting success: initial gains from certain responses may subsequently prove ephemeral; others with more modest initial impact may gain

greater traction over time; certain responses may succeed in some contexts but greatly disappoint in others; successful pilots may not work at scale. There is certainly no presumption that the approaches described are necessarily the “best” way to respond, but despite the inherent uncertainty, decisive action has had to be taken rapidly in every country. The point of sharing selected examples is the sharing itself—to offer snapshots of what is being done, with the hope that it can usefully inform and inspire efforts elsewhere. Precisely because the current moment is without historical precedent, everyone has much to gain from the experiences of others. Over time, such exchanges can help organizations and teams learn, both in real time now and from subsequent evaluations, how best to navigate such complex development challenges. Through such a process, a more detailed and reliable “map” of this unfamiliar terrain begins to take shape.

Responding to COVID-19 presents unique challenges

Responses at the scale required to combat COVID-19 and its associated economic crisis cost money at levels that many countries cannot afford, even though failing to incur such costs will only make matters worse. Sovereign and corporate debt levels were already at historic highs (Kose et al. 2020) before the global pandemic arrived, driving 90 percent of the world’s economies into recession. Compared with 2009, fewer emerging market and developing economies, especially those heavily dependent on tourism, remittances, and energy exports, are well placed to respond with aggressive monetary or fiscal strategies. Because stopping the spread of COVID-19 and protecting livelihoods have become each country’s highest priorities (even if the available means for doing so vary enormously), countries have had little choice but to re-prioritize spending, mobilize additional fiscal resources, and, if these efforts are insufficient or prove unfeasible, take on additional debt to finance the necessary responses.⁷ Though significant investments in additional public health and social protection measures are justified in these circumstances, any additional

debt can lead to higher interest rates, a higher likelihood of cascading defaults—and then to a protracted financial crisis. And, precisely because almost all of the world’s major economies are now in recession, none can act as an alternative source of positive growth; thus, the importance of cooperation and coordination between countries and multilateral agencies only intensifies.⁸ So, too, do the imperatives to extend debt moratoriums, raise domestic revenue to fund additional support for households and firms, and allow banks to draw down capital and liquidity buffers (World Bank 2020a).

Numerous steps are already being taken on these fronts, though policy makers need to keep a careful eye on the future stability of the financial sector so that they can withdraw certain measures once economies stabilize and growth resumes. Indonesia, for example, has taken assertive steps to curb the human and economic costs of COVID-19, initiating four fiscal policy packages since March 2020, each more expansive than the last, with the most recent, in early June 2020, amounting to 4.2 percent of gross domestic product. These packages have been launched as part of a national economic recovery program, and have focused on (1) boosting the health care sector to expand its COVID-19 testing and treatment capability; (2) increasing social protection programs to low-income households in the form of cash transfers, electricity subsidies, and food aid, and expanding unemployment benefits to workers in the informal sector; (3) implementing tax deductions for individuals (with a ceiling) and those who work in the tourism sector; and (4) applying a permanent reduction of the corporate income tax, from 25 percent to 22 percent in 2020–21 and to 20 percent in 2022. Capital has also been provided to shore up state-owned industries, support credit guarantees, and lend restructuring funds to micro, small, and medium enterprises.⁹

In most countries, responses to COVID-19 and the ensuing economic crisis have rightly prioritized saving lives and protecting the most vulnerable citizens (for example, the elderly), while striving to ensure that livelihoods, jobs, and businesses remain viable in the short term and are primed for a quick and sustained rebound once the worst of the

pandemic has passed. Delivering on these goals requires sound policies, strong institutions, and secure investments—especially when large sums of money are being quickly mobilized and dispersed, creating opportunities for misappropriation. From the start of the pandemic, countries have focused on tailoring responses to their specific health, economic, and social shocks, with donors creating various “fast-track” mechanisms to ensure that pressing health concerns, in particular, can be addressed in a timely manner. In countries such as Cambodia and Ethiopia, the response to COVID-19 has entailed securing resources to strengthen public health systems in anticipation of rising demand for protective equipment, as well as upgrading treatment centers, enhancing health-screening facilities, and supporting public communications and outreach.

