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Emergency social protection against the impacts of the pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean


Evidence and lessons learned for universal,
comprehensive, sustainable and resilient
social protection systems

Bernardo Atuesta
Tamara Van Hemelryck



**COVID-19
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Evidence and lessons learned for universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems

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Abstract

Social protection measures implemented during the pandemic have played a key role in mitigating the devastating economic and social effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Latin American and Caribbean countries. The reaction was swift, as between March and May 2020 alone, 33 countries in the region announced 300 non-contributory social protection measures. The announcements continued, but at a decreasing rate, reaching a cumulative total of 468 measures by October 2021, 67 of which were announced in 2021. As the crisis became prolonged, the characteristics of the measures varied in terms of coverage (extensions or modifications to eligibility criteria), duration (number of deliveries) and scale (increase or decrease in amounts and services delivered). Emergency non-contributory social protection measures were notable for their use of cash transfers (45% of the measures up to October 2021) and speed of design, implementation and delivery, as well as varying widely in terms of amounts, coverage, adequacy and duration of the entitlements implemented. The countries of the region supplemented entitlements with in-kind transfers (26%) and other support (19%), such as tax relief, payment facilities or price fixing, and ensuring the continuity of basic services (10%) (ECLAC, 2022a). Other key innovations were the incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the improvement of social information systems and registries, the creation of new registries of potential participants and the adoption of new approaches or instruments to identify potential recipients of emergency programmes.

The implementation of these measures, both pre-existing and new, has made it possible to achieve quite high overall coverage of the population in the region which, due to a more active search for potential recipients, includes populations previously invisible in information registries (informal workers, migrants and young people, among others). In Latin America and the Caribbean, it is estimated that cash and in-kind transfer measures have covered, on average, 64.4% of the population since the beginning of the pandemic (111.5 million households comprising 422 million people), thanks to the estimated investment of US\$ 89.7 billion in 2020 and US\$ 45.3 billion in 2021 (ECLAC, 2022), responsibility for which fell mainly on governments' social sector agencies. Most of those measures have specifically targeted the population living in poverty and vulnerability. Evaluations of emergency social protection measures indicate that they have curbed the adverse effects on the poverty and inequality rates, but not enough to prevent them from increasing, particularly in the case of extreme poverty (ECLAC, 2022a).

This paper mainly analyses the responses in terms of emergency non-contributory social protection measures and other forms of support to households announced in Latin American and Caribbean countries in 2020 and 2021. Where information permits, reference is also made to the experience of European countries in dealing with the pandemic, which reveals the key role played in that region by employment protection and social security measures, in particular. Therefore, this document also mentions measures related to contributory social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on formal workers under various instruments, such as unemployment insurance (ECLAC, 2022a and 2021c), and highlighting their main characteristics and innovations in terms of design and implementation. The analysis offers lessons to be learned for moving towards income guarantees and emergency social protection in future crises in order to protect people and their households in situations in which labour income disappears or diminishes. The aim is to contribute to the discussion on possible ways to advance towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems (ECLAC, 2021a), which would offer a better and faster response to crises and contexts of high uncertainty.

Introduction¹

Latin America and the Caribbean is undoubtedly one of the regions hardest hit by the health and economic crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (ECLAC, 2022a; OECD and others, 2021). In 2020, regional GDP and investment fell by 6.8% and almost 20%, respectively (ECLAC, 2020a, 2021c and 2022c). The pandemic has also had a major impact on the labour market, with sharp falls in employment and labour force participation, resulting in historic rises in unemployment, all of which affected women, young people and workers in informal and low-income strata to a greater extent (ECLAC, 2022a and 2021b; OECD and others, 2021). In addition, global wealth increased by 7.4% in 2020 due to movements in stock markets which, together with what occurred in the first year of the pandemic, has had negative distributive effects, particularly in countries where social protection measures arrived late and had neither the scope nor coverage to absorb the consequences of the crisis. In addition to the above, it should be noted that the impact of the crisis increased due to almost zero growth in the countries prior to 2020, as well as weaknesses in social protection systems and health systems (ECLAC, 2021c).

The evolution in both scale and diversity of the mechanisms adopted to deal with the emergency has been clear throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Developments in the first stage stood out for the speed and targeting of specific populations to offset the initial impact of COVID-19 and the isolation, distancing and mobility restriction measures imposed. The second stage saw the extension of those social protection mechanisms to other vulnerable groups of the population whose labour income was affected, had their wages suspended, or lost their jobs (Blofield, Giamb Bruno and Filgueira, 2020).²

¹ The analyses in this document are based on official country information compiled by the ECLAC COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; and the site "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19" at the portal Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

² In this paper, the expression "most vulnerable population group" refers to households and individuals who are not in a situation of poverty but are at high risk of falling into poverty when experiencing risks such as the crisis. Such is the case of a large percentage of informal workers, young people with low levels of education, older persons and households in remote rural areas, among other population groups.

In 2020, on average, 4.6% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the countries in the region was used to develop major fiscal packages that included programmes in the area of public health, compensation for lost and reduced income, and protection of the productive structure (ECLAC, 2021d).

However, as this paper shows, despite the adaptive capacity demonstrated by most countries in implementing social protection measures to mitigate the impact of reduced household income and increased uncertainty in capital markets, the weakness of social protection systems in the region became evident. The inadequacy of welfare entitlements provided before and during the pandemic was compounded by the low coverage of social information systems and the challenges faced by social institutions, which in many cases prevented the identification of the population worst affected by the crisis. High levels of informality left a large part of the population particularly exposed to the impact of the pandemic. According to estimates by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 38% of the population was not covered by any social protection mechanism in 2019, on the eve of the pandemic (OECD and others, 2020). The heterogeneity of national contexts and welfare regimes also had an impact on how some countries were able to contain the economic and social effects of the crisis better than others.

The pandemic also widened existing gaps, as it had a greater impact on female, youth and informal employment (ECLAC, 2021b). To mitigate these effects, countries have sought different ways to include these particularly vulnerable populations in emergency measures. In particular, as highlighted in this document, the innovations made by all Latin American and Caribbean countries stand out, both in terms of the mechanisms used to identify and select the worst-affected population groups, as well as in the methods used to supply the goods and services delivered by the social programmes implemented (see also Atuesta, Holz and Hemelryck; Berner and Van Hemelryck, 2020; OECD and others, 2021). These new ways of implementing social protection programmes are of interest because of their novelty in terms of the generation of welfare entitlements and support for populations in adverse situations. At the same time, they have served as a learning experience for improving social protection systems and incorporating mechanisms that make it possible to anticipate, adapt to and overcome situations that have significant consequences on income levels and, therefore, on people's well-being. Another argument for studying innovations in emergency measures is that new tools and possibilities have been created for implementing social policies that make it possible to increase coverage levels and incorporate new groups that were not previously targeted or were not a priority for social protection programmes. Thus, the emergence of these innovations generates positive pressure to develop new tools, generate more efficient processes, collect new data and generate information that enables a more precise identification of the populations requiring state support and their needs.

These new and innovative measures, together with the social protection measures designed and implemented prior to the pandemic and their respective modifications, had a positive effect in several countries in the region by reducing the levels of poverty, extreme poverty and inequality that would have been come about in the absence of such mechanisms (ECLAC, 2021b and 2022a). However, despite the growth seen during 2021 and the growth of 4.5% in the global economy expected for 2022, it is likely that not all the region's countries will regain their pre-crisis levels of activity and employment. In addition, growth in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is expected to slow from 5.9% in 2021 to an average rate of 2.9% in 2022 (ECLAC, 2022c).³ These projections herald a complex outlook, especially for reversing the impacts on extreme poverty, which, according to ECLAC projections for 2021, is expected to increase from 13.1% to 13.8% between 2020 and 2021 (ECLAC, 2022a), as well as the overall effects on inequality. Moreover, beyond material conditions, which have been the focus of emergency social protection measures, the pandemic has had effects on multiple dimensions of people's well-being in the region. For this reason, it is also

³ See [online] <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/economic-slowdown-deepens-latin-america-and-caribbean-average-regional-growth-18>.

important to have more detailed data on the short-, medium- and long-term effects of the pandemic on subjective dimensions of people's well-being, such as mental health (OECD, 2021), as well as other badly affected areas, including education and the various facets necessary to move towards sustainable development with equality (ECLAC 2021b and 2022a).

The document is divided into three parts that aim to reflect the response of Latin American and Caribbean countries to COVID-19, focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable populations and compare it with the situation experienced by European countries, as well as to report on their progress and challenges in terms of social institutions and operational innovations. In particular, the document transversally analyses in its various sections the four dimensions of social institutions (Martínez and Maldonado, 2019) that have to do with social protection responses in pandemics and addresses their legal and regulatory dimension through the legal frameworks used to design the measures; the organizational dimension, related to the structure adopted for their implementation; the technical and operational dimension, in terms of the operational innovations implemented and their link to the expansion of social registries; and the amount of financing needed for the announced measures.

The first part of the document describes the 468 non-contributory emergency measures and other forms of family support adopted in 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean from March 2020 to October 2021.⁴ The emphasis on non-contributory emergency measures is due to their key role in maintaining income and basic consumption levels, especially for poor and vulnerable populations amid high shortages in contributory social protection coverage.⁵ An assessment is made to identify what each of these measures consisted of in the different countries and whether there are, a priori, common patterns that explain the design and implementation of certain measures in terms of the development of social protection systems and their information system or registries. In particular, emphasis is placed on the coverage, duration and adequacy of emergency measures, key elements that, together with rapidity of response, enable an assessment of the degree to which they can mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. To this end, indicators such as types of measures implemented, average number of deliveries per user, average duration of the measures delivered, their coverage and their scale in terms of estimated expenditure are presented. The assessment also examines the institutional framework, the use of available information and the forms and places of delivery of emergency measures.

In addition, the main emergency measures aimed at formal and informal workers are presented, given that the labour market was badly affected by the health crisis due to the mobility and distancing restrictions imposed by the different governments of the region. The purpose of the above is to show how the response of the countries highlighted the particular vulnerability faced by workers, especially informal workers, due to the effects of the pandemic and the pre-existing inequalities in the labour market. Many informal workers are part of the so-called "missing middle", as they do not have an income low enough to be considered poor and access social programmes; however, nor do they enjoy formal social security protection, which leaves them completely exposed to crises and loss of income, as happened in the COVID-19 pandemic (IPC-IG and UNICEF, 2020).

⁴ This document focuses on emergency non-contributory measures primarily targeted at persons and households in situations of poverty and vulnerability during the COVID-19 pandemic. It considers measures announced by national governments in the period between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. It does not include measures announced by subnational governments, or those targeted at enterprises or other entities that have an indirect effect on households and individuals. Section I.J provides an overview of labour-market contributory emergency measures but is not exhaustive in terms of such measures. Information on all the measures presented here can be found in the COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

⁵ Contributory measures cover a very broad spectrum that goes beyond the scope of this study, so only specific labour-market contributory measures relevant to this study are mentioned.

The second part reviews the initial results of the emergency measures, presenting estimates made by ECLAC and analysis contained in secondary studies.

The third section sets out the challenges faced by Latin American and Caribbean countries in sustaining support over time and in restructuring social protection systems to better respond to complex situations in the future. This part also presents the main operational innovations that helped respond to people's situations and to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. To that end, it presents cases in which information, registration and payment systems were used in a different way than usual; cases in which protocols were modified, where new tools were used to identify and select programme recipients; how digital technology was incorporated and other innovations.

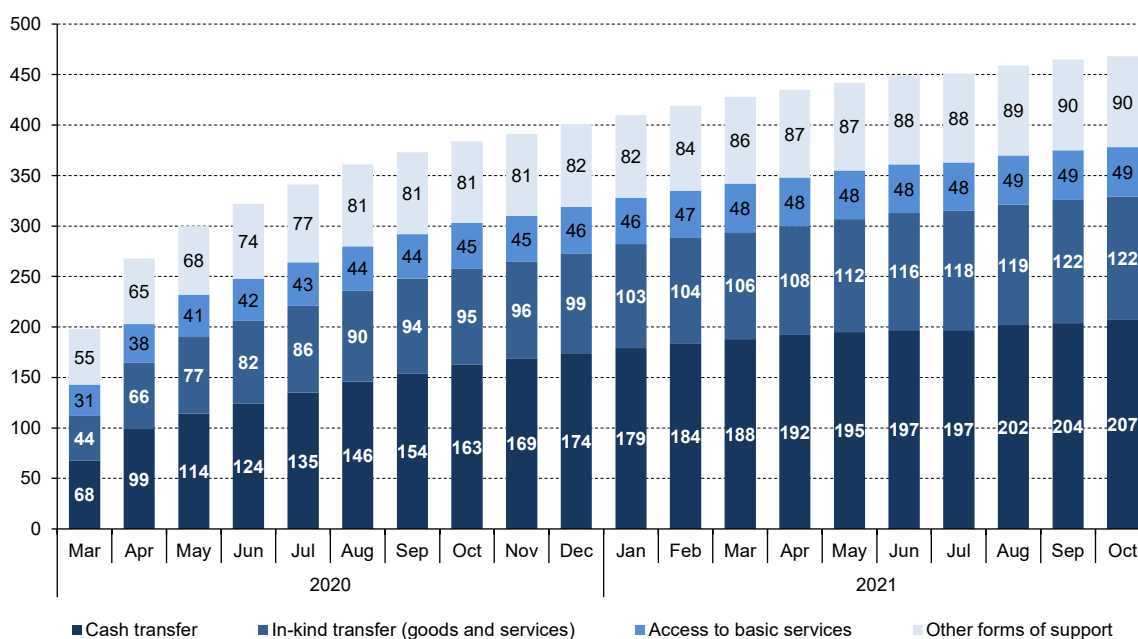
The document concludes by highlighting the importance of non-contributory entitlements to guarantee basic needs in crises and the limitations in terms of coverage, adequacy and duration of emergency measures implemented during the pandemic, as well as offering recommendations based on the different ways in which Latin American, Caribbean and European countries acted. The recommendations are based on the lessons learned during the pandemic, especially with regard to the restructuring of social protection systems with a view to their universalization, the strengthening of the social institutional framework of those systems, inclusion, improved adequacy and sustainability of the entitlements provided, the implementation of protocols or ways to respond better and faster to crises, catastrophes or disasters, and the creation of guaranteed income mechanisms in emergency situations that respond to a human rights approach.

I. Emergency measures adopted in Latin America and the Caribbean

The governments of Latin America and the Caribbean have announced diverse emergency measures to contain the negative effects of the economic and social crisis caused by the necessary health regulations imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including lockdowns and physical distancing. Announcements of these measures surged in the period between March and May 2020, during which a total of 300 non-contributory social protection measures and other forms of support to affected households and individuals were recorded.⁶ Among the first measures announced, for example, is the 15% reimbursement for debit card purchases in Argentina, for retirees and pensioners on the minimum pension and holders of the Universal Child Allowance (AUH) and Universal Pregnancy Allowance (AUE). Likewise, in March 2020, the Support Project for Community Organization Canteens (Pacoc) was announced in Paraguay, aimed at improving food and nutritional security for people in situations of poverty and vulnerability served at community canteens. Between June and August 2020, countries in the region announced an average of 20 measures per month, reaching a total of 361 measures. By that point, the importance accorded by countries to cash and in-kind transfers was already clear, as they respectively accounted for 146 and 90 measures, or 40% and 25% of the total number of measures. Although announcements of such emergency measures have not ceased, they have gradually fallen in frequency, with an average of around 10 measures per month between September 2020 and March 2021, and 6 measures per month between April 2021 and October 2021 (see figure 1).

⁶ These statistics reflect non-contributory social protection and other direct support measures targeting people and households in situations of poverty and vulnerability that were announced by national governments between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. It does not include measures announced by subnational governments, or those targeted at enterprises or other entities that have an indirect effect on households and individuals. For more detailed information on the non-contributory social protection measures announced by the countries of the region amid the COVID-19 pandemic, see Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean" [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/>.

Figure 1
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries): cumulative number of non-contributory emergency social protection measures for the population in situations of poverty and vulnerability announced 1 March 2020–31 October 2021, at each month-end^{a,b}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; and "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", "Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, The Plurinational State of Bolivia, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b In-kind transfers include goods such as the delivery of food, medicines or work or technology equipment, among others, and services such as training courses and vocational training, labour intermediation, free educational courses and health care support, among others.

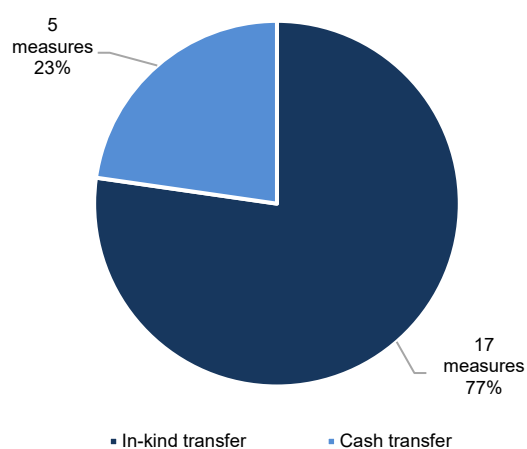
In percentage terms, 85.7% of these emergency measures were announced in 2020, while 67 additional measures were disclosed in 2021, about half of which were cash transfers, and a third, in-kind transfers. The latter include deliveries of food and medicines, computer equipment to support students attending school remotely and, increasingly, support for inclusion in employment and productive activity (e.g. scholarships for training courses, online education and inputs for start-ups) (ECLAC, 2021a). Measures aimed at providing electronic equipment, either free or on loan, have been implemented, for example, in El Salvador, Honduras and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Some countries, such as Chile and Saint Lucia, have even provided technological resources and support services for students with disabilities. This population is particularly vulnerable to crises, so it is worth highlighting these examples and considering their greater prominence and inclusion in future crises.

With regard to inclusion in employment and production activity, 13 countries have implemented measures of that sort. For example, Argentina developed the Youth and MSMEs programme, which links vocational training and employment promotion programmes with policies and tools for microentrepreneurship. This measure engages with the private sector, specifically with formalized microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that wish to employ young people aged 18–24 (see box 1).

Box 1
Measures for protection and labour and productive inclusion

To counter the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean implemented economic reactivation and job recovery measures, using existing social programmes that promote labour and productive inclusion or designing new programmes. Historically, such programmes have been a mainstay of poverty alleviation strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean, which can have positive effects in terms of improving labour indicators for the most disadvantaged groups (Abramo, Cecchini and Morales, 2019). Between March 2020 and October 2021, the countries of the region have announced 22 emergency measures supporting labour and productive inclusion, 5 of which have consisted of cash transfers and 17 of in-kind support, such as training scholarships, online training and the delivery of inputs for entrepreneurship.

Figure 1
Latin America and the Caribbean (13 countries): emergency measures supporting labour and productive inclusion, by type of measure, 1 March 2020–31 October 2021^a



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of official information from the countries; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database]. <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/>; and L. Abramo, S. Cecchini and B. Morales, Social programmes, poverty eradication and labour inclusion: lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC Books, No. 155 (LC/PUB.2019/5-P), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2019.

^a The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Colombia, Costa Rica, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Emergency cash transfers mainly aimed at supporting labour and productive inclusion have been made through both existing pre-pandemic programmes and new measures. In the case of existing programmes, the Boost Work Programme in Argentina provided two additional transfers on top of those it normally delivers to its users: one in December 2020 and another in June 2021. This programme seeks to enhance employability and promote the socioproductive inclusion of people in situations of social and economic vulnerability. Likewise, Colombia's Youth in Action programme delivered five special payments to its users in 2020 as part of its cash transfer component. Mexico's Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life) programme increased its coverage by an additional 200,000 farmers who are entitled to a monthly cash transfer component and another that provides them with permanent employment in rural areas. One example of new cash transfer measures is MANTA, a programme that offers scholarships for artisanal production development in Argentina with the aim of supporting the sustainability of artisan activity and helping to alleviate the economic impact to artisans from the COVID-19 crisis. In exchange for the scholarship, the artisans have the option of presenting a virtual or in-person training proposal based on their knowledge. Also, in 2020, the measure "Promoting Youth Micro Enterprises (PRYME)" was designed in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; it initially provided cash transfers to potential entrepreneurs between 18 and 40 years old and was later expanded to include those over 40 years old under the name "PRYME-plus".

Technical and professional training, in this case classified as in-kind transfers, is the most common component of programmes for labour and productive inclusion, as well as of new interventions in this area implemented during the emergency. Countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Costa Rica, Grenada, Guyana and Saint Lucia offered free online courses for anyone looking to acquire knowledge to supplement their university studies and enhance their employability and productivity, in order to improve the job opportunities available to them. The experience of Costa Rica, which enabled unemployed people to access the Habilidades Proteger Plan, stands out. In addition to the cash transfer they received through the Proteger subsidy (three payments of approximately US\$ 207), users of this programme had access to training with the objective of enhancing their employability.^a As regards adaptations of existing programmes, it is important to mention the strengthening of Mexico's "Youth Building the Future" programme. Under this programme, young people received a monthly cash transfer (equivalent to US\$ 196), had free access to health insurance and could access courses and webinars aimed at mitigating the interruption of their training in the companies that had to suspend or alternate their activities.

Some countries in the region also implemented more comprehensive programmes during the pandemic. For example, Argentina's Youth and MSMEs Programme seeks to link the resources of vocational training and employment promotion programmes with policies and tools for promoting and financing micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. The objective of this programme is to jointly promote the creation of new sources of production and new jobs. Young users of the programme have access to orientation and induction courses offered by the employment offices, labour intermediation, vocational training and promotion of their insertion in the participating companies. In addition, companies participating in the programme that wish to train or hire workers, including young workers, may access, among other things, labour intermediation services and obtain an additional rate discount on the financing lines they apply for at authorized financial institutions.

With regard to programmes to support self-employment, Colombia launched the Economy for the People strategy. Its purpose is to support the reactivation and strengthening of the production units of the most vulnerable population, as well as formal and informal micro-businesses adversely affected by the pandemic. This measure addresses five fronts: (i) income generation, entrepreneurship, and formalization; (ii) productive development, partnerships, and market access; (iii) innovation and technology; (iv) financing; and (v) competitive environment. It seeks to implement training and entrepreneurship programmes tailored to the skills and experiences of the participants, as well as initiatives to diversify support for expanding their access to markets and promoting partnerships with the private sector and access to financial services and technology.

The strengthening and adoption of measures supporting labour and productive inclusion by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are necessary to guarantee the right of the families worst affected by the crisis to decent work and a decent income, and thus promote a transformative recovery. Measures supporting labour and productive inclusion provide tools for employment, income generation and an eventual escape from poverty for their users, who belong to the most vulnerable populations (young people, women, people in extreme poverty, people with low education levels and persons with disabilities). As a result, the countries of the region increased the proportion of this type of emergency measure between 2020 (4% of a total of 401 measures announced in 2020) and 2021 (12% of a total of 67 measures announced in 2021). These measures must be strengthened and designed considering the new context imposed by the pandemic. To this end, intersectoral coordination and coordination with social protection systems is necessary, while always promoting and operating according to decent work standards.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of official information from the countries; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; and ECLAC, *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/CDS.4/3), Santiago, 2021.

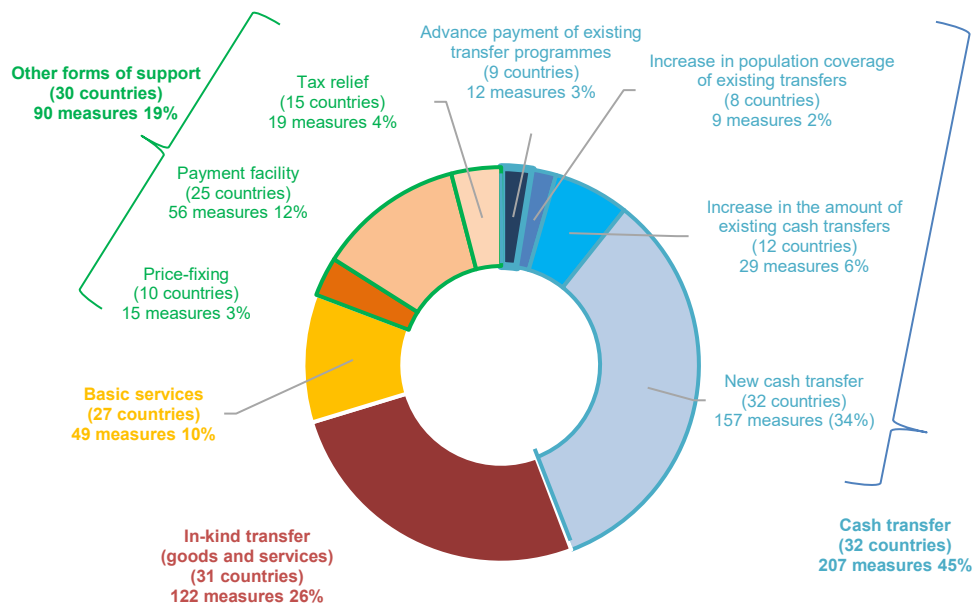
^a As of 30 June 2020, Proteger subsidy coverage was extended to high school graduates who had been laid off, even if they had not applied for the subsidy.

In total, between March 2020 and October 2021, 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean introduced 468 measures targeting population groups in situations of poverty and vulnerability, which have been hit worst by the crisis. Of these, 378 are non-contributory social protection measures, including 207 cash transfers, 122 in-kind transfers and 49 measures for ensuring and facilitating access to basic services (water, energy, telephone and Internet) by prohibiting the cutting of services, reconnecting those cut off for non-payment and postponing bills or reaching agreements on their payment.⁷ The remaining 90 measures were other forms of support to contain spending for crisis-affected families. They included

⁷ For further information on access to basic services in the midst of the pandemic, see Filgueira and others (2020).

tax relief (through exemption from fines, suspension of collection dates and auctions for non-payment, and postponement of tax payments), measures to fix and control prices of basic food basket products and rents, and payment facilities (for example, deferral of credit and mortgage payments, loan rescheduling and refinancing, payment exemptions or suspension of interest on arrears and fines) (see figure 2).

Figure 2
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries): non-contributory emergency social protection measures and other forms of support for the poor and vulnerable population, by type of measure, 1 March 2020–31 October 2021^a
(Number of countries, measures and percentages)



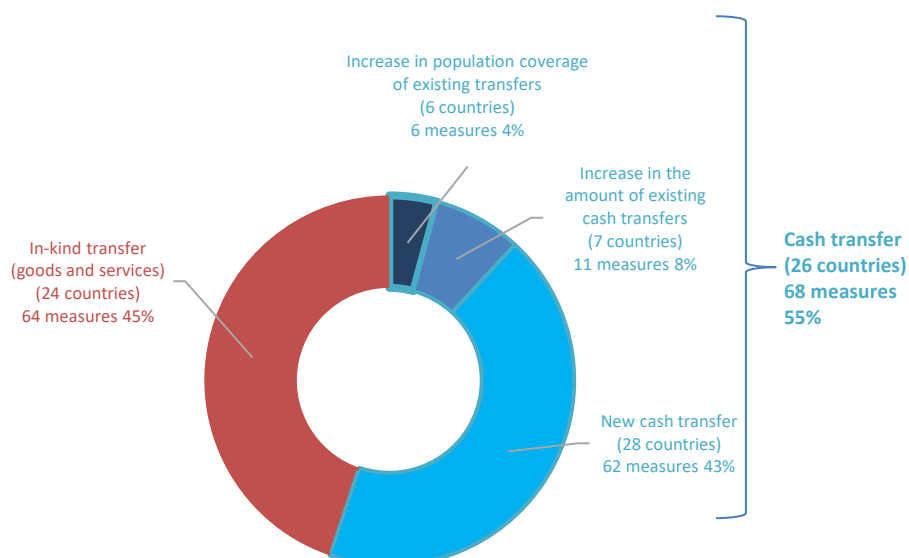
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; and "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a Includes the 468 measures announced between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

The prolongation of the health crisis has led to the modification of some of the measures put in place in 2020 and their extension in terms of duration, frequency of entitlement transfers or deliveries and coverage, in addition to the implementation of new measures. Between January and October 2021, 32 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had a total of 132 active cash and in-kind transfer measures (see figure 3). Forty-five percent of those measures have been in-kind transfers, 43% have been new cash transfers, while the remaining 12% are divided between amount-increases in existing cash transfers (8%) and increases in the population coverage of existing transfers (4%). By way of illustration, one measure active in 2021 was the Bahamas' Government Unemployment Assistance for COVID-19 Programme, which made increased space available so that those who lost their jobs during the pandemic could apply. There is also the COVID-19 Cash Transfer Programme in Belize, which was implemented from February 2021 onward to provide support to vulnerable households affected by COVID-19 that did not qualify for other welfare mechanisms. Brazil's Auxílio Emergencial (Emergency Aid) resumed deliveries between April and October 2021, with a reduced amount, dropping from

R\$ 600 to R\$ 250 (US\$ 47) per person and limiting delivery to one person per family, but maintaining the differential for female providers in single-parent households (R\$ 375 per month). Among others, it is also worth highlighting the continuity in 2021 and the changes in measures such as Solidarity Income in Colombia,⁸ the Panama Solidarity Plan,⁹ the Stay at Home programme in the Dominican Republic,¹⁰ and Chile's Emergency Family Income (IFE) programme.¹¹ In terms of emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures alone, the percentage of announcements of the former kind fell from 64% to 59% between 2020 and 2021, while that of the latter rose from 36% to 41%. This increase in the relative weight of in-kind transfers is mainly due to the implementation of measures for the delivery of electronic equipment to support online education, as well as scholarships for online training and education and the delivery of inputs for entrepreneurship (on the latter, see box 1).

Figure 3
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures
for the population living in poverty and vulnerability, by type of measure,
active between January and October 2021^a
(Number of countries, measures, and percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; "Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

⁸ In June 2021, the government said that payments would continue to be made until August 2021. On 14 September 2021, the Social Investment Act, which provides that payments will be made until December 2022, was passed. The measure could then either be extended further or could be merged with other existing programmes.

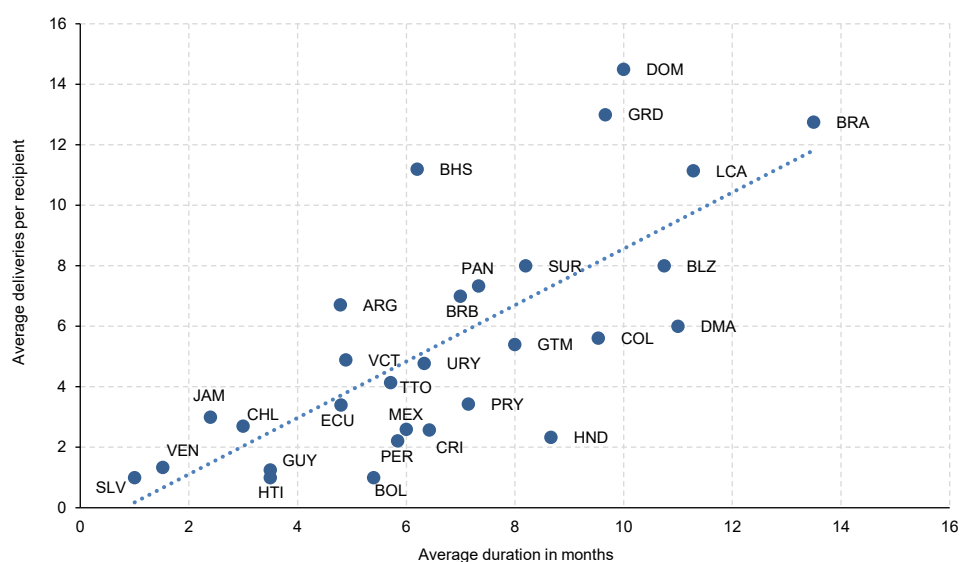
⁹ The amount increased gradually and has been set at US\$ 120 since February 2021. In July 2021 it was replaced by the New Panama Solidarity Plan, which makes transfers of the same amount as before.

¹⁰ The transfers made under this programme were raised in January 2021 from a payment of 2,500 Dominican pesos once every fortnight (US\$ 87 per month) to 3,000 Dominican pesos every fortnight (US\$ 105 per month).

¹¹ Both the size of the transfers and the target population of this programme have been changed on a number of occasions. Currently, individual transfers equivalent to the value of the poverty line are being made to 8.3 million households.

The number of deliveries of emergency cash transfer measures is positively related to the number of months of duration of the measures. Countries in the region that have implemented emergency cash transfer measures with a high number of deliveries tend to have high-duration measures. For example, the cash transfer measures in Brazil —Emergency assistance to indigenous families under the Bolsa Família family allowance programme, Increased coverage of the Bolsa Familia programme, Advance payment of the continuous entitlement programme (Benefício de Prestação Contínua – BPC), and Emergency Aid— have an average duration of 13.5 months and an average number of deliveries of 12.8 times per recipient between March 2020 and December 2021 (see figure 4). This was found when the analysis jointly considered measures such as the increased coverage of the Bolsa Familia programme, which was implemented from March 2020 onwards and continued with monthly deliveries; and the 16 monthly deliveries by the Emergency Aid programme over a 19-month period (between April 2020 and October 2021). Other countries with high-duration cash transfers and a high number of deliveries are the Dominican Republic, Grenada and Saint Lucia. On the other hand, countries such as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, El Salvador and Jamaica have cash transfers that, on average, have few deliveries and are of short duration. Some countries, such as Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have implemented emergency cash transfers lasting between 5 and 10 months on average, but with between 1 and 3 deliveries per user.

Figure 4
Latin America and the Caribbean (29 countries): number of deliveries per recipient and duration in months
of active emergency cash transfer measures between March 2020 and December 2021^{a b c}
(Average per country)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; "Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

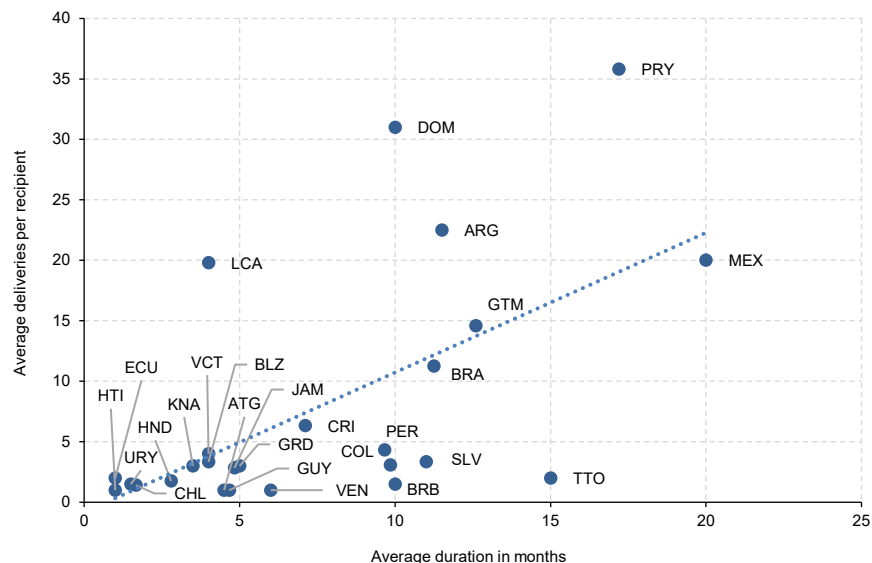
^a The countries are Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b Deliveries per recipient is the number of official deliveries announced for each measure.

^c Table A.3 in the annex identifies the measures considered cash transfers and in-kind transfers.

In contrast to what happens with cash transfers, high-duration measures with few deliveries are much more common among in-kind transfers. Countries such as Peru, Colombia, Barbados, El Salvador and Trinidad and Tobago have implemented in-kind transfers with an average duration of around 10 months or more, but with fewer than 5 deliveries per user (see figure 5). However, most countries in the region have provided in-kind support with fewer than 5 deliveries, on average, and a duration of less than 5 months. Only Paraguay and Mexico are notable for having designed emergency in-kind transfers with more than 20 deliveries and an average duration of more than 17 months. In the case of Mexico, the Youth Building the Future programme was strengthened and has provided monthly training since the end of May 2020. Paraguay has 5 food delivery measures with high frequencies and long delivery periods, such as “My family school lunch” food kits, which are delivered every 10 days over a period of 22 months. The cases of Argentina, the Dominican Republic and Saint Lucia are unique because the average number of deliveries per user of in-kind transfers is higher than the average duration in months, a result mainly driven by their school feeding measures, which have biweekly, weekly and even daily deliveries.

Figure 5
Latin America and the Caribbean (27 countries): number of deliveries per recipient and duration in months
of active emergency in-kind transfer measures between March 2020 and October 2021^{a,b,c}
(Average per country)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; “Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19”, Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

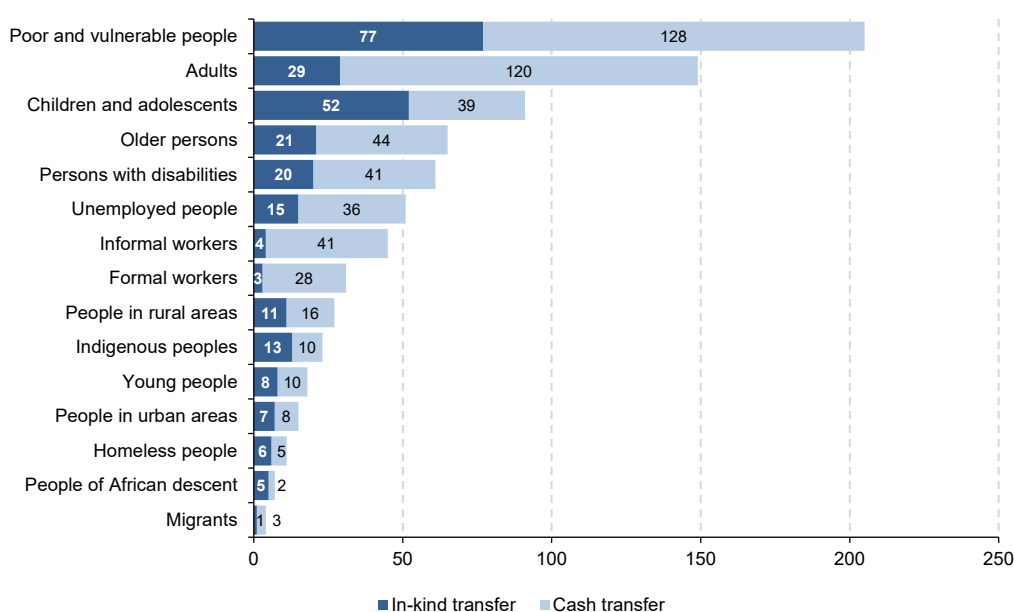
^b Deliveries per recipient is the number of official deliveries announced for each measure.

