Learning from Rapid Data to Inform Policy on COVID-19 in Sierra Leone, Côte d’Ivoire, and Burkina Faso

Results from RECOVR Round 2

April 29, 2021
Today’s Panelists and Moderator

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IPA at a Glance

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8 Program Areas

700+ Partners

600+ Researchers in our network

850+ Evaluations to date in 51 countries

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

- Rapid response surveys to answer critical policy questions (10 countries)
- A global hub that centralizes research and policy lessons
- Advising 15+ governments on evidence-based approaches
Sierra Leone Survey Information

Dates of survey: May (Round 1) and October (Round 2), 2020

Sampling method: Random Digit Dialing of a nationally representative sample of phone numbers, limited to respondents age 18+ (panel survey- follow ups with original respondents)

Sample size: 1,070 respondents (Round 2)
1,304 respondents (Round 1)

Average respondent demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% women</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>% that completed more than secondary school</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household size</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>% working in informal sector</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Under national poverty line:</td>
<td>61% (Estimated with the PPI)</td>
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Sierra Leone RECOVR: Survey and Policy Timeline

12-month State of Emergency (National Curfew through Oct 27)

Closure of Land Borders  Mar 24-Jun 24
- National Lockdown 1  Apr 5-7
- National Lockdown 2  May 3-5
- Use of Facemasks required in public  Jun 1

School Reopenings  Oct 5
- RECOVR Round 1  May 26- Jun 15
- RECOVR Round 2  Oct 1-16

Closure of Educational Institutions  Mar 31

World Bank Announces $7.5 million grant for health response  Apr 2

Government issues one-time targeted cash transfers before second lockdown  May 2
1
Health & COVID-19 Mitigation
One in four respondents reported that they or someone in their household developed mental health symptoms.
One in three respondents believes they or someone in their household is at risk of contracting COVID-19, an increase from R1.

Radio is the most frequently cited medium from which respondents receive information about COVID-19.
78% of respondents indicate that they would take a COVID-19 vaccine.

Of the 22% of respondents who would not take the vaccine, 54% cite worries about its side effects. 20% cite conspiracy theories.

81% of respondents receive information about COVID-19 from the radio.
Food Security & Financial Resilience
Respondents continue to experience sharp, adverse effects from the economic fallout of COVID-19

- **64%** report shortages in the markets prevent them from buying food
- **79%** report drops in income prevent them from buying food
- **79%** report the price of food was too high
- **63%** of adults say they’ve had to limit portion sizes in the past week
Most measures of food insecurity worsened across rounds.
While one third of respondents typically receives assistance from family and friends, almost two thirds received less assistance since March 2020.
Nearly half of respondents face severe difficulties in obtaining emergency funds (200,000 Leones) within 30 days.
Education
Parents’ concerns for their children during the pandemic shifted across rounds.
Nearly all primary school students are using their own school books for educational continuity. Radio is a more popular medium for poorer students.
More than half of respondents report listening to the National Life Skills Program every day or several times a week.
Economic Activity and Employment
Compared to June, employment increased slightly by October, and those working were working more, but not yet at pre-Covid-19 level.
Among those working less since February 2020, four in ten report being unable to cope, and almost one quarter have looked for a new job.
Just less than half of formally employed households (46%) were able to earn more or the same as a year before.
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Family Relationships
A larger proportion of poor respondents (15%) report increased conflict and arguments between siblings than non-poor respondents (5%).
One fifth of respondents are concerned about physical violence towards minor children or between romantic partners.
Policy Implications: Sierra Leone
Policy Implications

- **Meeting students at their learning level when they return to school:** Rigorous research has shown that targeted instruction improved learning in Ghana, Kenya, India, and elsewhere.

- **Research in Côte d’Ivoire and Brazil** found that engaging parents in children’s education using SMS messages can improve learning even while schools are in session.