Countries seeking to protect and promote employment during the COVID-19 crisis are generally following a sequenced strategy based on relief, restructuring, and recovery.¹⁰ During the initial relief phase, efforts have focused on saving livelihoods, especially those of women and informal sector workers. In the subsequent restructuring phase, the emphasis will shift to helping enterprises adjust while sustaining business growth; and in the recovery phase the focus will be on promoting skills, reforms, and tools that contribute to sustainable and resilient enterprise development. In at least 33 countries thus far, such actions have been informed by data from COVID-19 Business Pulse Surveys, which use phone and online platforms to assess the real-time impacts of the pandemic on firms; similar efforts use high-frequency monitoring surveys to track the effects on households and workers (see box 2.2 in chapter 2 of this report). Because crises also create opportunities, recovery may encourage the promotion of regulatory reform and the expansion of investments in digital technology. In Ecuador, the Philippines, and Uganda, for example, such reforms have facilitated increased access to finance, enabled greater logistical support to small and medium enterprises, and expanded workers’ awareness of employment opportunities.

A major practical challenge for many governments is providing monetary assistance to

those most in need, for example, social protection payments to those who have recently become unemployed. Direct payments of transfers from governments to people are obviously made much faster, more accurately, and at lower cost if they can be made electronically; but the sophistication of systems varies widely between countries. COVID-19 has already prompted more than 55 countries to expand their government-to-people cash transfer systems (Rutkowski et al. 2020). These measures are helping meet citizens’ needs now without the additional health risk of face-to-face human interactions, while also building platforms that, when linked in the future to digital identification and financial systems, will be useful in many additional ways for years to come. Chile, Peru, Thailand, and other countries have already developed such platforms.

Importantly, building monetary transfer systems capable of operating safely, reliably, at scale, and for all is not just an issue of technology. It requires corresponding regulatory efforts by government to modernize rules for such transactions and to enable innovative public-private partnerships. Efforts are also needed to reassure people who are illiterate or intimidated by digital tools (often including the elderly) that electronic transactions are safe, reliable, and easy. The poorest countries are also the most likely to lack the resources to invest in the necessary technology. In partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank recently launched a government-to-person initiative called G2PX to expand and refine these efforts.¹¹

Restarting economies once the worst of the pandemic has passed provides an opportunity for policy makers to enact reforms and choices consistent with sustainability principles.¹² Such principles pertain not just to the environment but also to employment, economic activity, and risk—as well as to longer-term considerations such as building human, social, and cultural capital; upgrading technology and infrastructure; and correcting market failures. Given this report’s emphasis on providing more support to those least able to address the effects of climate change, the priority should be to develop systems that help both governments and poor people better prepare for and respond to natural disasters, which are becoming

more frequent and intense as climate change advances. India recently deployed targeted efforts to help rural communities confronting COVID-19 in the midst of cyclone season. Relatively few lives were lost in these highly vulnerable settings, thanks to effective preparedness, demonstrating the importance of such initiatives and the steady improvements that are being made (Kishore 2020).

How might strategies to reverse reversals be strengthened and sustained?

In the current moment, the highest priorities everywhere must be defeating COVID-19 (saving lives) and then reviving economies (restoring livelihoods). Failure to act comprehensively now will create even bigger challenges in the future, especially for the poorest. Some of the policies and delivery mechanisms needed to achieve these priorities, such as social protection systems, are already in place. For example, efforts are well underway in Brazil and Indonesia to expand existing cash transfer programs. Digital technologies can, in principle, facilitate the implementation of such programs in ways that would not have been possible a decade ago; but these solutions risk further exacerbating a digital divide if the poorest cannot access the delivery systems. This divide has been especially consequential in education, where gaps have become readily apparent in students' access to online learning, including in high-income countries. Extending sovereign debt forgiveness is another policy option that is relatively familiar and is being deployed again to enable low-income countries to borrow additional funds.

However, the essence of a new challenge, especially when its effects are compounded by others occurring simultaneously, is that so much remains unknown: potential solutions need to be found and tested very quickly. For example, some countries may have social protection programs that cannot be extended and thus may need to create alternatives. Others may decide to take drastic, unprecedented steps—such as Bolivia and Kenya canceling an entire school year—that buy a short-term reprieve but that could intensify longer-term

challenges (Dahir 2020). The world cannot afford to fail in the fight against COVID-19 and its associated economic crisis. But, as argued in this report, efforts to find effective responses to the triple challenges of COVID-19, conflict, and climate change can draw upon past experience and broad lessons from recent assessments of highly complex development interventions (see, for example, Andrews 2013; Buntaine, Parks, and Buch 2017; Honig 2018; see also Denizer, Kaufmann, and Kraay 2013).

