

**Timeline**

2020-2022

**Study Type**

Randomized Evaluation

**Research Implemented by IPA**

Yes

# COVID-19, Gender, and Youth Employment in Kenya

## Researchers

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## Abstract

The Government of Kenya, in partnership with the World Bank, is implementing a multi-year project, the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP), to increase employment and earning opportunities for youth aged 18-29 years. The project involves several evaluations including the study of the combined and isolated impacts of providing small business grants, business development services (BDS) of different forms (in classroom, via one-on-one counselling visits, and with digital means), and behavioral interventions. In particular, two of the interventions in the original design are gender intentional in design: lightly moderated peer groups via WhatsApp, as women are less likely to have existing business mentors or formal associations, and future self-exercise as women are less likely to know successful older business role models. The study was launched in the middle of 2019 and baseline data for study participants across both components was collected in January and February 2020 before COVID-19 related lockdowns were put in place.

In response to the rising body of empirical evidence that the short-run effects of COVID-19 pandemic on employment and businesses may not be gender neutral, the research team surveyed a sample of the KYEOP participants to study the gender-differentiated impacts of the crisis on income generating activities and intra-household dynamics. In late 2020, the research team conducted the first round of a gender-focused survey among 2000 KYEOP participants (55 percent women) who were married or living with a partner at baseline. The survey included questions on pre- and post-COVID business outcomes and other income generating activities, time-use patterns, and respondents' perceptions on their positions inside the household.

In addition, the project introduced a light touch gender-focused randomized intervention targeted at the respondents of this survey in the form of an SMS-based nudge in February 2021. The goal of the SMS was to remind respondents of the importance of continuing with their business plans despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 in terms of increased family responsibilities and the complexities of intra-household bargaining dynamics. The research team plans to collect a second round of gender-focused data in the fall of 2021 to examine the longer-term gender effects of COVID-19 (whether sustained or reduced) and also analyze the early impacts of some of the randomized interventions (including the gender-inspired SMS) that have been implemented. The second round of data collection will follow-up with the respondents of the first round to study the impact of the text messages on business outcomes, such as profits, working hours, as well as the time allocated inside and outside the household by both men and women.

## Project Outcomes of Interest

Economic outcomes, including the respondent's income, labor force participation, business operations, business adjustments to Covid-19 (transfer, location, employees, wages, credit). In the respondent's household, outcomes such as spouse/partner's economic outcomes (income, labor, business operations). Additionally, time-use outcomes such as hours spent in different activities inside and outside the household, and the number of hours spent multitasking with childcare; household outcomes such as household composition (including changes after COVID-19); and intra-household decision making (perception on changes due to COVID-19) and intra-household transfers.

## Partners

[State Department for Youth, Micro and Small Enterprises Authority \(Kenya\)](#)

[The World Bank](#)

## Impact Goals

- Improve women's health, safety, and economic empowerment

## Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

## Link to Pre-Registration

<https://www.socialscienceregistry.org/trials/6099>

## Results Status

No Results Yet

## Link to Questionnaire

[COVID-19, Gender, and Youth Employment in Kenya \(Questionnaire\)](#)