^c Table A.3 in the annex identifies the measures considered cash transfers and in-kind transfers.

A. Target population for emergency non-contributory social protection measures

Emergency non-contributory social protection measures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have especially targeted the most vulnerable groups. These groups include, among others, people in situations of poverty and vulnerability due to their income levels; children and adolescents; people with disabilities; and older persons. Of all the cash and in-kind transfer measures announced up to October 2021, 205 explicitly targeted people in situations of poverty or vulnerability, making them the target population group at which the largest number of emergency measures are directed. This is partly explained by the fact that, since the early 1990s, the social protection system has been built around this population group and measures have been implemented in order to contribute to eradicating their poverty (Cecchini, 2019). Of those measures, 128 were cash transfers and 77 were in-kind transfers (see figure 6). This pattern of receiving more cash transfers than in-kind transfers is repeated for most population groups. The exceptions are children and adolescents, for whom more than half of the measures are in-kind transfers involving the provision of food; and indigenous people, the homeless and the Afrodescendent population, who, as part of the measures that explicitly mention them as priority groups, receive mainly food, hygiene products and health care.

Figure 6
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): number of emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures by target population group, by type of measure, 1 March 2020–31 October 2021^{a,b}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; "Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a Includes 333 emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures. The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

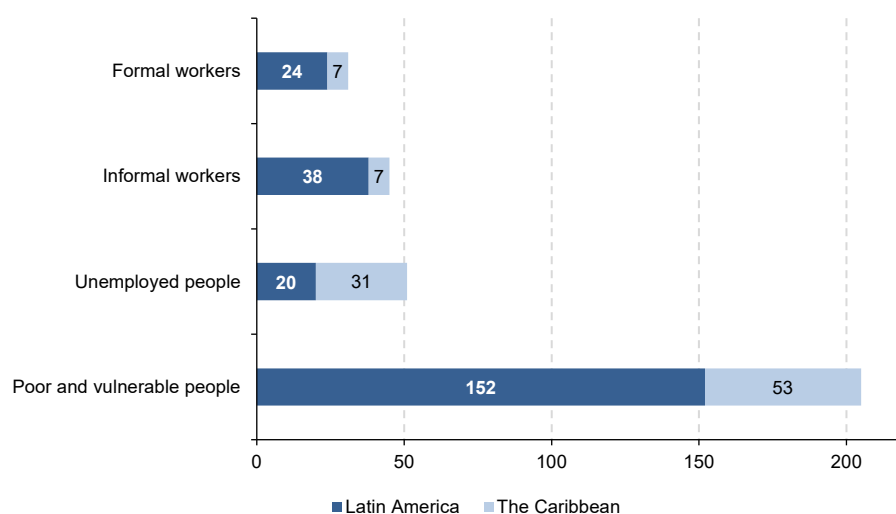
^b Different target groups may overlap, i.e., a measure may target more than one population among the groups mentioned.

Although these categories are not mutually exclusive, the information makes it possible to identify public policy priorities at the country and regional levels. There is also evidence of room for improvement in the support provided to certain groups or even the need to collect information on populations overlooked by social policy. Analysis of the delivery of welfare entitlements by age shows that almost half of the emergency programmes developed in Latin America and the Caribbean target adults. Specifically, 120 cash transfer measures and 29 in-kind transfers have targeted adults whose jobs have been adversely affected by the pandemic. An example of this is the Solidarity grant for transportation workers in Honduras, which was designed to compensate for the negative impact of the pandemic on that group's incomes. This is followed by programmes targeting children and adolescents and those aimed at older persons. However, only 5.4% of the 333 programmes reviewed are targeted at young people, which is not in line with the support needs of this population, especially considering the impact of the crisis on the completion of their studies and their entry to the job market. This evidence reinforces the need to continue implementing measures supporting labour and productive inclusion in employment and production activity (see box 1) that provide training and facilities for the labour market inclusion of young people in the context of the ongoing pandemic, but with fewer restrictions on mobility and displacement.

Children and adolescents have also been included in the target population of various emergency measures, especially those addressing food security. Specifically, 52 in-kind transfer measures and 39 cash transfer measures have been announced during the crisis period. In Argentina, Bahamas, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay, some type of cash or in-kind transfer was provided to make up for food deliveries that were previously made at schools. This population has also been the recipient of most deliveries of technological materials for educational continuity and distance education, in order to minimize the probability of dropping out. For example, Paraguay's programme Improvement of Learning Conditions through the Incorporation of ICTs in Education Facilities and Education Management Units (*Mejoramiento de las Condiciones de aprendizaje mediante la Incorporación de TIC en Establecimientos Educativos y Unidades de Gestión Educativa*) provided computers to strengthen distance education.

Likewise, coverage of informal workers has also been the target of emergency non-contributory social protection measures against the pandemic. According to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in 2019, just before the pandemic, 38% of the population in the region was not covered by any type of social network, due to the high incidence of informality, and were therefore particularly exposed to the impact of the pandemic (OECD and others, 2020). Most of the measures targeting or including this population have been cash transfers, which totalled 41 measures as of October 2021; however, in-kind transfers, mainly focusing on training and education for labour market inclusion, have also been implemented. This is of great interest because, owing to their employment status, this population is not included in the administrative records that report income. Informal workers are also not included in contributory social protection measures in the labour market, such as unemployment insurance, because they work without employment contracts. This situation has traditionally led them to be overlooked by social protection information systems. However, it is a population that has been badly affected by the pandemic and is usually exposed to income shocks due to precarious working conditions (Velásquez Pinto, 2021). In addition, this population is often excluded from non-contributory social protection because measures such as conditional cash transfer programmes operate under means-testing mechanisms and target extremely poor groups. Some examples of emergency measures that have covered informal workers are Brazil's Emergency Aid, Argentina's Emergency Family Income, Colombia's Solidarity Income, Paraguay's *Pytyvõ* programme, Peru's Grant for independent workers, and Uruguay's (Emergency food basket). However, the effort to reach this population is mainly made by the Latin American countries, since in the Caribbean region the unemployed have greater prominence and are the recipients of 31 emergency programmes to mitigate the loss of income (see figure 7).

Figure 7
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): number of emergency measures by type of economic and employment situation, by region, 1 March 2020–31 October 2021^{a b}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; "Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

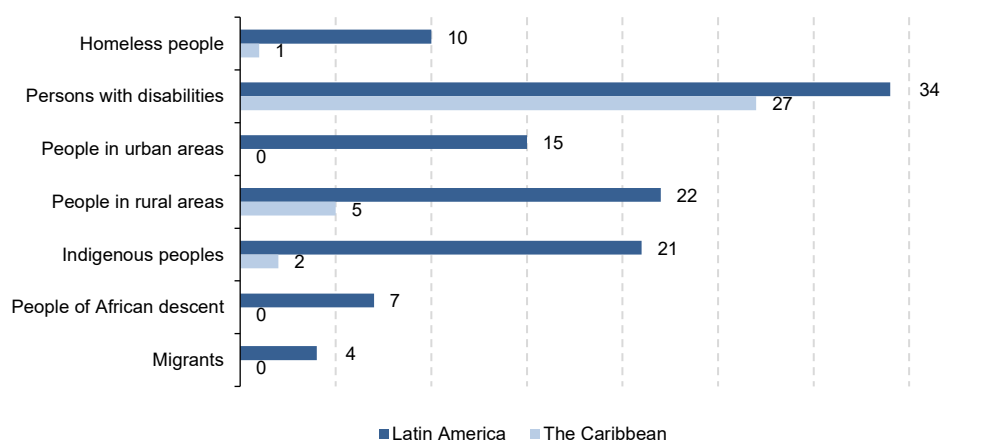
^a Includes 333 emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures. The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

^b Different target groups may overlap, i.e., a measure may target more than one population among the groups mentioned.

The effort to reach out to specific vulnerable populations is reflected in the introduction of emergency measures aimed at homeless people, migrants, indigenous people and Afrodescendants (see figure 8). These population groups are not usually part of social protection systems due to lack of information and lack of capacity of the state apparatus to identify and contact them to register their information.

Another population in a situation of greater vulnerability to which a significant proportion of emergency measures were directed were people with disabilities (18%). Specifically, 27 programmes targeting this population were identified in Caribbean countries, which amounts to 28% of the total number of emergency programmes implemented by those countries. For example, the Disability Support Programme established in Saint Kitts and Nevis provided cash transfers to households with persons with disabilities. The programme also included additional support for private providers to train people with disabilities in order to facilitate their labour market insertion. Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Suriname also announced new programmes that included people with disabilities, while the Bahamas, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago modified existing programmes. Meanwhile, eight countries in Latin America created new programmes targeting people with disabilities (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia), but none exclusively, as in the case of Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Lucia.

Figure 8
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): number of emergency measures by individual and residential characteristics and by region, 1 March 2020–31 October 2021^{a b}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b Different target groups may overlap, i.e., a measure may target more than one population among the groups mentioned.

A group particularly affected during the pandemic, in terms of income, work and time spent on care, were women. The map of non-contributory cash and in-kind transfer measures shows a total of 35 measures aimed expressly at women (26 cash transfer and 9 in-kind transfer programmes). An example of these measures is the strengthening of women-led enterprises in Costa Rica whose economic activity was affected by COVID-19. The Costa Rican government provided specialized advisory services to study and identify the main activities of companies in order to determine which of them generate added value or a competitive advantage in the final product, as well as to prepare a risk plan to deal with this type of crisis. There are also measures such as that of Saint Lucia, whose government, through economic support provided by Global Affairs Canada and UN Women's Multi-Country Office, granted subsidies to women in the tourism and agriculture industries.

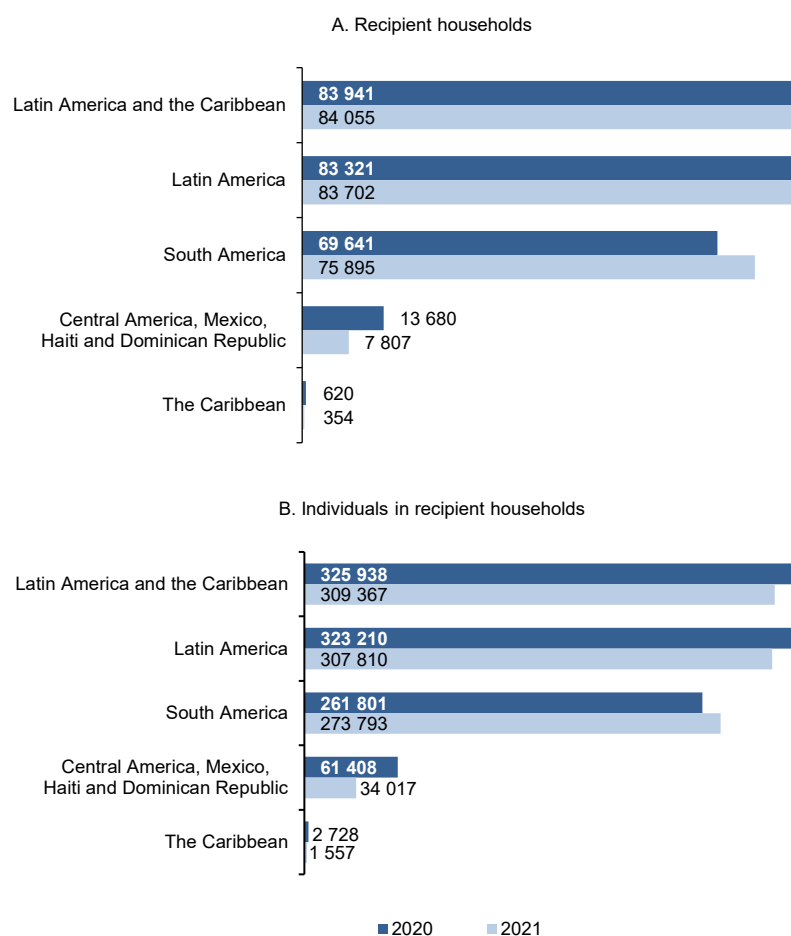
Regarding the mainstreaming of a gender approach in emergency measures, taking into account both contributory and non-contributory measures, the COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean identified 46 employment and income generation measures, 38 measures linked to transfers and other social protection entitlements, and 41 linked to the care economy, including the extension of care leave.¹² Such is the case of Law No. 21.247 (Protected Parenting Law) in Chile, which enabled the extension of postnatal parental leave for public and private sector workers, whether dependent or independent, as well as for workers enrolled in the unemployment insurance scheme who are responsible for the care of one or more children born after 2013 and who are not using postnatal parental leave to request the suspension of their employment contract (furlough) for reasons of care while the operation of education facilities, kindergartens and nurseries remains suspended due to COVID-19. Parents or caregivers of children born since 2013 were able to unilaterally avail themselves of a furlough under the Employment Protection Law (Law No. 21.227) (Amarante, 2022).

¹² See [online] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>.

B. Coverage

Considering the coverage compatibilities between the different measures in each country, it is estimated that household coverage of cash and in-kind transfer measures in the region was around 84 million households in 2020 and 2021. Coverage fell from about 326 million people to 308 million.

Figure 9
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): coverage of emergency cash and in-kind transfers
(March–December 2020 and January–June 2021)^{a,b}
(Thousands)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; CEPALSTAT [online database] <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en>; Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/cct>.

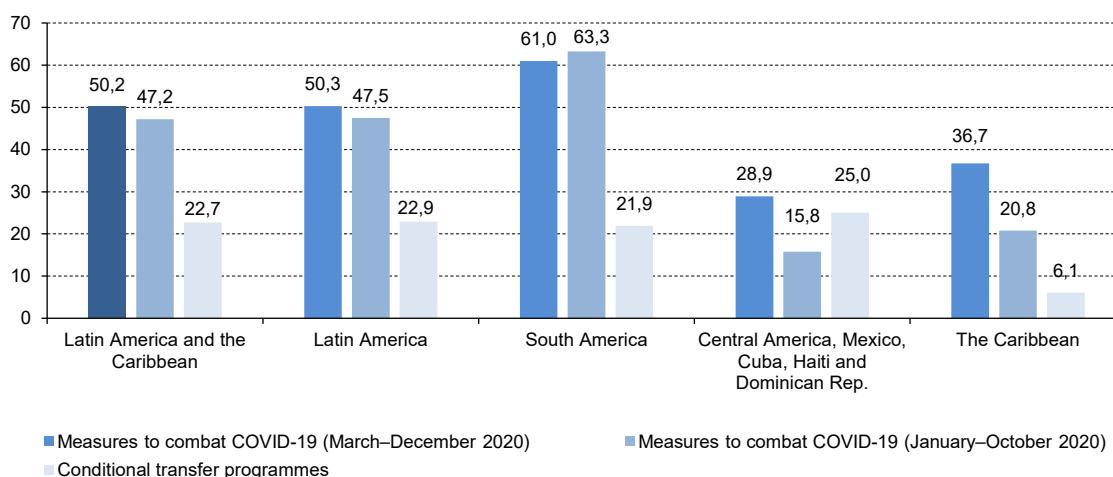
^a Includes the measures announced between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. The estimate was made based on official government information (announced or effective coverage, depending on availability), taking into account the possible complementarity between the different measures announced by each country, to minimize duplication in the calculation of coverage. For measures related to transfers made per person, if no information is available on the average or maximum number of recipients per household, it was assumed that there were two recipients per household.

^b South America includes Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. Central America includes Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, in addition to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico. The Caribbean includes Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

This result is due to the fact that the increase in the number of persons in households using the measures in South American countries, implemented mainly by Brazil, Chile and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, was lower in magnitude than the decline in the number of persons in households using the measures in Mexico and Central American countries such as Honduras and Guatemala, where the average size of households is larger. While in South America the number of people covered by these emergency measures increased by nearly 12 million, in the region comprising Central America, Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic it fell by more than 27 million, and in the Caribbean region there was a decline of 1.2 million (see figure 9).

Between March 2020 and October 2021, cash and in-kind transfers are estimated to have covered 111.5 million households, to which about 422 million people belong. However, there is a reduction in population coverage in the countries of the region between 2020 and 2021, from 50.2% to 47.2% coverage (see figure 10). Nonetheless, the coverage of emergency programmes in the first 10 months of 2021 was still greater than the coverage of the countries' pre-existing conditional cash transfer and other permanent cash transfer programmes, which amounted, on average, to 22.7% of the population. In addition, during the period analysed, the coverage of measures implemented in South America increased notably.

Figure 10
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): persons in households receiving emergency cash and in-kind transfers (March 2020–October 2021) and conditional transfer programmes (latest available year), by subregion^{a b c}
(Percentages of total population)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021 (LC/PUB.2021/17-P), Santiago, 2022; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; CEPALSTAT [online database] <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en>; Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/cct>.

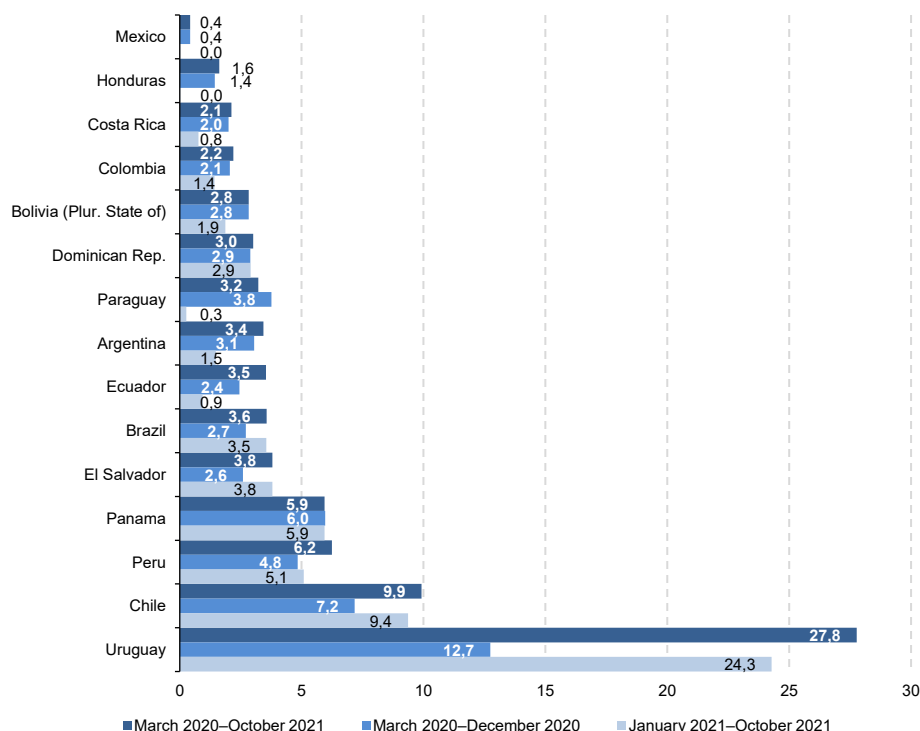
^a The figure considers cash and in-kind transfers announced between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. The estimate was based on official government information (either announced or effective coverage, depending on availability), taking into account the start date and duration, as well as the possible complementarity between the different measures announced by each country, in order to minimize double counting when calculating coverage. The coverage of persons in households receiving emergency measures is estimated by multiplying the estimated household coverage by the average size of households in the first income quintile, according to the latest data available from CEPALSTAT. For measures related to transfers delivered per person, if no information is available on the average or maximum number of recipients per household, two per household is assumed.

^b The figure considers coverage of conditional transfer programmes or other permanent cash transfer programmes in the latest year with information available in the Database of Non-Contributory Social Protection Programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

^c South America includes Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. Central America includes Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, in addition to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico. The Caribbean includes Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The coverage of emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures was greater than the size of the population living in poverty in most of the region's countries. In 2020, all countries for which information is available, except Mexico, delivered emergency cash and in-kind support to a population larger than the population in poverty (see figure 11).

Figure 11
Latin America and the Caribbean (15 countries): persons in households receiving cash and in-kind transfers (March 2020–October 2021)^{a,b}
(In multiples of the pre-pandemic population in poverty)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; CEPALSTAT [online database] <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en>; Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/cct>.

^a The figure considers cash and in-kind transfers announced between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. The estimate was based on official government information (either announced or effective coverage, depending on availability), taking into account the start date and duration, as well as the possible complementarity between the different measures announced by each country, in order to minimize double counting when calculating coverage. The coverage of persons in households receiving emergency measures is estimated by multiplying the estimated household coverage by the average size of households in the first income quintile, according to the latest data available from CEPALSTAT. For measures related to transfers delivered per person, if no information is available on the average or maximum number of recipients per household, two per household is assumed.

^b The figure considers poverty rates at the national level for 2019, available in CEPALSTAT, except Chile (2017), Mexico (2018) and Argentina (rate for urban areas).

The low incidence of poverty in Uruguay and the scope of its measures is reflected in a coverage that amounts to almost 30 times the population living in poverty between March 2020 and October 2021. The case of Chile is similar, although with a smaller variation in coverage between 2020 and 2021, with a scope of about 10 times its population living in poverty. At the other extreme are the cases of Mexico, Honduras and Costa Rica, which in 2020 and 2021 delivered monetary and in-kind support to a population that represented less than twice the number of people living in poverty.

The evidence presented reveals that the coverage of emergency cash and in-kind transfers implemented by countries in the region to deal with the pandemic has been much higher than that of conditional cash transfer programmes and other ongoing programmes. This reflects the magnitude of the emergency and the great effort made by countries to cover the population affected by the crisis. Countries such as Chile have employed universal emergency measures, while others, such as Brazil and Colombia, have significantly and continuously increased the coverage of their transfer programmes to ensure a minimum income for the worst-off families. Some programmes, including Brazil's Emergency Aid, have moved towards their institutionalization, which led to the transition from the Bolsa Familia programme to the Auxilio Brasil programme. However, coverage by emergency measures showed a downward trend during 2021, which negatively affected extreme poverty projections that year due to the prolongation of the health crisis and uncertainty regarding when countries would be able to bring the pandemic under definitive control (ECLAC, 2022a). Therefore, in order to mitigate part of the negative impact of the pandemic, ECLAC has urged that emergency cash and in-kind transfers and their coverage be maintained.

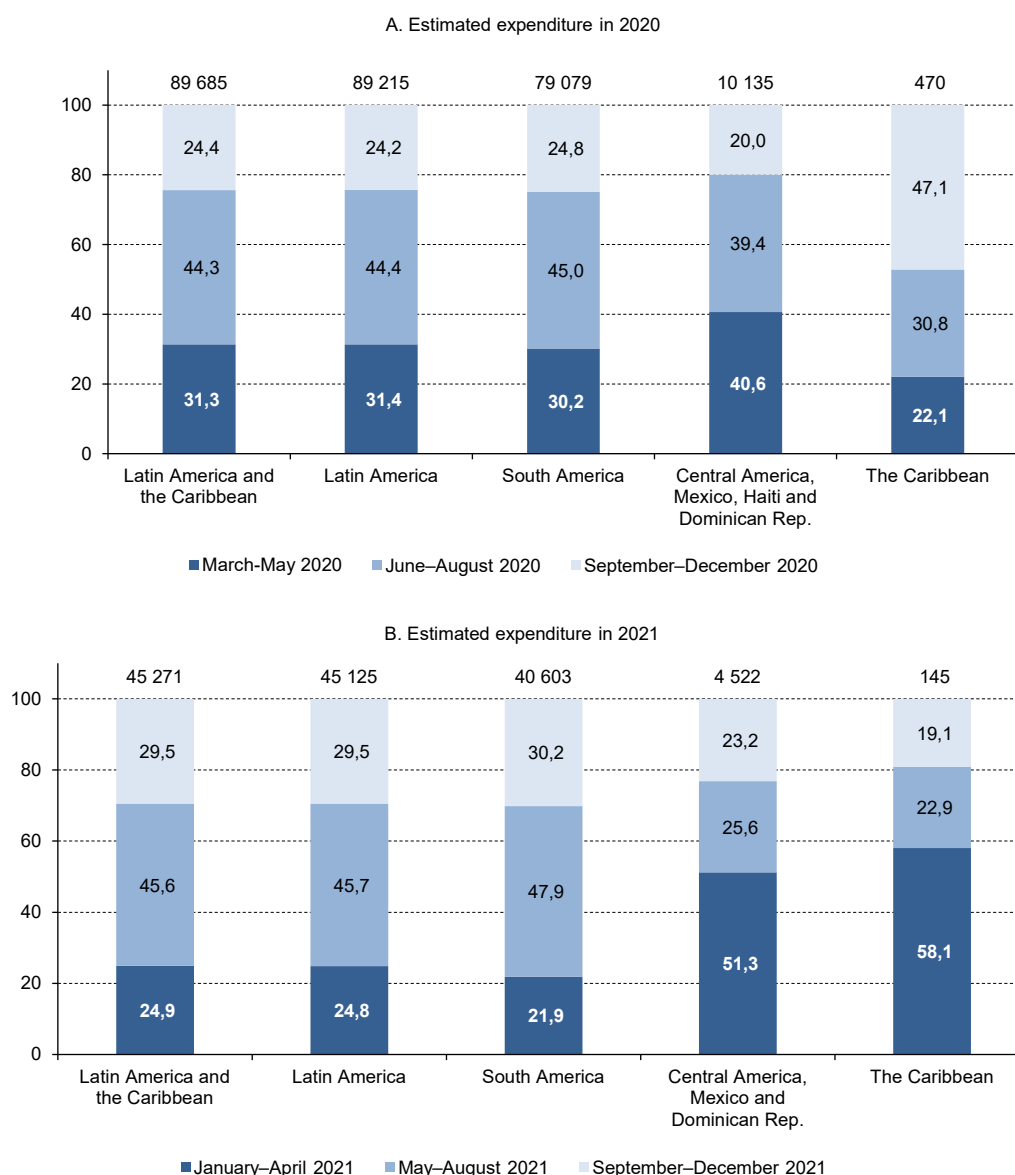
C. Estimated expenditure

Although the fiscal package of emergency measures includes other measures and policies not associated with emergency cash and in-kind transfers (see box 2), the total commitments announced by Latin American countries between January and December 2021 were estimated at US\$ 45.3 billion, about half of the expenditure in 2020, which was estimated at US\$ 89.7 billion (ECLAC, 2022a).¹³ All regions of Latin America and the Caribbean had a similar pattern of declines in estimated spending on cash and in-kind transfers between 2020 and 2021, with decreases of around 50%,¹⁴ a magnitude greater than the change in coverage. 90% of those 2021 estimated commitments were made by South American countries, with Brazil and Chile accounting for 77% of that amount. As regards Central America, the Dominican Republic and Mexico, expenditure on non-contributory cash and in-kind transfer measures is estimated at around US\$ 4,522 million in 2021. The Dominican Republic and Panama accounted for around 53%. In the Caribbean countries, total spending in 2021 was estimated at US\$ 145 million, with close to 58% committed from January to April 2021. The Bahamas and Jamaica represented 40% of that amount (see figure 12). Regarding the temporal distribution of the estimated spending, South American countries had higher estimated spending in the months around the middle of the calendar year, while Central American countries, Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic had a higher proportion of estimated spending in the first months of 2020 and 2021. The Caribbean countries, on the other hand, had higher estimated spending on cash and in-kind transfers during the last months of 2020 and the first months of 2021.

¹³ Of the 378 non-contributory measures announced by 33 countries in the region up to 31 October 2021, there is sufficient information to estimate spending by measure for 221. Of that total, 148 were cash transfers, and 73, in-kind transfers (including 4 subsidies for the supply of basic services).

¹⁴ The downward trend in estimated spending on cash and in-kind emergency transfers was also apparent when the figures were expressed in terms of regional monthly averages as percentages of monthly GDP in 2020, as they slipped from 1.58% in March–April 2020 to 1.05% in January–April 2021 and are estimated to total 0.70% for the period from September to December 2021. In similar fashion, average estimated per capita expenditure on cash and in-kind transfers made in response to the COVID-19 crisis in the region went down, on average, from US\$ 97.6 in 2020 to US\$ 87.2 in 2021 (ECLAC, 2021b and 2022a).

Figure 12
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): distribution of estimated spending on emergency transfers (cash and in kind), 2020 and 2021^{a b}
(Percentage distribution, total in millions of current dollars)



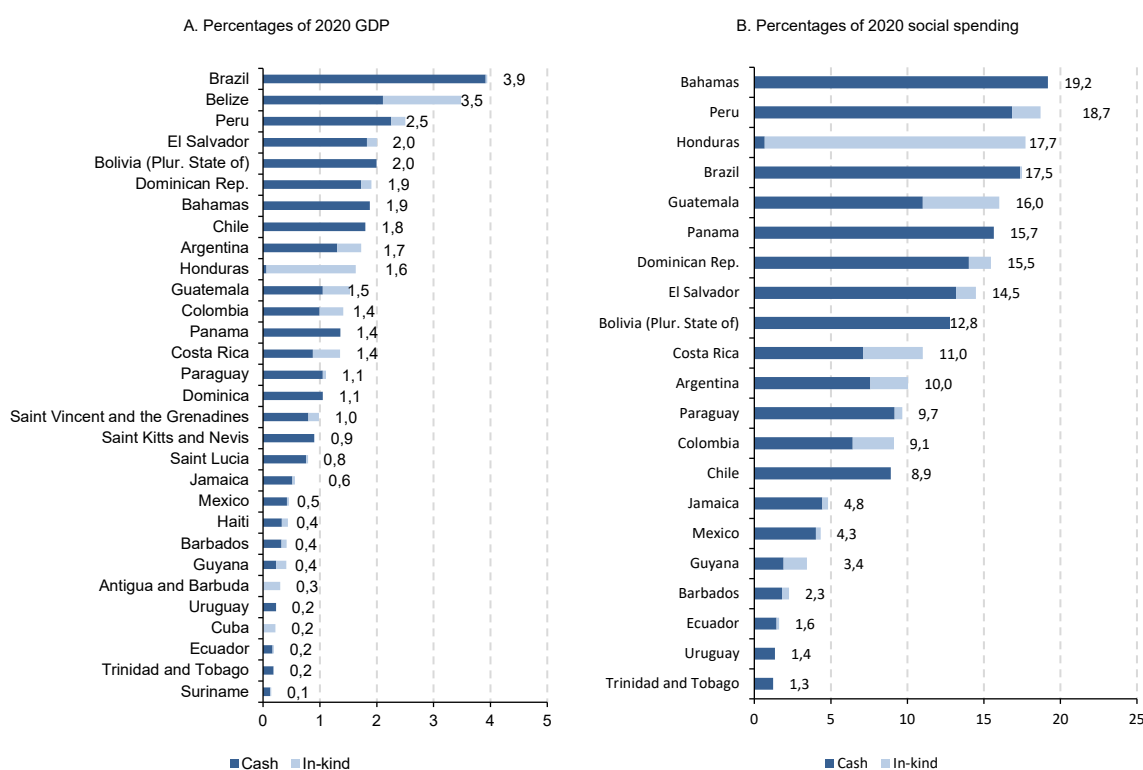
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021* (LC/PUB.2021/17-P), Santiago, 2022; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a Includes the measures announced between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. The 32 Latin American and Caribbean countries for which information is available on emergency transfers to tackle COVID-19 are divided into two groups: 19 Latin American countries and 13 Caribbean countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadine, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago). The Latin American countries are divided into two subgroups: 10 South American countries (Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay) and 9 in the group comprising Central America (Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Panama), and the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico.

^b Using the average monthly exchange rate from March 2020 to October 2021 published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with the exception of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for which the daily exchange rate published by the Central Bank of Venezuela was used. See "Tipo de cambio de referencia SMC (sistema del mercado cambiario)" [online] <http://www.bcv.org.ve/estadisticas/tipo-cambio-de-referencia-smc>.

Between January and December 2020, estimated spending on cash transfers by Latin American and Caribbean countries was higher than estimated spending on in-kind transfers. Expressed as a percentage of GDP, the estimated average expenditure on cash transfers by the countries of the region in 2020 was 1%, while in-kind transfers were 0.2%. The countries that exceeded two points of GDP in estimated spending on cash transfers in 2020 were Belize, Brazil, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Other countries, such as Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras and Trinidad and Tobago had estimated spending on emergency cash transfers of less than two points of GDP in 2020. However, Honduras, together with Belize, had the highest estimated spending on in-kind transfers in the region in 2020, with 1.6% and 1.4% of GDP, respectively (see figure 13, panel A). When expressing estimated spending on emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures as a percentage of social spending, there is a slight reordering of the countries, but the pattern is similar to that described above. In this case, the regional average of estimated spending on cash transfer measures was 8.4% of social spending in 2020, while in-kind transfers amounted to 1.9% of social spending (see figure 13, panel B).

Figure 13
Latin America and the Caribbean (30 countries): estimated average expenditure on emergency cash and in-kind transfers, March–December 2020, by type of transfer^a



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; and Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

Box 2 Emergency fiscal plans

From the onset of the pandemic, with the announcement of emergency measures and the expansion of existing social protection measures, it was necessary to concoct strategies to increase the amount of resources normally allocated to social spending. The heterogeneity in the levels of public income and social spending, as well as the levels of indebtedness of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, meant that financing strategies to respond to the increased spending needed to mitigate the effects of the pandemic varied from country to country (ECLAC, 2020c, 2021a and 2021b). Broadly speaking, three main domestic fiscal policy tools were used to finance the emergency social protection measures implemented during the pandemic: (i) public spending financed through budgetary reallocations (between expenditure items or advances of long-term budgeted payments) and as extraordinary budgetary expenditures; (ii) tax relief through tax reduction, deferred payment or exemption; and (iii) government-backed liquidity support through government credit guarantees, government loans to the private sector, capitalization of funds or public financial institutions (ECLAC, 2020c). Then, as the crisis deepened and the pandemic continued, multilateral lending was added as another source of financing, especially for countries that had high fiscal deficits and indebtedness before the pandemic (ECLAC, 2021b). Caribbean countries, in particular, opted for this type of financing source with loans from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), or World Bank, in combination with donations from agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), or the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the establishment of a Caribbean Resilience Fund (ECLAC, 2021c).

In addition to traditional sources of financing and given the growing need to continue providing support and social protection to the population struggling with the consequences of the pandemic, green and social bonds were used to obtain additional financing, i.e., fixed-income instruments associated with green transition or inclusive social development projects (ECLAC, 2021a and 2021b). This was the case with countries such as Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico, which issued bonds to finance some or parts of measures to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

In parallel to the efforts to finance emergency measures, the countries of the region had to implement administrative measures and special tax normalization regimes to generate additional resources and improve tax revenue performance. In *Fiscal Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021*, ECLAC highlights the steps taken by Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Peru, which through laws, decrees, ordinances and instructions implemented measures offering taxpayers facilities for the payment of their taxes (remission of interest, fines and charges, tax reductions), rate reductions in the taxation of national assets and in the payment of tax debts, and control measures to reduce tax evasion and tax avoidance.

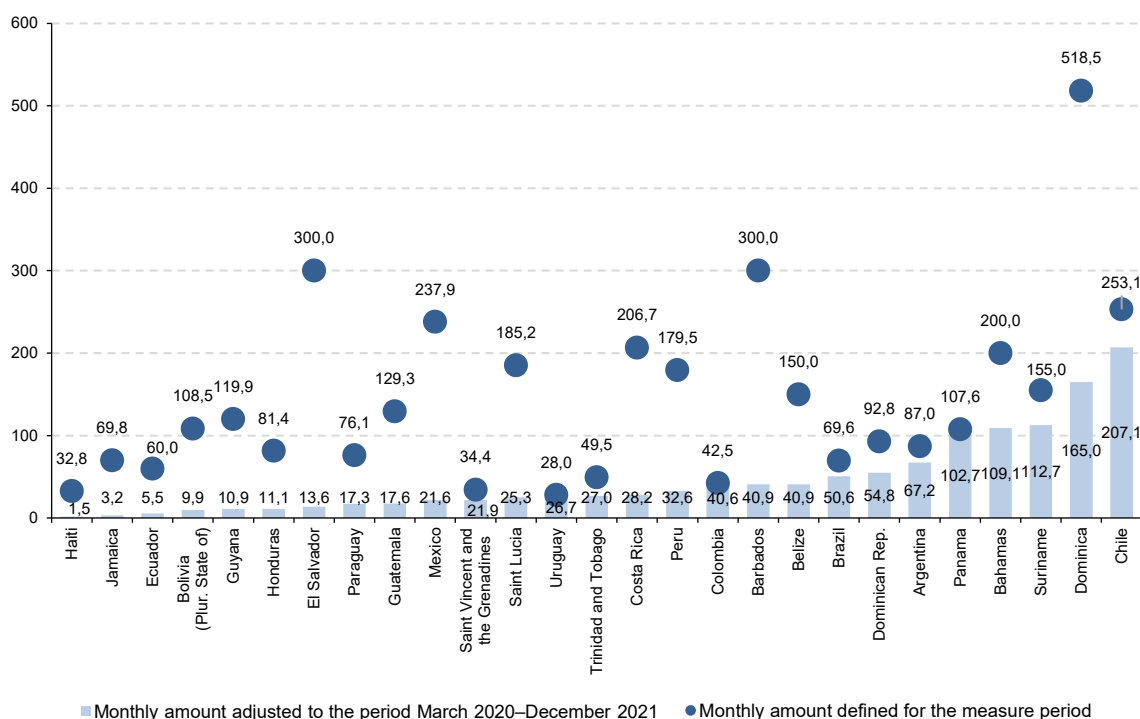
Fiscal policy also plays a key role in the transformative and sustainable recovery of countries. Governments should promote measures to maintain support for the population, improve critical aspects of the social protection system linked, among other factors, to universality and the implementation of a rights-based approach with a view to cross-cutting inclusion, and at the same time recover economic and budgetary stability. To that end, ECLAC recommends reducing opportunities for tax evasion and avoidance, strengthening governance of tax expenditures, reformulating personal income tax, strengthening the scope of taxes on real estate and wealth and applying taxes to the digital economy, and generating green taxes and taxes on consumer products that are harmful to people's health; at the same time regional cooperation should be strengthened, as should ties with multilateral organizations, and innovative instruments developed to boost income generation capacity so as to reduce indebtedness (ECLAC, 2021b).