This report serves primarily to document the scale of the current challenges and to support the efforts of governments, firms, citizens, and development partners who are responding to them. Those on the front lines have sometimes had to act at risk to their own lives. This report offers no simple answers to these challenges because there are none. However, it can point to areas of critical importance for making efforts more effective. The lessons from these experiences apply to urgent responses now, but especially to efforts in the future, when there may be time for broader reflection on the messages from this historic moment, including greater preparedness and prevention.¹³

Successfully designing and implementing responses to these kinds of policy challenges requires paying attention to four key issues: building robust implementation systems, promoting rapid learning and improving data quality, investing in preparedness and prevention, and enhancing coordination and cooperation.

1. Closing the gap between policy aspiration and attainment

Successfully addressing the slowdown and reversal in poverty reduction and economic growth requires sound policies. Too often, however, there is a wide gap between policies as articulated and their attainment in practice, and thus between what citizens rightfully expect and what they experience daily. Implementing sound policies, especially as the challenges intensify in reaching and responding to the poorest communities, requires securing adequate political accountability and financial support, building robust implementation systems (Page and

Pande 2018), and providing complementary support factors (for example, hungry children will struggle to learn even in well-equipped schools, so may need food support) (Bergoeing, Loayza, and Piguillem 2016).

Policy aspirations (including constitutional commitments) can be laudable, but there is likely to be considerable variation in the extent to which selected activities can achieve them and which groups benefit from them (Hickey, Sen, and Bukonya 2015; World Bank 2016). This space is the realm of political economy dynamics, in which those who control the state use their power to serve a spectrum of interests, ranging from the common good to securing their own personal advantage (see, among others, Acemoglu and Robinson 2019; Besley 2020; Fritz, Levy, and Ort 2014). Such concerns are ubiquitous: some combination of politics, political economy, and governance issues has been identified as a salient development concern in all 93 of the Systematic Country Diagnoses conducted by World Bank staff since 2015.¹⁴

These dynamics play out at multiple levels and in different ways, but in response to COVID-19, with vast sums of money needing to be quickly mobilized and dispersed, political economy issues are likely to be especially important. Similarly, the high-stakes pressure of the moment may embolden authoritarian responses and encourage the skirting of regular accountability mechanisms.¹⁵ A failed response under such pressure may erode a government's credibility and legitimacy, a factor that is especially important for navigating sensitive or contentious issues. Alternatively, steering a country (or subnational area) through the current pandemic and economic crisis may reinvigorate a government's standing and trustworthiness. In India, for example, the state of Kerala enacted a statewide response to COVID-19 proactively, collectively, and at scale even before national guidelines had been issued, tapping into that state's long history of social inclusion (Heller 2020), which it has forged despite wide ethnic and religious diversity (Singh 2011). Similarly, the state of Meghalaya achieved one of India's lowest rates of COVID-19 by focusing on screening returning migrants, having discerned quickly that most of its cases stemmed

from this group (Das 2020). Using available evidence in a crisis to identify where to target finite resources, especially when solutions are initially unclear and potentially contentious, is crucial for governments to resist unwarranted political influence.

Political economy issues are also likely to manifest at the global level, reflected in the extent to which rich and poor nations get access to finite global supplies of medical equipment (such as ventilators and protective equipment) and opportunities to acquire the first supply of effective vaccines. Indeed, more than 70 countries have already imposed restrictions on the export of medical supplies (Nkengasong 2020). In response to such measures, multilateral organizations, including the United Nations and the African Union, have established working groups seeking to ensure that crucial supply chains for medical equipment and testing kits remain available to low-income countries, and to help forge agreements between African nations enabling them to negotiate as a bloc with medical suppliers. Using this approach, countries can ensure a more equitable outcome for their poorest citizens (Garber et al. 2020). Such measures can play a vital (if often underappreciated) role in sustaining inclusive growth.

Sound policies, adequate supplies of equipment and medicines, and robust financial support are necessary but insufficient for vital health services to be provided: all of these still need to be structured into a reliable implementation system that can deliver key services to millions of people every day. Unfortunately, recent research suggests that levels of implementation capability in most low-income economies have been stagnant or declining in recent years (Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock 2017; Pritchett 2020). This low capacity has been clearest in the global struggle to enhance learning outcomes (World Bank 2018) but is also readily apparent in health care. When implementation systems are already struggling to accomplish their long-standing tasks, asking them to respond to an existential crisis such as COVID-19 suggests that vastly greater attention needs to be given not just to "getting policies right" but also to building the capabilities of the

administrative systems that are tasked with implementing those policies.

