

Timeline

May-December 2020

Study Type

Quasi-experimental Analysis

Research Implemented by IPA

Yes

The Impact of COVID-19 and Cash Transfers on Market Activity, Livelihoods, and Prices in Rural Markets in Liberia, Malawi, and Rwanda

Researchers

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Abstract

Researchers measured the impacts of the COVID lockdowns on well-being using monthly phone surveys with households as well as with food vendors in local markets. The surveys were implemented as part of an ongoing evaluation of a large unconditional cash transfer (UCT) program, and data collection started well before the global onset of COVID-19, and has continued throughout the pandemic. The household survey was conducted every 2 months (with half of the sample interviewed each month) and includes questions on food security, income, labor supply, expenditures, transfers and other related outcomes. The second survey is with food vendors in markets in the study area, as well as in comparable markets elsewhere in the country, and is conducted monthly. This survey includes questions on food prices; in addition, in the weeks following the imposition of COVID-related public health measures, researchers added retrospective questions on market activity including income, revenues, the number of customers, and supply chains. Finally, in both surveys, they added modules specific to COVID-19, including questions on attitudes and behavior changes.

Project Outcomes of Interest

Project 1) Prices, market closures (including the ones from which vendors source goods as well as the ones where they sell), supply disruptions, income declines, product mix, and

number of customers; Project 2) Behavior change around COVID, attitudes, and several measures of food consumption

Partners

[GiveDirectly](#) (Liberia/Malawi)

Key Findings

- In both countries, market activity was severely disrupted and researchers observe large declines in income among market vendors.
- But there was no evidence of declines in food security for households in the short run.
- Even though no adverse effects of the lockdowns on food security were observed among the control group, cash transfers improved dietary quality and quantity over the low levels observed at baseline.

Link to Results

[Link to the working paper](#)

Impact Goals

- Build resilience and protect the financial health of families and individuals
- Build resilient and adaptable businesses and employment opportunities
- Improve social-safety net responses

Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

Link to Pre-Registration

<https://www.socialscienceregistry.org/trials/4869>

Results Status

Results