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Fiscal Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020* (LC/PUB.2020/6-P), Santiago, 2020; *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021* (LC/PUB.2021/10-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2021; *Fiscal Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021* (LC/PUB.2021/5-P), Santiago, 2021; and *Building forward better: action to strengthen the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (LC/FDS.4/3/Rev.1), Santiago, 2021.

D. Adequacy

The amounts of emergency cash transfers delivered to individuals and households vary greatly among the countries of the region. In a review that considered the cash transfer measures with the highest coverage in each country, the average monthly amount, defined by the duration of each measure, came to around US\$ 138 per user.

Figure 14
Latin America (27 countries): average monthly amount of cash transfers with the highest coverage to address the COVID-19 pandemic, by country^{a b c}
(Dollars)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; CEPALSTAT [online database] <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en>; International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Exchange rates selected indicators: national currency per U.S. dollar, period average", Washington, D.C., 2021 [online] <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545862>.

^a The adjusted monthly amount of each measure between March 2020 and 31 December 2021 (22 months) is calculated as the product of the monthly dollar amount and the duration in months (between March 2020 and 31 December 2021) divided by 22, as reported by countries as of 31 October 2021.

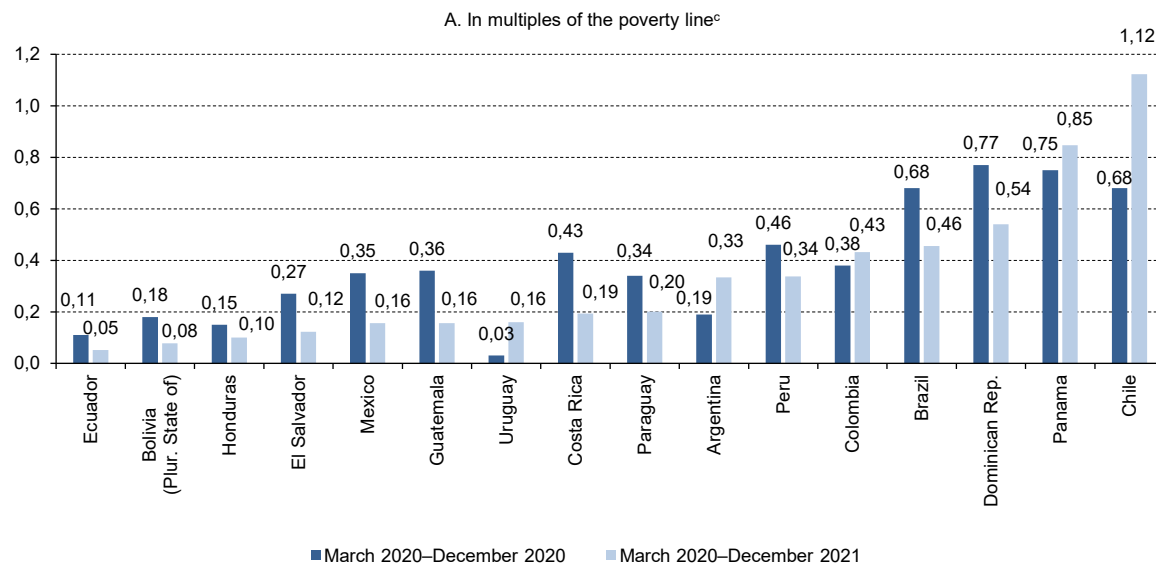
^b The cash transfers considered are those with the highest coverage in each country. The following measures are considered by country: the Food Card in Argentina; Food assistance vouchers and social support in The Bahamas; the Vulnerable Family Survival Programme in Barbados; the Unemployment Relief Program in Belize; Emergency Aid in Brazil; Emergency Family Income (IFE 1.0 and IFE 2.0), the COVID Christmas bonus, Expanded IFE and Universal IFE in Chile; Solidarity Income in Colombia; the Proteger subsidy in Costa Rica; the Cash Grant for farmers - Emergency Agricultural Livelihoods and Climate Resilience Project (EALCRP or DEALCRP) in Dominica; the Stay-at-Home programme in the Dominican Republic; the Health Emergency Family Protection Grant in Ecuador; the 300 Dollar Bonus in El Salvador; the Family Allowance in Guatemala; COVID-19 Cash Grants in Guyana; the Social assistance transfer in Haiti; the Honduras Solidaria programme in Honduras; the COVID 19 Compassionate Grant - CARE Programme in Jamaica; the Pension Programme for the Well-Being of Older Persons (advance payment equivalent to four months, i.e. two bimesters) in Mexico; the Panama Solidarity Plan and the New Panama Solidarity Plan in Panama; the Pytyvõ Grant and Pytyvõ Grant 2.0 programmes in Paraguay; Universal Family Allowance, second Universal Family Allowance and the Bono 600 subsidy in Peru; the Universal Grant and Anti-hunger Grant in the Plurinational State of Bolivia; Temporary Income Support for Non-NIC Contributors in Saint Lucia; Unemployment Benefit in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Economic benefit for unemployed persons in Suriname; the Food Card - Food Support Program in Trinidad and Tobago; and the Operativo Canasta Emergency Food Basket in Uruguay.

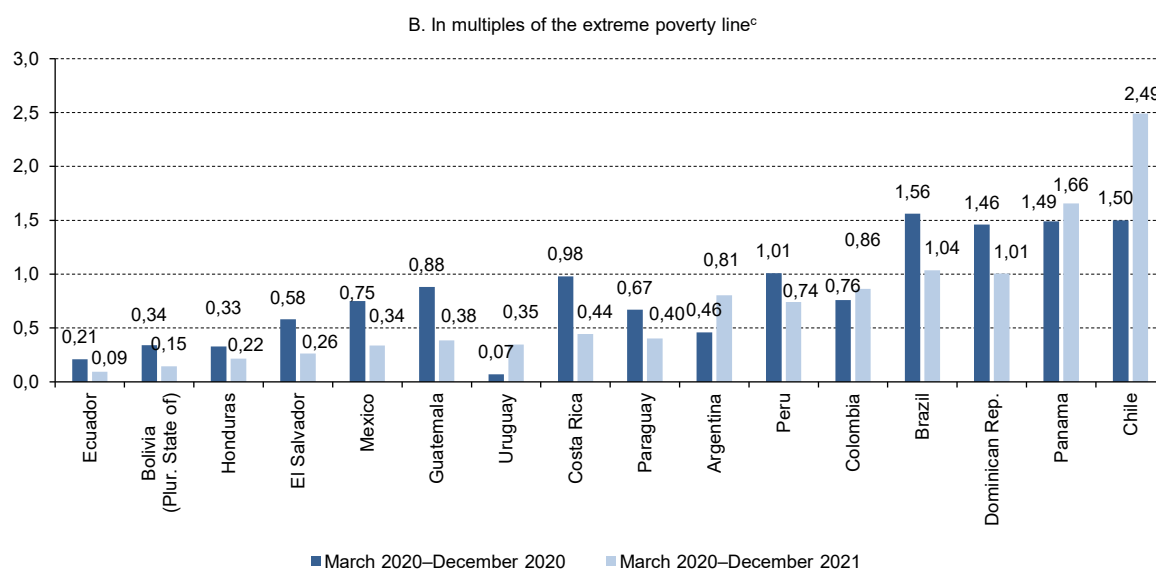
^c GDP and total population for 2020 published by CEPALSTAT are used.

However, when considering the period from March 2020 to December 2021 (22 months of pandemic), the monthly average drops to US\$ 45 per user. Some countries, such as Haiti, Jamaica and El Salvador, made single-delivery cash transfers per user, which makes the pandemic-adjusted amount for the period to December 2021 significantly lower than the amount delivered. On the other hand, countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Suriname and Uruguay made more than 16 deliveries during the period analysed, as is reflected in the low difference between the monthly amount defined for the period that their measures were in effect and the monthly amount adjusted for the period between March 2020 and December 2021. In terms of magnitude, the amounts of the cash transfers adjusted for the pandemic period to December 2021 of Panama, Bahamas, Suriname, Dominica and Chile stand out, exceeding US\$ 100 per month per user (see figure 14).

Although the emergency cash and in-kind transfers shown in figure 14 succeeded in reaching a large percentage of the population, in most cases the size of these transfers was not sufficient to cover recipients' basic needs during the whole pandemic period. Between March 2020 and December 2020, six countries, including Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Peru provided cash transfers whose average monthly amount was around or above the value assigned to the extreme poverty line. The lack of continuity in the delivery of cash transfers in Costa Rica and Peru meant that those two countries were removed from this list when considering the period to December 2021. The average monthly transfer provided by Chile under its largest programme was the only one that exceeded the value assigned to the poverty line as such in the period March 2020–December 2021 (see figure 15). Overall, the adequacy of emergency cash transfer measures declined during 2021 as several measures were discontinued. Only in Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay were steps taken to increase the adequacy of measures in 2021.

Figure 15
Latin America (16 countries): average monthly amount of the highest-coverage cash transfers to address the COVID-19 pandemic in the period 1 March 2020–31 December 2021, by country^{a,b}





Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021* (LC/PUB.2021/17-P), Santiago, 2022; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; CEPALSTAT [online database] <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en>; International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Exchange rates selected indicators: national currency per U.S. dollar, period average", Washington, D.C., 2021 [online] <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545862>.

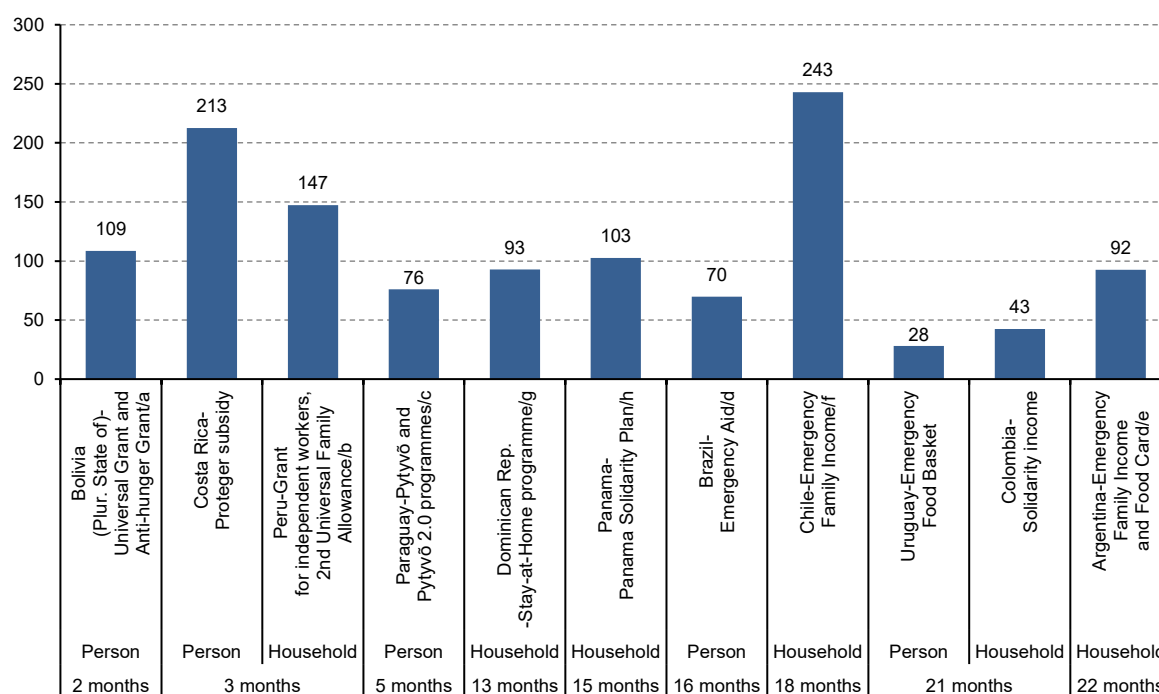
^a The monthly amount for each measure for the period March 2020–31 December 2021 (22 months) is calculated as the product of the monthly dollar amount and the duration in months (between March 2020 and 31 December 2021) divided by 22, as reported by countries as of 31 August 2021. Countries are ranked in ascending order according to the average monthly amount of their largest emergency cash transfer programmes in the period 1 March 2020–31 December 2021 in multiples of the poverty line.

^b The cash transfers considered are those with the highest coverage in each country. The following measures are considered by country: the Food Card in Argentina; Emergency Aid in Brazil; Emergency Family Income (IFE 1.0 and IFE 2.0), the COVID Christmas bonus, Expanded IFE and Universal IFE in Chile; Solidarity Income in Colombia; the Proteger subsidy in Costa Rica; the Stay-at-Home programme in the Dominican Republic; the Health Emergency Family Protection Grant in Ecuador; the 300 Dollar Bonus in El Salvador; the Family Allowance in Guatemala; Honduras Solidaria in Honduras; the Pension Programme for the Well-Being of Older Persons (advance payment equivalent to four months, i.e. two bimesters) in Mexico; the Panama Solidarity Plan and the New Panama Solidarity Plan in Panama; the *Pytyvõ* Grant and *Pytyvõ* Grant 2.0 programmes in Paraguay; Universal Family Allowance, second Universal Family Allowance and the Bono 600 subsidy in Peru; the Universal Grant and Anti-hunger Grant in the Plurinational State of Bolivia; and the Operativo Canasta Emergency Food Basket in Uruguay.

^c Calculated using the individual monthly value of the 2019 urban poverty and extreme poverty lines in current dollars according to CEPALSTAT. The most recent urban poverty and extreme poverty lines were defined in 2017 for Chile, 2014 for Guatemala, 2016 for Honduras and 2018 for Mexico. Accordingly, the amounts corresponding to these poverty lines were calculated at the prices of the year of the most recent data on the amount of the transfers in each component, as appropriate, adjusted by the consumer price index (CPI) published by CEPALSTAT.

Between March 2020 and December 2021, 22 countries in the region implemented 41 cash transfer programmes explicitly targeting informal and other vulnerable workers. Such workers operate on their own account and, for the most part, are not covered by social security or non-contributory social programmes (Abramo, 2021; OECD and others, 2020). Efforts to identify this population represent a significant achievement for their present and future inclusion (see Chapter III). Of the total, 35 are new measures, while in the cases of Trinidad and Tobago and Argentina, with the exception of the Emergency Family Income programme, they were innovations to programmes that already existed before the pandemic. The measures targeting informal workers consisted of a one-off or periodic payment (from 2 to 22 months); and the amount transferred to each individual or household varied considerably from country to country. While some measures, such as Costa Rica's Proteger subsidy and Chile's Emergency Family Income, granted monthly amounts per user in excess of US\$ 200, other measures, such as Uruguay's Operativo Canasta Emergency Food Basket and Colombia's Solidarity Income, delivered monthly amounts of less than US\$ 50 (see figure 16).

Figure 16
Latin America and the Caribbean (11 countries): main emergency cash transfers to informal workers,
by type of recipient (individual or household) and duration, March 2020–October 2021
(Dollars at current prices)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Exchange rates selected indicators: national currency per U.S. dollar, period average", Washington, D.C., 2021 [online] <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545862>.

Note: The figure includes the highest-coverage measures targeting informal workers, announced between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021.

^a Each programme consists of a single payment. The universal bonus was 500 bolivianos (US\$ 72), and the anti-hunger bonus was 1,000 bolivianos (US\$ 145).

^b The figure considers two payments of 380 soles (US\$ 111) for the grant for independent workers and a one-off payment of 760 soles (US\$ 221) for the Second Universal Family Grant. In addition, informal workers who did not receive the grant for independent workers were eligible to receive the one-off payment of US\$ 221 of the Universal Family Grant.

^c The Pytyvõ Grant and Pytyvõ Grant 2.0 programmes are included, with a duration of two months each and monthly amounts of US\$ 80 and US\$ 73 per person, respectively. Along with this, the Border Subsidy Assistance programme provided two instalments of US\$ 73 per month to those who did not participate in the Pytyvõ Grant 2.0 programme.

^d As of April 2020, the value of each instalment was 600 reais (US\$ 112). In September 2020 it was extended for four more instalments (until December 2020 and for a total of nine months) at half the amount, i.e., 300 reais (US\$ 56) per person. The 2021 Emergency Aid programme delivers 4 monthly instalments of 250 reais (US\$ 47) per person and is limited to one person per family. In August 2021, it was extended for three more instalments, from August to October.

^e Includes the three monthly payments of the Emergency Family Income programme of US\$ 138 each and the fifteen deliveries under the Food Card programme of US\$ 65 per month, including a 50% increase in the transfer from February 2021 onwards.

^f Given that the total amount per household varies according to its composition and source of income (formal or informal), the average amount of the single payment made by IFE 1.0 (US\$ 193), the average amount of the 5 payments made by IFE 2.0 (around US\$ 157), the average amount of the 5 payments of the expanded IFE grant (US\$ 209) and the average amount of the June and July 2021 payments of the Universal IFE grant (US\$ 374), are used. The September 2021 payment was 50%, so it is assumed to be equal to half the July 2021 payment. The average monthly payment for August, October and November 2021 is assumed to be equal to that of July 2021.

^g As of April 2020, each biweekly payment is equivalent to 2,500 Dominican pesos (US\$ 87 per month). As of January 2021, recipients receive a biweekly transfer of 3,000 Dominican pesos (US\$ 105 per month).

^h From March to June 2020, the value of the grant was US\$ 80. As of 1 July 2020, the value of the grant increased to US\$ 100. As of February 2021, the grant was US\$ 120.

E. Institutional framework

Analysing the framework of social institutions is fundamental to understanding the scope and constraints that countries faced in implementing the various emergency measures mobilized in response to the pandemic. That framework determines the array of formal and informal rules, procedural guidelines, resources and organizational structures that enable social policies to function (Repetto, 2004; Martínez, 2019). Social institutions can be analysed in four dimensions. First, the legal and regulatory dimension comprises the system of constitutional frameworks, laws and regulations that account for commitments undertaken by countries in the area of social policy and which, in the context of pandemic responses, enable analysis of the mechanisms used to implement and, as applicable, institutionalize the responses employed. Secondly, the organizational dimension encompasses the formal structure and models for decision-making and for communication and coordination between the different actors participating in policy implementation. In the case of the measures introduced during the pandemic, it is important to consider the entities in charge of their implementation, as well as possible intersectoral coordination mechanisms established to consolidate lessons learned (Atuesta, Holz and Van Hemelryck, 2022). Third, the technical and operational dimension refers to the instruments and tools used to implement policies in a way that is efficacious, efficient, effective, transparent and participatory, including the procedures, physical resources and existing technical capacities for this implementation, in terms of strategic planning processes, information systems, and transparency and accountability tools. In the context of the pandemic, for example, social registries have gained increasing attention as part of social information systems that need to be consolidated for a swift emergency response (Atuesta, Holz and Van Hemelryck, 2022). Fourth, the financing dimension reflects the priority given to certain problems (Martínez and Maldonado, 2019), which in the context of the pandemic has been evidenced by increasing levels of social spending.

During the pandemic, it became evident that social institutions play a fundamental role across the board geographically, including both the national level and the different administrative levels, as well as in all their dimensions (Martínez, 2019; Atuesta, Holz and Van Hemelryck, 2022). This section deals with aspects relating to the organizational, legal and regulatory dimension of social institutions, while the technical and operational dimension is addressed in the following sections and also in the section on operational challenges and innovations, with special attention to information systems for diagnostic assessment, allocation, monitoring and evaluation (see sections I.F, I.G and chapter III). The financing dimension was presented in section I.C and I.F.

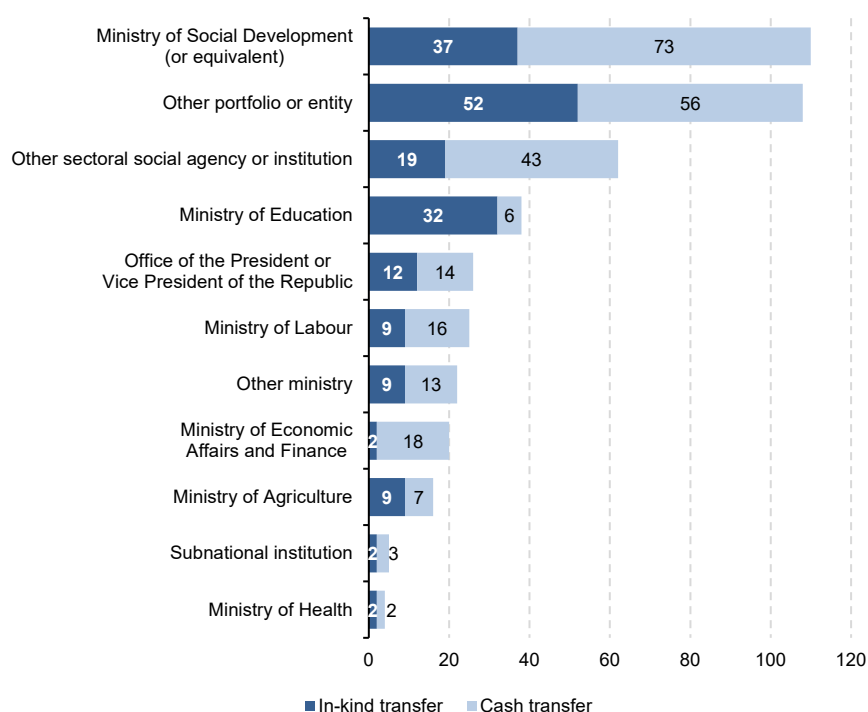
The organizational dimension is the one that reflects the coordination and articulation between social protection actors, since it is the one that determines the structure responsible for the delivery of welfare entitlements. In particular, the role of the social sector is evident in the design and implementation of emergency social protection measures.¹⁵ Ministries of social development or equivalent portfolios were responsible for 110 emergency measures, and sectoral social agencies or institutions, for a total of 62 measures (see figure 17). Other portfolios and agencies, such as the Paraguayan Institute of Crafts (IPA), the Social Energy Inclusion Fund (FISE) of Peru and the National Women's Institute (INAMU) of Costa Rica, were also responsible for a large number of programmes providing both in-kind transfers (46 measures) and cash transfers (45 measures).¹⁶

¹⁵ The analysis of the number of responsible and executing entities is based on information from 306 emergency measures in 32 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. For the analysis of the type of legal instrument, less official information is available, which is why 91 measures are considered.

¹⁶ The "other portfolio or entity" category includes, for example, entities related to the tourism sector and economic and productive development; rural development; sectoral bodies in charge of specific populations, such as persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous peoples; defence; and basic services, among others.

One of the particularities that emerged in the development of emergency programmes was the coordination between different actors. This is reflected in the fact that 102 measures have been implemented under the coordination of different institutions, as is the case in Argentina, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Paraguay, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. In some cases, synergy was required between ministries of social development and other non-social portfolios such as ministries of agriculture (for example, the Emergency Food Support programme in Trinidad and Tobago), or with social portfolios such as ministries of labour (for example, Colombia's Solidarity Income programme). However, it also involved alliances between other ministries and institutions, such as ministries of education, office of the presidency, ministries of finance and agencies in the health, food and productive sectors, among others.

Figure 17
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): number of measures by type of entities responsible for and executing emergency cash and in-kind transfers, by type of measure, March 2020–31 October 2021^{a b c}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Exchange rates selected indicators: national currency per U.S. dollar, period average", Washington, D.C., 2021 [online] <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545862>.

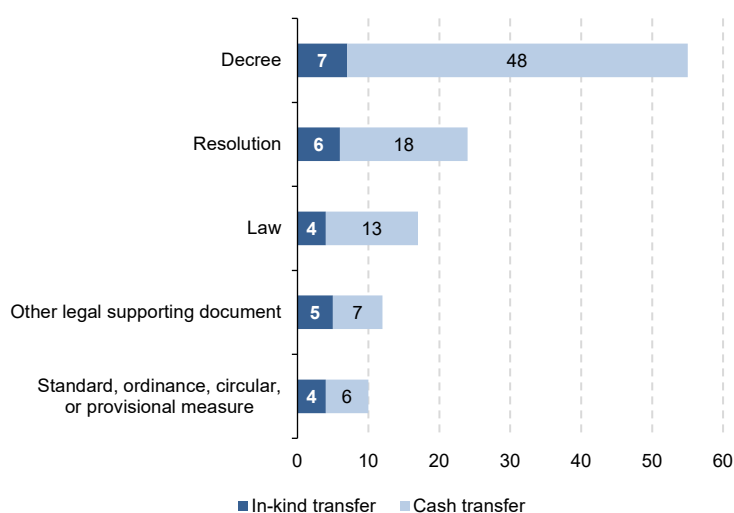
^a The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b The different responsible and executing entities may overlap, i.e., a measure may have more than one responsible or executing entity.

^c There are 26 measures with no information, 8 of which are in-kind transfers and 18 are cash transfers.

From a legal and regulatory perspective, for the development and implementation of emergency measures, in cases where information was available, legally backed regulations or documents were used to regulate the selection criteria for the target population and the allocation of state resources (Atuesta, Holz and Van Hemelryck, 2022). The bulk of the 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries for which information on the regulations associated with the development of emergency measures could be found implemented cash transfers. By far the most frequently used legal instrument was decrees, together with resolutions, which seems logical given that this is usually the instrument used to regulate measures in emergencies in Latin American countries. Following them, in order of use, are laws (which often take longer to publish); other legal documents; and rules, ordinances, circulars or provisional measures (see figure 18).

Figure 18
Latin America and the Caribbean (19 countries): number of emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures, by type of legal instrument and type of measure, March 2020–31 October 2021^{a b c}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Exchange rates selected indicators: national currency per U.S. dollar, period average", Washington, D.C., 2021 [online] <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545862>.

^a Considers official information from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b The types of instruments may overlap, i.e., a measure may have been created or modified on the basis of more than one legal document. The category "other legal support document" includes administrative decisions, regulations, terms and conditions of calls for proposals or services, agreements between stakeholders, guidelines or memorandums.

^c There are 242 measures with no information as to the legal instrument, 106 of which are in-kind transfers, and 136, cash transfers.

It should be borne in mind that associating standards with emergency measures may not be straightforward due to the speed with which entitlements need to be arranged and implemented. However, their enactment is also linked to the need to reallocate public budgets or to allocate extraordinary budgetary expenditures to implement emergency measures, whether this is a new measure (e.g., extraordinary and transitory bonuses) or the expansion of an old measure (e.g., expansion of programmes and increases in coverage) (ECLAC, 2020c). By way of illustration, in Chile the law creating the Emergency Family Income (Law No. 21,230) provided that those monetary contributions would be charged to the taxpayer and that if the health emergency situation continued, the Ministry of Finance could issue decrees signed by the Ministry of Social Development to adjust amounts and determine new contributions. Then, Law No. 21,352 amended the Public Sector Budget

Law for the year 2021 (Law No. 21,289) and Law No. 21,230 granting the Emergency Family Income, which states that the increased expenditure would be financed by the Treasury and the Transitional Emergency Fund.¹⁷ This could explain why in 23 of the 91 cases for which information is available in Latin America and the Caribbean different legal instruments were combined. In such cases, laws are usually specified through decrees whose operationalization tends to be defined in resolutions. For example, in Brazil, the enactment of a law was combined with decrees and ordinances to regulate the creation of Emergency Aid programme, while in Paraguay, a law, a decree and a ministerial resolution were combined for the implementation of the My Family School Lunch Food Kits programme.

F. Social information registries

Social information registries —also known as potential recipient registries— and participant registries are fundamental tools for public policy decision-making and an important part of the technical-operational dimension of the social institutional framework. Such registries make it possible to guide and improve social policy by enabling programmes that are of high quality inasmuch as they contain data on identification, characterization, living conditions and programmes received by individuals. Such tools for identifying potential recipients of welfare entitlements provided by the State have been of great help during the pandemic. However, they have not been sufficient to identify all vulnerable groups because they do not always afford complete coverage of the population.

Emergency social measures in Latin America and the Caribbean have used these registries for the allocation of cash and in-kind transfers, regardless of whether they were centralized and managed at the national level (75 measures) or the ministry level (69 measures).¹⁸ At the same time, given the differences in their level of development, coverage and quality, information from registries of participants in existing programmes that predated the pandemic was also used (61 measures). Even so, it was necessary to complement the data obtained from those registries with other sources of information in order to identify populations that were usually invisible in these databases, such as informal workers, the homeless and migrants, among others. This explains the use of new recipient registries and new information collected by 46 emergency measures adopted by governments during the pandemic (see figure 19, panel A). These new registries, together with changes from the usual way of using them, explain why some emergency measures are associated with innovations towards improving and developing information systems and registries (see figure 27 in chapter III). The collection of these new data took place, for example, in Uruguay, with the use of participant lists provided by social organizations that manage different centres administered by the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents (INAU), in Suriname and Saint Lucia through the use of web platforms set up to collect new information, and in Colombia, where the new information allowed the RUDA-COVID-19 Single Registry of Victims and Affected Persons to be developed.¹⁹

The second characteristic of the information for the identification and subsequent selection of the target population during the pandemic was the type of data used. As panel B of figure 19 shows, mainly administrative data were used to complement information from the State's social information registries, which stemmed from governments' need to provide a rapid response to the economic and social fallout of the COVID-19 crisis. This is due to the fact that these data do not need to be collected, are readily accessible for timely decision making and, because of their characteristics, are often sufficiently up to date. However, they are not always exhaustive and available, so they were supplemented with data self-reported by individuals, which also, through the compilation of new records, allow the incorporation of individuals who were previously not visible in administrative

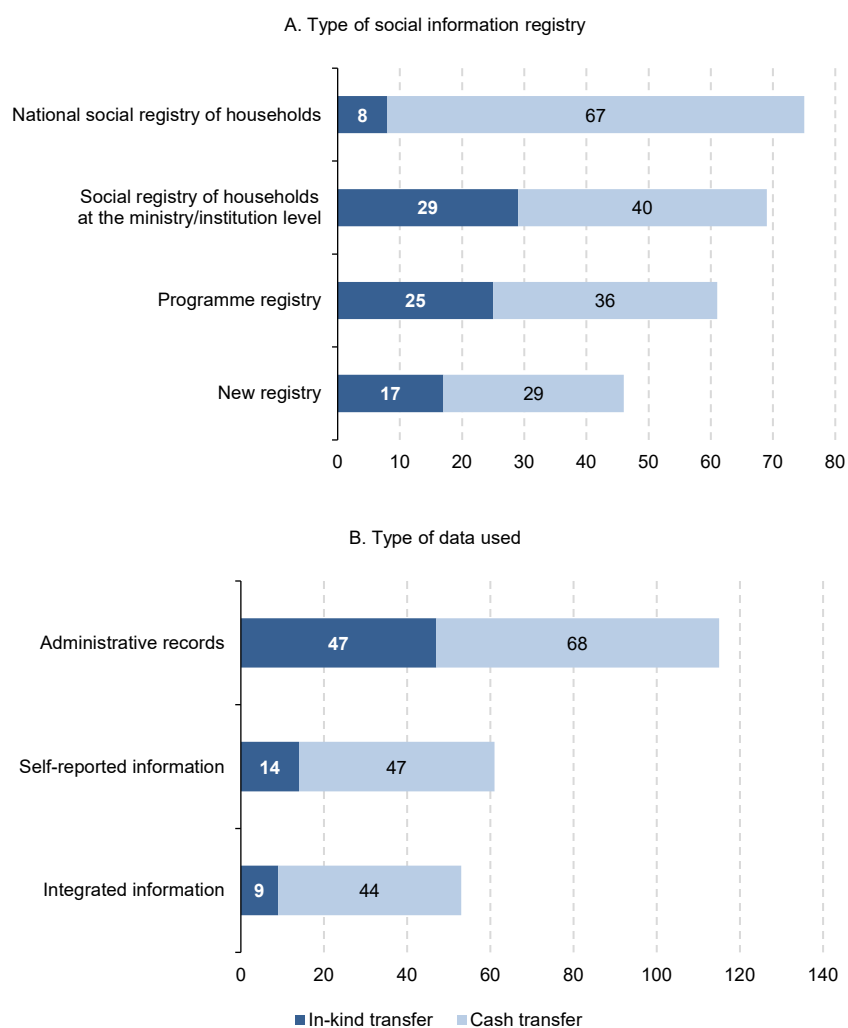
¹⁷ See Ministry of Social Development and Family (2020) and Ministry of Finance (2021).

¹⁸ The analysis of social registries is based on information from 219 emergency measures in 20 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Information on the type of data used is available for 213 emergency measures.

¹⁹ Section III of this paper explores these and more examples in greater depth.

databases (see panel A of figure 19), as well as meeting the need for up-to-date information on the situation of individuals that reflects the extent to which the crisis is affecting them, since registries of potential recipients do not always contain such information.

Figure 19
Latin America and the Caribbean (30 countries): number of emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures, by type of information registry and by type of measure, March 2020–31 October 2021^{a b c}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Exchange rates selected indicators: national currency per U.S. dollar, period average", Washington, D.C., 2021 [online] <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545862>.

^a The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b The categories in the graphs in panels A and B are not mutually exclusive, i.e., a measure could draw on information from social registries and new records simultaneously. It is also possible for the same measure to rely on administrative records and self-reported data.

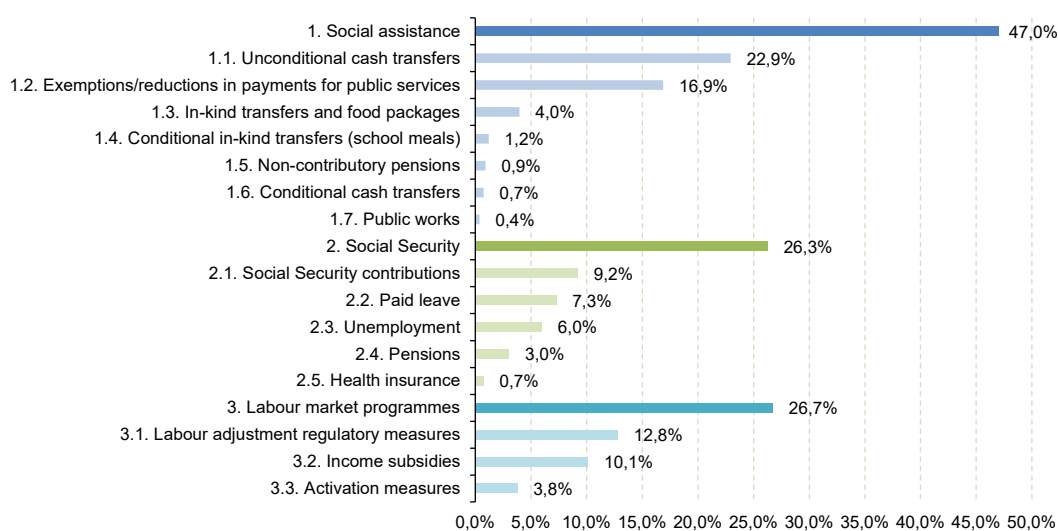
^c To identify the type of social information registry used, 114 measures had no information, while in the case of the type of data used, there were 120 entitlements for which there was insufficient detail for their classification.

Box 3 Social protection measures in Europe

In Europe, as in Latin America and the Caribbean, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the population. The unprecedented economic shock resulted in a 6% decline in GDP and a 1.5% fall in employment (European Commission, 2021). Social protection systems in the countries of the European Union (EU) were not sufficient to absorb the effects of the pandemic, and it was necessary to combine them with emergency measures, of which the following were established at the European level: (i) elimination of the deficit cap, allowing increased public spending; (ii) creation of common initiatives to mitigate unemployment risks and to introduce greater flexibility in the use of cohesion funds^a (funds used to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of EU member countries and to reduce imbalances and gaps), including the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII)^b; and (iii) agreement on the largest stimulus package in EU history, equivalent to 1.8 trillion euros, to rebuild countries and make them more sustainable, more resilient and better prepared for ecological and digital transitions (European Commission, 2021).