Even so, much can already be learned from instances in which, despite the odds, governments, firms, and communities have found ways to achieve initial success in the fight against COVID-19. These examples can be especially important when they involve the “new poor” identified in chapter 3—including adults living in urban areas engaged in informal businesses, domestic work, and tourism, as well as migrants. These populations may be particularly difficult to reach with services because many had not previously received government support. In Mumbai, India, for example, officials faced the daunting task of trying to stem the rapid spread of COVID-19 in Dharavi, one of the city’s largest urban settlements. With limited resources and cases rapidly increasing, the decision was made to concentrate efforts on the five specific areas with the highest number of cases, screening as many people as possible for fever or low oxygen levels. Staff at private clinics were enlisted in the effort, with officials asking them to work longer hours in stifling heat in exchange for providing them with additional safety equipment. Hundreds of public latrines in prominent areas were sanitized three times a day. To house quarantine and treatment facilities, officials took over a sports complex and neighboring buildings to set up a makeshift 200-bed hospital with oxygen beds. Over a 10-day period, 47,000 people were screened, 400 symptomatic individuals were tested (80 of whom were positive), and an additional 4,000 people were placed in institutional quarantine. By July, the number of reported cases was just 20 percent of its peak in May. To help poor families during the lockdown, foundations, nongovernmental organizations, and volunteers provided thousands of households with ration kits. As Masih (2020) concludes, Dharavi’s unlikely success stems from a combination of “customized solutions, community involvement, and perseverance.”¹⁶

A related implementation issue, exposed under the pressure of COVID-19 but also an aspect of more familiar development challenges, is the priority typically given to the technical aspects of complex problems (for example, for COVID-19, a vaccine, better

personal protective equipment, and low-cost technology enabling large-scale testing and contact tracing). Addressing the technical aspects of policy problems is necessary but insufficient. A key lesson from many decades of promoting sanitation in Indonesia, for example, is the complementary importance of addressing nontechnical issues if outcomes are to be realized. Initial efforts to promote sanitation in the country viewed it primarily as an engineering and finance problem: well-designed latrines, affordably priced, would lead to widespread uptake. Instead, the initial result was uptake at a rate so low it fell behind population growth. Only when attention focused on the more laborious work of promoting behavior change—village by village, across provinces, adapting strategies forged in Bangladesh and India—was success at scale finally achieved (Glavey and Haas 2015). During COVID-19, attention to such issues is likely to be especially important when reaching out to uncounted (or undercounted) populations, such as migrants and refugees (see chapter 3), as well as those (including non-native-language speakers and those who are illiterate) who may struggle to understand or respond appropriately to complex policy guidelines. Members of these vulnerable groups may be hard to identify and reach with conventional policies.

2. Enhancing learning and improving data

Much about the novel coronavirus, by definition, remains unknown. The speed and scale with which it has affected the world have overwhelmed response systems in rich and poor countries alike. Faced with unprecedented scientific, organizational, and societal uncertainty, governments and agencies need to learn—quickly, effectively, at scale—how to identify and enact context-specific responses. Innovative responses often come from communities and firms, which may have a better sense of the problems that should be prioritized and may enjoy greater local legitimacy to convey and enforce difficult decisions such as stay-at-home requirements; such cross-sectoral innovation is reflected in the effective response to an initial outbreak of COVID-19 in Mumbai, India, described

above (Masih 2020).¹⁷ No matter the source, agencies need to remain open to learning from initial successes and failures and to encouraging experimentation with new ideas. This principle is embodied in the “living paper” initiative developed by hundreds of social protection colleagues in organizations around the world, each contributing real-time insights on how to implement job support programs during COVID-19 (Gentilini et al. 2020). No one has a road map for navigating novel terrain. The map has to be produced, and the faster everyone learns from each other, the more accurate, detailed, and useful it will be. Another example is the Republic of Korea’s widely applauded response to COVID-19, which has been attributed in part to efforts to learn from the country’s “painful experience” (Lee, Yeo, and Na 2020) when responding to the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2015.¹⁸

Such navigation is crucially enhanced by investing in comprehensive data collection and curation at multiple levels (World Bank, forthcoming). In responding to the challenges of COVID-19, conflict, and climate change, more extensive use of new technologies can help inform real-time decisions, especially in fragile and conflict-affected situations, where the collection of primary data may put enumerators at great risk.¹⁹ But, for the everyday management of key development issues, retaining a strong long-term commitment to data collection, curation, and use across six core domains—household surveys, enterprise-based surveys, agricultural statistics, price data, administrative data, and national accounts data—is vital.²⁰ The information provided is essential for ensuring that limited resources are optimally deployed, assessing the quality and reach of public services, providing assistance to groups with particular needs (for example, those with disabilities), and equalizing opportunities for all (for example, across racial, income, and gender lines).