- **Impact on girls:** Crises/school closures may increase women’s chances of school dropout, sexual exploitation, early marriage/pregnancy, and increased household responsibilities, which can cut into learning time (e.g. evidence from Sierra Leone and Liberia during Ebola).
RECOVR Côte d’Ivoire
Côte d’Ivoire Survey Information

Dates of survey: October 22nd to 30th, 2020 (Round 2)

Sampling method: Random sample from Integrated Regional Survey on Employment and in the Informal Sector (ERI-ESI 2017)

Sample size: 994 respondents (Round 2)
1,329 respondents (Round 1)

Average respondent demographics:

● Age: 40
● % women: 32%
● Household size: 6.4
● % that completed more than secondary school: 45%
● % Under national poverty line: 36% (Estimated with the PPI)
Côte d’Ivoire RECOVR: Survey and Policy Timeline

Mar 16  Apr 16  May 16  Jun 16  Jul 16  Aug 16  Sep 16  Oct 16  Nov 16  Dec 16

- Government enacts economic stimulus measures
  16 Mar
- Government announces additional economic relief measures
  31 Mar
- World Bank issues $35 million for pandemic response
  5 May
- Facemasks required in public
  10 Apr
- Reopening of educational institutions in interior
  8 May
- Closure of Educational Institutions
  16 Mar-25 May
- Reopening of educational institutions in Greater Abidjan
  8 May
- Border Closures
  22 Mar-30 Jun
- Nationwide Curfew
  23 Mar-15 May

IPA RECOVR Survey Round 1
1 Jun-15 Jun

IPA RECOVR Survey Round 2
22 Oct-30 Oct

Qualitative Survey
21 Dec-28 Dec

Legend
- Public Health Measures
- Economic Measures
- IPA RECOVR

- Presidential Election
  31 Oct
Health & COVID-19 Mitigation
Risk perceptions and fear of COVID-19 were mostly consistent across rounds. For those respondents who do NOT feel at risk for COVID-19, 77% cite that it is because they follow protective measures, but 61% cite that it is because nobody is at risk for COVID-19.
77% of respondents would take the COVID-19 vaccine, and this does not vary significantly by socioeconomic status.
One third of respondents indicate that doctors and other health staff are their most trusted source for vaccine information.
Food Security & Financial Resilience
The economic fallout from COVID-19 continued to hamper respondents’ ability to access sufficient food.

- **28%** report shortages in the markets prevent them from buying food
- **54%** report drops in income prevent them from buying food
- **46%** report the price of food was too high
- **31%** of respondents with children indicate that their diets are less healthy
The proportion of respondents who cite specific barriers in accessing sufficient amounts of food decreased across rounds.
13% of adults report limiting portion sizes due to an inability to buy food for all 7 days in the last week, compared to 9% of those under 18. The majority have not had to limit portions during the last week.
Education
Students most frequently use textbooks to continue their educations at home. A slightly higher proportion of poorer students uses textbooks to continue their education at home.
31% of respondents have heard of the "Ma radio, mon école avec Tonton JoJo" radio program, though more than half of those never listen to it.
Economic Activity & Employment
78% of heads of household worked in the week the survey was administered and, of those, 46% are earning less and 47% maintain the same hours.
Among respondents still working, a majority within each sector reported still working with the same employer/business.
Burkina Faso Survey Information

Dates of survey: October 15 - December 4, 2020 (Round 2)

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

Sample size: 977 respondents (Round 2)
              1,356 respondents (Round 1)

Average respondent demographics:

