

Timeline

June-December 2020

Study Type

Descriptive / Surveillance

Article Link

<https://www.ifpri.org/program/myanmar-strategy-support-program>

Research Implemented by IPA

Yes

COVID-19 Economic Vulnerability Phone Survey in Myanmar (Community Focus)

Researchers

[Isabel Lambrecht](#), [Sophie Goudet](#), [Derek D. Headey](#), [Alexandra C. Hartman](#), [Edmund Malesky](#), [Lakshmi Iyer](#), [Than Zaw Oo](#)

Abstract

The Feed the Future Myanmar Agriculture Policy Support Activity (MAPSA) is a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded activity, led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in partnership with Michigan State University (MSU), that seeks to improve governance in the agricultural sector in Myanmar. MAPSA partnered with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) to conduct six rounds of COVID-19 Community Survey to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 and other shocks at community level. The survey focused on health, mobility, schooling, income and poverty, migration, agriculture and markets and productive and social safety nets. The wide geographical coverage of this survey in combination with a focus on communities rather than household or individuals, lends itself to estimating changes in the country throughout the pandemic.

Project Outcomes of Interest

Economic activities of farmers, retailers and rural households, including the constraints these actors face as a result of the economic crisis and the efforts made by the Government of Myanmar to mitigate the health crisis caused by COVID-19.

Partners

United States Agency for International Development, International Food Policy Research Institute, Michigan State University, Innovations for Poverty Action

Key Findings

Round 4 Key Findings (October 2020):

- COVID-19 prevention measures are at their highest level since June. Almost all COVID-19 prevention measures have been applied in a larger share of communities than in any of the previous survey rounds. In nearly all communities, respondents reported restrictions on gatherings, such as weddings or other social activities, and mandates on wearing face masks outside the home. Many communities also implemented measures that interfere with employment and income generating activities; 70 percent of communities reported that residents cannot leave the village/ward for work or trade and 76 percent reported that food vendors and traders are not allowed to enter the village.
- Community respondents perceive a quarter of households to be extremely poor. Respondents to the October round of the survey reported that on average 25 percent of households in their communities are extremely poor, which is similar to levels reported in September (27 percent), but much higher than was reported in the June/July (17 percent) and August (11 percent) rounds. Reduced income due to less work or lower wages for non-farm workers and less income from non-farm businesses are mentioned as the primary reasons for the high prevalence of extremely poor households in the most recent round.
- Cash-based assistance reaches 90 percent of communities. In June/July, government assistance came mostly in the form of food, but since August has changed to predominantly non-food assistance. Twenty percent of communities reported receiving non-food assistance in June/July. Respondents reported in October that on average 90 percent of communities received cash or non-food assistance from the government, a level similar to that reported in September.
- Agricultural production and marketing, particularly sales of agricultural commodities, continues to face challenges. One-third of the surveyed communities reported that the production of farmers in their community were lower than normal in October and September, compared with 48 percent of communities in June/July and 42 percent in August. Communities reported that bad weather and pests were the reasons for lower production. In October, 48 percent of communities also reported disruptions to agricultural sales, mainly due to closures of town/city markets, low output prices, insufficient traders or brokers, and other COVID-19 related mobility restrictions. This is

the highest share of communities reporting disruptions since the start of the telephone survey in June/July.

- Barriers to healthcare facility access and delays to healthcare seeking. Respondents from 11 percent of communities reported being unable to visit healthcare facilities when they wanted to, and respondents from 25 percent of communities reported postponing visits to healthcare professionals out of fear of contracting COVID-19. Additionally, 19 percent of respondents mentioned knowing people in their community who had felt ill and would normally have visited a healthcare provider but chose not to do so due to fear of being suspected of carrying COVID-19. Fortunately, fewer villages reported medication scarcity than was the case in the June/July survey round.

Link to Results

- [June-July 2020 Policy Note](#)
- [July-August 2020 Policy Note](#)
- [October 2020 Policy Note](#)

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)

Results Status

Results

Results

Final results forthcoming