More broadly, comprehensive, high-quality data are the foundation for conducting official and accurate tracking of global poverty and inclusive growth over time and space. Policy in general, and the prevention and mitigation of crises in particular, cannot be effective without evidence derived from carefully

interpreted data. The scale and quality of data for assessing progress on global poverty and inclusive growth are steadily improving, but data too often remain unavailable for many reasons—surveys are not produced; surveys are conducted but are of poor quality or low relevance for tracking poverty reduction and inclusive growth among specific groups; surveys are done well but poorly curated over time; or surveys are conducted but not openly shared. As shown in chapters 1, 2, and 3 of this report, these kinds of data problems have hindered more accurate assessment of global poverty levels, trends in shared prosperity, and the changing profile of the global poor. More important, pervasive data problems limit developing countries’ own abilities to practice evidence-based policy design and implementation. Accessible, high-quality, and useful data are a public good whose importance only increases during crises.²¹

3. Investing in preparedness and prevention

COVID-19, together with climate change and persistent conflict, is providing an urgent reminder of the importance of maintaining investments in comprehensive preparedness and prevention measures (Osterholm and Olshaker 2020). These challenges are risks, and they should be professionally managed as such (Clarke and Dercon 2016). “Pay now or pay later” may be a cliché, but in the current moment the world is surely learning this lesson again, the hard way. Sustaining administrative measures to anticipate and prepare for crises is hard. Prevention measures often have low political payoff, with little credit given for disasters averted.²² Preparedness and prevention are areas in which multilateral agencies are already active, for example, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.²³ The importance of preventing conflict, and not just recovering more quickly from it, is the main message of the report *Pathways to Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (United Nations and World Bank 2018), which reflects broader principles from fields such as nutrition and public health. It is also the main message of all the major reports on climate change (for example, Stern 2007). The

common principle, though politically difficult to uphold, is that preventing problems is vastly cheaper than responding to them after the fact.²⁴

As an extreme shock, COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated weaknesses in existing preparedness systems. Some wealthy countries initially ranked as having health care systems that would be “most prepared” for a pandemic have in practice struggled to respond effectively, especially for their most vulnerable citizens (NTI and CHS 2019). Beyond such specific indexes, a key lesson from the current moment is the nature of state-society relations as itself a “preparedness” factor, even if this relationship is hard to quantify as a single metric. When a pandemic strikes, it is vital that political leaders and citizens be willing and able to respond quickly, effectively, and with a shared sense of purpose despite the inherent uncertainty. In this regard, the prompt initial responses to COVID-19 in Vietnam and India’s Kerala state (discussed earlier in this chapter) provide important lessons for rich and poor countries alike.

More broadly, an example of successful international cooperation and preparation is the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS). Of the 28 countries around the Indian Ocean rim, most had seismological units that detected the earthquake that initiated the region’s devastating December 2004 tsunami, but none was prepared to issue an official warning. Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand forged ahead after the earthquake to set up their own warning centers but struggled to agree on who would host the regional alert centers and issue warnings across the area. After years of effort and coordination, but also political jockeying and technical glitches, IOTWMS became fully operational in 2013. Since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, regional warning systems have also been created in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, which, together with those in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, operate under the guidance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. This is just one example of efforts that continue across countries and multilateral agencies to promote

cooperation, coordination, and commitment on problems that affect more than one country.

A focus on poverty and shared prosperity also implies investing in preparedness and prevention measures at the household level. Since their inception in the 1500s, social protection programs in the form of cash transfers, basic insurance, and identity registration have been called for on the grounds that they provide assistance to vulnerable populations during good times and bad, thereby enabling them to steadily build assets and have resources at hand when faced with a major calamity. In their most recent guise, such programs—in the form of adaptive social protection (Bowen et al. 2020)—have been expanded and refined to respond to precisely the challenges of this moment, namely, covariant shocks such as a pandemic, an economic crisis, conflict, or a natural disaster. The explicit goal of adaptive social protection is to help vulnerable households prepare for, cope with, and adapt to such shocks—before, during, and after they occur.