- Age: 33 (S.D.: 11.5)
- % female: 27.94%
- Average household size: 6.75
- % of respondents with post-secondary education: 39%
- % under the national poverty line (Estimated with the PPI): 46.4%
## Burkina Faso RECOVR Survey: Survey and Policy Timeline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mar 16</th>
<th>April 16</th>
<th>May 16</th>
<th>June 16</th>
<th>July 16</th>
<th>Aug 16</th>
<th>Sep 16</th>
<th>Oct 16</th>
<th>Nov 16</th>
<th>Dec 16</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All schools closed</strong></td>
<td>16 Mar</td>
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<td><strong>Closure of Borders and Commercial Flights, and Curfew Introduced</strong></td>
<td>21 Mar</td>
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<td><strong>Markets in Ouagadougou closed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Inter-city Travel Ban</strong></td>
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<td>20 Apr- 4 May</td>
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<td><strong>Government unveils 2020 Budget revisions and considerations</strong></td>
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<td>2 Apr</td>
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<td><strong>Facemasks required in public</strong></td>
<td>27 Apr</td>
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<td><strong>Nationwide Curfew</strong></td>
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<td>21 Mar- 3 Jun</td>
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<td><strong>Emergency Response Budget</strong></td>
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<td>March-June</td>
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<td><strong>IPA RECOVR Survey Round 1</strong></td>
<td>6 June-26 June</td>
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<td><strong>IPA RECOVR Survey Round 2</strong></td>
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<td>15 Oct- 4 Dec</td>
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<td><strong>IPA RECOVR</strong></td>
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### Legend
- **Public Health Measures**
- **Economic Measures**
- **IPA RECOVR**

- **General Election**
  - Nov 22

- Emergency Response Budget:
  - March-June
Health & COVID-19 Mitigation
For those who do not feel at risk of contracting COVID-19, the vast majority indicate that it is because they follow preventive measures.
69% of respondents indicate that they would take a COVID-19 vaccine and would vaccinate their children. The majority of these respondents would do so for self-protection, followed by family protection.

Of the 31% of respondents who would not take the vaccine, 45% cite worries about its side effects. 20% cite conspiracy theories.

52% of respondents indicate doctors and healthcare professionals are their most trusted source for vaccine information.
Food Security & Financial Resilience
Various aspects of food insecurity affect about one in four respondents.

- **18%** report shortages in the markets prevent them from buying food.
- **24%** report drops in income prevent them from buying food.
- **27%** report the price of food was too high.
- **60%** of respondents with children indicate that their diets have remained about the same since schools closed.
There have been decreases between 19-25 pp in respondents’ ability to buy their usual amounts of food from markets because of market shortages, high food prices, or reduced incomes.
While 21% of respondents indicate that they have family/friends that can help in times of need, nearly half (49%) report receiving less than usual support from that source.
Almost one third (29%) of respondents indicate that their children used to eat at least one meal per day through a school feeding program (before schools closed). 34% of poor respondents’ and 41% of rural respondents’ children ate at least one meal per day through a school feeding program (before schools closed).
Almost **one in ten** respondents indicate that they feel it is unsafe to travel to markets, due to security concerns.
Education
Besides education, household chores are the predominant activity that primary school students spend time doing.
Economic Activity & Employment
A majority (81%) of heads of household or respondents report working in the last week.

A greater proportion (86%) of non-poor heads of household or respondents indicate working in the past week compared to poor heads of household/respondents.
Among those working in the last week, the proportion working fewer hours decreased by 38pp across rounds.
Across rounds, a majority of respondents could obtain emergency financial sources (20k FCFA) in 1 month, though more than one in four would find it somewhat difficult.
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Family Planning
30% of respondents indicate that they are currently using any contraceptive method, and 48% of respondents indicate that they intend to use contraceptive methods in the future.
11% of respondents indicate that it has been more difficult to access family planning since the onset of the crisis, and 3% of respondents indicate that girls under 18 in the household that have gotten pregnant since the onset of the crisis.
Policy takeaways

- **Mobile money:** Research shows that growing reliance on mobile money has already reduced poverty rates and strengthened women’s agency under ordinary circumstances.

- **Cash transfers:** Delivery and targeting? Governments consider big data to identify recipients. Safe targeting during a pandemic through self-enrollment, geographic targeting, or building on existing administrative data.

- **Food ration programs** focused on families with young children or the reinstatement of school feeding programs could help mitigate potential adverse impacts.

- **Vaccination uptake** intentions are high, but as new information on safety and effectiveness is available, health workers should be engaged in communication.
Policy Discussion and Q&A
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As a Practitioner:
● We can help answer your questions and support you in using evidence to make your programs or policies as effective as possible.

As a Funder:
● Our funders make it possible for us to generate evidence and inform debates about how to effectively reduce poverty and improve lives.

Get in touch at contact@poverty-action.org
Thank you

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