As in Latin America and the Caribbean, the number of social protection measures in EU countries has been increasing since the beginning of the pandemic, reaching 1,085 measures in February 2022. Of those, 646 (59.5%) were new programmes (Gentilini and others, 2022). During the pandemic, countries increased the coverage and amounts of existing social protection measures while relaxing eligibility conditions to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups not covered before the pandemic (European Commission, 2021). Disaggregating by the type of measures presented by Gentilini and others (2022), at the European level, labour programmes (290 measures, 26.7%) and contributory social protection programmes (285 measures, 26.3%) were developed in relatively similar proportions, which together is slightly higher than the proportion of non-contributory social protection programmes (510 measures, 47.0%). This situation differs from that of Latin American countries where, according to Gentilini and others (2022), social security and labour market measures accounted for 17.6% and 22.0%, respectively, while 60.3% of emergency measures were non-contributory programmes. In Europe, 22.9% of measures were unconditional cash transfers, followed by measures regulating public and financial services (16.9%) and thirdly, labour regulation adjustment measures. Sweden, Switzerland and Denmark are notable for having a very low proportion of welfare programmes, accounted for by the fact that they have more developed social security systems. In contrast, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, at more than 70%, had the highest proportion of programmes for that purpose. As for employment support programmes, the Faroe Islands and Greenland only have programmes of this type, while Hungary, France, Monaco, Lichtenstein and the Isle of Man are territories where 50% of programmes are in the labour market sphere (see table A4). Among the non-contributory social protection measures deployed in European countries, it is striking that exemptions and reductions in financial obligations and basic services are almost as common as unconditional cash transfers.

Figure 1
Europe (53 countries and territories): cumulative number of measures by type of measures, 28 January 2022
(Percentages of total measures)



Source: U. Gentilini and others, "Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures (Vol. 2): Global Database on Social Protection Responses to COVID-19", World Bank [online] <https://socialprotection.org/discover/databases/social-protection-and-jobs-responses-covid-19-real-time-review-country-measures>.

In the United Kingdom, as a result of these adjustments, the formula for calculating pension contributions was temporarily modified. Another support measures implemented in several EU countries was a return to the use of training and labour intermediation policies. In the case of Austria, the government implemented a bonus for companies that included new workers as part of an in-house training programme, with the disbursement of 1,000 euros at the start and another 1,000 euros if the worker was retained after a three-month probationary period.

The second most important group of measures to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the labour market were employment subsidies (10.1%). These include experiences such as that of Hungary, which took advantage of such subsidies to generate research, development and innovation in strategic sectors. By decree, to avoid job losses, engineers working in research and development (R&D) sectors directly received an additional income for three months.

In addition to support for labour supply, European countries also created programmes to shore up labour demand targeting small and medium-sized enterprises and business owners, mainly to provide them with liquidity and support users amid health restrictions that had a big adverse effect on their sales and regular development. The United Kingdom and Ireland are examples of this programmatic approach. In the United Kingdom a measure was implemented that was also very popular in a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries, which consisted of allowing the deferred payment of value added taxes for one year. They also launched the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBL5) to provide liquidity loans to companies, which included an extension from 6 to 10 years while maintaining an interest rate of 2.5%, a reduction of monthly payments and a moratorium on payments of up to six months. Ireland, for its part, created the Credit Guarantee Scheme to facilitate loans by subsidizing low interest rates.

Among the measures implemented, those aimed at older persons had a wide coverage in all countries, especially in Europe and Central Asia. In Ireland, an early retirement entitlement was introduced for residents aged 65 who ceased regular or self-employment, as long as they met certain contribution requirements. Also noteworthy are programmes aimed at preserving jobs in which people with disabilities work—as in the case of Croatia—or at automating the renewal of disability certificates, which also made it possible to secure their jobs in Bulgaria.

It should be noted that, according to the World Social Protection Report 2020–2022 (ILO, 2021), effective social protection coverage in Europe has not become universal. However, while 56.3% of the population is covered by at least one social protection programme in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Europe the proportion is over 84% (84.6% for Eastern Europe and 90.4% for Northern, Southern and Western Europe).

Table 1
Effective social protection coverage, estimates by population groups, 2020 or most recent year available, by region
(Percentages)

Region	At least one social protection measure (excluding health)	Persons covered by social protection systems, including social protection floors								Universal health coverage
		Children	Mothers with newborns	Persons with disabilities	Unemployed	Older persons	Workers in the event of an accident	Vulnerable persons covered by non-contributory programmes	Labour force covered by a pension	
Latin America and the Caribbean	56.3	41.5	30.5	57.7	12.5	75.4	40.8	36.0	30.1	75.4
Eastern Europe	84.6	96.7	81.4	100.0	67.1	95.2	80.0	61.2	50.7	73.2
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	90.4	96.2	99.4	95.6	61.2	97.4	78.8	75.1	51.2	81.6

Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), "World Social Protection Database", on the basis of the Social Security Inquiry (SSI) [online] <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/WSPDB.action?id=15>.

Likewise, measures were taken to introduce care policies and exceptional parental leave. For example, in Poland, an additional measure was implemented to allow parents to remain in the care of children, and in Austria paid leave was established for people with care responsibilities. In addition, although to a lesser extent, programmes specifically targeting the migrant or forcibly displaced population were introduced from December 2020 onwards. For example, in Portugal, the asylum seekers had their situation temporarily regularized to enable access to health care, social assistance, employment and housing. In Spain, asylum seekers and refugees can benefit from a relaxation of the requirements for accessing and receiving assistance from the asylum system during the pandemic.

However, unlike in Latin America and the Caribbean, where several countries offered in-kind support measures, though always in a smaller proportion than cash transfers, in Europe only nine countries implemented this type of entitlement (Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, and the United Kingdom). In Bulgaria, they were used to expand the coverage and scope of measures targeting the elderly, people with disabilities and people living below the poverty line, delivering food packages and hot meals to 41,000 and 50,000 additional users, respectively. In addition, food normally provided at schools was sent to children's homes. Something very similar happened in some communes in France, while others replaced meals with cash transfers or food vouchers.

Regarding the costs of implementing these measures, of the EU countries, Ireland spent the most as a proportion of GDP in 2019, with 8.7%, followed by Cyprus (5%) and Spain (4.5%), while Slovakia and Finland spent 1% on social protection and inclusion. Outside the EU, spending levels were also varied; for example, in Kosovo expenditure amounted to 7.1% of GDP, while in Turkey it was 1.2%.

Source: European Commission, *Annual Report of the Social Protection Committee*, 2021 [online] <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8432>; U. Gentilini and others, "Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures (Vol. 2): Global Database on Social Protection Responses to COVID-19", World Bank, 2022 [online] <https://socialprotection.org/discover/databases/social-protection-and-jobs-responses-covid-19-real-time-review-country-measures>; International Labour Organization (ILO), *World Social Protection Report, 2020–22. Social Protection at the Crossroads – in Pursuit of a Better Future*, Geneva, 2021. For examples of the United Kingdom, see [online] <https://static.eurofound.europa.eu/covid19db/>; <https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/00-eu-emn-covid19-umbrella-inform-en.pdf>; and <https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/00-eu-emn-covid19-umbrella-inform-en.pdf>.

^a See [online] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1300&from=EN> and https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/2021_2027/#:~:text=EU%20Cohesion%20Policy%20contributes%20tothe%20green%20and%20digital%20transition.

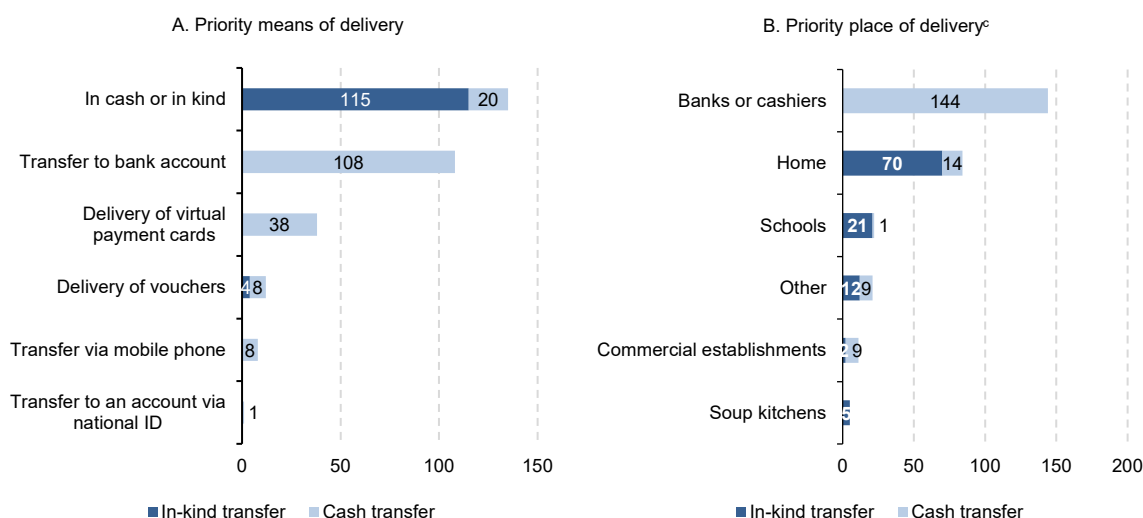
^b See [online] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/newsroom/crri/ifs_crii_o2o4_en.pdf.

G. Means and place of delivery

As part of the technical-operational dimension of the social institutions involved in social protection responses, the means of delivery of emergency measures and where that occurred, whether of goods or money, was particularly important in view of the lockdowns and social distancing measures imposed by governments. The institutions responsible were forced to provide the entitlements and offer an alternative to the usual point of delivery at the various administrative offices in order to avoid queues and an increase in infections (see Atuesta, Holz and Van Hemelryck, 2022). In the case of cash transfers, cash delivery continued to be important, but was complemented, when possible, with direct transfers to bank accounts and, to a lesser extent, with the delivery of virtual payment cards and transfers via mobile phone or to an account via national ID. This last alternative was only used in Chile, where the RUN (Single National Registry) account served to deliver money under the Emergency Family Income programme, which was combined with cash delivery in cases where people did not have active RUN accounts. In addition, as figure 20 shows, priority was given to banks and ATMs as delivery locations. However, the use of commercial establishments to deliver cash transfers was also adopted in cases such as the Food Assistance Programme in Belize, the Single Voucher in Honduras or the emergency food basket programme (Operativo Canasta) in Uruguay.

As for in-kind transfers, they were only replaced by vouchers in four cases (Barbados, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago). There was a preference for changing the places where in-kind transfers were delivered, with priority given to household residences (70 measures), followed by schools (21); other locations (for example, the delivery of arrowroot starch at hospitals and prisons in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, hygiene and care kits delivered to foster homes in Saint Lucia, or support for homeless people in Chile and Uruguay), and to a lesser extent at community kitchens (5 measures) (see figure 20).

Figure 20
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): number of emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures, by means and place of delivery, and by type of measure, March 2020–31 October 2021^{a,b}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Exchange rates selected indicators: national currency per U.S. dollar, period average", Washington, D.C., 2021 [online] <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545862>.

^a The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b There are 31 measures with no information on the means or place of delivery, 7 of which are in-kind transfers, and 24, cash transfers.

^c The "Other" category refers to places such as, for example, offices of public agencies, churches or public spaces.

H. Permanent non-contributory transfer programmes and their role in COVID-19 emergency measures

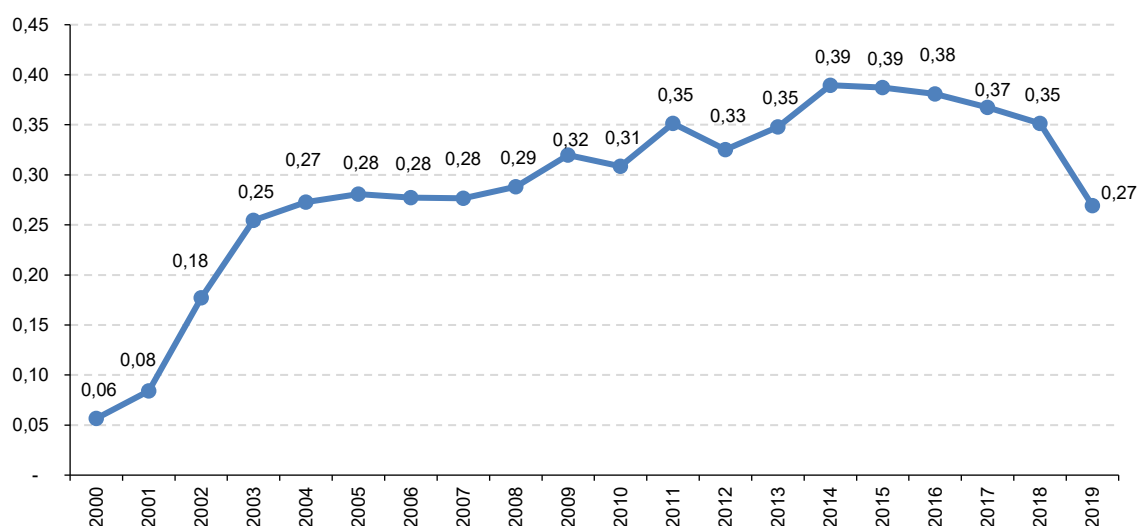
Permanent non-contributory transfer programmes have been implemented in Latin American and Caribbean countries for more than two decades and play an important role in policies to alleviate poverty, extreme poverty and inequality. Included in these programmes are conditional cash transfer programmes or co-responsibility programmes. On the one hand, they seek to reduce poverty in the short term through the periodic delivery of cash transfers to poor families. On the other hand, the conditional cash transfer programmes are designed to reduce poverty in the long term through the co-responsibilities of families in terms of health and education of their members, mainly children and adolescents. In addition to the increase in consumption by recipient families, conditional cash transfers have had positive effects in terms of higher school enrolment and attendance, as well as on the coverage of growth monitoring for children, preventive check-ups and vaccinations (Abramo, Cecchini and Morales, 2019; Cecchini and Atuesta, 2017; Rossel and others, 2022). The good results of the first conditional cash transfer programmes implemented in the region, including PROGRESA in Mexico since 1997, led to their rapid uptake. By the mid-2000s, more than half the countries in the region had designed and implemented their first conditional cash transfer programmes. At present there are 30 such programmes active in 20 countries.²⁰

²⁰ For detailed information about conditional cash transfer programmes in the region, see Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnccct>.

Despite rapid adoption and sustained investment in conditional cash transfer programmes by countries in the region for close to 15 years, the estimate of regional spending on conditional cash transfer programmes as a percentage of GDP has been tracking downward since 2015. Figure 21 shows the rapid increase in regional estimated spending on conditional cash transfer programmes as a percentage of GDP between 2000 and 2003. This reflects the implementation of large-scale programmes such as Bolsa Familia in Brazil, Chile Solidario in Chile, Families in Action in Colombia, and the Human Development Grant in Ecuador, among others. Thereafter, the region's programmes underwent several changes, though always with the aim of increasing their coverage and expanding their services, as evinced by an upward trend in spending, despite some fluctuations, until 2014. From this point on, investment in conditional transfer programmes has declined as a result of the elimination of some programmes and the redesign of others, leading to reductions in coverage.

Of the 21 countries that have implemented conditional transfer programmes, 15 reduced their spending on them as a percentage of GDP between 2014 and 2019. The biggest reductions are those of Mexico and Ecuador, with cuts of 0.42 and 0.19 points of GDP, respectively. In the case of Mexico, the drop in spending on conditional cash transfer programmes was mainly due to the transition from the Prospera programme to the Benito Juárez Social Scholarships for Well-being in 2019. Among other things, the transition was intended to simplify the services provided to families living in poverty and to universalize the right to health and education services. Although the Benito Juárez Scholarships for Well-being increased the coverage of students receiving transfers, they only replaced the educational components of Prospera. The health, labour insertion and food components were transferred to other non-conditional programmes. This programmatic redesign in Mexico significantly reduced spending on conditional cash transfer programmes. In the case of Ecuador, the cuts were mainly the result of modifications made to the Human Development Grant starting in 2013, aimed at correcting inclusion errors, which reduced its coverage and spending on transfers to households by around 50%.

Figure 21
Latin America and the Caribbean (21 countries): evolution of estimated spending
on conditional transfer programmes,^a 2000–2019
(Percentages of GDP)



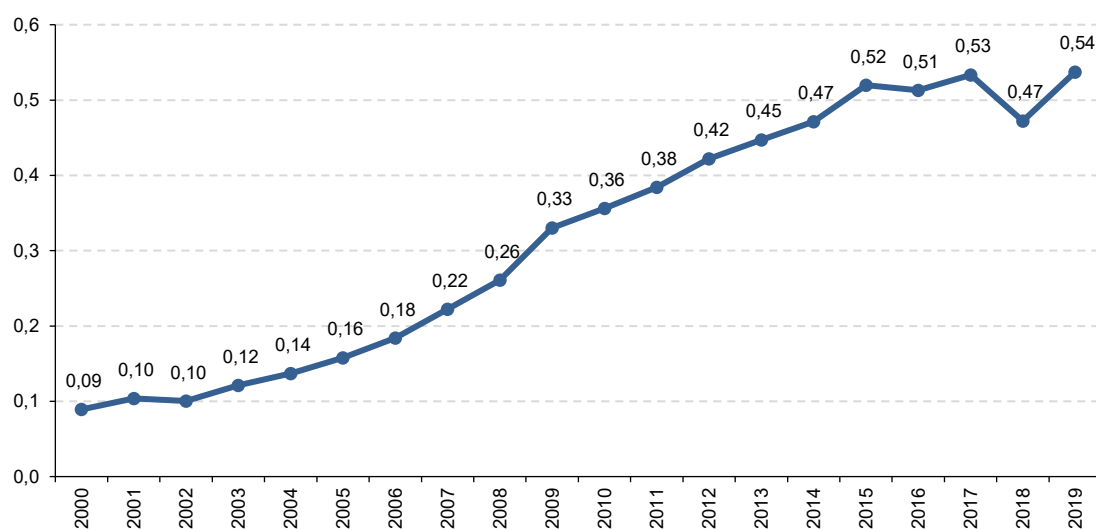
Source: Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/cct>.

^a The method of Cecchini and Atuesta (2017) was used for the estimation of the complete series. The imputation of missing data by programme is done using the available data, assuming equivalence with the last available data or a linear relationship between the two closest available data.

The other permanent non-contributory transfer programmes implemented in the region's countries are non-contributory pension programmes. These programmes provide cash transfers to senior citizens or people with disabilities who have not made contributions during their working lives. The number of non-contributory pensions in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased significantly since the 1990s, with an accelerated rise particularly in the first decade of the 21st century. Although 8 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean provided non-contributory pensions from the beginning of the twentieth century until the end of the 1980s, in the following two decades that number tripled, taking the region's total countries with non-contributory pensions to 24. This accounts for the recent increase in the participation of Latin American and Caribbean countries in the provision of non-contributory pensions, which in 2019 stood at 25 countries and a total of 37 programmes.

The increase in the supply of programmes of this type in the region is reflected in the increase in estimated spending on these programmes as a percentage of GDP, from 0.09% to 0.54% between 2000 and 2019 (see figure 22). Estimated spending on non-contributory pensions as a percentage of GDP in Latin American and Caribbean countries grew steadily between 2000 and 2017, at which point it reached its historical peak of 0.53%. During that period, there was a particularly sharp rise in the spending series between 2008 and 2009. On the one hand, this was due to the widespread impact of the slump in GDP that the region's countries experienced during the 2008; and on the other, to the start in 2009 of the special economic assistance programme for older persons aged 65 and over without retirement or pension plans (120 at 65) in Panama, the Food Allowance for the Elderly (Pensiones Alimentarias para Adultos Mayores) in Paraguay, the Our Older People's Rights programme in El Salvador, and the People's Benefit Program in Antigua and Barbuda; and to adjustments in amounts and coverage, Chile's Basic Solidarity Pension, which began in 2008.

Figure 22
Latin America and the Caribbean (25 countries): evolution of estimated spending
on non-contributory pension programmes, 2000–2019
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/cct>.

Note: All non-contributory pension programmes for the elderly and people with disabilities are considered. The Rural Welfare (Previdencia Rural) programme in Brazil is not included because it is considered semi-contributory in nature. The regional aggregate uses the Cecchini and Atuesta (2017) method for the estimation of the complete series. The imputation of missing data by programme is done using the available data, assuming equivalence with the last available data or a linear relationship between the two closest available data.

Likewise, the series shows a dip of 0.06 points of regional GDP from 2017 to 2018, mainly as a result of the reduction in spending on the Argentine non-contributory disability or invalidity pension programme from 0.96% of GDP in 2017 to 0.85% in 2018, which, indeed, continued downward in 2019, reaching 0.78%. This drop in spending on the Argentine programme was due to a correction of errors in the inclusion of users and a gradual transition of elderly users of the programme to the Universal Pension for the Elderly, which began in 2016. From 2018 to 2019, the series resumes its upward trend, reaching 0.54%, primarily driven by the transition from the Pension for Elderly People to the Pension for the Well-being of Older People in Mexico, and by the start in 2019 of the Pension for the Well-being of People with Permanent Disabilities in the same country. Those programmatic changes resulted in an increase in Mexico's non-contributory pension spending from 0.18% to 0.51% of GDP from 2018 to 2019.

Despite the recent drop in spending on conditional cash transfer programmes and the criticisms of the coverage and adequacy of non-contributory social protection programmes (Abramo, Cecchini and Morales, 2019), the widespread adoption of such programmes in the region's countries in the last two decades has been a key element in the prompt response of governments to the pandemic and the vertical and horizontal expansion of their coverage. In particular, 19 countries in the region took advantage of the infrastructure and institutional framework of conditional cash transfer programmes and non-contributory pension programmes for the swift implementation of 48 emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures during the pandemic (Atuesta, Holz and Van Hemelryck, in 2022).

Of those measures, nine consisted of the advance delivery of transfers from existing pre-pandemic programmes. Such was the case of the advance payments of the Pension for the Well-being of Older People and the Pension for the Well-being of People with Permanent Disabilities in Mexico. The first advance was allocated in March 2020 and covered payments from March to June; the second was made in July 2020, covering payments from July to October. Likewise, the Plurinational State of Bolivia advanced the annual Christmas bonus under the Renta Dignidad (Dignity income) annual grant, Brazil advanced the payment of the continuous benefit programme (BPC), and Paraguay brought forward the payment of the Food pension for older persons in a situation of poverty, among others.

In order to cover those worst affected by the pandemic, other countries decided to increase the coverage or amounts of their existing programmes. In Brazil the coverage of the Bolsa Familia programme was increased by 1.2 million households, Guatemala announced the expansion of the Economic Contribution to Older Persons Programme to 8,400 new recipients, while Peru broadened the coverage of the Contigo programme from 40,075 people with disabilities to more than 75,000. Programmes such as Colombia's Families in Action, Argentina's Grant for users of Universal Child Allowance (AUH) and Universal Pregnancy Allowance (AUE) and Jamaica's Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), among others, provided higher amounts or additional transfers to their recipients during the crisis. In total, there were 5 measures in which the priority innovation was to increase coverage, and 15 measures that increased the amounts delivered by existing conditional transfer and social pension programmes. In addition, some programmes took new steps or made modifications to the services they provide to their recipients. For example, in the case of Jamaica, the method of delivery of the food support component to PATH students at the primary and secondary levels in the weeks when they did not attend school was changed: in the first week food was delivered to schools; in the following weeks it was delivered to distribution points assigned to each school.

Finally, 7 countries in the region implemented 15 new cash and in-kind transfer measures that used the institutional framework of existing non-contributory pension programmes and conditional cash transfer programmes to streamline their operation and reach the worst affected households. For example, the Plurinational State of Bolivia used the database of recipients of the Dignity income grant, the administrative records of the Juan Azurduy grant (BJA) and the Information System of the Single Registry of Persons with Disabilities (Sistema de Información del Registro Único de Personas con Discapacidad) (SIRUPD) to deliver Family baskets to more than one million people. The COVID-19 Emergency Grant, as well as the first versions of Chile's Emergency Family Income, made use of the

social registry of households to direct transfers to users of the Single Family Allowance (SUF), the Subsystem of Security and Opportunities (SSyOO) and the Basic Solidarity Old-Age Pension (PBSV). Another example was the first delivery of the Universal Family Allowance in Peru, which was aimed at households receiving the National Direct Assistance Programme for the Very Poor (JUNTOS), and households with a member benefiting from the Pension 65 National Solidarity Assistance Programme or the CONTIGO programme.

This demonstrates the important role played by conditional transfer and non-contributory pension programmes in enabling a rapid and efficient response by the countries of the region to support the population hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic. This highlights the importance of further progress in institutionalizing the protection of the right to an income sufficient to cover basic needs, to be established as a pillar of the welfare State that provides economic security to people in the midst of crises and that is part of a universal, comprehensive and sustainable social protection system.

I. Main emergency measures for informal workers

A cross-cutting characteristic of informal work in the region is that it is performed in conditions without access to social protection due to the absence of employment contracts that allow for social security contributions. In other words, informal workers do not receive retirement pensions, unemployment insurance or other entitlements such as paid vacation or sick leave.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018), 53.1% of workers in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016 were informal. At the household level, an estimated 45% of households have all members working in the informal sector (OECD and others, 2021; OECD and others, forthcoming). Worldwide, 50.5% of people of working age are engaged in informal work.²¹ In Latin America and the Caribbean, this group is characterized by having a higher proportion of women (54.3%) and young people (46.2%), lower levels of education, living in rural areas (68.5%), and working mainly in agriculture. For its part, in Europe the composition of this group is distinguished by having a very similar proportion of men and women (26.4% and 23.6% respectively) and more young people, but also more older persons (ILO, 2018). For this reason, even before the pandemic began, governments were adopting measures to formalize informal jobs and improve working conditions through different measures; for example, through macroeconomic policies; reduction of tax burdens; improvements in access to financial services, education and public services; revitalization of private sector activity; regularization of labour markets and improvements in the governance of the institutions involved; identification and monitoring of informal workers and creation of support policies to incentivize formality and protect them in case of loss or reduction of income (Ohnsorge and Yu, 2021; ILO, 2018). Informality also features other gaps that occur in the labour market and in Latin American countries, further deepening the precarious situation of women, the low-income population and young people, and increasing their exposure to situations of economic disadvantage (Abramo, 2021; ECLAC, 2021a; ILO, 2018). The COVID-19 crisis highlights this structural reality, in which informal workers lack sufficient protection or savings to curb the effects of a crisis. The reason for this is that informal workers tend to have lower incomes than formal workers and also do not pay contributions for health or other social protection services, leaving them much more vulnerable to situations such as the pandemic (ECLAC/ILO, 2021; Ohnsorge and Yu, 2021).

It is estimated that labour will become more precarious, that the quality of jobs will worsen and that poverty among informal workers will increase. It should be noted that during the pandemic, as a result of the health measures in place and the difficulties that informal workers have teleworking,

²¹ This calculation excludes informal workers in agriculture, which sees a high proportion of informal workers due to seasonal work harvesting food crops. If this group is included, the proportion of informal workers rises to 2 billion people over the age of 15, or 61.2% of all employed people worldwide.

informal work behaved pro-cyclically manner; i.e., it did not increase in line with the economic crisis (ECLAC/OEI, 2020; ECLAC/ILO, 2021; Filippo, Flores and Szekely, 2021; Velásquez Pinto, 2021). Although for 9 Latin American economies formal work grew relative to informal work during the pandemic, it was estimated that in 2021, about 7.56 million additional informal jobs will be created with the return of people to the labour market (Acevedo and others, 2021).²²

Governments face great difficulties identifying which people work informally and require government support. There are also obstacles to determining the type of needs that this population has, as well as to mobilizing mechanisms for the delivery of goods and services to provide them with social protection in a timely manner. The complexity of this situation increases when the high heterogeneity of this population and the companies in the sector are considered (ILO, 2020a). The early adoption of policies for informal workers was important for mitigating the economic and social effects of COVID-19 on this group. To that end, given the difficulty of identifying them, developing universal emergency measures was the key to success in the early days of the pandemic. Subsequently, some countries, considering the importance of incorporating them in emergency public policy, looked for ways to identify them and implement specific measures to prioritize or reach informal workers (ECLAC, 2021b; OECD, 2020; Basto-Aguirre, Nieto-Parra and Vázquez Zamora, 2020; Velásquez Pinto, 2021). In total, 23 countries established measures to support informal workers, either as a priority (14 measures in 13 countries) or by including them in universal programmes and making efforts to identify them (36 measures in 24 countries).

In general terms, measures targeting informal workers sought to expand pre-pandemic and emergency social protection programmes that were easily scalable. Such measures have consisted of the delivery of cash transfers, both conditional and otherwise, with the support of digital platforms and technologies to identify them (including the use and cross-referencing of administrative data with existing participant records). Also, prior to the pandemic, in a move towards universal policies, progress was already being made in European countries to include self-employed or part-time workers in unemployment insurance. Measures and strategies of this sort are framed within the working guidelines of the ILO and the European Commission for reducing informality and ensuring human rights to all workers, particularly in countries with a high percentage of informality. In some cases, access to financing was facilitated for informal-sector companies.²³

Within the programmes targeting informal workers, Colombia and Guatemala were the only countries that combined in-kind transfers with cash transfers.²⁴ Honduras also provided in-kind transfers, but without combining it with cash transfers; all other countries adopted cash transfers.²⁵ There are two programmes that stand out in particular for strengthening their information mechanisms on this population: the first is Ecuador's Health Emergency Family Protection grant, which was provided to underemployed families with an income of less than US\$ 400, for which it was necessary to combine information from the social registry with information identified by the Technical Commission set up to build a database of administrative records based on emerging information in order to expand the number of potential recipients. The second programme is the Grant for independent workers in Peru, a cash subsidy provided using the Registry of Households with Economically Vulnerable Own-Account Workers, created

²² Estimates are made for Argentina (urban area), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Those with access to social security are considered formal workers. See [online] www.publications.iadb.org/es/informalidad-en-los-tiempos-del-covid-19-en-america-latina-implicaciones-y-opciones-de and www.blogs.iadb.org/efectividad-desarrollo/en/a-crisis-like-no-other-why-informal-work-did-not-spike-under-covid-19/.

²³ These strategies were also common in all emerging and developing economies where there is a significant proportion of informal workers (Ohnsorge and Yu, 2021).

²⁴ In Colombia, the entitlements targeted at informal workers were the Ayudar Nos Hace Bien virtual network where different actors (citizens, companies, territorial entities and organizations) can make solidarity contributions to purchase and distribute at least one million kits of basic commodities and food for the most vulnerable households, and the Solidarity Income for informal workers. In the case of Guatemala, there are also two entitlement programmes: *Saldremos Adelante* ("We'll go through it"), which consists of food boxes for vulnerable households, and Support for Popular Trade for informal traders registered in municipalities.

²⁵ In Honduras, two in-kind transfer measures were announced for informal workers: the *Honduras Solidaria* (Honduras shows solidarity) programme and the Encarguito Solidario programme, both of which provide food and hygiene products.

exclusively to register and identify recipients. The registry was developed from data from the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, including the General Registry of Households, the National Registry of Users and the Registry of Beneficiary Households (Padrón de los Hogares Beneficiarios) receiving the cash subsidy under Article 2 of Emergency Decree No. 027–2020; and also the personal information databases managed by the Superintendency of Banks, Insurance and Private Pension Fund Administrators, the National Tax and Customs Administration, the Supervisory Agency of Investment in Energy and Mining, among other databases. In the Caribbean, few programmes were designed that prioritized informal workers. The Income Support to Informal Sector Workers - COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Support Package 2.0 programme in Grenada targeted workers not registered with the Inland Revenue Division, without fixed working hours or a location, and without formal agreements with employees, such as employment letters or contracts, and whose sectors have not recovered significantly from the crisis or have remained closed. In addition, other measures were adopted, such as the Unemployment Assistance Programme for Self-Employed (Sole Entrepreneur) Persons in The Bahamas, which seeks to support those whose income has decreased since the beginning of the lockdown. There were also changes to existing programmes, such as in Trinidad and Tobago, where the Food Support Card - Food Support Programme created before the pandemic was modified to increase the amounts delivered for a three-month period to families under the pre-COVID-19 emergency Food Support Programme. Subsequently, it was modified thanks to an IDB loan with a view to its temporary expansion to households where at least one member working in the informal sector had experienced a loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Box 4

Social protection measures for informal workers in Europe

In Europe, the situation associated with the informal economy is very heterogeneous and has evolved very differently between the east and west of the continent.

Protecting informal workers by extending the coverage of social protection programmes to them was also a concern in European countries. As in Latin America and the Caribbean, the pandemic highlighted the coverage gaps between informal and formal workers in Europe, making it difficult for the former to access entitlements available in the social protection system. However, in Europe, the income protection social measures implemented targeted both formal and informal workers, although the effectiveness in reaching and supporting the informal economy has varied from country to country (Ohnsorge and Yu, 2021; World Bank, 2021). Such emergency measures included exemptions, reductions or extensions of tax and contribution payment times, easing of eligibility requirements for social protection programmes, inclusion in labour inclusion programmes, and non-contributory measures aimed at a broader population, income compensation and measures specifically aimed at the own-account workers, usually cash transfers equivalent to the country's minimum wage.

The European Commission (Baptista and others, 2021) found that non-standard jobs —i.e., temporary, part-time, on-call, self-employment or other forms of work (ILO, 2016)— were not always covered by unemployment programmes or by the modifications implemented in response to the pandemic. However, in Spain, France and Sweden some non-standard job categories were included: (i) domestic workers and artists received support from Spanish unemployment schemes; (ii) arts and entertainment workers were included in French measures and (iii) in Sweden the rule associated with working hours was relaxed, allowing temporary workers to participate in existing pre-pandemic unemployment measures (Baptista and others, 2021). In this way, such workers can be supported in the future with entitlements from this social protection pillar.

The other countries created special measures, particularly to address other categories of workers in non-standard jobs and independent, own-account or informal workers. As for independent or own-account workers, access to protection in the event of unemployment varies greatly from country to country; in some cases, people in this category are included as mandatory participants, while in others it is voluntary. During the pandemic, Denmark, Spain, Finland and Sweden introduced specific measures enabling such workers to enter the unemployment system voluntarily. However, in the cases of Belgium, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and Bosnia and Herzegovina no specific measures were adopted (Baptista, 2021). In Slovenia, a cash transfer is provided to increase the minimum income of workers by up to 70%, while in Sweden, a programme was developed for unemployed own-account workers in which they were eligible for unemployment insurance if they paused their business, which under normal conditions they would not have been; it was necessary to make a legal amendment to that labour insurance mechanism for that purpose (Gentilini and others, 2021).

At the same time, policies were also developed to support the businesses of people who are self-employed or have non-standard contracts. For example, in Albania, a package of measures amounting to 1.4% of GDP was implemented, which included support for small businesses and self-employed workers who were forced to halt their activities or close their businesses permanently; they were transferred double the amount of tax they declared on income and welfare payments. Similarly, in Switzerland, resources were earmarked to provide transfers to compensate for the loss of income of the self-employed, but also for workers affected by the health measures imposed, such as parents who add care tasks to their daily lives as a result of the closure of educational establishments (ILO, 2020).

Source: World Bank, *Europe and Central Asia Economic Update: COVID-19 and Human Capital*, Washington, D.C., Fall 2020; I. Baptista and others, *Social Protection and Inclusion Policy Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis. An Analysis of Policies in 35 Countries*, 2021 [online] <https://sid-inico.usal.es/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Social-protection-and-inclusion-policy.pdf>; U. Gentilini and others, "Global Database on Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: Version 15 (May 14)", Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2021 [online] <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/281531621024684216/pdf/Social-Protection-and-Jobs-Responses-to-COVID-19-A-Real-Time-Review-of-Country-Measures-May-14-2021.pdf>; F. Ohnsorge and S. Yu (eds.), *The Long Shadow of Informality: Challenges and Policies*, Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2021 [online] <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35782/The-Long-Shadow-of-Informality-Challenges-and-Policies.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>; International Labour Organization (ILO), *Non-standard Employment around the World: Understanding Challenges, Shaping Prospects*, 2016 [online] https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_534326/lang--e/Index.htm; and "Unemployment protection in the COVID-19 crisis: Country responses and policy considerations", *Social Protection Spotlight*, 2020 [online] <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?id=56834>.

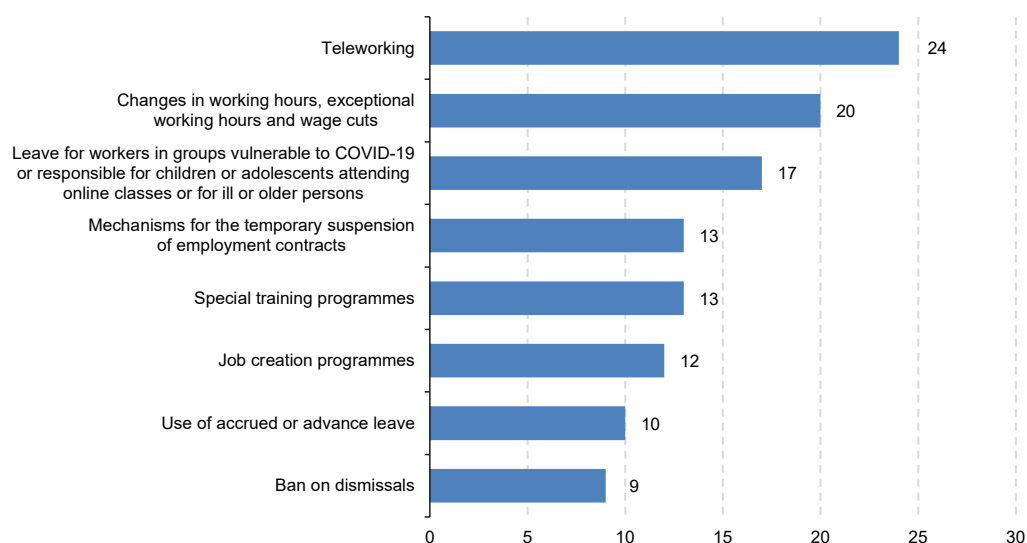
J. Main emergency measures for formal workers

Health measures to contain COVID-19 infection increased the risk of falling labour participation and rising unemployment among both formal and informal workers. Thus, in addition to the design and implementation of non-contributory social protection measures, the main features of which have been described in the previous sections, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean also deployed comprehensive packages of measures to protect formal employment.