Proper preparation and prevention require prediction (Kleinberg et al. 2015), which in turn requires good data, along with sound theory (for interpreting findings) and innovative methods to compensate for a lack of data. Recent methodological and computing advances (for example, machine learning) enable future events to be predicted in ever more sophisticated and defensible ways (Mueller and Rauh 2018). If the question for pandemics, violent conflict, and events related to climate change is not whether they will happen again but when, where, and at what scale—and if the world now possesses the technology enabling such predictions—then on both moral and strategic grounds the corresponding investments in prevention measures need to be undertaken. Indeed, we might hope that, over time, embedding prediction measures into the policy process at the “beginning” will one day have the same stature as evaluation now has at the “end.”

4. Expanding cooperation and coordination

Contributing to and maintaining public goods require extensive cooperation and

coordination among individuals, groups, regions, and countries. This cooperation is necessary not only for promoting widespread learning and improving the empirical foundations of policy making, but also for forging a sense of shared solidarity in the midst of crises and ensuring that the difficult policy choices made by officials are both trusted and trustworthy. Pervasive negative externalities and information asymmetries associated with COVID-19 can be exploited by opportunistic leaders even as such problems demand greater cooperation and coordination. Here, too, there are additional challenges to be overcome. At a historic moment for development agencies, when international cooperation is needed more than ever to help combat COVID-19, conflict, and climate change, global organizations can play a central role in helping countries confront problems that are large, complex, novel, and rapidly evolving, promoting the sharing of ideas, experience, and evidence needed to inform increasingly effective responses. Cooperation and coordination are crucial tasks for regional agencies as well, such as the Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement Project (in West and Central Africa) and the East Africa Public Health Laboratory Networking Project (Wetzel 2020)—all the more so if the effects of COVID-19 linger or periodic outbreaks eventuate. Regional cooperation will be essential to reviving economies after the public health crisis has passed.

The consequences of crises and policy decisions are experienced most directly in households and communities, and here too cooperation and commitment are vital.²⁵ It is at this level that variation becomes apparent in the ways in which countries—and subnational areas and communities within them—have responded to COVID-19, along with corresponding variations in the effectiveness of those responses. Some leaders have enacted decisive policies willingly supported by citizens from the outset; others have essentially ignored or denied the threat until it was too late. This variation can be understood as stemming from key differences in three interacting domains: science, states, and society. By virtue of the virus

being novel, much of the underlying science remains unknown or fluid, with the virus itself seemingly able to quickly mutate. But, in an age in which even the consensus views of scientists—for example, concerning the reality of climate change—are often looked upon with deep skepticism, it is harder still to provide citizens with clear, consistent, and compelling guidance on how to protect themselves and others when the subject matter (in this case COVID-19) remains only partially understood.

Vietnam stands out as a country that, despite this inherent uncertainty, provided clear and regular public information from the outset, thereby crowding out space for “fake news,” conspiracy theories, and misinformation (Ravallion 2020). Precisely because much of the science remains uncertain, however, the means by which public guidance is provided, by whom, and on what basis matter enormously for ensuring its legitimacy, and thus maximizing the likelihood that unwelcome requirements and recommendations will be adhered to. Even seemingly basic public goals such as “flattening the curve” of COVID-19 infections are likely to have different meanings for different groups, as will the perceived credibility of the proposed steps to ensure that these goals are met. Similarly, upholding the legitimacy of the response process is especially important for negotiating peace agreements, which may well entail asking those who have directly experienced violent trauma to forgive their enemies, or even form a joint government with them (Kleinfeld 2018; Philpott 2015).²⁶ In such circumstances, high-quality leadership assumes an even more important role (Kerrissey and Edmondson 2020).

Even where professional expertise informs a credible COVID-19 response strategy, and where this strategy is ably conveyed to citizens and adequately supported by public leaders, citizens themselves still need to comply willingly with recommended and legally prescribed actions. These actions may range from the onerous (closing one’s business) to those that are merely inconvenient but require daily practice (washing hands, wearing a mask). Success requires everyone to abide by these prescribed actions, over long periods, given that lapses by a few can

rapidly lead to the infection of the many. As noted, the costs of these actions fall disproportionately on the poor, and especially poor women. But the fact that *all* social groups are affected is an opportunity for skillful leaders to actively promote a sense of social inclusion and collective resolve, and to publicly recognize those who are suffering the most or making the largest sacrifices to confront the pandemic (for example, frontline health workers). Societies and communities vary in the extent to which they are willing and able to do this. In less cohesive societies, a patchwork of partial, idiosyncratic responses emerges (Yong 2020), undermining attempts to forge a prompt, unified, and effective strategy. However, as the examples above from India, Indonesia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere demonstrate (thus far), innovative and effective responses to the current crises are being implemented. In the coming year, countries and their partners will need to find, share, refine, fund, and scale up many more of these initiatives to overcome evolving policy and implementation challenges and restore inclusive growth and poverty reduction.

