Informing Policy on COVID-19 with Rapid Data: Results and Responses from the RECOVR Survey in Ghana
Today’s Panelists

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Using rigorous research to reduce poverty & improve lives
A Nobel Prize-Winning Approach

“IPA plays a crucial role in assisting researchers to run and implement experiments throughout the world.”

—Committee for the Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel
More than just RCTs

1: Create Stronger Evidence
To deepen knowledge on how to reduce poverty

2: Share Evidence Strategically
To influence conversations & inform decisions

3: Equip Decision-Makers to Use Evidence
To improve the lives of the global poor
IPA at a Glance

22 Country Offices

600+ Researchers in our network

8 Program Areas

850+ Evaluations to date in 51 countries

700+ Partners

17 Years of generating evidence and moving evidence to policy
IPA’s Research for Effective COVID-19 Responses (RECOVR)

Conducting a rapid response survey to answer key policy questions: IPA has built a rapid response panel survey to directly inform key government partners on the health, economic, and social ramifications of the pandemic, and is running it in eight countries.

Advising governments on evidence-based approaches: We are collaborating with dozens of governments and peer organizations to share information, resources, and data to inform global stakeholders and advocate for more funding to be allocated to economic responses, especially in the global south.

Curating a global hub that centralizes research and policy lessons: We are rapidly developing more than 80 new individual evaluations related to the COVID-19 response. Some build on existing studies, and others are new studies that have been quickly developed to inform the design of new programs aimed at mitigating the impacts of the crisis on health, livelihoods, learning, and other outcomes.
25% of respondents say they feel someone in their household is at risk of contracting COVID-19. For those who do not feel at risk, the vast majority (92%) say that it is because they are following preventative measures.

While 65% of respondents report working in February, 41% of households report working in the past 7 days. Of those still working, 41% earned less and 29% worked fewer hours in the past week.

Almost half of respondents say they have had to deplete their savings to pay for food, healthcare, or other expenses since February 2020.

More than 40% of respondents say they have had to limit portion sizes at meal times or reduce the number of meals in the past week.

Respondents report that 64% of primary and 57% of secondary school children are spending time on education at home since schools were closed. However, children spend only an average of 6 hours per week on education.
Ghana RECOVR Survey: Policy and Survey Timeline

- Suspension of Public Gatherings > 25 People, School and University Closures: Mar 16
- Borders Ordered Closed: Mar 23
- IMF Approves $1 Billion Disbursement for COVID-19: Apr 13
- Face Masks Mandatory in Public (Greater Accra Region): Apr 22
- Launch of Coronavirus Alleviation Plan: May 19
- Gradual Easing of Restrictions: Jun 5
- Suspension of Water Bills: Apr 1 - Jun 30
- Partial Lockdown of Major Urban Areas: Mar 30 - Apr 23
- IPA RECOVR Survey Round 1: May 6 - May 26
- Electricity Subsidies: Apr 1 - Jun 30
Ghana Survey Information

Dates of survey: May 6 to 26, 2020

Sampling method: Random Digit Dialing of a nationally representative sample of phone numbers

Sample size: 1,357 respondents out of 10,781 call attempts
Average Respondent Demographics:
RECOVR vs. Ghana Statistical Services’ Living Standards Survey

Younger
(32 vs. 40 y.o.)

More Male
(60% vs. 54%)

More Urban
(34% vs. 18%)

More Educated
(36% vs. 15%)

Comparable Household Size
(5.3 vs. 5)
Health & COVID-19 Mitigation
25% of respondents say they feel someone in their household is at risk of contracting COVID-19.
Respondents report increases in virus-mitigating health behaviors

- **53%** of respondents report staying home all day for 4+ days
- **90%** of respondents report more frequent hand-washing since mid-March
- **90%** of respondents report wearing a face mask
Economic Activity & Employment
While 65% of respondents report working in February, 41% of households report working in the past 7 days.
21% say their business/place of work is closed. Of those still working, 41% earned less and 29% worked fewer hours in the past week.
Social Protection & Financial Resilience
Respondents have experienced sharp, adverse effects from the economic fallout of COVID-19 restrictions

- 29% report shortages in the markets prevent them from buying food
- 57% report drops in income prevent them from buying food
- 64% report the price of food was too high
- More than 40% say they’ve had to limit portion sizes or reduce the number of meals in the past week
Households with school-age children are more likely than those without children to report being unable to buy the usual amount of food because household income has dropped.
Almost half of respondents say they have had to deplete their savings to pay for food, healthcare, or other expenses since February 2020.
29% of respondents say they would not be able to find 500 cedis to pay for an emergency.

Those who would be able to obtain those funds would receive them from family or friends (23%) or from their savings (16%).
2.8% of households have received food/cash from the government in response to COVID-19, while 14% have received free electricity or water.
Education
60% of respondents say their main concern regarding children in their household is children falling behind in education.
Respondents report that approximately 60% of all children are spending time on education at home since schools were closed.

However, they report that children in the household are spending an average of only 5.9 hours per week on education.
32% of households with a child in school have received communication from their children’s school

Households report that the main reasons why children are not spending more time on education include lack of supervision from adults in the household, lack of support from teachers and schools, and lack of motivation.
Almost 60% of respondents report that children are using their own school books to spend time on education at home.
Policy Implications
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The government made wearing face masks mandatory nationwide as of June 15. How can we make sure respondents are following preventive measures correctly? And continue to do so for a longer period of time?

The government has created the Coronavirus Alleviation Programme to provide support to SMEs impacted by COVID-19. Is the programme adequately providing support to those who need it most?

Only a small percentage of respondents are taking advantage of government-provided water and electricity subsidies. How can the government increase awareness / encourage take-up of these subsidies?

Households with school-aged children are particularly affected by income losses and reduced food consumption. Is the government considering a food ration program or reinstating school feeding programs before school starts?

Children are spending only an average of 6 hours per week on education. How can we ensure students don’t fall behind when school resumes? How can we ensure students have access to distance learning platforms?
Thank you

https://www.poverty-action.org/recovr

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