Following ECLAC (2021c) definitions, this subsection focuses on labour policy measures aimed at protecting existing employment and stimulating the creation of new jobs. The type of employment protection measure most used by the countries of the region to prevent the interruption of the employer-employee relationship was the promotion of remote work (see figure 23 and table A3). In particular, 24 countries in the region promoted remote work or telework/working from home/e-work/working at home/telecommuting/e-commuting and amended the relevant regulations to ensure that jobs that can be performed from home went unscathed by mobility restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic. By way of illustration, Cuba developed the wage guarantees measure, which sought to encourage telecommuting. Given its nature, this type of measure was applied mainly to jobs that can be performed with Internet access and that require a relatively high level of education. For the same reason, other types of measures were designed to cover a broader spectrum of jobs, such as changes in working hours, the establishment of special working hours and pay cuts, adopted by 20 countries in the region. This type of measure allowed companies to adapt their workers' schedules to the mobility restrictions and to adjust their payrolls without having to lay off employees.

The pandemic also led 17 countries in the region to grant leave to workers in groups vulnerable to COVID-19 or responsible for children or adolescents attending online classes or for ill or older persons. This category includes El Salvador, which encouraged paid leave to support older persons, pregnant women, people with health conditions and workers in quarantine. Other measures that prevented job losses were mechanisms for the temporary suspension of employment contracts, use of accrued or advance leave, and a ban on dismissals, which were adopted by 13, 10 and 9 countries in the region, respectively. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for example, implemented a measure prohibiting the dismissal of employees during the pandemic. In addition, 13 countries in the region have devised special training policies, and 12 countries have developed job creation measures, some specifically targeting young people and women.

Figure 23
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries): number of countries that have adopted the main measures taken to sustain formal employment during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020–2021^a



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021 (LC/PUB.2021/10-P), Santiago, 2021.

^a Table A3 in the annex shows the categories of measures adopted by each country.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean also implemented measures to help companies curb the fall in production and employment. These measures are classified as fiscal and credit policies targeting the productive apparatus, and include credit rescheduling, tax payment or refund facilities, prohibition of cuts in basic services or reductions in tariffs, mechanisms to reduce or facilitate the payment of social contributions, support for companies in specific economic activities, and support for payroll payments. An example is Costa Rica's Minimum Tax Base Reduction programme (programa de Reducción de Base Mínima Contributiva), which sought to reduce the minimum tax base by 75%. All these measures are aimed at companies, which is why they are not discussed in depth in this document. However, they should be mentioned as an important part of the package of measures designed to maintaining formal employment.

Finally, countries have also adopted measures to protect the income of formal workers who have lost their jobs or suffered a decline in income. For example, there are emergency income measures or special bonuses to support the worst affected households, such as the middle-class bonus in Chile and the Social Security COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund in Saint Kitts and Nevis aimed at supporting people whose incomes have fallen as a result of the pandemic. This group also includes bonuses and transfers as compensation for job losses, such as Ecuador's Unemployment Relief Fund and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' temporary unemployment entitlement. Several countries in the region also implemented ancillary measures to support the employment and income of women and young people in specific sectors. An example of this is the payment of entitlements to support workers in the hotel sector in Antigua and Barbuda and the measure to protect workers in the construction sector in Panama.²⁶

²⁶ For more details on contributory social protection measures for workers, see Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>.

It is also worth noting the important innovations that have taken place with respect to the operation of unemployment insurance, a key social protection instrument, though still with a limited presence in the region. Based on information for Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, significant modifications have been introduced during the pandemic, including a reduction in the minimum number of contributions required to qualify for the entitlement, the extension of insurance to previously excluded groups, extension of partial unemployment insurance, extension of the duration of the entitlement, extension of the amounts, an increase in minimum and maximum amounts, streamlining of procedures, the option of withdrawal of savings funds and the creation of unemployment insurance support programmes. Despite this, the coverage of these instruments is still low, and their creation is imperative in those countries where they do not yet exist (ECLAC, 2022a). Considering both contributory and non-contributory labour emergency measures, ECLAC (2022a) estimates that spending on labour policies increased from 0.31% of GDP in 2019 to 0.92% in 2020. This increase in spending on labour policies was mainly driven by unemployment income protection measures—which increased from an average of 0.09% of GDP in 2019 to 0.55% in 2020—and work incentive measures, which rose from 0.01% of GDP in 2019 to 0.14% in 2020. This is evidence of the magnitude of the effort made by countries to protect the jobs and labour incomes of individuals hardest hit by the pandemic.

Box 5

Measures targeting formal workers in Europe

Employment promotion measures were adapted in all European countries to ensure income security for vulnerable workers. According to the database developed by Gentilini and others (2021), 210 such measures have been implemented in 27 countries, notable among which are France and Greece with 18 measures each, followed by Belgium, Croatia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Slovenia and Portugal, all with more than 10 measures aimed at regulating and improving labour market conditions for all workers. In the case of Portugal, for example, one measure was to guarantee various training or retraining opportunities for the newly unemployed, particularly young people. France also provided support to that population, which before the pandemic had difficulties finding and staying in formal employment. The French government implemented a plan called “1 young person, 1 solution” to encourage their hiring, improve their training opportunities, mentor them and provide financial assistance of up to 8,000 euros for those under 26 years old.^a As of January 2022, 290 measures had been announced in 53 countries, with information incorporated from 26 new countries, including France (19 measures), Spain (14 measures), Portugal and Greece (13 measures) (Gentilini and others, 2022). In all, 47.9% of programmes made adjustments and changes to labour regulations, 37.9% are employment subsidies and the remaining 14.1% of the measures involved labour activation, such as training and labour intermediation. All these measures were aimed primarily at the active members of the labour market, the unemployed and, in particular, young people between 18 and 25 years old. For example, in Cyprus, in September 2020, a monetary incentive for young people who are unemployed or in training was announced, and in England the Kickstart Scheme was approved to grant private companies funding to enable them to create new jobs for six months for young people in debt or at risk of being unemployed (Gentilini and others, 2022).

According to the European Commission (2021), emergency measures implemented during the pandemic for the unemployed in conjunction with existing social protection programmes played a stabilizing role in mitigating the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. In most countries, existing programmes were improved by relaxing eligibility requirements, duration and conditions for existing transfers (with the exception of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Netherlands, Slovenia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and the United Kingdom). As for new programmes that were incorporated, most addressed the needs of vulnerable groups outside the social protection system. Countries sought to ensure income of at least 60% to 80% of the prevailing wage.

Source: European Commission, SPC Annual Review of the Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) and Developments in Social Protection Policies Report on Key Social Challenges and Key Messages, 2021 [online] <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8432>; U. Gentilini and others, “Global Database on Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures”, Living Paper, Version 15 (May 14), Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2021 [online] <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/281531621024684216/pdf/Social-Protection-and-Jobs-Responses-to-COVID-19-A-Real-Time-Review-of-Country-Measures-May-14-2021.pdf>.

^a See [online] <https://iuslaboris.com/insights/incentives-to-employ-young-people-the-new-1-young-person-1-solution-scheme-in-france/>.

II. Initial results of emergency measures

The COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for Latin American countries. Because this crisis has been characterized by both a supply and demand shock, economic activity, the labour market and the general well-being of the population have been affected (ECLAC, 2021a; OECD and others, 2021). In particular, in the labour markets, there were significant losses of income due to absences in the event of COVID-19 infection or due to the unprecedented drop in employment and labour participation, especially among women due to the need to care for a family member. In addition, job losses, reductions in hours worked, deterioration in the quality of jobs and drops in workers' incomes were seen. This, together with effects on non-labour income, consumption and the interruption of basic services, caused great harm to the situation of households (World Bank, 2020; ECLAC, 2021a and 2022a; ILO, 2020a; OECD and others, 2021). Income losses were more acute among those households and individuals who were exposed to pre-pandemic structural inequalities in the region associated with its structural determinants, such as gender, socioeconomic level, ethnicity or race, area of residence, age or migratory status, among others (ECLAC, 2021a). Therefore, it is important to identify the effects of public mitigation policies on the main indicators associated with the labour market and household poverty.

However, forecasting these effects is not a simple exercise owing to the multiplicity of factors involved in determining poverty rates, the dynamism of the waves of contagion and the uncertainty associated with the actions of countries. Due to mobility restrictions adopted by governments in response to the pandemic and physical distancing measures, household surveys²⁷ and the recording of administrative data,²⁸ as well as sources of information for calculating poverty and the employment situation of individuals, changed in terms both of formats and of application times (ECLAC, 2020b;

²⁷ The periodicity and information of household surveys are usually those needed to evaluate the results of social policies and the socioeconomic situation of the population by collecting socioeconomic characterization variables for households and their members at different points in time, allowing the calculation of poverty rates and their variation.

²⁸ Administrative records are an additional source of information for making assessments regarding the situation of individuals and households. In countries where household surveys have been postponed as a result of the pandemic, administrative data could serve as an alternative source of information. This is particularly true in the measurement of formal employment indicators. However, not all countries in the region have quality information and sufficient coverage of the population; in addition, these data may be delayed by a few months.

World Bank, 2021). While most countries continued with these surveys, especially in 2021, when analysing the data, it is necessary to take into account that the format may have changed from an in-person to a telephone or digital format, that the characteristics of the sample may have altered and that, therefore, there may be a potential bias that is difficult to quantify and that the results will not always be comparable with those prior to the pandemic (ECLAC, 2020b).

A. Timely, rapid and adequate response to emergency measures

Despite the heterogeneity of realities in Latin American countries, governments combined contributory policies with non-contributory measures and employment protection programmes, acting in different areas with the aim of sustaining consumption and ensuring basic conditions for the well-being of households. However, deciphering whether these measures have been sufficient to mitigate the effects of the pandemic requires identifying whether decisions were made in a timely manner, with the necessary speed, and whether they entailed the levels of coverage and breadth necessary to make up for losses in income and access to basic services.

Due to the fact that the virus was propagated first in the northern hemisphere, Latin American and Caribbean countries had more time to react to the situation and had some background for decision-making. However, the region was not in optimal shape, with labour participation falling, low employment generation and a contraction in regional employment levels, together with structural socioeconomic gaps and public discontent in several of its countries (ECLAC, 2021b; OECD and others, 2021 and 2020).

As Chapter I describes, the speed of implementation of social protection measures in the first months after health measures were announced was evident in Latin American and Caribbean countries. However, considering all the different types of initiatives, Latin American and Caribbean countries were slower in delivering the first entitlements than countries in the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, taking an average of 72 days to respond following the first case, and 67 days after the announcement of the pandemic, in contrast to countries in the Middle East and North Africa where the times were 54 and 37 days, respectively, and South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, with times of 69 and 41 days (Beazley, Marzi and Steller, 2021).

Following this same line of analysis, Blofield, Giamb Bruno and Filgueira (2020) examined these elements during the first half of the pandemic (March–August 2020) for the following ten Latin American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. The findings reveal great heterogeneity in how the countries developed these emergency policies, and the effects on the population can also be deduced from this. The authors highlight Argentina, Brazil and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which incorporated the possibility of application for entitlements by households with informal workers. By including this population group, they reduced the differences in pre- and post-pandemic poverty rates. In addition, the speed with which Argentina implemented the Emergency Family Income programme is also noteworthy. The efforts of Chile, Costa Rica and Peru were also highlighted. As the crisis continued, they adapted their emergency measures to cover a larger proportion of the most vulnerable population. In terms of meeting household needs, in particular, Chile and Costa Rica had especially noteworthy initiatives. In the case of Chile, data from the COVID-19 Social Survey indicate that entitlements from the State (government or municipalities) increased by 10.1 percentage points between July 2020 and November–December 2020.²⁹ This increase was greater for female-headed households, as more than half of the female-headed households received entitlements from the State (58.1% in the second round of the COVID-19 Social Survey) and for the first two quintiles (71.8% received entitlements in quintile 1

²⁹ See [online] <http://observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/encuesta-social-covid19>.

and 69.6% received entitlements in quintile 2 according to the second round of the COVID-19 Social Survey).³⁰ This is explained, in part, by the fact that 66.2% of households receiving Emergency Family Income belong to those two quintiles (MDSF, 2021). The third round of the survey produced more favourable findings with respect to the entitlements delivered by the government, since in the period June–July 2021, 69.8% of the households received in-kind or cash assistance from the government or municipality and the income situation in the course of the pandemic. However, in that period, 19.2% of households indicated that they still had insufficient income and some difficulties, while 5.7% said that their income was insufficient to cover their expenses and they had major problems.

In general, countries that implemented emergency measures with existing and available data to identify potential participants (where registries of potential users or registries of participants existed) responded faster and had better outcomes (Beazley, Marzi and Steller, 2021). It should be noted that these countries also had a favourable context for the implementation of social protection measures (e.g., in terms of infrastructure, connectivity and financial inclusion), legislation and financing associated with the existing social protection system, as well as a system in which transfers are made in the form of electronic payments. Beazley, Marzi and Steller (2021) show that, in the case of Brazil, the speed of response of the Emergency Aid programme is due to the combined use of existing databases and the Unified Register for Social Programmes of the Government of Brazil (Cadastro Único or CadÚnico), along with the fact that the resources came from funds earmarked for recognized calamities. In the case of Chile, the Emergency COVID-19 grant was the fastest to be implemented because it targeted households listed in the Social Register of Households. This grant covered 24% of the total population, while the Emergency Family Income, which began to be implemented the following month (May 2020), reached a coverage of 85% in November 2021.³¹ In Peru, the swift response of the I'm Staying at Home Grant (bono Yo Me Quedo en Casa) was possible because the identification of potential recipients was based on the social registry, which covers about 75% of the population. A similar situation occurred in the Dominican Republic with the Stay at Home programme, which also used existing records to identify recipients. Moreover, in all these cases, the context was apposite: a high or upper-middle income country, high technology penetration, high national identifier coverage and high financial inclusion, except in Peru.

Lustig and others (2021 and 2020) find that the effects of the pandemic in terms of inequality and poverty can be offset in the larger Latin American economies if social spending is expanded to broaden or incorporate emergency measures in terms of coverage and amount. Estimates made for Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico are based on the assumption that income losses are not proportional to income distribution and consider that the welfare measures implemented by governments during the first half of the pandemic were insufficient to cover the largest losses, which tend to be greater in the middle deciles. Thus, they conclude that the effects of the pandemic tend to be greater for those in the middle of the distribution and that emergency programmes compensate to some extent for the increase in poverty, especially among female heads of household. In addition, they find that given the duration of the pandemic, there could be permanent effects on the labour market that, in the long run, will have consequences not only on welfare but also on human development, so it is important to maintain welfare entitlements that consist of transferring resources and ensuring children's education to lessen future effects on human development (Lustig and others, 2021).

³⁰ In the second round of the COVID-19 Social Survey, 46.8% of households where the main breadwinner is male received entitlements from the State, while for quintiles 3 to 5, 54.8%, 44.1% and 28.1%, respectively, received entitlements. See [online] <http://observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/encuesta-social-covid19>.

³¹ See [online] <https://www.desarrollosocialyfamilia.gob.cl/informacion-social/informe-ingreso-familiar-de-emergencia/descargar-informes-de-ingreso-familiar-de-emergencia>.

The results indicate that it is necessary to establish coverage that considers at least the entire poor and vulnerable population. Likewise, the emergency measures implemented, together with the installed capacity of the social protection systems, have, therefore, been fundamental for mitigating the effects of the pandemic, minimizing the contraction of economic activity and allowing subsequent economic recovery. This is confirmed by telephone surveys conducted by the World Bank in 13 countries in the region in order to determine the consequences of the pandemic on household incomes, the labour market and access to basic services (health, education, water, electricity and the Internet).³² These surveys collect information that allows the construction of 143 different indicators associated with demographics, education, finance, food security, employment, income, health, housing, social protection and subjective well-being, among others. The results in the area of social protection indicate that for Latin American countries the range of households that have received some form of government assistance since the onset of the pandemic varies from 9.3% in Mexico (June 2020) to 48.5% in El Salvador (June 2020). It is common in the countries of the region for people who did not have salaried jobs and had a lower level of education to have had greater difficulty keeping and resuming their jobs, with women and migrants being the worst affected populations (World Bank, 2020). In this situation, social protection for those who were unemployed or lost their jobs is key.

For example, in Greater Buenos Aires, during August and October 2020, 90% of households with unemployed heads received some of the entitlements provided during the pandemic period, which was not enough to prevent 70.6% of households from having to resort to borrowing, generate new income, use savings, sell belongings or reduce the consumption of certain foods as a strategy to cope with the effect of the pandemic (INDEC, 2020b). In Mexico, the COVID-19 and Labour Market Telephone Survey (ECOVID-ML) conducted monthly by the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) between April and July 2020 with national coverage, reveals that in April, 5.0% of the employed population surveyed reported being recipients of government programmes, which peaked at 7.9% in June before dropping to 6.6% in July, while when the unemployed population was asked in July, 14.2% said they received government support (INEGI, 2020).

B. Effect of emergency social protection measures on poverty rates and inequality

In general terms, emergency social protection measures have proven critical to containing the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. As the initial months of infections passed, better strategies were identified, such as expanding coverage, increasing the amounts and extending some of the emergency social protection measures. This increased the effectiveness of more recent measures. Initial estimates of the impact of these measures and the analysis of household surveys suggest that, in addition to providing social protection to people in the low-income strata, it is necessary to support those in the lower-middle and middle strata, whose probability of falling below the poverty line is very high. In addition, other groups have been identified whose characteristics and structural inequalities increase the likelihood of seeing their living conditions worsen as a result of the pandemic. They include women, who are particularly affected by gender-based inequalities in the distribution of paid and unpaid work, children, adolescents and young people, migrants, the indigenous or Afrodescendent population, persons with disabilities, poor households in urban areas and informal workers, among others.

³² The World Bank designed a telephone survey with national coverage in 13 countries in the region (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia) conducted in three rounds: May, June and July. It also built a data dashboard that monitors the results of the 143 indicators constructed in 16 thematic areas from surveys carried out in each country of the world. See [online] <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/interactive/2020/11/11/covid-19-high-frequency-monitoring-dashboard>.

The *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021* (ECLAC, 2022a) shows that, considering emergency social protection measures, in 2020, monetary poverty stood at 33% in the region (204 million people), with extreme poverty at 13% (81 million people). Although poverty and extreme poverty rates had been trending upwards since 2015, the levels reached in 2020 were the highest for 10 and 20 years, respectively. Of the 13 countries with data available for measuring total poverty in 2020, only Brazil recorded a reduction with respect to the latest available data; and in the case of extreme poverty, only Brazil and Paraguay showed improvements for that indicator (see table 1). The Emergency Aid programme, which made monthly transfers of about US\$ 200 to 29 million households from April 2020 onwards, had a strong impact in the case of Brazil;³³ in Paraguay, emergency measures such as the *Pytyvõ* Grant and the *Ñangareko* Food Security Programme proved similarly effective.

Table 1
Latin America (15 countries): extreme poverty and poverty, 2017–2020^a
(Percentages)

	Extreme poverty				Overall poverty			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017	2018	2019	2020
Argentina ^b	2.8	3.6	4.2	6.3	18.7	24.4	27.2	34.3
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	16.4	14.8	12.1	13.5	34.9	33.1	31.0	32.3
Brazil	5.7	5.6	5.8	5.1	21.2	20.4	20.2	18.4
Chile	1.4	...	...	4.5	10.7	...	...	14.2
Colombia	10.9	10.8	12.8	19.2	29.8	29.9	31.7	39.8
Costa Rica	3.3	4.0	3.4	4.0	15.4	16.1	16.5	19.4
Dominican Republic	5.7	4.6	3.9	5.6	23.5	20.9	19.0	21.8
Ecuador	7.0	6.5	7.6	10.8	23.6	24.2	25.7	30.6
El Salvador	8.3	7.6	5.6	8.3	37.8	34.5	30.4	30.7
Honduras	...	19.4	20.0	...	...	55.7	52.3	...
Mexico	...	7.7	...	9.2	...	35.5	...	37.4
Panama	6.9	6.8	6.6	...	15.6	14.6	14.6	...
Paraguay	6.0	6.5	6.2	6.0	21.6	19.5	19.4	22.3
Peru	5.0	3.7	3.0	8.6	18.9	16.8	15.4	28.4
Uruguay	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	2.6	2.9	3.0	5.0

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021* (LC/PUB.2021/17-P), Santiago, 2022.

^a Countries for which ECLAC poverty estimates are available from 2017 onwards.

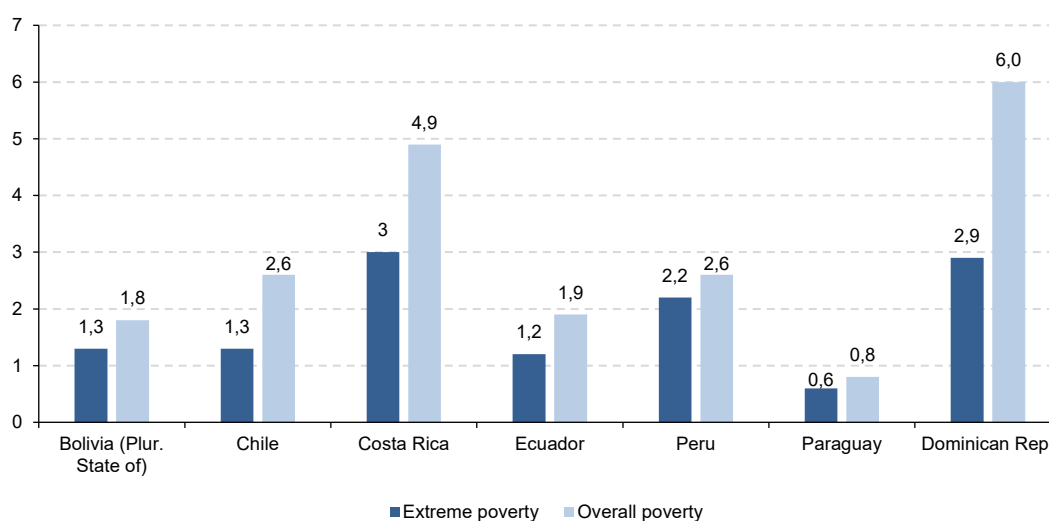
^b ECLAC estimates refer to the fourth quarter of each year.

The countries whose extreme poverty rates were worst affected were Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, which saw increases of more than 3 percentage points; while Costa Rica, Mexico, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay experienced a smaller increase equivalent to or less than 1.5 percentage points. The changes in the total poverty rate were of a greater magnitude, which was expected given the impact of the coronavirus crisis on the labour income of lower-middle strata households. Argentina, Colombia and Peru had the highest poverty rate increases, exceeding 7 percentage points; while El Salvador, Mexico, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay were the countries whose poverty rates were least affected, rising 2 percentage points or less. These results show the negative effect of mobility restrictions in coping with the coronavirus—and the resulting slump in economic activity—on the incomes of poor and vulnerable households in the region.

³³ Paiva and others (2021) consider that Emergency Aid, which is larger than the Bolsa Familia programme in terms of coverage and size of the transfer, stopped households falling below the poverty line in the short term, particularly by improving the situation of the poorest.

Without the implementation of emergency cash transfer measures, it is estimated that these indicators would have been even higher. Specifically, estimates show that, without emergency cash transfers,³⁴ extreme poverty and poverty in 2020 would have been approximately 1.8 and 2.9 percentage points higher, respectively (ECLAC, 2022a). Of the countries with sufficient information to make this estimate, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica are the ones that would have seen their poverty indicators increase most had emergency transfers not been implemented in 2020 (see figure 24). Without emergency transfers, extreme poverty and poverty in the Dominican Republic would have reached 8.5% and 27.8%, respectively, instead of 5.6% and 21.8%. The non-contributory emergency transfer measures that seem to have had the greatest impact on this outcome were the Stay at Home programme and the Pa' Ti Self-employment Assistance Programme, the former with 22 biweekly deliveries of more than US\$ 45 per household from April 2020 onwards, and the latter with 7 monthly deliveries of around US\$ 90 per user from June 2020 onwards. In the case of Costa Rica, extreme poverty and poverty would have been 7% and 24.3% rather than 4% and 19.4%, respectively. The main non-contributory emergency transfer programmes in the case of Costa Rica are the Bono Proteger programmes, which offered 3 payments of more than US\$ 200 each per user, and the Emergency allowance from the Mixed Social Assistance Institute (IMAS), with two payments of approximately US\$ 200 to households not covered by other government programmes.

Figure 24
Latin America (7 countries): incidence of extreme poverty and poverty, with and without COVID-19 emergency transfers, 2020^a
(Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021 (LC/PUB.2021/17-P), Santiago, 2022, p. 68.

^a Countries that included questions in the household survey that make it possible to identify the emergency transfers implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

³⁴ These estimates were made based on information from seven Latin American countries whose surveys contain questions to identify the income received from the emergency cash transfer measures implemented in 2020 to counter the effects of the pandemic. The countries were Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

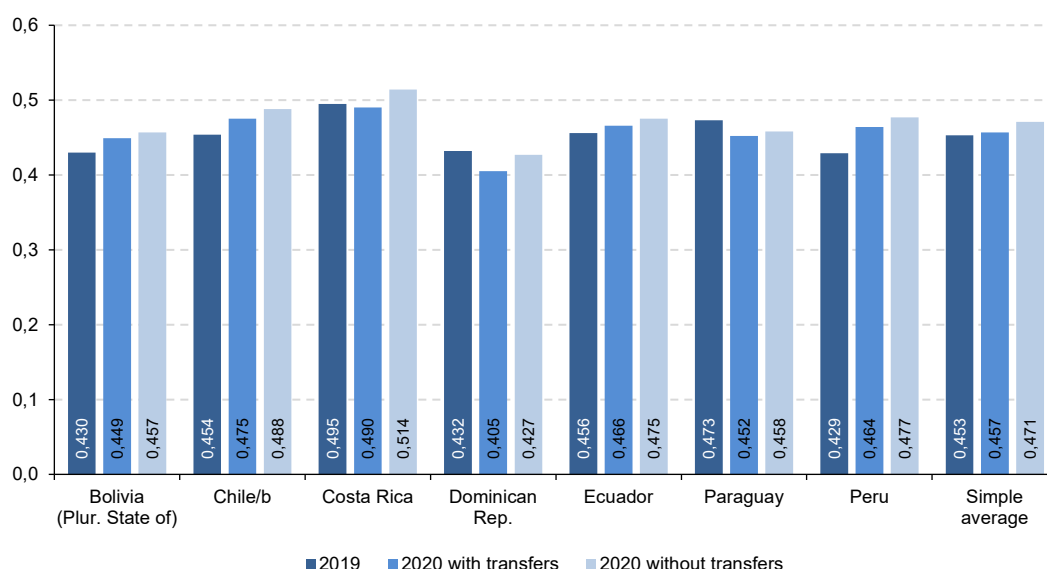
In Chile, Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, emergency transfers are thought to have averted an additional increase in extreme poverty of 1.3, 1.2 and 1.3 percentage points, respectively, and in poverty of 2.6, 1.9 and 1.8 percentage points, respectively. In the case of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the non-contributory emergency transfer measures that contributed most to this result were the Universal Grant, the Family Grant and the Family basket, all with a single delivery per user and an average amount between US\$ 58 and US\$ 73. In the case of Chile, based on data from the National Socioeconomic Survey (CASEN) of households during the pandemic in 2020, ECLAC (2021d) found that, although emergency transfers did not have a significant effect on the average income, the COVID-19 Emergency Grant in April 2020, with an average amount of US\$ 63, and the Emergency Family Income (IFE) for COVID-19 from May 2020 onwards, with an average monthly amount of around US\$ 200 per household, helped mitigate the loss of household resources.³⁵ In Ecuador, the non-contributory emergency cash transfer measure that contributed most to these outcomes in 2020, as a result of the amount of the transfer, coverage and number of deliveries, was the Health Emergency Family Protection grant, which provided three deliveries of US\$ 60 to about 950,000 households.

Although the effect of emergency cash transfers on poverty and extreme poverty in Paraguay is the smallest in magnitude among the countries with available information, Paraguay is also the only one of these countries where the extreme poverty rate practically did not increase between 2019 and 2020 (0.2 percentage points). In other words, emergency cash transfers more than offset the increase in extreme poverty in that country. In particular, without emergency transfers, the incidence of extreme poverty would have increased from 6.2% in 2019 to 6.6% in 2020, or 0.4 percentage points above the projected 2020 level. In the case of poverty, the effect of the emergency transfers was not enough to fully offset the increase in the indicator, but it did manage to lower the rise by 0.8 percentage points, as a result of which, poverty went up from 19.4% in 2019 to 22.3% in 2020, instead of 23.1% if the emergency measures had not been implemented. The cash transfers that contributed most to these results were the *Pytyvõ* Grant —versions 1 and 2— which made a total of 5 deliveries of between US\$ 70 and US\$ 80 to nearly 950,000 households, and the *Ñangareko* Food Security Programme, which made a one-time delivery of a US\$ 73 grant for the purchase of food. Other non-contributory measures that also influenced these outcomes, if only to a lesser extent, were the additional payment made by the Tekoporã social programme and its increased coverage, as well as the expansion of coverage of the Abrazo child protection programme.

Just as emergency non-contributory social protection measures made it possible to partially contain increases in poverty and extreme poverty rates in most Latin American and Caribbean countries, the negative effects of the crisis on income distribution also appeared to have been minor. Even though the actual impact of emergency measures on inequality is still uncertain due to the absence of information on what would have happened without them, estimates of household income distribution with and without emergency transfers offer some clues. According to ECLAC (2022a), the average Gini coefficient for the region would have increased from 0.453 in 2019 to 0.471 in 2020 had emergency measures not been deployed, while with emergency measures it came to 0.457 in 2020. In all the countries with information available for estimation purposes, emergency transfers prevented higher levels of inequality than would have occurred without them (see figure 25).

³⁵ See [online] www.observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/storage/docs/casen/2020/Medicion_de_la_pobreza_en_Chile_2020.pdf.

Figure 25
Latin America (7 countries): Gini index with and without emergency cash transfers, 2019 and 2020^a



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021* (LC/PUB.2021/17-P), Santiago, 2022.

^a Countries that included questions in the household survey that make it possible to identify the emergency transfers implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Brazil is not included in the analysis as its 2020 survey does not allow emergency transfers to be identified accurately.

^b The 2019 value corresponds to 2017.

The continuity of emergency measures for the most vulnerable population remains essential. Although economic indicators have improved compared to the situation in 2020, it is still uncertain whether coronavirus resurgences will continue to occur, as has been the case with variants of the virus. Therefore, the path to economic recovery for countries is unclear. In that sense, there is also uncertainty as to whether the benefits of the recovery will be sufficient to contain, slow and reverse the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, especially in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2021a). The continuity of emergency measures in 2022 should be aimed at the protection and labour inclusion of the population in situations of poverty and vulnerability.

ECLAC estimates for the 18 Latin American countries indicate that, if emergency cash transfers were partially maintained, poverty would stand at 32.1% in 2021 and extreme poverty would be 13.8%. In other words, the poverty level would decline by 0.9 percentage points but still be higher than the level seen prior to the pandemic in 2019; meanwhile the incidence of extreme poverty would increase by 0.7 percentage points, driven by the decline in emergency cash transfers in 2021, which would not be sufficient to offset the expected increase in labour income (ECLAC, 2022a). This evidence shows the significant effect that such transfers have had on the welfare of the population, which, together with boosting private consumption and economic growth (ECLAC, 2021b), supports the argument that maintaining such policies is essential, at least in the short term for the most vulnerable population.

Box 6**Social protection measures in Europe: effects on poverty levels**

According to the European Commission (Baptista and others, 2021), it is important to note that countries with more robust social protection systems, or that had no gaps or problems, implemented fewer non-contributory social protection measures in response to the pandemic. By contrast, those countries that had to create a wide range of emergency measures, such as Portugal, for example, have social protection systems with weaknesses and gaps in coverage.

In aggregate terms, just as in Latin America and the Caribbean, social protection measures implemented in Europe were able to partially mitigate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on household poverty. The European Commission estimates that, on average, incomes would have fallen by about 5.9% between 2019 and 2020 if these measures had not been in place, while with social protection measures the impact of the pandemic was kept to 3.6% (European Commission, 2020). In addition, statistics indicate that the size of the population at risk of poverty remained stable between 2019 and 2020, which could also be attributed to the protective measures implemented (Eurostat, 2020).

At the same time, there is similarity with respect to the populations worst affected by the pandemic in both regions: the poorest, those with lower educational levels, women, older persons, children, young people, persons with disabilities, single-parent households and migrants have been hardest hit (Baptista and others, 2021).

All estimates seem to indicate that the distributional consequences of the pandemic are and will be more important than those occurring in the context of pandemics (Furceri and others, 2021). The European Commission estimates that the pandemic has resulted in a 3.3% increase in inequality, as measured by the Gini index. However, the implementation of emergency policies to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the most vulnerable groups is estimated to have reduced inequality by 1% on the Gini index in European Union countries (European Commission, 2020). A survey conducted in September 2020 in Germany, Spain, France, Italy and Sweden yielded similar findings, suggesting that the prioritization of emergency measures in the most vulnerable groups of the population is behind the reduction in inequality rates, as they are concentrated on the lower part of the income distribution (Clark, D'Ambrosio and Lepinteur, 2020). Likewise, in some countries that implemented income reduction compensation packages for households with children, the rate of children and adolescents at risk of poverty was reduced, especially in countries with Afrodescendent populations. Something similar occurred with older adults in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Cyprus and Sweden (Eurostat, 2020).

Source: I. Baptista and others, Social Protection and Inclusion Policy Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis. An Analysis of Policies in 35 countries, European Social Policy Network, 2021 [online] <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=es&pubId=8418&furtherPubs=yes>; A. Clark, C. D'Ambrosio and A. Lepinteur, "The fall in income inequality during COVID-19 in five European countries", Working Paper series, No. 565, ECINEQ, 2020; Eurostat, "Early estimates of income inequalities during the 2020 pandemic", 2020 [online] www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Early_estimates_of_income_inequalities_during_the_2020_pandemic#Key_findings; European Commission, "Households' income and the cushioning effect of fiscal policy measures in the Great Lockdown", 2020 [online] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/jrc121228_policy_brief_the_impact_of_the_great_lockdown_on_hh_25_06_2020_1.pdf; D. Furceri and others, "Will COVID-19 have long-lasting effects on inequality? Evidence from past pandemics", IMF Working Paper, No. WP/21/127, 2021 [online] <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/WP/2021/English/wpia2021127-print-pdf.ashx>.

III. Operational challenges and innovations

The heterogeneity of information systems and social records in Latin America, together with the economic, social and political situations that countries were going through prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, affected the design of mitigation policies to counter the crisis (ECLAC, 2020d; Lustig and others, 2021; OECD and others, 2021). A common point is that, regardless of their situation, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have managed to adapt to their reality and innovated different aspects of the process of delivering social protection programmes to best meet the needs of their populations. In particular, in countries with incipient or fragmented social protection information systems and where social protection programmes usually require support from other non-governmental and international organizations, it was found that they were able to develop assistance packages by creating new ways of identifying and incorporating the worst affected population. With fewer resources, they had to turn to technological innovations that were user-friendly and accessible to the entire population (Basto-Aguirre, Nieto-Parra and Vázquez-Zamora, 2020).

On the other hand, countries with more advanced social protection systems and with more information available for decision-making have faced other difficulties; for example, the invisibility of certain population groups or the fact that the available information was outdated and did not reflect the situation of the population at the time they needed support. These considerations are key to the extent that the consequences of the health crisis have not impacted the population uniformly. Some groups have been hit harder than others and the extent to which they have been also differs. For some, the consequences of the crisis will be temporary, while for others they could be permanent, particularly because of the protracted duration and the uncertainty as to how the pandemic will continue to evolve (ECLAC, 2021b; Lustig and others, 2021). Thus, countries with more-developed social protection systems also faced unexpected circumstances that forced them to respond in innovative ways.

In this context, countries adapted their processes, protocols or rules established prior to the pandemic in order to increase coverage and improve the response in line with the needs of vulnerable groups. These innovations have arisen in different formats and stages of the provision of goods and services by the State. They include minor design adjustments (changes in processes, protocols,

delivery methods); vertical expansion (increasing amounts, frequency of payments and type of services) and horizontal expansion (broadening coverage) (Atuesta, Holz and Van Hemelryck, 2022), the purposes of which are:

- Increased coverage of emergency programmes. For example, through the combination of information sources, the use of mapping, contacts with local organizations, registrations on web platforms or mobile applications.
- Increased use of technology throughout the process to maintain constant communication channels and gather information from recipients of welfare entitlements. For example, through registration pages for social programmes, mobile applications for cash transfers, text messages with information on emergency measures and mobile banking.
- Flexibility to adapt programmes or creating new programmes based on the needs of pandemic-affected groups, such as increased amounts or coverage, increased programme duration, and lifting certain requirements for accessing emergency entitlements.
- The adjustments in recipient registries, which served to increase coverage and improve the delivery of entitlements, will serve to understand the direction in which social protection measures and their delivery channels will have to adapt once the crisis is over.