Conclusion

The global shocks of COVID-19, conflict, and climate change require policies enabling economies to recover from them and prevent their further recurrence—through strengthened health systems, lasting peace, and improved climate change adaptation and mitigation. As important as it is to address these shocks in the present moment, for countries to sustain poverty reduction in the long term, attention must also continue to be focused on the ongoing development agenda of promoting inclusive growth, investing in poor people's acquisition and protection of productive assets, and improving the quality of public services. Given the global nature of the shocks unleashed by COVID-19, conflict, and climate change, countries must adopt policies that elicit the collaboration of multiple groups within the nation as well as coordination with other countries. The more integrated the world becomes, the more necessary it is to take coordinated and cooperative action to maximize integration's benefits and minimize its inherent costs (Nixon 2020; World Bank 2017c).

In these uncertain times, responding to these three global threats and to more familiar development challenges is difficult and sometimes dangerous work. It is likely to be time consuming and expensive, with successes hard to measure, sometimes even to discern. Some of the best responses will likely unfold fitfully over long, idiosyncratic, nonlinear trajectories. Campaigns to promote greater accountability and to end gender-based violence, for example, have followed such paths, with outcomes sometimes initially getting worse before they eventually get better. Accurately assessing such efforts will require making major corresponding investments in diverse evaluation strategies, including novel forms of evidence and methods to collect, curate, interpret, and learn from the data. Crafting and implementing a more economically just, socially inclusive, and politically legitimate development process—as a necessary complement to the adoption of technically sound policies—provides the world its best chance of reversing today's reversals of fortune.

However, reversing even a massive reversal of fortune, such as the world is experiencing with COVID-19, is necessary, desirable, and possible. It has been done many times in the past, in the face of what were regarded at the time as insurmountable challenges—for example, eradicating smallpox, ending World War II, creating national parks, closing the hole in the ozone layer—and it will be done again in the future. This global crisis is also a defining historical moment. To address development challenges, whether large or small, the world needs to commit to cooperation and coordination, both within and between countries. We must commit to working together, and to working better—now especially, but also for the long term.

Notes

1. For now, however, the very poorest African countries appear to have fared better than initially anticipated (Mbow et al. 2020).
2. See also Amare et al. (2020), drawing on panel data evidence. A recent phone survey from Myanmar (World Bank 2020b) reports that a much lower share of households, 7.3 percent, have reduced their food consumption, but

- that 75 percent of rice-growing farmers had delayed planting for the monsoon rice season, raising concerns of a potential food crisis in the coming months. In Latin America and the Caribbean, seven countries have reported 40 percent or more of people running out of food during lockdowns (Hill and Narayan 2020). For a broader assessment of the effects of COVID-19 on childhood malnutrition, see Headey et al. (2020).
3. See “World Bank Education and COVID-19,” World Bank, Washington, DC, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/interactive/2020/03/24/world-bank-education-and-covid-19>.
 4. See Akresh, Verwimp, and Bundervoet (2011) and Akresh et al. (2012) on the enduring effects of war on stunting (in Rwanda and Nigeria, respectively); similar effects are reported by Bundervoet, Verwimp, and Akresh (2009) for Burundi. See Singhal (2019) on the long-term effects of the Vietnam War on the mental health of civilians. A broader overview of the micro effects of violent conflict are documented in Justino, Brück, and Verwimp (2013).
 5. See “Niger to Receive \$140 million to Improve Quality of Education and Learning,” Press Release, World Bank, Washington, DC, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/06/niger-to-receive-140-million-to-improve-quality-of-education-and-learning>.
 6. This may be less true for the poor in urban areas, where there are greater opportunities to access markets and better public services, but, as Pritchett and Hani (2020) show, real wage comparisons of workers with identical observed and unobserved human capital characteristics in poor and rich countries show “massive gaps” in earnings, suggesting the existence of “a ‘place premium’—or space-specific wage differentials that are not due to intrinsic worker productivity.”
 7. See also the range of initial responses outlined in World Bank (2020d); a broader array of current policy initiatives and data sources is available at “Oxford Supertracker,” Oxford University, Oxford, UK, <https://supertracker.spi.ox.ac.uk/>.
 8. As World Bank (2020a, 7) puts it, in the current context “global coordination and cooperation—of the measures needed to slow the spread of the pandemic, and of the economic actions needed to alleviate the economic damage, including international support—provide the greatest chance of achieving public health goals and enabling a robust global recovery.”
 9. Helpful summaries of the macroeconomic and fiscal initiatives undertaken by countries in response to COVID-19 are available at “Policy Responses to COVID-19,” International Monetary Fund, Washington, DC, <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#I>.
 10. The World Bank’s Jobs and Economic Transformation (JET) initiative has been particularly active in this area. JET seeks to create more and better jobs by increasing worker productivity by expanding private sector investment, increasing integration with markets and value chains, and improving ties to the digital economy. Further details are available at “Jobs and Economic Transformation,” International Development Association, Washington, DC, <https://ida.worldbank.org/theme/jobs-and-economic-transformation>.
 11. See “G2PX: Digitizing Government-to-Person Payments,” World Bank, Washington, DC, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/g2px>.
 12. A checklist of such principles, as articulated by the World Bank’s Climate Change group, is available at “Proposed Sustainability Checklist for Assessing Economic Recovery Interventions April 2020,” World Bank, Washington, DC, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/223671586803837686/Sustainability-Checklist-for-Assessing-Economic-Recovery-Investments-April-2020.pdf>.
 13. These issues will be explored in more detail in a forthcoming companion volume to this report.
 14. More specifically, the concept of “governance” appeared at least 10 times in all but 4 of these 93 Systematic Country Diagnoses (SCDs); on average, it was referred to about 50 times in each report, as was the word “political.” “Political economy” concerns were mentioned in 67 of the 93 SCDs. “Governance” or “political” appeared more than 100 times in the SCDs on Brazil, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Lebanon, Mauritania, Mongolia, North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation, Solomon Islands, and Tunisia.
 15. The World Bank’s Governance Global Practice has prepared several guidance notes on how

