![IPA Innovations for Poverty Action]

RECOVR Rwanda: Tracking the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Researchers

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Abstract

Tracking how people's lives are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic can enable policymakers to better understand the situation in their countries and make data-driven policy decisions. To respond to this need, IPA has developed the RECOVR survey—a panel survey that will facilitate comparisons, document real-time trends of policy concern, and inform decision-makers about the communities that are hardest-hit by the economic toll of the pandemic. In Rwanda, the survey is building on an ongoing research and policy partnership with the Rwanda Education Board to inform the design of distance learning programs by incorporating questions about students' home environments and current access to technology.

Project Outcomes of Interest

Some of the key questions the survey aims to answer at the global level include the size and scope of the disruptions to government service provision, work disruptions and type of disruptions, whether and how households with school-aged children are spending time on education since schools have been closed, extent to which people are skipping necessary healthcare, identification of populations most at risk of skipping necessary healthcare. The Rwanda survey focuses on health symptoms and care, COVID-19 mitigation behavior, education (with an emphasis on distance learning preparedness), work and income, social safety net support received, food and market security, and financial health.

Partners

Rwanda Education Board

Key Findings

Round 1:

- More than 70% of respondents say they feel their household is at risk of contracting COVID-19. For those who don't feel at risk, almost 30% report it is because they follow preventive measures.
- More than 50% of households say they have had to reduce food consumption in the past week.
- Almost 80% of respondents say they have had to deplete savings to pay for food, healthcare, or other expenses since February 2020.
- 80% of employed individuals have earned less pay than they did in a typical week before the government closed schools.
- Households report that 80% of children in primary and secondary school are spending time on education at home since schools were closed.

Round 2:

- 78 percent of respondents report feeling at risk of contracting COVID-19, a slight increase from Round 1 (75 percent).

- A smaller share of those who reported receiving government transfers in Round 1 reports reducing portions or skipping meals. Across rounds, the share of respondents that had to limit portions at mealtimes decreased from 50 percent to 44 percent.

- 14 percent of respondents could not come up with Fr35,000 within 30 days. One fifth of female respondents could not come up with Fr35,000 within 30 days.

- There was a 7 percentage point increase in the share of respondents working since Round 1 and, of those working, 41 percent are working fewer hours.

- Parents' most common concerns are children falling behind in their education (24 percent), children getting into trouble (21 percent), and affording school fees and materials (17 percent).

Link to Results

Round 1: Full results presentation and blog post summarizing the key takeaways

Round 2: Full results presentation, blog post summarizing the key takeaways, and webinar recording.

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
- Improve women's health, safety, and economic empowerment
- Keep children safe, healthy, and learning
- Promote peace and safety, and improve humanitarian response
- Reduce COVID-19 transmission rates

Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

Link to Data Collection Instruments

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1r1Tk3-IdQDSCb4qv5gOMl8AwwFmqhBRbXCRNXIgrS1U/edit#gid=1925977161

Link to Public Data

https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/RTMVNO

Results Status

Results