The design of emergency programmes is a reflection of how the effects of the pandemic have evolved, the current and future needs of the population, and the lessons learned along the way. Hence the need, for example, to support poor households and population groups that have difficulty smoothing consumption and are exposed to income shocks, such as the migrant population, informal workers and people with disabilities, among others. A cross-cutting gender equality perspective should also be adopted in the design of measures. An analysis of the innovations implemented during the pandemic demonstrates the key role of social protection mechanisms and the need for them to be flexible enough to adapt in a crisis situation in response to the economic and social consequences. To achieve this, social protection mechanisms need to incorporate the entire population at risk of seeing a worsening of their well-being. In this regard, it is worth pausing to analyse the various stages of the process of delivering welfare entitlements: (i) searching out and recording the relevant information and then making it accessible; (ii) identifying and assessing eligible members of the population; (iii) registering and delivering the entitlement in question; (iv) overseeing the processes involved in getting the goods or services to their intended recipients; and (v) evaluating the relevant social entitlements and processes with a view to providing feedback, as well as rectifying and rechannelling them.

In these different stages, social registries or registries of potential recipients play a pivotal role, especially in identifying the needs and conditions of the population. Such registries contain the information to quantify and characterize potential and target populations of social protection programmes and are the platform for registering households and individuals who previously might not have been visible to the State but require support in the health crisis and in future crises.

A. Innovations in the identification of the most vulnerable population and potential recipients of social programmes

Searching out, recording and making available information that will then make it possible to assess the population and determine which persons or groups are eligible for a social programme requires the use of information systems and data records. This is important as the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean work to strengthen their social protection systems to guarantee human rights. Strengthening interoperability between different types of existing registries will be one of the key

factors in ensuring more accurate and efficient social protection systems (OECD and others, forthcoming 2022). To that end, it is essential to work on data governance to enable information management (planning, monitoring and decision making).

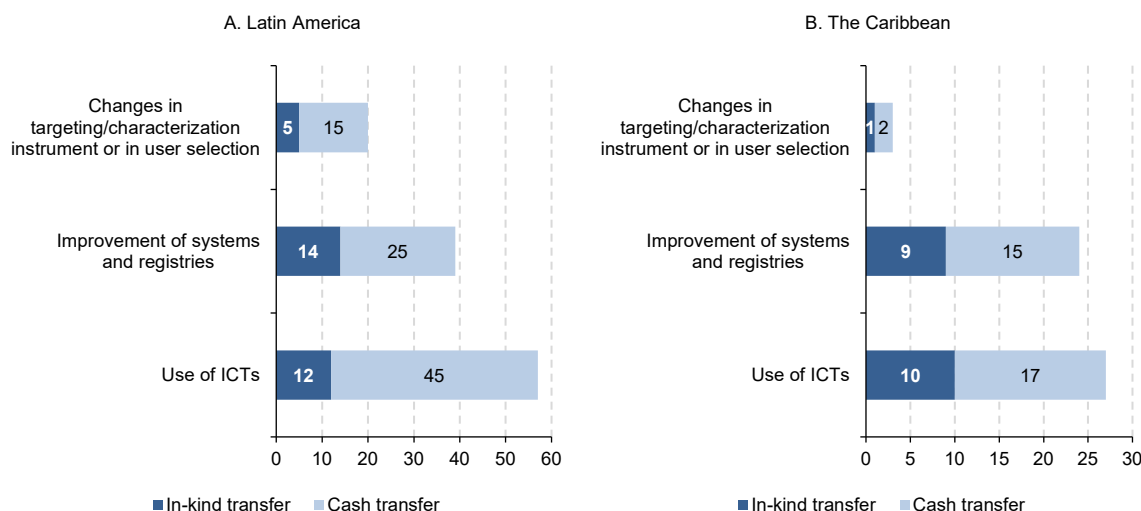
While there are countries, such as Argentina, Chile, Peru or Uruguay, with high coverage rates of their registries of potential recipients, others, such as El Salvador or Haiti, fail to reach more than 30% population coverage. This is associated not only with the countries' income levels, but also with the way in which social protection policies have been developed and the economic and sociopolitical context of each country. Those with more-developed systems or registries tend to have higher levels of coverage and registries that record applications by households, which can register whenever they want, usually at local offices or Internet platforms set up to collect the necessary information for their admission (Berner and Van Hemelryck, 2020). Both elements (coverage and mechanisms to collect information) are critical for having quality and up-to-date information on most of the population and for facilitating the expansion of cash transfers to reach groups in middle and lower strata that are not usually the main focus of social protection policies, but which became a particularly vulnerable group in this crisis (ECLAC, 2021b). On the one hand, continuous, open access to registries makes new admissions possible and, on the other, ensures the dynamic inclusion of households. That is, it allows the information of those already in the registries to be updated, thus having more accurate information for decision making.

The registration and identification of people, especially those vulnerable to a crisis, is key to achieving adequate levels of coverage to protect households from shocks and income losses. However, the depth and breadth of the pandemic meant that the characteristics of the groups affected have changed, and population groups that previously received no support from the State have been added. As a result, countries had to adapt and innovate to ensure the inclusion of these people and their households, given that, generally speaking, they did not offer universal coverage entitlements to deal with this type of situation. As a result, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean adopted different strategies to identify everyone in a vulnerable situation as a result of the crisis and include them in beneficiary registries.

Although many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean continued to use information that was available, figure 26 shows that the most common innovation was the adoption and use of information technologies, both for cash transfer programmes and for programmes that provided goods and services. Of the social protection measures implemented in the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, 36% have incorporated some type of innovation, either by using information and communication technologies (69%), improving social registries or information systems (52%), creating new registries of potential recipients (38%) or adopting new ways or instruments to identify potential recipients of emergency programmes (19%). Even if this information is disaggregated by subregion, incorporation of ICTs remains the predominant innovation (see table A5).

Another set of important innovations has to do with the improvement of social protection information systems and recipient registries, which is especially necessary for identifying potential target groups. In this area, the effort to amass new records on recipients and combine different sources of information, with a priority on that obtained from administrative data or lists of participants of programmes implemented before or during the pandemic, as well as the lengths to which countries went to integrate the most vulnerable populations that were not registered, are noteworthy.

Figure 26
Latin America (27 countries): innovations in the registration and identification
of potential recipients as of 31 October 2021
(Number of measures)^{a b}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a The countries are Argentina, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Uruguay. Only in-kind and cash transfers are considered.

^b There are 46 measures without any associated innovation.

1. Use of social registries and combination of other information sources

Administrative records are data collected and managed by public institutions or organizations (civil registry service, ministries of economic affairs, basic services companies and financial system, among others). Social registries can be combined with administrative records, for example, using the household composition reported in the social registry (by means of forms that must be completed in-person at local offices or with the help of Internet platforms to register applicants), and coupled with entries from administrative sources such as pension fund administrators, internal revenue services or other institutions to which the individuals contribute, among others; or also, with the list of customers with the level of electricity consumption that electricity companies provide to the Ministry of Energy, which combines it with the information from social registries yielded by household data collection. Chile, Peru and Colombia, which initially had sufficient information on the poor in their registries and were able to use this information directly to respond to the crisis, also needed to include other mechanisms to incorporate other populations.

A common strategy used by the countries of the region when the beneficiary registries lacked a sufficient level of coverage or did not include the entire population in need of assistance was to combine information from different data sources. On the one hand, they might use administrative information where there were unique civil registry identifiers or national identifiers, or even a combination of variables that make an individual unique. An interesting case is what happens with the Health Emergency Family Protection grant in Ecuador, where the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) set up a technical commission to develop a new database from information in administrative records in order to expand the number of potential recipients to complement

information from administrative records. In Peru, information on the implementation of emergency cash transfers was cross-referenced to identify more precisely individuals with low formal labour incomes (Perez, 2020).

Argentina, Bahamas, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Grenada, Honduras, Jamaica, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago are also notable for drawing on administrative records to determine the eligibility of recipients of emergency programmes. For example, the Family Grant programme in Guatemala, which provides a temporary transfer to support families, identifies recipient households based on their electricity consumption. The Ministry of Social Development then cross-checks information with the administrative records from the National Institute of Statistics and the National Registry Office (RENAP), among others, to assign the programme. In addition, that information is combined with the information declared on a platform set up for registration and eligibility verification.

Another common situation was the easing of restrictions on data sharing between agencies, whether public or private, in order to obtain additional information. In Antigua and Barbuda, the COVID-19 Utility Relief Discount programme, implemented in 2020, uses user information both to avert the suspension or disconnection of water or electricity services for non-payment and to make a 10% reduction in the cost of services (increased to 25% in June 2020) for people who have lost their incomes as a result of the pandemic. Other sources of information were also used for the social registry in Brazil, Colombia and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. For example, the Plurinational State of Bolivia used the records of utilities providers (both public and private) to ban the suspension of basic services and made the companies themselves responsible for implementing that measure. In Colombia, the government authorized the sharing of data from both public and private institutions through a decree guaranteeing the confidentiality of the information, which was used for the Solidarity Income programme.³⁶

2. Changes in social protection information system protocols

In countries with more advanced social protection information systems, it was decided to make the entry protocols social registries more flexible in order to enable data to be rapidly updated and at the same time ensure that households that were not registered could do so more quickly than usual. For example, in Chile and Brazil, information verification protocols were adjusted to allow households to register more rapidly and directly in the Social Register of Households (RSH) and the Single Cadastre (CadÚnico), respectively. In both cases, the home visit to verify the data declared by the individuals concerned was dispensed with. In addition, in Chile, the protocol for approving applications from households registered in the RSH was altered to eliminate the verification carried out by the municipal programme officer.³⁷

3. Use of mapping and local organizations to supplement information

As part of the strategy to increase the coverage of information records, some countries used geo-referenced tools or involved local institutions to identify the populations in need of support more precisely. However, few countries opted for this course of action. In Brazil, for example, another instrument is used to increase coverage. For the distribution of food baskets to indigenous families, the National Indian Foundation (Funai) is responsible for mapping recipients and priority geographic locations. Another example is the support received from the local emergency committees in Costa Rica for the food delivery programme (With You We Can and Efforts Connection), which are responsible for identifying and drawing up lists of households in need that will receive food. In addition, in order to identify these people, the committees can cross-check with the databases of institutions such as IMAS or local health facilities, among others; the possibility for the

³⁶ See [online] https://ingresosolidario.dnp.gov.co/documentos/DECRETO_518_DEL_4_DE_ABRIL_DE_2020.pdf.

³⁷ See [online] http://www.registrosocial.gob.cl/docs/o236_aprueba_protocolo_RSH_E37886.pdf and http://www.registrosocial.gob.cl/docs/Rex_o208_APRUEBA_PROTOCOLO_EXCEPCIONAL.pdf.

population to approach the municipal committees to request food packages was also made available. Something similar occurs in Guatemala, where the list for the Support for small local enterprises programme is prepared by municipal councils and the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Cattle and Food (MAGA). These have established a single database and rely on the 316 Emergency Operations Centres to identify potential recipients of the COVID-19 Food Support and Prevention Programme.

4. Use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for identification of recipients

Despite efforts to include more available data, in many cases these complementary sources of information were not available, either because of low data development by government institutions or because it was simply not possible to identify the most vulnerable population from the available data. For that reason, and thanks to technological advancements, 61 measures in 22 countries decided to gather information through the creation and use of online platforms, mobile telephone applications or call centres, so that those interested in applying could do so. This additional information makes it possible, on the one hand, to increase coverage, since it allows people not in recipient registries to apply and, on the other, to gather useful, up-to-date information to proceed with other stages of the provision of social protection programmes, such as the selection of recipients based on key variables or the delivery or payment of contributions. For example, in Argentina, although 10 measures use the National Social Security Administration (ANSES) database to allocate assistance without requiring special application processes, the measures requested the completion of individual or household forms to register new applicants who did not appear in the information systems of the Argentine State, as in the case of the Emergency Family Programme or the Assistance Programme for Argentines Abroad.

A case in point is Guyana's COVID-19 Public Assistance Programme, through which the government provides a voucher for the purchase of food to the most vulnerable. In order to identify them, from 20 May 2020 onwards, the government established an online platform for those with Internet access to register, as well as a telephone line for those without Internet access to do likewise. In addition, this programme adopts a rights-based approach by considering the special food needs of people belonging to indigenous peoples and providing food baskets adapted to their diets.

Another example is Brazil, where a web platform and a mobile application were set up for applicants to register in the Emergency Aid programme and to enable people to look up information, check the status of their application and have a communication channel for specific questions.³⁸

Technology and new information systems must be used with caution, taking special care to protect people's information under a rights-based approach and, in the same way that there is a social infrastructure in place to determine the processes for the delivery of social entitlements, a support infrastructure must be developed. The total replacement of allocation processes for social programmes with digital systems should be carefully evaluated, especially given the significant digital divides in the region and the impossibility of replacing human contact in processes that demand a high degree of exchange and follow-up (ECLAC, 2022b and 2021e). Digital social protection systems that incorporate information technologies in the design, allocation, implementation and evaluation of welfare entitlements can improve the performance, speed and scale of social responses and be more flexible and cost-effective (Ohlenburg, 2020). Such systems should be accompanied by an overhaul of the architecture of the social protection system, in which organizational aspects, legal practices, and technical and personal relationships between social actors are defined and the functioning of the

³⁸ The possible use of an application to replace the Unified Register for Social Programmes of the Government of Brazil (CadÚnico) sparked debate. See Senate debate of 22 November 2021 [online] <https://recontaai.com.br/tereza-campello-mal-feito-e-sem-estudo-auxilio-brasil-deixa-de-fora-29-milhoes-de-familias>.

information system is established in a way that ensures interoperability (GIZ, 2021; Ortiz, 2021). Their development requires taking into account limitations and potential risks associated with considerations such as population selection bias, privacy and security of information, digital gaps and possible digital exclusion, and the high costs of technology and its development (Ohlenburg, 2020; Newlands and others, 2021; Taylor, 2020).

However, the introduction of ICTs and the new challenges facing social protection systems around the world have enabled the digitalization of social protection to develop, facilitating the identification and registration of potential participants and maximizing the use of existing administrative data to minimize declared data. This enables State decision-making to be more efficient, since information can be obtained more quickly, with better quality (or at least with verifiable data) and at a lower cost, since it does not require periodic information gathering. This optimizes the information systems used to design and allocate social protection measures and makes it easier to achieve interoperability of information systems. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of ensuring such information system linkage, as countries were able to scale up responses to the crisis and react quickly thanks to data sharing and the use of administrative and other information sources. Digitalization also brings with it new opportunities to build an open government based on a digital public infrastructure in which a new space is opened to interact and get closer to citizens.

5. New social registries

Countries with greater flexibility in terms of technical, institutional and budgetary capacity developed new registries of potential recipients in order to gather information on groups traditionally excluded from social policy. Argentina, for example, implemented the National Register of Workers of the Popular Economy (Registro Nacional de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de la Economía Popular - RENATEP) as a tool to identify workers in the informal sector of the economy such as street vendors, fair vendors, artisans, sociocommunity workers or caregivers, among others. Another case is the RUDA-COVID-19 Single Registry of Victims and Affected Persons in Colombia, under the responsibility of governors' and mayors' offices. This registry was used to provide entitlements under the "Colombia is with you" and "Support for older persons" programmes.³⁹ This registry was created on 27 March 2020 within the framework of disaster risk management policies that allow the collection of special data that can be connected to each other to improve emergency response and certify those who are actually affected by the virus.⁴⁰ In the case of Peru, the government set up the National Registry for Covid-Nineteen Measures in the framework of the health emergency to complement the information in its household targeting system (SISFOH) as a way to ensure the exclusion of high-income households and to have updated information on persons affected by the pandemic.⁴¹

The experience of countries that have set up systems to deal with emergencies and disasters is an important antecedent in the creation of new recipient registries. The exposure of many Latin American countries to natural disasters, especially in Central America with tornadoes, has generated governance that frames potential public policy actions of countries in such situations. It is interesting to highlight some of the characteristics of these systems that allow governments to react quickly and in a timely manner, since there are established protocols and proven strategies for delivering welfare entitlements. However, the implementation of these emergency systems does not necessarily mean that countries possess a system that offers the necessary flexibility to deal with these complex and multifactorial situations (Beazley and others, 2016). For example, in Mexico, cash transfers have procedures for annually updating programmes and adapting them in the event that an emergency

³⁹ See [online] http://portal.gestiondelriesgo.gov.co/Paginas/Slide_home/Registro-Unico-de-Damnificados-y-Afectados-RUDA.aspx.

⁴⁰ See [online] https://portal.gestiondelriesgo.gov.co/Documents/Resoluciones/Resolucion_0232_marzo_27_de_2020.PDF.

⁴¹ See [online] https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/1915837/RM_089_2021MIDIS_completo.pdf.pdf.

occurs (Smith and Bowen, 2020). That could partly explain why Mexico is one of the countries with the fewest new programmes implemented in Latin America, since its programmes are sufficiently flexible to waive restrictions or modify conditions in affected areas. Likewise, an agreement issuing the operating guidelines of the programme for the well-being of people in social or natural emergencies, for fiscal year 2021 was launched in January 2021,⁴² updating the guidelines with which it was established in 2019, in which it is recognized that Mexico is a country exposed not only to natural disasters, but also to social emergencies that adversely affect people's welfare.⁴³ The general objective of the programme is to mitigate the vulnerability of people affected by a social or natural emergency by prioritizing vulnerable population groups (children, adolescents, older persons, people with disabilities, and indigenous and Afro-Mexicans) and providing economic support, housing assistance, transportation or other goods or food, depending on the needs created by the emergency. In another area, we can highlight the case of the Dominican Republic, which has a Vulnerability to Climate Hazards Index (IVCC) that is part of the Single System of Beneficiaries (SIUBEN), which calculates the probability that the effect of a climate event will have repercussions on the well-being and survival of households (Smith and Bowen, 2020). While the IVCC was not used directly, the protocols established for the use of SIUBEN data in the event of an emergency, plus the fact that the data was current to 2018, meant that the information could be used to act in a timely manner.⁴⁴

A different way to collect information from potential recipients who are not in any state registry is to use the delivery mechanisms of other programmes to gather information. This is the case of El Salvador, where food deliveries were used as an opportunity to conduct censuses and include more families, particularly those whose members have no employment relationship or permanent income and are being hard hit by the pandemic.

6. Strategies for incorporating new population groups: the case of informal and own-account workers

In order to identify informal workers, governments had to innovate so that they could guarantee support to this specific population group. Table 2 shows examples of measures of this sort, most of which consisted of cash transfers (41 programmes), particularly those primarily targeting informal workers. Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras were the only countries that made in-kind transfers to this population group in the area of food and nutrition security, Honduras being the only one not to combine both types of measures. In particular, two can be mentioned. The first is Colombia's Ayudar nos hace bien network, which stands out for a method of operation that consists of developing a virtual network where all citizens, companies, territorial entities and organizations can make solidarity contributions that will be consolidated to purchase and distribute at least one million kits of basic commodities and foodstuffs for the most vulnerable households. The other is Honduras' El Encarguito Solidario programme, which is notable the product delivered, since it provided not only basic food basket commodities and cooked meals, but also personal hygiene supplies.

⁴² See [online] https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5610007&fecha=19%2F01%2F2021.

⁴³ The Programme for the Wellbeing of People Affected by Social or Natural Emergencies is linked to the Priority Objectives, Priority Strategies and Specific Lines of Action of the Welfare Sector Programme 2020–2024 [online] <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9307en/cb9307en.pdf>, published in the *Diario Oficial de la Federación* on 26 June 2020. See [online] https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5610007&fecha=19%2F01%2F2021.

⁴⁴ See [online] <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000119047/download/>.

Table 2
Latin America and the Caribbean (13 countries): measures targeting informal workers as a priority, 2020–2021^a

Country	Description of the measure	Target population	Identification of the population	Innovations
Argentina	Emergency Family Income	Households where all members are unemployed or work in the informal economy.	National Administration of Social Security (ANSES) supplemented with a new registry.	Two ways of identifying applicants were combined: using ANSES records and by means of an application form if they have a national identity document (DNI) and a unique code of labour identification (CUIL).
	Registered Programme ^b	Private household workers and employers who register a new employment relationship.	The employer registers the individuals with the Federal Public Revenue Administration (AFIP).	Encourages formal hiring of female domestic workers and less informality in this sector, guarantees access to and continuation of registered employment, and encourages the workers to use banking services. It also creates a committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and AFIP and coordinated by the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity to monitor and develop the programme.
Brazil	<i>Emergency Aid</i>	Workers over 18 years of age, without a formal contract, who do not receive social security or welfare entitlements and have a monthly income of less than half a minimum wage (BRL \$ 522.5) and a family income of less than three minimum wages.	Selection made by the Social Security Technology and Information Company (DATAPREV) and Single Registry for Federal Government Social Programmes (CadÚnico), and then validated by Ministry of Citizenship.	Modification of the programme according to the progress of the pandemic and the needs observed: the programme has three versions: Emergency Aid, Expanded Emergency Aid and Emergency Aid 2021 where adjustments were made to target population and then priority was accorded in 2021 to the most vulnerable groups in the informal economy.
Chile	Universal Emergency Family Income	Social Register of Households (RSH) with informal workers.	RSH and data provided in the application.	It expanded the programme progressively from the beginning of the pandemic until universal coverage was achieved to ensure that informal workers had some form of income protection. It benefits households whose members are either all or mostly informal workers by setting a not-to-exceed amount of formal income. It also includes households with members who receive a Basic Solidarity Pension or Solidarity Pension Supplement.
Colombia	Solidarity Income	Highly vulnerable households, informal workers, furloughed workers, and 43,000 soldiers and police auxiliaries.	System for the Identification and Classification of Potential Social Programme Beneficiaries (SISBEN), registries of other social programmes and databases of the Department for Social Prosperity, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health and Social Protection and Ministry of Finance and Public Credit.	It combines sources of information to improve the identification of informal workers and protect them from loss of income and cuts in pay.
Ecuador	Health Emergency Family Protection Grant	Underemployed families with incomes of less than US\$ 400 per month.	Social register that considers administrative records.	In the event that the database is not sufficient to register the recipients, a technical commission is created to structure an emerging database of administrative records. This is in order to expand the number of potential recipients.
Grenada	Income Support to Informal Sector Workers	Persons working in a business in the informal sector prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.	Administrative records of the NIS (National Insurance Scheme Grenada) and IRD (Inland Revenue Division).	Uses administrative information to identify recipients.
Guatemala	Support for Small Local Enterprise	Informal traders.	New registration with verification of administrative records.	Uses lists generated by municipal councils; the only main selection criterion is that recipients work in commercial activities not registered with the Office of the Superintendent of Tax Administration, (SAT).

Country	Description of the measure	Target population	Identification of the population	Innovations
Haiti	Transfers to informal workers	Highly vulnerable population working in the informal sector.	Economic and Social Assistance Fund (FAES), World Food Programme (WFP) and Volunteers Association for International Service (AVSI)	Protection of the highly vulnerable population who lack access to transfer programmes and work in the informal sector. The measure provides cash and in-kind transfers and identifies recipients based on national (FAES) and international (WFP and AVSI) data registries.
Paraguay	<i>Pytyvõ</i>	Informal workers who are self-employed or who are dependent on a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise.	Information from administrative databases of the Ministry of Finance.	A web page was set up for people to register and apply to be recipients of the programme. This shared information is verified by the Ministry of Finance by means of cross-checking with government records. In a second version, priority was given to workers residing in border towns and a unified registry of informal workers in the Paraguayan economy was created to facilitate their formalization (Velásquez Pinto, 2021).
Peru	Grant for independent workers	Vulnerable households whose members are own-account and informal workers not on public- or private-sector payrolls.	New registry: registry for the households of vulnerable independent workers, combining administrative sources.	An exclusive, special registry was established to register and identify individuals. Data from the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (General Registry of Households, National Registry of Users and the Registry of Beneficiary Households) were used in its construction, as were personal information databases managed by the Superintendency of Banks, Insurance and Private Pension Fund Administrators, the National Tax and Customs Administration, and the Supervisory Agency of Investment in Energy and Mining, among others.
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Interim assistance benefits for vulnerable Vincentians	Informal workers.	NI	It includes, in particular, urban vendors and those who traditionally rely on trade adjacent to schools.
Uruguay	Emergency food basket	Informal workers not covered by social protection (if two household members are informal workers, both receive a grant).	Combines information provided in online forms with available databases.	Individuals must fill out an online form to apply, the aim being to identify those not covered by any state measure. The Ministry of Social Development validates the data from its records.
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Discipline and Solidarity Grant	Informal workers.	Patria System database.	A new survey was developed on the Patria website to update labour data.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>; International Monetary Fund (IMF); M. Velásquez Pinto, "La protección social de los trabajadores informales ante los impactos del COVID-19", Project Documents (LC/TS.2021/37), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2021.

^a For more details on the other measures targeting informal workers and other characteristics of those measures such as duration and coverage (see Velásquez Pinto, 2021).

^b This programme is in addition to the database prepared by ECLAC. For more information on how this programme operates, see [online] https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2021/09/resumen_programa_registradas.pdf.

Since this is the first time that countries have sought en masse to identify informal workers and their characteristics, it is essential to continue these practices. The informal economy has been battered by the pandemic and all studies indicate that the sector looks set to get bigger, so having up-to-date, quality information for this group is needed to continue making informed public policy decisions in order to reduce the poor working conditions and lack of support it has historically endured. In that regard, innovations in ways

of identifying this population are important because some have enabled online platforms and other information technologies to supplement the information in countries' registries of recipients, as in the cases of Argentina (ANSES), Chile (RSH), Brazil (CadÚnico) and Colombia (SISBEN). Others have combined administrative records to good effect: Ecuador (Social Register), Dominican Republic (SIUBEN and Social Affairs Commission based on information validated by the Social Cabinet), and Saint Lucia (NIC records). Jamaica also used an online platform to register applicants, while in Costa Rica, registration was done on the Proteger web platform of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS).

Another used to identify informal workers was to combine sources of information within the country. Examples of this can be seen in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, where AFP registries were combined with records on the delivery of other grants to exclude the non-eligible; El Salvador combined a gas subsidy list with records on solidarity card holders and census information for food deliveries; Haiti used information collected by FAES, the WFP and AVSI; and Panama used information from the Ministry of the Presidency (which chairs the Inter-Ministerial Commission) in conjunction with data from the Ministry of Agricultural Development (Bolsa Solidario) and the Ministry of Social Development (Solidarity Grant).

A third way is the creation of new records on informal workers based, for example, on information collected by the local community, as in the case of Guatemala. In Paraguay, a platform was established to register applicants whom the Ministry of Finance verified by cross-checking their information with government records; and Peru established a registry for households with vulnerable independent workers using data from the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion and other institutions.

Chile's and Argentina's Emergency Family Income programmes were created to support informal workers by protecting their incomes. In both cases, there are recognized structural problems in the social protection and social security systems that result in a failure to meet the needs of this population group, which is thus left unprotected in crises such as the pandemic. Furthermore, in the case of Argentina, the pandemic exposed the fragility of workers at private homes, domestic and unpaid care workers, and own-account/self-employed workers, who were especially hard hit by lockdowns to contain the spread of the virus.⁴⁵ To design the Emergency Family Income programme it was necessary to identify, based on Permanent Household Surveys, the potential population and their main characteristics. ANSES established two stages of registration: The first allows automatic selection based on the institution's information on anyone who has been a recipient of the Universal Child Allowance (AUH) or Universal Pregnancy Allowance for Social Protection (AUE); the second consists of people registering by entering their national identity document (DNI) and unique code of labour identification (CUIL) in an application form. Information from the Federal Administration of Public Revenues (AFIP) was used to verify compliance with socioeconomic requirements. The second stage recorded information on new individuals and a group for which no data had been available before the pandemic, thereby expanding coverage and advancing the guarantee of human rights (D'Alessandro, M. and others, 2020).

The situation in Brazil with the Emergency Aid programme differs somewhat. As infections spread, the programme was expanded to include not only informal workers and users of the Bolsa Familia and CadÚnico programmes, but also mothers of young children and adolescents, employees with intermittent work contracts under the emergency programme and cultural workers. After the extension of the measure by four months in September 2020, one of the ways used to target informal workers was to exclude from the transfer those who started working after the start of the programme, as well as anyone granted social security or welfare entitlements, unemployment insurance or cash transfers during the period.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ In Argentina, five of seven programmes that consider this population already existed and their coverage or the amounts they provide were expanded as a result of the pandemic. The two new programmes were Emergency Family Income and Support Culture Scholarships I and II.

⁴⁶ See [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/fichamedida.php?id=BRA005>.

In the Caribbean, although less frequent than in Latin America, there were also programmes targeting the informal sector. For example, in Grenada, the Income Support to Informal Sector Workers (COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Support Package 2.0) programme was established to provide temporary income support to individuals working in an informal sector business not registered with the Inland Revenue Division, without fixed working hours or a fixed location, with no formal arrangements with employees such as employment letters or contracts, that belong to a sector that has not recovered significantly from the crisis or has remained closed.

B. Innovations in the eligibility and determination of recipients of welfare entitlements

1. New mechanisms for measuring the socioeconomic situation of households

The second stage in the delivery of social protection programmes consists of the application of eligibility criteria, the determination of the goods and services to be provided and the allocation of entitlements to recipients. Knowing and determining in greater detail the composition of households in the region is essential for advancing more efficient social protection systems, bearing in mind that 45% of households in the region have all their members working in the informal sector, while about 22% are mixed households (with at least one member working informally) (OECD and others, 2021 and OECD, to be published in 2022). Countries usually develop household socioeconomic assessment measures using characterization variables already collected, with which they identify which are in a situation of vulnerability and need to be included in the entitlements of social protection systems. In terms of innovations in this area, there have been few exercises to modify these instruments, since that requires a review of available information, the construction of statistical models and estimates of the behaviour of variables in certain situations. The only case identified was Chile, which created an emergency socioeconomic indicator for the delivery of the Emergency Family Income (IFE), as a tool to better gauge the short-term situation of households, as opposed to their situation in the long term. However, owing to the context in which it was developed, it was abandoned after the third month of implementation (Berner and Van Hemelryck, 2020). Associated with that measure, in June 2021, a new modification was approved in Congress that consisted of expanding IFE coverage to the entire population inscribed in the Social Register of Households and also to the migrant population that had a visa application in process and at least one child registered in the Chilean Civil Registry Service.⁴⁷

The simplicity of targeting mechanisms, the clarity of requirements and information, as well as the timeliness of the latter with respect to the application and reception processes of the emergency programmes, are critical to their performance and for them to fulfil their purpose of reaching those who need them at the time they need them. This demonstrates the State's capacity to implement social policies in a way that takes account of differences and inequalities, applies a rights-based approach and advances more-universal and comprehensive social protection policies. To that end, the role played by public institutions and the characteristics of the political, social, economic and environmental context are decisive when it comes to implementing welfare entitlements in emergencies, as that will determine the implementation capacity of the agencies in charge of social policy (Martínez and Maldonado, 2019).

⁴⁷ Law No. 21230 granting an Emergency Family Income, enacted on 14 May 2020, last amended on 7 June 2021 (Law No. 21352). See [online] <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1145400>.

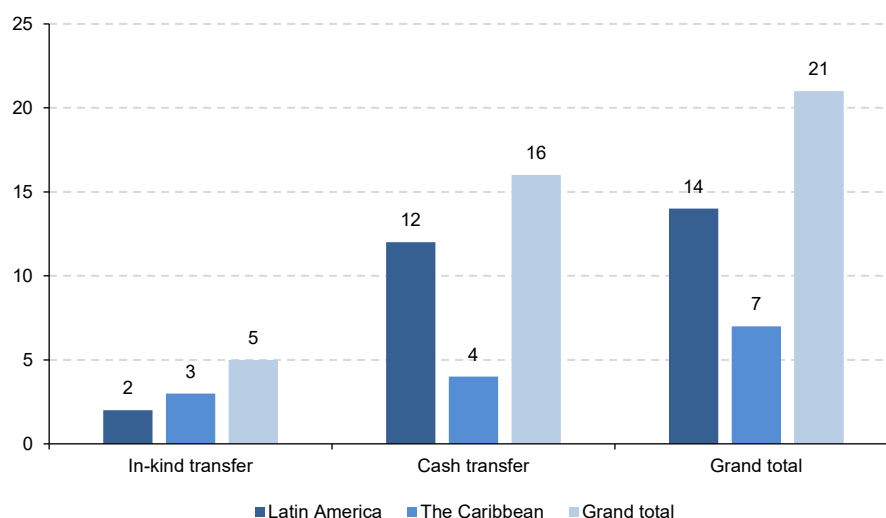
2. Greater inclusiveness as a result of increased coverage

Many countries have implemented innovations and complementary ways of registering information on potential recipients of programmes, including combining databases (harnessing the interoperability of information systems, but also integration and direct cross-referencing of databases) and setting up of telephone lines, mobile messaging or web platforms that request personal data and other background information to apply for emergency measures. This effort to increase the coverage of social protection measures is reflected in greater inclusion of the population and the incorporating groups that were not usually part of such systems, including informal workers or homeless people, to mention a few.

Among the social protection measures, efforts to include often invisible populations and achieve coverage that strove, in some cases, for universality marked a trend in the region. This is even more significant if we consider that social protection policies in Latin America and the Caribbean had tended to focus on groups in situations of poverty or vulnerability. The pandemic has clearly exacerbated inequalities and deepened existing gaps, making the inclusion of large groups of the population vulnerable to its effects highly necessary. Thus, as shown, social protection measures have been expanded in a bid to cover the urban poor, women, children and adolescents, older people, the indigenous population, migrants and other population groups not included in social registries, such as the homeless or the prison population (Lustig and Tommasi, 2020). This expansion in welfare entitlement coverage occurred in two modalities: existing programmes and new programmes.

While during the pandemic the proportion of new programmes progressively increased to meet the needs of the population, existing programmes also played an important role in providing a swift response to mitigate the early impacts of the pandemic because the infrastructure necessary for their deliveries was operational. Despite that installed capacity, expanding the coverage of these programmes was a challenge. Not all countries had data records with sufficient information to expand existing welfare entitlements. However, in Latin America, 14 programmes managed to increase the number of individuals and households receiving assistance, while in Caribbean countries 7 programmes were expanded to different vulnerable populations (see figure 27). In some cases, the expansion consisted of increasing the number of individuals or families eligible for programme entitlements, and in others, countries sought to incorporate new populations into programmes. In Argentina, for example, the Food Card programme announced the extension of its coverage to minors up to the age of 14 (previously up to 6 years old), pregnant women, people with disabilities and mothers with more than 7 children. There were also instances in which the expansion involved including new territories, such as in Colombia, where 11 new territories were added to those where early childhood food baskets were delivered. Another example is the expansion of Trinidad and Tobago's Food Card programme which, thanks to an IDB loan, was able to incorporate informal workers who suffered income losses as a result of the pandemic.

Figure 27
Latin America and the Caribbean (14 countries): number of existing emergency cash and in-kind transfer measures that expanded coverage, by Latin American subregion, March 2020–31 October 2021^{a,b}



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a The countries are Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Grenada, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

^b The emergency measures reviewed correspond to existing (pre-pandemic) programmes modified during the pandemic to address the needs of the population for increased support to mitigate the pandemic's effects and are, therefore, part of the overall emergency measures applied (emergency entitlement packages).

C. Innovations in information channels, financing, payment methods, and delivery methods

1. Information channels and use of information technologies

The announcement and communication of measures is an important part of what public programmes provide. Providing people with instructions on how to access available welfare entitlements is particularly important in times of pandemic, when health restrictions concerning face-to-face contact need to be observed. It is necessary to establish channels of communication with the potentially eligible population in order to keep them informed and answer questions about available State entitlements, access requirements, application methods and the subsequent delivery of goods and services. Due to health restrictions, many countries had to opt for a combination of communication methods that made greater use of technology and virtual communication channels. This led Paraguay's Food Security Programme, for example, to make available a telephone line to provide information and register households in the programme, or, in the case of Chile, to the creation of a search engine for emergency programmes and the strengthening of the Ministry of Social Development and Family's telephone hotlines.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See [online] <https://www.reddeproteccion.cl/cuestionario/form/1>.

Also in Chile, in order to avoid large crowds and owing to physical distancing restrictions, the government set up 24-hour telephone hotlines and online platforms with information on emergency measures and how to apply for them.⁴⁹ It also created a platform where members of the public could consult the programmes and ascertain which they qualified for in light of their household situation. In Dominica the communication effort focused on the Social Cash Transfers Programme, for which it implemented a multi-platform strategy to ensure that people in need of assistance received it.⁵⁰ The digital registration process was conducted between 14 and 25 September 2020, using an application form. With the support of community councils, survey staff were deployed at 45 registration points throughout the country to interview applicants in person and collect information on tablets and phones. Telephone and online registrations were also used to collect information remotely through a digital application form, as were home visits to interview those who were unable to access registration points.

2. Registration of recipients

With respect to the registration and determination of recipients of the goods and services delivered by welfare entitlements, another innovation relates to the flexibility of both existing social protection programmes and new measures implemented in the emergency. This flexibility is reflected in the change or adjustment of several aspects of a programme's delivery: coverage, duration and quantity, or amount in the case of cash transfers.

However, changes in amount and coverage have not been the only transformations in social protection programmes; there have also been changes in the duration of delivery of the good or service. For example, in Chile, since May 2019, the Emergency Family Income has seen an increase in the monetary contribution it transfers, an expansion in coverage and an extension in its duration.⁵¹ Another example of a programme established during the pandemic that has had several modifications is Argentina's Food Card, which has undergone changes in terms of access and delivery method, expanded coverage by increasing the eligibility age of children, a doubling of the amount and an increase in periodicity.

As table 3 shows, there are several such examples in which, in addition to the above elements, changes have been made or eligibility requirements adapted in order to broaden coverage, simplify the programme's design or strive for universality. The latter is very significant because, as the *2020 Social Panorama of Latin America* (ECLAC, 2021) shows, the crisis is affecting a large proportion of the population and, given its breadth and the mobility restrictions still in place, its impacts are not only temporary, but there are risks of permanent effects on the socioeconomic situation of households. The selection of examples in the table does not reflect the totality of programmes that have been modified to better address the consequences of the crisis but is intended to show the diversity of aspects that have been modified and how this has occurred in measures that have different purposes.