to anticipate and respond to such concerns. These and other contributions are available at “Governance & Institutions COVID-19 Response Resources,” World Bank, Washington, DC, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/governance-institutions-covid-19-response-resources>.

16. This effort has been publicly praised by the World Health Organization (see Masih 2020). For more general examples of such “pockets of effectiveness” in public administration, see Brixi, Lust, and Woolcock (2015) on service delivery in the Middle East and North Africa region and McDonnell (2020) on Ghana.
17. Despite the enormous development challenges Somalia faces, for example, its informal sector has shown remarkable capacity to provide an array of public services in urban areas (see World Bank 2020e).
18. Sachs et al. (2020) rank the Republic of Korea first among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations for its response thus far to COVID-19; more telling, perhaps, is the wide variation in response effectiveness among the 33 relatively wealthy member countries of the OECD. On the details of Korea’s response, see also Ladner, Hamaguchi, and Kim (2020).
19. On this issue, see the thoughtful contributions in Hoogeveen and Pape (2019).
20. At the World Bank, advancing efforts in these domains is being overseen by the Data for Policy Initiative; further details are available at “Data for Policy (D4P) Initiative,” Poverty and Equity Notes 23, World Bank, Washington, DC, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33857>. See also a related effort based in the United Kingdom, <https://dataforpolicy.org/>.
21. These principles are articulated more formally in the World Bank’s Open Data Initiative; see “World Bank Open Data: Free and Open Access to Global Development Data,” <https://data.worldbank.org/>.
22. Formally assessing the effectiveness of prevention measures is also a challenge; most evaluation efforts are spent assessing the effectiveness of interventions promoting a desired outcome, not avoiding an undesired one.
23. See “Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery” website, <https://www.gfdrr.org/en>.
24. A corresponding literature has long argued for investing in more effective insurance

mechanisms for addressing the types of everyday risks that the poor themselves encounter (for example, Dercon 2005). See also *World Development Report 2014: Risk and Opportunity—Managing Risk for Development*, which rightly notes that “[i]n the absence of an effective global risk governance mechanism with an international body that has appropriate accountability and enforcement powers over sovereign nations, the international architecture necessary to provide the global public goods and address global risks has not kept pace with the connectivity that glues the world together and the complexities such connectivity creates” (World Bank 2013, 269). And, as World Bank (2017a) also rightly argues, taking a “development approach” to an issue such as refugees and internally displaced peoples *means* giving full attention to preparedness and prevention measures.

25. See Van Bavel et al. (2020) for an extensive list of practical recommendations grounded in the social and behavioral sciences for promoting empathy, social solidarity, and cooperation during COVID-19.
26. On the broader role of process legitimacy for deliberative democracy and poverty reduction, see Rao (2019).

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