

Timeline

October 2020-September 2021

Study Type

Descriptive / Surveillance

Research Implemented by IPA

No

Economic Research Forum COVID-19 MENA Monitor

Researchers

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Abstract

The project aims to answer pressing questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on people's lives and firms' behavior in the Middle East and North Africa, and shed light on coping mechanisms and policy responses. The Economic Research Forum (ERF) is conducting a series of short panel phone surveys (the COVID-19 MENA Monitor) to monitor the effect of the crisis on households, workers, and micro and small enterprises. The short phone survey includes an economic impact questionnaire, with a household module as well as worker, enterprise, and farmer impact modules. The multiple waves (every two months) of interviews with the same respondents will allow researchers to accurately assess changes over time in this rapidly developing crisis.

Project Outcomes of Interest

The Economic Research Forum (ERF) is conducting a series of short panel phone surveys (the COVID-19 MENA Monitor) to monitor the effect of the crisis on households, workers, and micro and small enterprises. The short phone survey includes an economic impact questionnaire, with a household module as well as worker, enterprise, and farmer impact modules.

Partners

Economic Research Forum

Key Findings

Surveys from October 2020-February 2021 found the following:

- Due to Covid-19, wage workers in Morocco and Tunisia have lost jobs, been temporarily laid off, and experienced reduced hours, lower wages and delays in pay.
- The impact has been minimal for public sector workers, but substantial in the private sector, especially for informal and irregular workers. Farmers, the self-employed and employers have experienced particularly sharp decreases in their revenues.
- Although some workers and families are receiving government support, many are falling through a sparse safety net and experiencing large income decreases. Additional social protection and better targeting will be needed to cushion the impacts of the pandemic.
- Between November 2020 and February 2021, there were some improvements in labour force participation and employment in Morocco and Tunisia, as well as falls in unemployment. Wage workers in all four countries have experienced layoffs, and reduced hours and earnings, particularly in the informal sector.
- Although the majority of employers and the self-employed report that their businesses are open and operating, hours are reduced and most report lower revenues compared with 2019. Half of households report that their income has decreased; in most countries, the poor have experienced the largest income losses.
- In most countries, social protection measures have reached only a small fraction of the population, a declining share from November 2020 to February 2021, and social protection systems remain poorly targeted.

Link to Results

Preliminary results from October 2020-February 2021 are reflected in the following policy briefs and blog posts:

- [The Impact of COVID-19 on Middle Eastern and North African Labor Markets: Glimmers of Progress but Persistent Problems for Vulnerable Workers a Year into the Pandemic](#)
- [The Impact of COVID-19 on Middle Eastern and North Africa Labor Markets: Vulnerable Workers, Small Entrepreneurs, and Farmers Bear the Brunt of the Pandemic in Morocco and Tunisia](#)
- [The Impact of COVID-19 on Labour Markets: Evidence from Morocco and Tunisia](#)

- Vulnerable Workers in MENA a Year into the Pandemic

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

http://www.erfdataportal.com/index.php/catalog#_r=1624393131821&collection=&country=&dtype=&from=1963&page=1&ps=&sid=&sk=COVID&sort_by=rank&sort_order=desc&to=2021&topic=&view=s&vk=

Link to Public Data

http://www.erfdataportal.com/index.php/catalog#_r=1624393131821&collection=&country=&dtype=&from=1963&page=1&ps=&sid=&sk=COVID&sort_by=rank&sort_order=desc&to=2021&topic=&view=s&vk=

Implementing Organization

Economic Research Forum

Results Status

Results