⁴⁹ See [online] <https://www.gob.cl/coronavirus/gestionpandemia/>.

⁵⁰ See [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/fichamedida.php?id=166>.

⁵¹ In addition, a new modification was approved on 6 June 2021 that seeks to universalize the cash transfer by extending it to all households in the Social Register of Households, with the exception of those households that are in the highest income bracket of the aforementioned instrument, for which the sum of the household's income divided by the number of its members must be equal to or less than 800,000 pesos, after the appropriate deductions under the law, which will be verified from the information declared by the applicant. See [online] <https://www.diariooficial.interior.gob.cl/publicaciones/2021/06/07/42972-B/01/1957548.pdf>.

Table 3
Latin America and the Caribbean (9 countries): examples of changes in eligibility requirements
for access to social protection programmes as of 31 October 2021

Country	Emergency measure	Changes in access requirements
Argentina	Cultura Solidaria special support	Eliminates restrictions for those who were recipients of the Emergency Family Income (IFE) and the Emergency Assistance Programme for Employment and Production (ATP) and makes registration in the Federal Cultural Registry a requirement.
Bahamas	Government-Funded Unemployment Assistance for COVID-19	Coverage was increased to include more workers; previously only those who had lost their jobs after the start of the lockdown (26 March 2020) could apply, but that was changed to enable those who had lost their jobs on or after March 13 to apply. This means that an additional 5,000 people could apply for the entitlement.
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Anti-Hunger Grant	The requirement of a voting card was discontinued.
Brazil	Easy access to credit for companies and individuals	Credit requirements were relaxed.
Chile	Emergency Family Income (IFE)	The IFE modified its recipient eligibility requirements four times during the pandemic (IFE 1 between May and October 2020, IFE and COVID Grant between January and March 2021, Expanded IFE in April and May 2021, and Universal IFE between June and November 2021) with the goal of increasing coverage and reaching the newly vulnerable. As exclusion variables, first it stopped using the Socioeconomic Emergency Indicator and then the socioeconomic rating.
Colombia	Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Advanced Studies Abroad (ICETEX)	The measures include the extension of new loans for the second half of 2020 without the requirement for a debt guarantor.
Costa Rica	Close season allowance for fisherfolk	Fisherfolk in arrears with the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS) were allowed to receive the grant through favourable payment arrangements offered by that institution.
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Widening the social safety net - Stimulus package	During the pandemic, the social safety net was expanded with temporary assistance entitlements for people not receiving public assistance and pensions.
Trinidad and Tobago	Food Card - Food Support Program	Increase in the amounts delivered through Food Cards for a period of three months for families registered with the pre-COVID-19 emergency Food Support Program. In February 2021, thanks to an IDB loan, a temporary extension of Food Support Program transfers was announced for households with a member who had worked in the informal sector and suffered a loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official data from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social protection measures to confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a The Socioeconomic Emergency Indicator measures the socioeconomic vulnerability of households in the short term, using available information on the household's situation as of March 2020. The socioeconomic rating is the instrument created in Chile from the Social Register of Households to measure the socioeconomic situation of individuals and their households over the medium and long term. For more information on the legal and operational modifications of the Emergency Family Income, see [online] [https://www.desarrollo.sociedadfamilia.gob.cl/storage/docs/ife/210630_INFORME_IFE_JUNIO_2021_VF\(1\).pdf](https://www.desarrollo.sociedadfamilia.gob.cl/storage/docs/ife/210630_INFORME_IFE_JUNIO_2021_VF(1).pdf).

3. Contributions from civil society, international cooperation agencies and public-private partnerships

In this field of action, coordinated work with the private sector and international organizations, which can, on the one hand, provide financial support and, on the other hand, be executors and facilitators of access to technology or even deliver products directly to the recipients, is once again an innovative possibility in pandemics.

The joint use of public and private resources for programme implementation made it possible to have additional sources of financing in countries where the State had lacked the capacity to offer more support to the population using its own fiscal resources. The actions of the private sector included cash or in-kind donations, support with databases, active search for people and generation of lists of potential recipients. Such is the case of food delivery in Panama, in which large companies and organizations donated food and money for the Panama Solidario: por Nuestra Niñez programme.⁵² Another example is the public-private partnership that provided funding to the Adopt a Family programme in Barbados to support 1,500 households identified by the Ministry of People Empowerment & Elder Affairs after in-depth interviews. The government requested donations from citizens earning more than BBD \$ 100,000 per year and received a total of BBD \$ 15,000 from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados (ICAB). The Prime Minister's Office indicated, in July 2020, that it had received about US\$ 2.1 million in donations, while the government has contributed about US\$ 2.9 million to the programme. Through that cooperation, as of September 2020, 3,448 families had received assistance. In Chile, Universidad Santo Tomás delivered tablets to children and adolescents who are recipients of the Abriendo Caminos programme of the Security and Opportunities programme. In addition, the Panama Solidario: por Nuestra Niñez programme receives donations from civil society and companies, both in kind and in cash, which are then delivered to families with minor children.

The information gathered shows that where countries have lacked such fiscal leeway, some have had to finance programmes with loans from international financial institutions, as illustrated by the experiences of the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. This type of strategy complements the continuation and increase of international cooperation, particularly in low- and middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, where support from international organizations has made it possible to carry out programmes to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and to seek ways to reduce the costs associated with the provision of emergency measures. For example, in the case of Honduras, cooperation between the State and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) enable the implementation of Honduras Solidaria programme, in which the international organization provides technical advice for selecting territories where food delivery should be focused by combining information from the National Centre for Social Sector Information (CENISS), the Secretariat of Development and Social Inclusion (SEDIS) and the National Entrepreneurship and Small Business Service (SENPRENDE). In Trinidad and Tobago, the programme Emergency Food Support to New Beneficiaries - Food Vouchers was created to provide new recipients of the School Feeding Programme with vouchers to purchase food or baskets of local commodities. The government signed an agreement with the IDB on 23 February 2021 for US\$ 24.45 million to develop measures to counteract the adverse social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the proceeds will be used to finance an extension of the Food Support Programme for households where at least one member working in the informal sector had experienced a loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 crisis since 1 March 2020. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was also supporting the implementation of some programmes, such as the Provision of hygiene and care kits to children with disabilities and children in foster care in Saint Lucia. Other institutions that participated in the emergency measures developed were the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).⁵³

⁵² See [online] www.despachoprimeradama.gob.pa/Panama-Solidario-Por-Nuestra-Ninez-recibe-primera-gran-donacion-de-viveres and <https://www.presidencia.gob.pa/Noticias/Despacho-de-la-Primera-Dama-impulsa-proyecto-Panama-Solidario-Por-Nuestra-Ninez->.

⁵³ The Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at the United States Embassy in Costa Rica and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as private companies, worked with the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education to distribute sanitary supplies for students in vulnerable areas. In the same country, the National Women's Institute of Costa Rica worked with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to help strengthen the response capacity of women entrepreneurs to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Honduras, the school feeding programme was made possible thanks to support from the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, while the Single Bonus was supported by the University of Oxford-based Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

There was also cooperation was generated at different territorial levels involving civil society organizations and local communities, which are often more knowledgeable about the vulnerabilities and needs of specific groups and helped to identify the most vulnerable. This was exemplified in Guatemala's Support for Small Local Enterprise programme, in which the municipal councils drew up the list of recipients; and the Food Basket programme in Peru, where the social welfare records and rosters used were provided by municipalities. In some cases, they were involved in co-financing programmes, as in Barbados, for example, where the Welfare Department partnered with civil society and private sector organizations for the Food Vouchers programme.

There was also cooperation between state institutions. Seven programmes were implemented in which the responsibility of the Ministries of Social Development was shared with other portfolios. For example, the Colombian Food for La Guajira programme involved the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), as well as the Social Prosperity Department and the Directorate of National Taxes and Customs (DIAN); and for the programmes in Guatemala and Trinidad and Tobago the responsibility of their ministries of social development was shared with their respective ministries of agriculture.

4. Methods of payment

Cash or in-kind delivery continue to be the preferred options for the payment of state transfers to the most vulnerable; however, the emergence of other alternative emergency measure payment methods is noteworthy. Those based on the digital tools available in each country, such as the delivery of virtual payment cards and mobile transfers in the case of cash transfer programmes, stand out in particular. This is the case of Paraguay's Ñangareko Food Security Programme, which consists of a voucher accessed by means of a code sent to the recipient's mobile phone, which can only be used to purchase food or hygiene products at a particular store, thus minimizing face-to-face contact. The economic transfer to recipients of Uruguay's school feeding programmes sends funds directly to the recipients.

In Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay and Uruguay, payments are made by means of mobile phone or mobile banking applications, which is a good use of technology as it reduces waiting times for payments and minimizes contact. However, to implement these methods as well as transfers to bank accounts, countries need to have sufficient information for their use. If the information is available or could be collected through the registration platforms, the funds can be deposited into personal accounts. Measures that used electronic or digital methods for entitlement payments reached people faster. The delivery of monetary support took one month less, on average, when digital means were used, such as in Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay and Uruguay, compared to measures in which manual payments or a combination of payment methods were used (Beazley and others, 2021).

Another significant challenge in getting assistance to informal workers has to do with the fact that they usually do not have a bank account; in view of this and the need to ensure that everyone can receive the entitlement, the alternative of in-person withdrawal is left open for those who do not have a bank account in Argentina, Chile, Peru and Paraguay (Velásquez Pinto, 2021).

In countries where transfers are aimed at the extreme poverty population that may not use banking services, another means of delivery of funds must be found. In response, the options adopted in Colombia or Brazil, have been to open basic accounts to make bank deposits. In Colombia, such accounts were created using the information provided by applicants, who had to provide their full name and details contained in their identification document. In the case of Brazil, both options are available: for those who already have an account the deposit is automatic, while those who do not can use a mobile banking application to open a savings account on their mobile phone (Beazley Derban and Barca, 2020). A noteworthy case is that of the Dominican Republic, where delivery of payments under the Stay at Home programme can be done by transfer to an account associated with the national identification number, which addresses the need for people not to leave home and allows those without a bank account to receive a transfer simply by presenting their identification document.

In addition, there are cases in which different strategies and payment methods were combined. For example, Brazil's Emergency Aid programme is also innovative because once registered on the web platform or mobile application, applicants receive a text message with information that allows them to open a social savings account where they can receive cash transfers.⁵⁴

The use of methods that rely on technology to deliver virtual payment cards or set up accounts by mobile phone should be approached with caution, since they may encounter the problem of low digital literacy that exists in certain countries or the fact that in some households no member has a mobile phone with an Internet connection. For that reason, traditional methods should not be completely replaced by technology; rather they should coexist with the delivery, for example, of physical coupons or identity cards that can be used to withdraw money, be it at local offices of the executing entities, at the bank or even at shops.

5. Place of delivery

Due to mobility restrictions, quarantines and physical distancing to reduce the spread of the disease, governments had to contend with the challenge of finding different ways to contact programme recipients and deliver appropriate goods or services.

Although most of the innovations focused on the operationalization of payments, given that most of the programmes provide cash or in-kind transfers, it is important to note that to deliver them it is crucial to have the contact information and bank details of the individuals concerned. Without that information, it is not possible to deliver services remotely, making it necessary to make in-person deliveries, either at people's homes, or at the place of delivery of the goods and services offered. This ensures that the entitlements are received by the population that actually qualified for the programme and reduces potential errors due to deficient delivery protocols. Other elements that restrict the possibilities of innovating at this stage are the conditions of the banking system and the technology available in countries, as well as their capacity to coordinate other payment channels and innovate. The challenge is to find the best way to deliver cash transfers and reduce people's exposure to the virus while delivering contributions quickly.

Box 7

Social protection measures in Europe: innovations

European countries also developed innovations in the implementation of measures similar to those reviewed for Latin America and the Caribbean, generally in relation to the registration of recipients, data records, coverage, programme characteristics, delivery methods of the entitlements, institutions, regulations and financing (Berner and Van Hemelryck, 2020; Hammad, Bacil and Soares, 2021). This box presents some of the innovations implemented to provide quick and timely responses to populations:

- (i) The use of technology and communications to facilitate the identification and selection of recipients, as well as the delivery of money or goods, as applicable, was common in several countries. For example, in Romania, it was established that in order to apply for any emergency programme, applications had to be submitted via e-mail or online platforms to avoid infections and comply with public health policies on physical distancing and quarantine. In Slovakia, telephone lines were set up to facilitate the delivery of food to housebound households. Another innovation associated with the delivery method of social entitlements was the distribution of food for isolated people living in poverty (Gentilini and others, 2020).

⁵⁴ This type of innovation is supported, for example, by the initiative launched by the World Bank in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to improve the relationship between the State and individuals in the payment of cash transfers using technology. Projects have been established in different regions and in Latin America and the Caribbean such projects have been found in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia. See [online] <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/gzpx>.

- (ii) Another common element was the need to incorporate programmes aimed at population groups most exposed to changes in the labour market and crises. This also seems to be a trend in the programmes that will begin to be implemented in the world's economies during the recovery stage. This is the case of women in Italy, where a programme was devised to provide an exemption from paying contributions to employers who between 2021 and 2022 hire women who have been unemployed for at least six months before being hired.^a One group that was given priority in welfare entitlements was migrants, a population that was vulnerable even before the onset of the pandemic, whose situation European governments were looking for ways to address in order to support them and ensure their well-being.
- (iii) Cooperation between social actors was also very important in the development of mitigation policies in Europe. In the European Union, they were involved in the design and implementation of protection measures for workers, especially in active labour market and income protection policies, with an emphasis on health and safety strategies in the workplace (European Commission, 2021). For example, in Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Spain, tripartite agreements were established between employers, workers and the social sector on staff retention and employment protection measures (European Commission, 2021).
- (iv) One area of innovation that has not been common to the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region is the effort to introduce emergency measures that are consistent with environmental improvement policies. In Sweden, for example, the government decided to match the unemployed with green industries by enhancing the partnership with the Federation of Swedish Farmers and the Swedish Public Employment Service.^b

Source: U. Gentilini and others, *Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures*, Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2020 [online] <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33635>; European Commission, *Employment and Social Developments in Europe Towards a Strong Social Europe in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Crisis: Reducing Disparities and Addressing Distributional Impacts. Annual Report 2021* [online] https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications_files/KE-BD-21-001-EN-N_o.pdf; M.F. Hammad, F. Bacil and V. Soares, "Next practices — Innovations in the COVID-19 social protection responses and beyond", Research Report, No. 60, New York, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth [online] https://ipcig.org/sites/default/files/pub/en/RR60_Next_Practices_Innovations_in_the_COVID_19_IPC_UNDP.pdf.

^a See [online] https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/intl_update/2021-04/index.html.

^b See [online] <https://www.government.se/press-releases/2020/05/unemployed-people-matched-to-green-industries/>.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

This document presents the main features and innovations of the emergency social protection measures implemented during the first two years of the coronavirus pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although it seeks to provide a complete overview of the social protection measures implemented during the pandemic, the main focus is on non-contributory measures targeting the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the population. It aims to describe, on the one hand, the responses implemented during the pandemic, in terms of their coverage, adequacy and financial sustainability and, on the other, their impacts and lessons learned in a context of high uncertainty regarding the future of the pandemic, increasing disasters of various kinds and future challenges for social protection in the region (ECLAC, 2021a). In order to minimize the socioeconomic consequences and the impact on social rights, the monitoring, systematization, analysis and subsequent assessment of measures adopted by governments yield useful information needed for decision making. To that end, this paper has sought to identify the most important policies in terms of scope, coverage, duration and effectiveness, and to highlight original and innovative practices that could help to improve the delivery of entitlements.

The pandemic has impacted the entire population both in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe, but it has also left important lessons and challenges for the future of social protection systems as a fundamental mainstay of the response in crisis situations. It is clear to observers of the way in which social protection measures have evolved in the course of the pandemic that those measures need to be strengthened to ensure the well-being of the population and guarantee the exercise of their rights. For example, in the face of the consequences of lockdowns, physical distancing and health policies adopted by governments, non-contributory transfers emerge as a quick and easy-to-implement option for ensuring basic needs, especially for those without social security coverage. However, they are also often a costly solution that depends on how the population is selected and runs the risk of leaving out the most vulnerable groups that are overlooked because of the prioritization mechanisms applied. Most emergency measures were conceived as responses of limited resources and duration that have not necessarily envisaged a mechanism to guarantee income levels after the crisis has peaked. This prompts two considerations. On the one hand, the need to strengthen contributory social protection systems so

that the workers have stable income assurance mechanisms in the face of periods of unemployment and transition to new occupations, particularly in a context marked by increasing use of technology and the need to move towards an environmentally sustainable economy. It is essential to learn the lessons of the pandemic in order to fully ensure access to entitlements aimed at guaranteeing levels of income, consumption and welfare with the requisite coverage, adequacy and financial sustainability for all who require them, regardless of their situation in the labour market. This is especially critical in a region facing an increasing occurrence of disasters (related to climate change or otherwise) and emergencies (social, economic and political) where the level of development of social institutions, in all their dimensions and scope, is heterogeneous. With respect to the comparative experience of European countries, progress in the institutionalization of such measures while strengthening social security systems, are two areas of learning from the pandemic (Robles and Rossel, 2022).

The main challenges for the delivery of emergency measures that faced the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean at the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic had to do with the timing of their introduction, the coverage of measures (maintaining transfers during the pandemic and targeting them at broad population groups), their adequacy (sufficient to offset the value of the poverty line and pay for basic services) and duration (extending the delivery of cash or in-kind transfers while lockdowns and the impacts of the crisis continue). With respect to the coverage of emergency measures and existing social protection measures, it was possible, broadly speaking, to reach those in a situation of poverty and vulnerability, older persons and working adults in the formal economy whose incomes declined or evaporated. However, other population groups that are particularly exposed when emergencies strike, such as informal workers, people with disabilities, migrants or the young, had less targeted support and their access to measures often depended on being included in social registries or the existence of mechanisms that enabled contact quickly to be established with those population groups. It is also important to underscore the importance of gender mainstreaming in emergency measures so that, in addition to considering entitlements explicitly intended for women, they address situations of special inequality occur within households due to the skewed distribution of paid work and unpaid care work that women often have to shoulder under unequal conditions, especially during lockdowns.

In terms of adequacy, when analysing the largest entitlements granted, which are considered to be those that ran between March 2020 and October 2021, it is estimated that in the Latin American and Caribbean countries for which information is available, only some —Brazil, Dominican Republic, Panama and Chile— managed to offset the value of the extreme poverty line with the cash transfers granted, and only Chile succeeded in offsetting the value of the poverty line (ECLAC, 2022a). The duration of the measures was associated with the number of deliveries made and was higher in the case of cash transfers. It is therefore crucial to that economic recovery and employment generation policies be accompanied by measures aimed at strengthening social protection in a sustainable manner and at achieving universal and comprehensive social protection, especially in the context of crises. In such a framework, it is very important to assess the feasibility, consistent with national realities, of progressively implementing a guaranteed basic income in emergency situations (or on a permanent basis), as well as universal or quasi-universal transfers for children and adolescents, in line with the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development (ECLAC, 2021f; United Nations, 2020). In that regard, disaster-policy makers should consider social and economic emergencies such as the current one, in addition to phenomena related to natural disasters and the climate crisis.

The prolongation of the pandemic and the social crisis prompted some of the measures implemented in 2020 to be extended and modified, in duration as well as in number of deliveries and coverage, in addition to the implementation of new measures; the same was true of amounts. According to Beazley, Marzi and Steller (2021), based on a study of different countries in our region, as well as in Europe, Asia and Africa, constraints on the delivery of social protection measures are

associated with the context in which the country operates (e.g., poverty rates, financial inclusion, connectivity, use of a unique identifier for individuals), the law and available financing to act, the capacity of the social protection system (coverage of social registries and programmes) and the means of delivery of entitlements (use of digital and electronic methods).

Given the current situation and the increasing exposure to disasters and crises, the question arises as to how countries can provide sufficient transfers to cover the needs of the population. The answer is not straightforward, but throughout the document we have provided background information on how countries were learning and adjusting emergency measures as information was gained, standards were established, and innovations were adopted for the delivery of entitlements. This alludes to the need to strengthen social institutions in all their dimensions (legal and normative, organizational, technical and operational, and fiscal) (Martínez and Maldonado, 2019) and to link the various social actors concerned in order to coordinate and interlink decisions towards the implementation of a rights-based and universalization in a way that is sensitive to the differences in the social protection systems of each country. As part of this development, it is recommended that short- and medium-term actions be designed and implemented to strengthen the social protection system and advance the design of an emergency response setup that incorporates the lessons learned and more explicitly links existing social-protection and risk management approaches (ECLAC, 2021a).

European countries are facing similar questions. Although the welfare state has structural characteristics are better for implementing social protection measures than the social protection systems being developed in Latin American and Caribbean, both regions are pursuing the same goals in terms of how to advance social protection in the face of the large social and economic gaps left by the pandemic, population aging, the situation of informal workers or workers with non-standard contracts and increased demand from the public for support to re-enter the labour market and recover their income, among other challenges. In other words, how to move towards a social protection and social security system that is more supportive, universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient.

Based on the information gathered and the analysis of the measures implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic both in Latin American and Caribbean countries and in European countries, different areas of work can be identified for improving social protection systems and their respective support instruments. The situation experienced since the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic shows the need to think about and plan social protection systems that are equipped to deal with situations of this nature, which are sure to occur again.

- (i) **Consolidate universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems** (ECLAC, 2021a). First, it is imperative to guarantee universal access to social protection and policies to deliver inclusive social development for populations hitherto excluded from access to welfare entitlements. The way to respond to these challenges is by advancing towards greater coverage, adequacy and financial sustainability of social protection systems that are also attentive to differences and inequalities. It is a matter of priority to reach traditionally overlooked populations, including informal workers, middle-income sectors, indigenous or Afrodescendent peoples, persons with disabilities, people in rural areas and homeless people, to mention a few examples. Throughout this paper, examples abound of steps taken by Latin American and Caribbean countries to include these populations because they were absent from the registries usually used, unlike European social protection systems, where progress had been made in establishing universal social protection mechanisms. The European Union has addressed this area by adopting an equity strategy in 2020 and 2021 that considers the unequal impacts of the pandemic on the population as a result of pre-existing social and economic gaps that the pandemic exacerbated (European Commission, 2021).

Secondly, given the nature of this crisis and of emergencies and disasters in general, it seems advisable to have flexible social protection instruments and, at the same time, to design and implement medium-term actions to strengthen the social protection system and move forward with the design of an emergency response mechanism that incorporates the lessons learned and more explicitly links existing social-protection and risk-management approaches (ECLAC, 2021a). This should encompass at least the areas of income protection, social protection and care, health and nutrition, education and housing. Adaptive tools must be available to respond to the needs and demands of the emergency that a country may experience. Rethinking social protection and promotion means clarifying the roles and functions of the different institutions and sectors involved, reviewing valuable experiences that could offer components that are flexible and easy to adapt to the reality of each country and determining the regulations necessary for the development of the new social protection and promotion strategy, its organizational functioning, the technical and operational needs of the system and possible sources of financing (Atuesta, Holz and Van Hemelryck, 2022).

In other words, within the social protection system, a structure must be established that responds to future shocks by activating emergency instruments to compensate for declines or losses in income, as well as a set of programmes for the ensuing recovery. In that regard, the European Commission (Baptista and others, 2021) also suggests that countries should constantly monitor access, availability, cost and quality of essential services in order to quickly spot abrupt changes in which state intervention is needed to stabilize prices or to support those unable to afford such services (Baptista and others, 2021).

Third, it is essential to move towards social protection systems that link and complement non-contributory and contributory entitlements, health and care systems, with the promotion of inclusion in employment and productive activity. The latter was one of the areas highlighted by the pandemic and opens windows of opportunity to think more explicitly about the linkages between social protection and labour inclusion, taking advantage of opportunities to strengthen the capacities of male and female workers, even during periods of pandemic and lockdowns. Likewise, talk of a universal basic income has acquired growing interest and importance, especially when considering the significant gaps in coverage of existing social protection systems. Of course, progress in these areas must explicitly consider the budgetary and financial sustainability constraints laid bare by current conditions in the countries. However, analysing the feasibility of strategies that ensure people's human rights and that can provide the basic services necessary to achieve social welfare is a key first step. At the same time, mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the eligibility requirements of recipients and the effects of programmes on specific groups should be included in order to adapt entitlements to the new needs of the population.

- (ii) **Strengthen labour protection policies and mechanisms to promote social, labour and productive inclusion**, in coordination with contributory and non-contributory social protection policies, ensuring decent jobs and working conditions for all. The COVID-19 crisis hit the labour market particularly hard, triggering historic unemployment rates and large drops in the number of employed and participation rates. It also created a particularly complex scenario for women, young people and older persons, who were often working in jobs with precarious and informal working conditions and without social security. As a result, some of the countries in the region have implemented specific programmes to support these groups, tailored to the difficulties that each face. Efforts to grasp the complexities of each population and devise policies to address their needs comprehensively must continue. Such policies must be complemented by labour market measures that take into account the changes underway prior to the pandemic as well as those that have

continued to emerge during it. In particular, it will be necessary to consider strategies to strengthen digital skills, improve labour market rules and foster inclusive labour processes to contend with the challenges associated with innovation, automation and labour market restructuring caused by the use of new technologies (ECLAC, 2021c).

Another crucial element of the changes in this area should be the identification and subsequent incorporation of all (or most) employment categories into social protection measures and systems, as has been attempted by European countries that have been adding non-standard employment categories such as workers in the arts and culture sector, platform workers or the self-employed. This requires adopting a strategic, integrated approach linking technology with education, vocational training and social policies, among other areas (ECLAC, 2021c). To that end, countries should weigh the costs and social risks of lack of access to unemployment measures for informal or own-account workers and provide them coverage regardless of the type of contract or time worked. In addition, it would be advisable to create a minimum income scheme that can be activated when people find themselves in adverse circumstances and that provides lifelong protection from falling into poverty, as recommended by the European Commission (Baptista and others, 2021) and the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021).

This is essential for informal workers, as well as for workers with non-standard contracts who were faced with a lack of social protection at the beginning of the pandemic. This lack of protection, among other factors, is due to the lack working conditions with guaranteed access to social security and the fact that such workers were not included in the social registries initially used to target the delivery of emergency measures. The effort made by the region's governments to provide them with support in the face of the adversity resulting from the pandemic should not be squandered. It is necessary to consider the tools used to include this population in social information systems and at the same time identify successful strategies associated with their inclusion through the universalization or expansion of coverage of some emergency measures.

With a view to the exchange of experiences and strategies, it should be noted that, in the case of the European Union, in March 2021, together with the presentation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, recommendations were put forward to support employment through the Effective Active Support to Employment (EASE) programme, included in the Recovery and Resilience Fund and the European Social Fund Plus, with the aim of generating labour retention policies to support recovery (European Commission, 2021).

- (iii) **Move towards an integrated social information system** that will provide all the necessary background information to deliver social entitlements quickly and effectively, making it easier for programmes to share information with each other. During the pandemic, under pressure to deliver support to households that were losing their sources of income, many governments had to face the following question: does the State have sufficient information to design and implement emergency social protection entitlements? And in the event that they are not sufficient, what data need to be incorporated? With those questions in mind, governments recorded new data that can now be incorporated into a broader information structure that includes the use of administrative records to develop disaggregated and interconnected systems that contribute to the management of the social protection system and can be complemented with information that governments continuously collect from surveys and censuses. To move in this direction, one alternative is to identify a secure way to link the data to the identity of a person and their family, which is often done through the civil registry identifier. This will not only improve data integration levels, but is also the first step towards information interoperability, a process that must include the definition of who is responsible

for the information, both its creation and modification, a legal framework and protocols for information protection and security, and data governance for its proper management.

This challenge is part of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, which states that it will be necessary to “consolidate information, monitoring and evaluation systems for social entitlements ... to allow them to be updated and monitored on a continuous basis, making them standardized and easily accessible for use by various public entities, enabling identification of gaps and inequalities in access to entitlements and reducing errors of exclusion or inclusion. Improve the quality of policies and fulfilment of policy goals” in order to establish, formalize and strengthen social institutions (ECLAC, 2021f). However, the information collected should not be thought of merely as a list of households with characteristics that allow them to be ranked, in order to target social programmes, but should be constructed as databases that complement other types of information held by the State in such a way that any person or their household can register whenever they wish (registration on demand or open window). In this way, a social information system will be created that does not exclude part of the population. This is a major challenge for the current social registries used to select recipients of entitlements in Latin America and the Caribbean (Berner and Van Hemelryck, 2020; Kidd, Athias and Mohamud, 2021). This is also one of the big differences with the social protection systems and the welfare state in European countries, where the basis is a social security system that is complemented by a free education and health system to guarantee these fundamental rights and which, in addition, contains a social assistance pillar to generate special programmes with tax-based financing.⁵⁵ In 2017, the European Commission established the European Pillar of Social Rights with an action plan defined in March 2021 to be implemented by 2030,⁵⁶ financing for which comes from available European funds.⁵⁷ This pillar includes the promotion of children’s rights, the right to social protection in the event of unemployment, a minimum income, reintegration into the labour market for people without sufficient resources, the right of access to health and care, the right to pensions and comprehensive measures for persons with disabilities, among other measures to guarantee the rights to housing and basic services (European Commission, 2021).

How could a rights-based approach be incorporated into social information system development work? The experience observed in Latin America includes open application platforms, coordination with the local level (municipalities and community organizations) and new registries. Incorporating the principle of active search for groups traditionally left off social registries or potential recipients of social policies in a permanent and efficient manner should outline a work path for the years ahead as part of the post-pandemic challenges. However, it is essential that in this process progress is made with data governance in order to include measures on personal data protection rights as well as with regulations and protocols for its total safeguarding.

⁵⁵ For example, incentive and disincentive systems to become employed, where entitlements delivered based on exclusion did not exceed 11% in 2019. See [online] [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title= Social_protection_statistics_-_social_benefits#Means-tested_benefits](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Social_protection_statistics_-_social_benefits#Means-tested_benefits).

⁵⁶ See [online] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en and https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en.

⁵⁷ See [online] https://eurosocial.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Plan_de_accion_Pilar_EU.pdf: On this aspect, the Plan does not earmark resources for the development of the Social Pillar, but rather calls for the use of available funds (largely European) and for shared responsibility of EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society. The European funds available come from the EU 2021–2027 ordinary budget and Next Generation EU (€ 1.8 billion). Within the Community instruments, the European Social Fund (ESF+), with € 88 billion, will continue to be the main EU source to support the implementation of the Pillar and to achieve the three main objectives proposed by the EU (page 4).

In addition, the social information system should serve as an instrument for monitoring and subsequently evaluating social policies, plans and programmes and, thus, optimizing decision-making in the implementation of the different social protection schemes. As presented in the second section, a review of the functioning of the welfare entitlements provided during the pandemic is necessary to determine the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful measures. Evaluating the impacts of these policies not only enables an understanding of the use of resources but also of the strategies that are working in responding to the differentiated needs of the population. For example, based on this exercise and the analysis carried out, it is fair to say that non-contributory transfers have played an important role in ensuring the basic needs of the population during the pandemic, especially for families of informal workers and for those that were not registered in social protection systems. It is also very important to investigate elements of their design, linkage with other programmes (such as labour inclusion) and disaster management mechanisms. The review of the data and the experiences of the countries makes it possible to outline certain lines of action in the short term to face future disasters, and in the long term based on investment in social infrastructure that includes measures to promote decent work and a recovery with equality, equity and sustainability and that addresses the challenges of moving towards universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient protection systems, as presented in the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development (ECLAC, 2021a).

- (iv) **Using information and communication technology tools to improve ways of processing people's data**, generate and combine information, especially from administrative records, and facilitate contact with recipients of welfare entitlements is an area that has stood out throughout the pandemic. Technology and digital advances have been harnessed in a number of ways during the pandemic, including, for example, to streamline registration of potential recipients of welfare entitlements by developing application platforms and mobile applications that allow a more direct, constant, fluid and rapid communication with end users. They also made it possible to deliver emergency cash transfers quickly and securely, enabling contact with recipients without breaking physical distancing protocols. Undoubtedly, technology has greatly changed how we work and communicate. However, it has also given rise to new social gaps due to inequality in people's access and—in particular—digital literacy, which has altered the structure of the labour market and had an impact on employment (ECLAC, 2021c). People living in poverty or in rural and isolated areas face limited connectivity and a shortage of technological devices that is currently not addressed by the digital and physical infrastructure provided by Latin American and Caribbean governments. Therefore, this situation gives rise to risks of digital exclusion (Martínez, Palma and Velázquez, 2020; Ohlenburg, 2020) and potentially, if not corrected by supplementing with other channels of communication and work, also of exclusion from social entitlements.

In addition, technology can be very useful for optimizing the processes of exchange and cross-referencing databases within the social information system. Improvements in the use of technological systems complement the development of the architecture of social information systems that allows the implementation of more secure interfaces that offer adequate information privacy protocols, increasing data accessibility and developing system interoperability, which in turn leads to greater accuracy and quality in the information used. Technology can be useful as a tool to improve the transparency of the State's actions, using elements such as digital government, which can eliminate unnecessary paperwork and reduce the number of in-person visits (which is ideal during a pandemic), as well as enabling the delivery of cash to the people and greater efficiency and security in transactions. This allows the development of more dynamic and flexible—and therefore more durable—information infrastructure, which can, thus, acquire the capacity to change and adapt if ad hoc digital tools

are designed and incorporated in conjunction with transparent, information security and privacy standards and practices (Doyle and others, 2021), with strict adherence to a rights-based approach and regulations in that regard.

- (v) Another challenge that emerges from the lessons learned in the pandemic is **to improve social institutions, governance and intersectoral linkage and coordination**, as well as the relationship with other stakeholders. In addressing this challenge, it is necessary to ask which are the institutions and actors that collect, generate, store and use data? How can these institutions or actors best coordinate their work and share the information they have? Which are the institutions, be they public or private, for-profit or not-for-profit, or international organizations, that are part of the actors that design, implement, monitor and evaluate public programmes? In view of the lessons learned from the pandemic, intersectoral coordination is key to the timely and targeted delivery of welfare entitlements. In addition, the support of civil organizations and public institutions at the local level, particularly municipalities, should be considered for identifying the most vulnerable people passed over by social protection system. There is also a clear need to promote international cooperation and regional dialogue on strengthening social protection systems.

The role of social actors can be fundamental in the development and implementation of changes in social protection systems, especially in the transition process and making changes sustainable. For example, in the European Union, social actors have collaborated by submitting proposals for a just and sustainable recovery. Social dialogue is a key aspect in the action plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission, 2021). Thus, for the strengthening and development of social institutions, it is essential to consider the geographic scope in terms of the territorial deployment of institutions and the legal and normative; organizational; technical and operational; and financing dimensions they encompass (Martínez and Maldonado, 2019).

In light of the above, it is necessary to bear in mind the needs and peculiarities of each country. The difficulties of implementing each of these measures must also be considered in a context of transformative recovery that puts equality at the centre, in which countries face substantial fiscal challenges while needing to maintain support for the most vulnerable population groups. It is, therefore, necessary to identify certain actions that can be implemented or activated in the short term, as well as others that, due to their characteristics and costs, are for the medium or long term.

In that regard, Latin American and Caribbean countries that have made progress in building networks and infrastructure to implement emergency measures can build on those advances to develop medium- and long-term strategies. To do so, it is key to identify the main steps in a time horizon. In the short term, governments could work on the identification of existing actions implemented during the pandemic, as well as those necessary to devise a future strategy or action plan for the development of social protection systems that move towards universalization, comprehensiveness and a rights-based approach. It is also necessary to review previous initiatives that have not succeeded and to analyse experiences in other countries where they have. This exercise is essential as part of the monitoring and evaluation of the actions implemented. The idea is to identify the actions that work and can continue to be used and those that need to be modified or adjusted in order to optimize the package of measures delivered to the population. Consideration could also be given to developing strategies for accountability, transparency and access to information that will bring the State closer to citizens. This would create communication channels allowing the collection of important information for public management and for knowledge and access to the public programmes offered. Likewise, developing digital tools would make it possible to generate and systematize information in a faster and more timely manner for the entire population, while abiding strictly with the necessary regulations for the protection of personal data and the rights of individuals.

In the medium or long term, new instruments should be established, or existing ones adjusted in such a way that they interlink and complement each other within the framework of universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems. Progress must be made in promoting coordinated actions among institutions that offer a package of services necessary to avoid falling into poverty and to sustain a basic level of income that is sufficient to offset eventual income losses. In other words, the proposal is to come up with social protection mechanisms whose programmes interlink and complement each other where necessary, without duplication, and to look for strategies to enable sustainability over time in the event that complex situations, crises or disasters become prolonged. These systems should create and implement instruments for follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of social policies and programmes, while at the same time generating a governance scheme that allows the work plan to be fulfilled. Likewise, a medium-term challenge on which the countries must make progress in parallel is to transform the productive structure to prioritize more strategic sectors for the country's development. All this, while putting decent work and formal employment activities at the centre, moving towards greener economies and strengthening universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems with a rights-based approach (ILO, 2021; ECLAC, 2022a).

Of course, this strengthening of social protection must consider people of all ages (girls, boys, young people, men and women of working age, retired older men and women), gender gaps, digital divides and other inequalities associated with, for example, indigenous and Afrodescendent populations, migration status, dependents or people with disabilities, to mention a few, thus moving towards the full application of the rights-based approach and social justice. These aspects must be incorporated in a cross-cutting manner in the social institutional framework. These systems should also consider aspects of institutional management such as the establishment of information systems, institutional governance, monitoring and evaluation systems for welfare entitlements, as well as taking into account how to link different systems or areas of social policy such as care, health, special assistance mechanisms for excluded groups, emergency systems, the labour market and critical dimensions of the institutional framework (legal and regulatory; organizational; technical and operational, and financing).

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Annexes

Table A1
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries): main measures taken to sustain employment amid the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020–2021

	Argentina	Brazil	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Chile	Colombia	Costa Rica	Cuba	Dominican Republic	Ecuador	El Salvador	Guatemala	Haiti	Honduras	Mexico	Nicaragua	Panama	Paraguay	Peru	Uruguay	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Antigua and Barbuda	Bahamas	Barbados	Belize	Dominica	Grenada	Guyana	Jamaica	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Saint Lucia	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Suriname	Trinidad and Tobago		
Ban on dismissals	x	x	x		x					x	x			x						x															
Teleworking	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x			x	x			x			x	
Changes in working hours, exceptional working hours and wage cuts	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x			x	x	x	x	x	x						x	x				x	x			
Mechanisms for the temporary suspension of employment contracts	x	x		x	x	x		x		x	x				x	x	x	x	x																
Use of accrued or advance leave	x	x			x	x		x	x							x	x	x														x			
Leave for workers in groups vulnerable to COVID-19 or responsible for children or adolescents attending online classes or for ill or older persons	x		x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x						x	x	x				x			x						x	x	
Job creation programmes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x				x						x	x														x	
Special training programmes	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x													x			x									x

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021 (LC/PUB.2021/10-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2021.

Table A2
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries): innovations in the registration and identification
of potential recipients as of 31 October 2021
(Number of measures)

Country	Changes in the characterization instrument or changes in user selection	Use of ICT	Improvement of information systems and recipient registries	New registries of potential participants	Measures implemented by country
Antigua and Barbuda	0	2	2	2	4
Argentina	1	4	7	6	24
Bahamas	0	3	2	2	5
Barbados	0	2	1	0	6
Belize	0	4	2	1	8
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	0	1	1	0	7
Brazil	2	1	3	1	9
Chile	3	7	2	2	17
Colombia	1	4	1	1	26
Costa Rica	2	5	4	4	18
Cuba	0	0	1	0	5
Dominica	0	2	2	1	2
Dominican Republic	0	0	1	1	6
Ecuador	1	1	1	0	8
El Salvador	1	0	0	0	4
Grenada	1	2	1	1	7
Guatemala	1	0	4	3	10
Guyana	1	1	1	1	7
Haiti	1	0	0	0	4
Honduras	0	2	1	1	8
Jamaica	0	3	3	3	13
Mexico	0	2	2	2	7
Nicaragua	0	0	0	0	1
Panama	0	1	1	1	5
Paraguay	3	3	2	2	13
Peru	2	2	4	1	20
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0	0	1	0	5
Saint Lucia	0	3	2	2	13
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1	3	2	2	12
Suriname	0	2	2	1	6
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0	3	3	9
Uruguay	1	5	4	2	15
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	1	19	0	0	29
Grand total	23	84	63	46	333
Percentage of total measures	6.9	25.2	18.9	13.8	100.0
Percentage of measures with some type of innovation	19.0	69.4	52.1	38.0	36.3

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

^a The emergency measures reviewed correspond to both existing (pre-pandemic) programmes and new programmes created during the pandemic to address the needs of the population for increased support to mitigate the pandemic's effects and are, therefore, part of the overall emergency measures applied (emergency entitlement packages).

Table A3
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries): main characteristics of emergency cash and in-kind transfers announced between March 2020 and October 2021

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
Antigua and Barbuda	National School Meals Programme	IT	NA	Once	2	In cash or in kind	NI	42.48		E
	COVID-19 Emergency Food Assistance Programme - Grace Relief	CT	NP	Once	9	In cash or in kind	Home	74.07		C E
	Free Employability/Entrepreneurship Online Training	CT	NP	Daily	2.5	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
	Government Assistance Programme (GAP)	CT	NP	NI	NI	Delivery of vouchers	NI	NI		
Argentina	Grant for users of Universal Child Allowance (AUH) and Universal Pregnancy Allowance for Social Protection (AUE)	CT	IA	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	43.65		C E
	Grant for users of non-contributory pension recipients	CT	IA	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	41.36		C E
	Food card (change in access and delivery method)	CT	IC	Weekly	10	Virtual payment cards	Commercial establishments	68.94	Yes	E
	Emergency Family Income	CT	NP	Three times	5	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	137.87		C E
	Reinforcement for beneficiaries of social plans	CT	IA	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	41.36		C E
	Adjustment to school feeding delivery mode	CT	NA	Biweekly	22	In cash or in kind	Schools	20.68	Yes	E
	Assistance Programme for Argentines Abroad	CT	NP	NI	NI	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	NI		
	Extraordinary payment for retirees	CT	NA	Twice	2	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	22.06		E
	Programme of Economic Assistance for Nursing Homes of People with Disabilities	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	275.75		
	Family Support Allowance	CT	IA	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	206.81	Yes	
	Increase in social security services	CT	IA	NI	NI	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	NI		
	Reimbursement of 15% of debit card purchases	CT	NP	Monthly	22	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	9.65	Yes	
MANTA, scholarship for artisanal production development	CT	NP	Once	1	Mobile money transfer	Banks or cashiers	1 120.22		E	

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Support Culture Scholarship I and II	CT	NP	Once	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	344.68		C E
	Strengthen Culture Programme	CT	NP	Monthly	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	206.81		C E
	Productive and solidary call for promotion	CT	NA	Once	2	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	333.44		E
	Extraordinary reinforcement of the Boost Work Programme	CT	NA	Twice	8	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	106.51	Yes	C E
	Increase of coverage and a 50% increase in the amount of the Food Card	CT	IA	Weekly	11	Virtual payment cards	Commercial establishments	34.47	Yes	E
	Training incentives for residents of health services	CT	NP	Monthly	6	NI	NI	351.58	Yes	
	Cultura Solidaria special support	CT	NP	Four times	7	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	206.81	Yes	E
	Extraordinary allowance for retirees	CT	NP	Three times	5	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	20.68	Yes	E
	Reinforcement of the Universal Child Allowance (AUH)	CT	NA	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	206.81	Yes	E
	Integration is Health Programme	CT	NP	NI	1	In cash or in kind	Other	264.59	Yes	E
	Youth and MiPyMEs Programme	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Other	NI	Yes	
Bahamas	Government Funded Unemployment Assistance for COVID-19	CT	NP	Biweekly	10	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	720.00	Yes	C E
	Advancement of assistance for persons with disabilities	CT	AD	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Student Lunch Program Vouchers	CT	NA	Biweekly	3	Delivery of vouchers	Schools	100.00		E
	Food assistance vouchers and social support	CT	NP	Biweekly	12	Delivery of vouchers	Other	200.00	Yes	C E
	Emergency Food Assistance	CT	NA	Once	5	In cash or in kind	Other	50.00		E
Barbados	Vulnerable Family Survival Programme	CT	NP	Monthly	3	NI	NI	300.00		C E
	40% increase for monthly programmes from the Welfare Department	CT	IA	Monthly	3	NI	NI	NI		
	Care packages	CT	NP	Once	11	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Adopt Our Families	CT	NP	Monthly	15	Virtual payment cards	Home	300.00	Yes	C E
	Coursera Workforce Recovery Programme	CT	NP	Once	4	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Food Vouchers	CT	IC	NI	15	Delivery of vouchers	Commercial establishments	130.79	Yes	E
Belize	Unemployment Relief Program	CT	NP	Biweekly	7	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	150.00		C E
	Guarantee of basic services (water and electricity)	CT	NP	Monthly	4	In cash or in kind	Home	35.71		E
	Maintenance of School Feeding Program	CT	NA	NI	2	In cash or in kind	Schools	124.89		E
	Food Assistance Program	CT	NP	Four times	6	In cash or in kind	Commercial establishments	78.54		C E
	Expansion of BOOST (Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation)	CT	IC	Monthly	21	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	77.51	Yes	C E
	Contingency Emergency Response Component - Cash Transfer for farmers-Farmers Relief	CT	NP	Once	9	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	250.00	Yes	E
	New Food Assistance Program	CT	NA	NI	NI	NI	NI	41.67	Yes	E
	Belize Covid-19 Cash Transfer Program (BCCAT)	CT	NP	Three times	6	Mobile money transfer	Other	75.00	Yes	E
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Universal Grant	CT	NP	Once	5	In cash or in kind	NI	72.36		C E
	Family Grant	CT	NP	Once	4	In cash or in kind	Banks or cashiers	72.36		C E
	Family basket	CT	NP	Once	7	In cash or in kind	Home	57.89		C E
	Plan to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 among Afro-Bolivian Indigenous Peasant Peoples	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
	Anti-Hunger Grant	CT	NP	Once	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	144.72	Yes	E
	<i>Renta Dignidad</i> (Dignity Income) annual grant	CT	AD	Once	5	In cash or in kind	Banks or cashiers	45.34		E
	Delivery of electronic equipment to students	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	NI	NI	Yes	E

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
Brazil	Emergency assistance to indigenous families under the Bolsa Família family allowance programme	CT	IA	Monthly	3	Virtual payment cards	Other	112.42		E
	Increased coverage of Bolsa Família programme	CT	IC	Monthly	22	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	35.95	Yes	E
	Advance payment of the continuous benefit programme (<i>Benefício de Prestação Contínua</i> – BPC)	CT	AD	Monthly	10	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	67.38		E
	Emergency Aid	CT	NP	Monthly	19	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	112.42	Yes	C E
	School meals distribution	CT	NA	NI	21	In cash or in kind	Schools	0.78	Yes	E
	Delivery of food baskets to indigenous families	CT	NP	Twice	2	In cash or in kind	NI	26.07		E
	Purchase of food from family farmers (Alimenta Brasil Programme)	CT	NA	NI	21	In cash or in kind	Soup kitchens	1.11	Yes	E
	Food Distribution Action (ADA) and Fraternal Brazil	CT	NP	NI	1	In cash or in kind	Home	38.43	Yes	E
	Nutritional reinforcement and fight against obesity in children and pregnant women of Bolsa Família	CT	NA	Daily	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
Chile	COVID-19 Emergency Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	62.96		E
	Emergency Family Income for COVID-19 (IFE)	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	193.37		E
	Emergency Family Income 2.0 for COVID-19 (IFE 2.0)	CT	NP	Monthly	5	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	206.52		C E
	Junaeb Basket	CT	NA	Twice	1	In cash or in kind	Schools	NI		
	Food for Chile programme	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Protection for homeless persons – Protected Winter	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Other	NI	Yes	
	Middle Class Protection Plan 2: Rent allowance for the middle class	CT	NP	Monthly	3	NI	NI	314.82		E
	Middle Class Protection Plan 5: Non-refundable grant for the middle class	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	629.64		C E
	Organizations in Action	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	NI		
Covid Christmas Bonus	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	86.99		E	

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	IFE-COVID Extended Grant (former IFE COVID (IFE-Quarantine and IFE-Transition))	CT	NP	Monthly	5	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	209.09	Yes	C E
	COVID Voucher (IFE-Preparation and Opening)	CT	NP	Monthly	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	NI	Yes	
	Delivery of tablets to users of the Abriendo Caminos programme	CT	NA	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
	Rental Subsidy 2021	CT	NP	Monthly	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	314.82	Yes	E
	Healthy Food Delivery to Community Pots	CT	NP	Once	6	In cash or in kind	Soup kitchens	28.55	Yes	E
	Support Programme for Students with Disabilities in Institutions of Higher Education	CT	NA	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
	IFE Universal Grant	CT	NP	Monthly	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	368.94	Yes	C E
Colombia	Families in Action	CT	IA	Five times	9	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	38.55		C E
	Youth in Action	CT	IA	Five times	9	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	94.65		C E
	Colombia Mayor Senior Citizen Programme	CT	IA	15 times	15	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	21.27	Yes	C E
	Colombia está Contigo (Colombia is with you) vulnerable population programme	CT	NP	Twice	2	In cash or in kind	Home	31.11		C E
	School Feeding Programme, "PAE at Home"	CT	NA	Monthly	22	In cash or in kind	Schools	13.29	Yes	E
	Solidarity Income	CT	NP	Monthly	33	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	42.54	Yes	C E
	Food for La Guajira	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Early Childhood Food Baskets	CT	IC	Five times	4	In cash or in kind	Home	0.95		E
	Colombia está Contigo (Colombia is with you), One Million Families Programme	CT	NP	Once	7	In cash or in kind	Home	35.49		C E
	Social welfare – value-added tax (VAT) relief	CT	NP	Bimonthly	22	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	9.97	Yes	E
	Humanitarian assistance for victims of the conflict	CT	AD	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	186.11		E
	Administrative reparations for victims of the conflict	CT	AD	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	2 127.02		E
	Voluntary contributions to purchase and distribute food packages (Ayudar nos hace bien)	CT	NP	Once	7	In cash or in kind	Home	69.13		C E

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Economic incentive for farm workers and producers over 70 years of age	CT	NP	NI	2	NI	NI	21.27		C E
	Special economic support for the population in the process of reintegration (demobilized combatants)	CT	NP	NI	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	42.54		C E
	Support programme for workers with suspended contracts	CT	NP	Monthly	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	42.54		C E
	Colombia está Contigo (Colombia is with you), Vulnerable Migrant Programme	CT	NP	Once	3	In cash or in kind	Home	31.11		C E
	Colombia está Contigo (Colombia is with you) vulnerable population programme	CT	NP	NI	3	In cash or in kind	Home	31.11		E
	College tuition subsidy	CT	NP	Once	6	NI	NI	460.71	Yes	E
	Manos que Alimentan (Hands that feed)	CT	NP	NI	16	NI	NI	80.17	Yes	E
	Tiendas para la Gente (Shops for the People)	CT	NP	NI	3	NI	NI	175.34		E
	Economy for the People	CT	NP	NI	15	NI	NI	1 152.94	Yes	C E
	Temporary financial compensation	CT	NP	Once	17	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	55.04	Yes	E
	Computers for Education - Digital Learning	CT	NA	NI	22	In cash or in kind	Schools	NI	Yes	
	Workforce Recovery Initiative- Coursera	CT	NP	NI	6	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Donations in kind	CT	NP	NI	20	In cash or in kind	Home	88.90	Yes	E
Costa Rica	School meal food packages	CT	NA	Monthly	21	In cash or in kind	Schools	35.05	Yes	E
	CEN-CINAI en Casa (At home) programme	CT	NA	Monthly	21	In cash or in kind	Home	63.35	Yes	E
	Food provision for older persons	CT	NA	NI	5	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Temporary allowance for lottery ticket vendors	CT	NP	Monthly	3	NI	NI	340.28		C E
	Bono Proteger programme	CT	NP	Monthly	9	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	206.71		C E
	Emergency allowance of the Mixed Social Assistance Institute (IMAS)	CT	NP	Twice	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	195.00		C E
	Advance payment of the Non-Contributory Regime pensions	CT	AD	Monthly	5	In cash or in kind	Other	139.52		C E
	Food delivery campaign ("Campaña Con Vos Podemos" and "Enlace de Esfuerzos")	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	9.16		E

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Close season allowance for fisherfolk	CT	NP	Monthly	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	246.70		C E
	Special measures for people with disabilities during the health emergency	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Skills Protect Plan	CT	NP	Once	6	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Assistance for small agricultural producers	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	1 326.72		C E
	Strategy for a comprehensive assistance for senior citizens because of COVID-19	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	149.00		
	Attention by Health Order of Home Isolation (COVID-19)	CT	NP	Once	5	In cash or in kind	Other	107.11		E
	Emergency grant for funeral expenses and payment of death certificate	CT	NP	NI	17	Transfer to bank account	Other	679.96	Yes	E
	Distribution of sanitary supplies for students in vulnerable areas	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Schools	0.48	Yes	E
	Strengthen the response capacity of women entrepreneurs-businesswomen in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic	CT	NP	NI	7	NI	NI	61.58	Yes	C E
	Scholarships to improve access to employment to address the impact of a pandemic	CT	NP	Once	1	NI	NI	1 701.40		
Cuba	Modification of the basic food basket	CT	NA	NI	22	In cash or in kind	Home	7.50	Yes	C E
	Food for older persons	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Assistance to pay for basic services	CT	NA	Once	18	In cash or in kind	Other	NI		
	Change in food delivery of the Family Attention System	CT	NA	Daily	22	In cash or in kind	Home	26.25	Yes	E
	Distribution of food module donated to Cuba	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Other	NI	Yes	
Dominica	Emergency Agricultural Livelihoods and Climate Resilience Project (EALCRP)	CT	NA	NI	20	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	518.52	Yes	C E
	Dominica Emergency Agriculture Livelihoods and Climate Resilience Project (DEALCRP)	CT	NP	Twice	2	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	166.67		C E
Dominican Republic	COVID-19 prevention kits and delivery of food rations (Presidential Social Plan - Covid-19 Emergency Operation)	CT	NP	Daily	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Quédate en Casa (Stay at home) programme	CT	NP	Monthly	13	Transfer via personal national identification number	Banks or cashiers	92.82	Yes	C E
	School feeding	CT	NA	Weekly	22	In cash or in kind	Schools	NI	Yes	
	Pa' Ti Self-Employment Assistance Programme	CT	NP	Monthly	7	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	87.44		C E
	Studying with you Grant (BEC)	CT	NP	Monthly	4	In cash or in kind	Other	26.23	Yes	E
	Distance Education Programme	CT	NA	NI	14	In cash or in kind	Home	24.54	Yes	E
Ecuador	Health Emergency Family Protection Grant	CT	NP	Monthly	3	In cash or in kind	Banks or cashiers	60.00		C E
	Food kits	CT	NP	Biweekly	1	In cash or in kind	Home	12.50		C E
	School feeding	CT	NA	Every 18 days	NI	In cash or in kind	Schools	NI		
	Support for priority care groups	CT	NA	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Financial compensation for families whose income has been affected by the crisis	CT	NP	NI	6	NI	Not specified	235.00	Yes	C E
	Nutritional Support Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Banks or cashiers	240.00		C E
	Family Protection Grant (Phase III and IV)	CT	NP	Once	2	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	120.00	Yes	C E
	Temporary increase to recipients of Social Protection Grants	CT	IA	Bimonthly	12	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	7.50	Yes	
El Salvador	Grant of US\$ 300	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	300.00		E
	Food baskets (Health Emergency Programme - PES)	CT	NP	Five times	16	In cash or in kind	Home	5.88	Yes	C E
	Family School Meals Package - School Meals Programme	CT	NA	Three times	10	In cash or in kind	Schools	24.38	Yes	E
	Delivery of computers to public school students	CT	NP	Once	7	In cash or in kind	Schools	375.00	Yes	E
Grenada	Public jobs programme - Emergency Relief	CT	NP	NI	3	NI	NI	NI		
	Support for Education, Empowerment and Development Programme (SEED)	CT	NA	Monthly	22	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Income support to self-employed workers	CT	NP	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI		
	Workforce Recovery Initiative	CT	NP	Once	5	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Subsidised Internet Access or Internet Connectivity Programme (ICP) - (Economic Stimulus Package and COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Support Package 2.0)	CT	NP	Monthly	5	In cash or in kind	Home	11.11	Yes	C E
	Income Support to Informal Sector Workers - COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Support Package 2.0	CT	NP	Monthly	4	NI	NI	185.19	Yes	
	Expansion of the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (Youth Entrepreneurship Programme - COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Support Package 2.0)	CT	IC	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	NI	NI	Yes	
Guatemala	School feeding programme	CT	NA	Biweekly	16	In cash or in kind	Schools	14.48	Yes	E
	Cash transfers	CT	NP	NI	1	NI	NI	64.66		E
	COVID-19 Food Support and Prevention Programme	CT	NP	Once	12	In cash or in kind	Home	45.27	Yes	E
	Family Grant	CT	NP	Three times	8	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	129.33		C E
	Support for Small Local Enterprise	CT	NP	Once	1	Mobile money transfer	Banks or cashiers	129.33		C E
	"Together we'll get through this" kit	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	17.99		E
	Economic Contribution to Older Persons Programme, expansion of coverage	CT	IC	Monthly	21	In cash or in kind	Banks or cashiers	51.73	Yes	C E
	COVID-19 assistance fund in the event of death abroad	CT	NP	NI	9	NI	NI	1 571.43		E
	Fortified Complementary Food "NutriNiños"	CT	NP	Monthly	12	In cash or in kind	Other	1.23	Yes	E
	Community Household (Food Bags)	CT	NA	Monthly	22	In cash or in kind	Home	30.42	Yes	E
Guyana	Social Relief Hampers	CT	NP	Once	6	In cash or in kind	Home	143.88		C E
	COVID-19 Public Assistance Voucher Programme	CT	NP	Once	1	Delivery of vouchers	Home	NI		
	COVID-19 Relief Kitchen Garden Initiative	CT	NA	Once	1	Delivery of vouchers	Home	NI		

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	COVID-19 Relief Cash Grants	CT	NP	Once	10	In cash or in kind	Home	119.90	Yes	C E
	Free access to online courses through COURSERA	CT	NP	Once	7	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
	One-off Cash Grant	CT	NP	Once	2	Delivery of vouchers	Other	119.90	Yes	E
	Face Masks Donation	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Schools	0.04	Yes	E
Haiti	Social assistance transfer	CT	NP	Once	1	Mobile money transfer	Home	32.81		C E
	Delivery of food packages	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Other	16.02		C E
	National School Meals Programme	CT	NA	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	NI	NI	Yes	
	Transfers to informal workers	CT	NP	NI	6	In cash or in kind	NI	72.70		C E
Honduras	School feeding	CT	NA	Twice	4	In cash or in kind	Schools	1.21		E
	Honduras Solidaria programme	CT	NP	Three times	6	In cash or in kind	Home	81.41		C E
	Solidarity Grant for Productivity	CT	NA	NI	1	In cash or in kind	Home	81.24		C E
	The solidarity errand	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Other	NI		
	Solidarity grant for transport workers	CT	NP	Once	2	Mobile money transfer	Commercial establishments	81.41		C E
	One-time Grant (or Self-Employed or Independent Workers Assistance Project)	CT	NP	Once	10	Virtual payment cards	Commercial establishments	81.41	Yes	C E
	Modification to the delivery of the "Better Life" and Disability Grant	CT	NA	Quarterly	14	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	NI	Yes	
	Delivery of electronic tablets to students	CT	NP	Once	3	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
Jamaica	Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) (50% increase in the regular amount of the transfer)	CT	IA	Monthly	4	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	6.63		C E
	Food assistance - PATH	CT	NA	Once	3	In cash or in kind	Schools	NI		

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	COVID-19 Compassionate Grant - CARE Programme	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	69.82		C E
	Dignity kit packages	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	NI	46.08		C E
	Supporting Employees with Transfer of Cash (SET Cash) programme - CARE Programme	CT	NP	Biweekly	5	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	125.68		C E
	COVID-19 General Grants - CARE Programme	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	279.28		C E
	Welfare packages	CT	NP	Weekly	3	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Back-to-School Grant	CT	IA	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	59.35		E
	5-Year Digital Skills Programme	CT	NP	NI	5	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
	One Laptop Or Tablet Per Child	CT	NP	Once	15	In cash or in kind	Schools	255.44	Yes	C E
	National Summer School Programme	CT	NP	Daily	2	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
	COVID-19 relief voucher through "Food For the Poor Jamaica"	CT	NP	Once	NI	NI	Commercial establishments	NI	Yes	
	Buy-Back Programme	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Other	NI	Yes	
Mexico	Pension Programme for the Well-Being of Older Persons (advance payment equivalent to four months)	CT	AD	Twice	4	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	237.91		C E
	Pension Programme for the Well-being of Persons with Permanent Disabilities (advance payment equivalent to four months)	CT	AD	Twice	4	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	237.91		C E
	Sembrando Vida (Sowing life) programme	CT	IC	Monthly	7	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	227.01		C E
	Assistance component for the well-being of fisherfolk and fish farmers (Bienpesca)	CT	IC	Once	9	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	326.89		C E
	Funeral Expenses Support Programme	CT	NP	Once	NI	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	520.31	Yes	
	Strengthening of the "Support Programme for the Wellbeing of Girls and Boys, Children of Working Mothers"	CT	NA	Bimonthly	NI	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	72.64		
	Strengthening of the "Youth Building the Future Programme"	CT	NA	Monthly	20	In cash or in kind	Home	170.17	Yes	C E
Nicaragua	Food transfer	CT	NA	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI		

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
Panama	Panama Solidarity Plan	CT	NP	Monthly	15	In cash or in kind	Home	102.67	Yes	C E
	Vale Panamá voucher programme	CT	NP	Once	1	Delivery of vouchers	NI	50.00		E
	Medicine delivery	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Solidary Panama: For Our Children	CT	NP	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI		
	New Panama Solidarity Plan	CT	NP	Monthly	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	120.00	Yes	E
Paraguay	Tekopora (additional payment and increase in coverage)	CT	IA	Once	21	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	13.19	Yes	E
	Food Pension for Older Persons in a Situation of Poverty	CT	AD	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	80.36		E
	Assistance to Community Organizations Kitchens Project (Pacoc).	CT	NA	Bimonthly	22	In cash or in kind	Soup kitchens	2.02	Yes	E
	Ñangareko Food Security Programme	CT	NP	Once	5	Mobile money transfer	Home	73.30		E
	Food kits "My school lunch at home"	CT	NA	Quarterly	22	In cash or in kind	Schools	77.83	Yes	E
	Food kits for indigenous families	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Pytyvõ Grant	CT	NP	Twice	5	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	80.36		C E
	Pytyvõ Grant 2.0	CT	NP	Monthly	5	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	73.30		C E
	Abrazo child protection programme - expansion of coverage	CT	IC	Weekly	22	In cash or in kind	Home	58.64	Yes	C E
	Assistance to popular pots	CT	NP	Monthly	13	In cash or in kind	Soup kitchens	14.27	Yes	E
	Compensation to suspended workers due to the pandemic	CT	NP	Monthly	11	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	101.01	Yes	C E
	Border Subsidy Assistance Programme	CT	NP	Monthly	2	Transfer to bank account	Home	73.30	Yes	
	Programme for the Improvement of Learning Conditions through the Incorporation of ICT in Educational Establishments and Educational Management Units (Delivery of computer devices for the strengthening of Distance Education)	CT	NA	Once	7	In cash or in kind	Schools	88.45	Yes	E

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
Peru	Yo me quedo en casa (I'm staying at home) grant (also known as Bono 760 soles or Bono Urbano)	CT	NP	Twice	2	In cash or in kind	Banks or cashiers	110.52		C E
	Universal Family Grant	CT	NP	Once	5	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	221.04		C E
	Rural Grant	CT	NP	Once	2	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	110.52		C E
	Non-contributory pensions - Pension 65 and CONTIGO (double advance payment)	CT	AD	Three times	8	Transfer to bank account	NI	147.37		E
	Additional discount voucher for the purchase of gas cylinders	CT	IA	Once	1	Delivery of vouchers	NI	4.65		E
	Qali Warma food distribution programme	CT	NA	NI	21	In cash or in kind	Home	14.97	Yes	E
	Food basket	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Home	23.27		E
	Grant for independent workers	CT	NP	Once	7	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	221.04		C E
	Financial assistance for Venezuelan migrants	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	110.52		
	Orphanage Grant (Bono Orfandad) Economic Assistance for Orphans due to COVID-19	CT	NP	Bimonthly	7	NI	NI	58.17	Yes	E
	Allowance for independent cultural workers	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	2 181.34		E
	Advanced transfer to users of the JUNTOS National Programme of Direct Support to the Poorest	CT	AD	Once	NI	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	116.34		E
	Second Universal Family Grant	CT	NP	Once	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	221.04		E
	Temporary Support for the Strengthening of Child Development - Grant of 200 soles for children	CT	NP	Five times	12	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	29.08	Yes	C E
	CONTIGO programme - increased coverage	CT	IC	Bimonthly	16	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	43.63	Yes	E
600 soles grant	CT	NP	Once	8	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	174.51	Yes	E	
Temporary Intervention to Support the productive development of rural households with a subsistence economy - Haku Wifay "Express"	CT	NA	NI	12	In cash or in kind	Home	91.89	Yes	E	

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Support Network for Seniors at High Risk and People with Severe Disabilities - Amachay Network	CT	NP	NI	16	In cash or in kind	Home	2.44	Yes	E
	Yanapay Peru Grant	CT	NP	Once	4	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	101.80	Yes	E
	Adaptation of the services of the "Cuna Más" programme	CT	NA	NI	7	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Delivery of food vouchers	CT	NP	Monthly	5	Delivery of vouchers	NI	55.56		E
	Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP)	CT	NP	Monthly	NI	NI	NI	185.19	Yes	C E
	School Meals Programme	CT	NA	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Care Package	CT	NP	Once	2	In cash or in kind	Home	74.07	Yes	C E
	Disability Support Programme	CT	NP	NI	NI	NI	NI	426.45	Yes	C E
Saint Lucia	Relief packages	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Self Employed Subsistence Allowance	CT	NP	Once	3	NI	NI	185.19		E
	Income Support Programme (ISP) for Non-NIC Contributors	CT	NP	Monthly	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	185.19		C E
	National Meals Programme (NMP)	CT	NP	Daily	3	In cash or in kind	Home	2.73		E
	Expansion of the Public Assistance Programme	CT	IC	NI	17	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	648.15	Yes	C E
	Increase in Child Disability Grant	CT	IA	NI	18	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	37.04	Yes	C E
	Increased Grant for Persons Living with HIV	CT	IA	NI	18	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	37.04	Yes	C E
	Increase in the grant for children in foster care	CT	IA	NI	18	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	37.04	Yes	E
	Workforce Recovery Initiative	CT	NP	Once	6	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Electricity Assistance Programme (EAP)	CT	NP	Monthly	6	In cash or in kind	Home	27.78	Yes	C E
	Donation of digital devices for special needs students	CT	NP	Once	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Provision of hygiene and care kits to children with disabilities and children in foster care	CT	NA	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Other	25.56		C E

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Small Grants to Women of the Tourism and Agriculture Sectors	CT	NP	Once	2	Delivery of vouchers	NI	NI	Yes	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Unemployment Benefit	CT	NP	Monthly	14	NI	NI	34.39	Yes	C E
	Widening the social safety net - Stimulus package	CT	IC	NI	9	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Displacement Supplementary Income - Stimulus package	CT	NP	NI	3	NI	NI	147.64		C E
	Pre-payment for all pensioners	CT	AD	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI		
	Distribution of 500,000 pounds of arrowroot starch	CT	NP	Once	1	In cash or in kind	Other	NI		
	Promoting Youth Micro Enterprises (PRYME)	CT	NP	Once	1	NI	NI	2 777.78		C E
	Love Box	CT	NP	Monthly	7	In cash or in kind	Home	61.98		C E
	Interim Assistance Benefits for workers in the informal sector	CT	NP	NI	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	111.11		C E
	Interim Assistance Benefit for vulnerable Vincentians	CT	NA	Monthly	9	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	74.07		C E
	Economic support for cultural and creative professionals	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	225.29		C E
	Government Displacement Supplementary Income Support Programme for Seafarers	CT	NP	Monthly	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	111.11		
COVID-19 and Drought Recovery Support Programme	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	185.19		C E	
Suriname	Financial assistance to persons with disabilities (Financiële Bijstand Mensen Met Een Beperking - FB MMB)	CT	IA	Monthly	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	69.73		
	General Benefit per Child (Algemene Kinder Bijslag - AKB)	CT	IA	Monthly	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	103.31		
	General Old-age Provision (Algemene Oudedags Voorziening - AOV)	CT	IA	Monthly	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	54.24		
	Financial assistance for households in a situation of vulnerability (Financiële Bijstand Zwakke Huishoudens - FB ZWH)	CT	IA	Monthly	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	25.83		
	Economic benefit for unemployed persons	CT	NP	Monthly	17	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	154.96	Yes	C E
	COVID-19 Support Packages (COVID-19 steunpakketten)	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Home	23.24		C E

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
Trinidad and Tobago	Food Card - Food Support Program	CT	IA	Three times	13	Virtual payment cards	Commercial establishments	49.47	Yes	C E
	Public Assistance and Disability Grants	CT	IA	Three times	3	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	22.22		C E
	Rental Assistance Grant	CT	NP	Three times	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	370.34		C E
	School Feeding Programme	CT	IA	Daily	10	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	75.55		E
	Cultural Relief Grant/Relief Grant for Artists and Creatives	CT	NP	Once	6	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	740.68		C E
	Emergency Food Support to New Beneficiaries - Food Hampers	CT	NA	Once	15	In cash or in kind	Home	NI	Yes	
	Emergency Food Support to New Beneficiaries - Food Vouchers	CT	NA	Once	15	Delivery of vouchers	Home	37.03	Yes	C E
	Christmas Food Support Card	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Commercial establishments	81.47		E
	Income Support Grant for people not registered at the NIB, Phase II	CT	NP	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	222.20	Yes	
Uruguay	Uruguay Social Card (TUS) (doubling of transfer amounts)	CT	IA	Four times	8	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	75.84		C E
	Family Allowance - Equity Plan (doubling of transfer amounts)	CT	IA	Four times	15	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	59.74	Yes	C E
	Food basket	CT	IA	Monthly	NI	In cash or in kind	Soup kitchens	NI	Yes	
	Operativo Canasta Emergency food basket	CT	NP	Monthly	21	Mobile money transfer	Commercial establishments	27.99	Yes	C E
	Support to civil society organizations	CT	NP	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Other	NI		
	School feeding	CT	NA	Once	1	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	9.91		E
	CEIP's School Feeding Programme	CT	NA	NI	NI	In cash or in kind	Schools	NI	Yes	
	Allowance for Artists	CT	NP	Monthly	2	In cash or in kind	Home	158.11		E
Food service	CT	NA	Monthly	2	In cash or in kind	Schools	NI	Yes		

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Economic transfer to users of school feeding programmes	CT	NA	Monthly	2	Mobile money transfer	Commercial establishments	67.40	Yes	
	Food Assistance Plan: CAIF food baskets (First stage)	CT	NA	Once	1	In cash or in kind	NI	NI	Yes	
	Food Assistance Plan: Food tickets (Second stage)	CT	NA	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Home	28.00	Yes	E
	Grant for national authors	CT	NP	Monthly	3	In cash or in kind	Banks or cashiers	158.11	Yes	
	Monetary reinforcement of Assignments-Equity Plan	CT	IA	Monthly	4	Transfer to bank account	Banks or cashiers	58.31	Yes	E
	Breeding Grant	CT	NP	Monthly	NI	NI	Not specified	46.65		
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Local supply and production committees (CLAP) food box	CT	NA	NI	6	In cash or in kind	Home	0.05		E
	School feeding	CT	NA	NI	6	In cash or in kind	Home	NI		
	Discipline and Solidarity Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	1.44		E
	"Quédate en Casa" (Stay at Home) Grant	CT	NP	Once	14	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	3.57	Yes	E
	Easter Grant	CT	NA	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	2.87		E
	Relative Normality Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	2.46		
	Discipline and Conscience Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	2.05		
	Take Care Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	36.93		
	"Conscience and Responsibility" Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	4.92		
	Father Bolivar Grant 2020	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	4.10		

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Carabobo Victory Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	2.61		
	Health and Life Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	1.44		
	Increase in the amounts of social protection programmes	CT	IA	NI	1	Virtual payment cards	Not specified	0.46		
	Discipline and Will Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	6.40		
	Grant United for Life	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	6.93		
	Bono Venezuela Decided to Take Care Bonus	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	8.00		
	Perfect 7+7 Bonus	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	8.67		
	Love for Venezuela bonus	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	12.80		
	Awareness and Prevention Bonus	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	13.87		
	Happy and Safe Christmas Bonus	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	19.20		
	Great Mission on Homes for the Nation Grant	CT	NP	Twice	2	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	4.92	Yes	C E
	Radical Quarantine Grant April 2021	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	61.95	Yes	E
	Patria Card fourth anniversary bonus	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	22.98	Yes	
	Holy Week in Quarantine Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	2.87	Yes	

Country	Measure	Type of measure	Innovation	Frequency	Duration (months)	Delivery method	Place of delivery	Monthly amount (dollars)	Active in 2021	Included in estimates of coverage and/or expenditure
	Care and Prevention Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	27.90	Yes	
	Consciousness and Union Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	29.38	Yes	
	Venezuela Vaccine Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	37.01	Yes	
	Resistance and dignity grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	41.03	Yes	
	Let's Say Present Grant	CT	NP	Once	1	Virtual payment cards	Banks or cashiers	45.95	Yes	

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information from the countries; ECLAC, COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://www.cepal.org/en/subtopics/covid-19>; "Social Protection Measures to Confront COVID-19", Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean [online database] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/listamedidas.php>.

Notes: IT: In-kind transfer; CT: Cash transfer; IC: Increase in coverage of existing programme; IA: Increase in amounts, goods or services of existing programme; AD: Advance delivery of amounts, goods or services of existing programme; NA: New action or service in existing measure or programme; NP: New programme/measure; C: Used to estimate country coverage; E: Used to estimate country's expenditure; NI: No official information available.

This paper addresses the emergency non-contributory social protection measures announced in Latin American and Caribbean countries in 2020 and 2021 in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The rapid reaction of the region's governments and the innovations implemented were key to reaching a large percentage of those affected and containing the adverse effects on poverty and inequality of the measures adopted to contain the pandemic. This process yielded fundamental lessons to advance in the development of mechanisms to provide efficient emergency social protection. The aim is to contribute to discussions on possible ways to strengthen universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems.