Learning from Rapid Data to Inform Policy on COVID-19 in Zambia and Rwanda

Results from RECOVR Round 2 and the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network

March 29, 2021
Today’s Panelists and Moderator

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Using rigorous research to reduce poverty & improve lives
IPA’s Research for Effective COVID-19 Responses (RECOVR)

- Rapid response surveys to answer critical policy questions (8+ countries)
- A global hub that centralizes research and policy lessons
- A portfolio of IPA studies to generate rigorous evidence (60+ studies)
- Advising 15+ governments on evidence-based approaches
- Research-on-Research to strengthen the quality of remote data collection
Zambia Survey Information

**Dates of survey:** Round 1: June 15-July 6, 2020 - Round 2: Nov 28-Dec 21, 2020

**Sampling method:** Random Digit Dialing of a nationally representative sample of phone numbers; panel survey

**Sample size:** Round 1: 1,278 respondents out of 3,213 call attempts
Round 2: 752 respondents out of 4,073 call attempts

**Average respondent demographics:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Women</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>31.9 years old</td>
<td>32.3 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% completed secondary school</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household size</td>
<td>5.2 people</td>
<td>5.4 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Under national poverty line*</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* (baseline)(Estimated with the PPI)
Zambia RECOVR: Survey and Policy Timeline

Partial Lockdown
20 Mar-8 May

Closure of Public Schools
20 Mar

- Closure of restaurants, bars, cinemas, and crossborder commercial travel
  27 Mar
- Facemasks required in public
  16 Apr
- Suspension of tourist visas
  29 Apr
- Closure of border with Tanzania
  11 May

Enactment of fiscal measures
27 Mar

Enactment of additional fiscal measures
20 Apr

Reopening of Public Schools
21 Sep

Legend

- Public Health Measures
- Economic Measures
- IPA RECOVR
Zambia: Key Takeaways

75% of respondents would take the vaccine if available, and 76% would vaccinate their children. There are no significant differences by socioeconomic status or gender in the likelihood of getting vaccinated.

While overall employment did not change significantly from February (Baseline) to June (Round 1) to December (Round 2), respondents were more likely to say that their earnings had increased in Round 2.

To pay for food, healthcare, or other expenses since February 2020, a higher proportion of respondents in Round 2 reported selling off their assets, skipping required payments on loans, and buying fewer inputs than planned.

Poor and non-poor respondents cite various barriers to food access (amount of food, and variety of food) at similar rates.
Health & COVID-19 Mitigation
The proportion of respondents who say they feel their household is at risk of contracting COVID-19 increased by 10 percentage points.

For those who do NOT feel at risk, the majority of respondents maintain that it is because they are following preventive measures.
The proportion of respondents reporting usage of homemade facemasks decreased by 16pp, while the proportion using medical facemasks increased by 10pp. However, the proportion of those NOT using facemasks also increased by 5pp, with more than half of those perceiving they are not necessary.
75% of respondents would take the vaccine, and 76% would vaccinate their children.

Nevertheless, less than half of respondents strongly agree that the vaccine is safe and effective.

65% of respondents trust doctors and healthcare professionals for vaccine information.
Food Security & Financial Resilience
Across rounds, respondents report increased prevalence of **selling assets (35%)**, skipping required loan payments (23%), and buying fewer inputs (39%) to cover basic household expenses.
Respondents have experienced sharp, adverse effects from the economic fallout of COVID-19

- **29%** report shortages in the markets prevent them from buying food
- **65%** report drops in income prevent them from buying food
- More than **70%** report the price of food was too high
- Over **40%** of adults say they’ve had to limit portion sizes or reduce the number of meals in the past week
One in five respondents indicate that they have no source of income for raising emergency funds of K800 within 30 days.

- No source of income for raising K800: 18%
- Very difficult to raise K800: 37%
- Somewhat difficult raise K800: 37%
- Not difficult at all to raise K800: 26%
3 Education
Across rounds, there was a 12pp increase in parents’ concerns about school-age children.
One in four primary students spent 2+ hours per day on education.

However, 22% spent no time on education.

Approximately 50% of respondents report that primary school children are spending at least one hour on education at home since schools were closed.
Boys in primary school are more likely to spend no time on education (25%) compared to girls (17%).

A larger proportion of primary non-poor students spend no time on education (26%) compared to poor students (17%).
Access to television, lack of motivation, and competing priorities were the main reasons children did not spend time on education.
Economic Activity and Employment
While respondents indicate largely maintaining employment levels, a majority experienced decreased earnings across both rounds.
Urban heads of household were more likely to work more hours in the last week compared to a typical week in Feb 2020 compared to their rural counterparts.
Compared to a typical week in February 2020, women were 19pp more likely than men to indicate “no earnings.”
Policy Implications: Zambia
Policy Implications and Recommendations

● **Cash Transfers**
  ○ Cash can boost *food security* (quantity/quality of diets) and *economic well-being* for the poor.
  ○ Cash transfers may also be leveraged to increase uptake of preventive behaviors during the pandemic.

● **Vaccination messaging and uptake**
  ○ Governments can leverage high rates of vaccine acceptance to develop nudge campaigns and reduce barriers to convert intent to action.
  ○ Incentives (in-kind goods and cash transfers) have proven effective in previous contexts.
Rwanda Survey Information

Dates of survey: October 22-November 6

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: 1,357 respondents out of 1,484 call attempts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average respondent demographics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% women</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>% that completed secondary school</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household size</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Under national poverty line:</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>(Estimated with the PPI)</td>
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### Rwanda RECOVR: Survey and Policy Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Nationwide Lockdown (21 Mar - 4 May)</td>
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<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Launch of Drones for Health Information Dissemination (12 Apr)</td>
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<td>Apr 16</td>
<td>Facemasks required in public (19 Apr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>National Bank eliminates charges for mobile money transfers (19 Mar)</td>
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<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Launch of in-kind food distribution program (28 Mar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 16</td>
<td>IMF approves $109 million Rapid Credit Facility Disbursement (02 Apr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>Curfew (8pm-5am) established (4 May)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 16</td>
<td>IMF approves additional $111 million (11 Jun)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 16</td>
<td>RECOVR Survey Round 1 (4 Jun - 15 Jun)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul 16</td>
<td>RECOVR Survey Round 2 (22 Oct - 6 Nov)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 16</td>
<td>Partial school reopenings (2 Nov)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 16</td>
<td>Closure of schools and higher education institutions (16 Mar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>RECOVR Survey Round 2 (22 Oct - 6 Nov)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 16</td>
<td>RECOVR Survey Round 3 (22 Oct - 6 Nov)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>RECOVR Survey Round 4 (22 Oct - 6 Nov)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**
- Public Health Measures
- Economic Measures
- IPA RECOVR
Rwanda Key Takeaways

85% of respondents would take the vaccine if available, and the majority cite self-protection as the main reason.

There was a 7pp increase in the share of respondents working since Round 1. Among those working, 41% are working fewer hours and 71% experienced decreased earnings.

Between Round 1 and Round 2, the proportion of respondents needing to deplete their savings to cover basic expenses since June 2020 decreased by 17pp.

40% of respondents say they’ve had to reduce the number of meals in the past week.
Health & COVID-19 Mitigation
94% of respondents report always using a facemask. For those who do not regularly use a facemask, 83% indicate it is not necessary.
78% of respondents report feeling at risk of contracting COVID-19, a slight increase from Round 1.
85% of respondents indicate that they would take a COVID-19 vaccine. The majority of respondents would take the vaccine because of self-protection, followed by family protection.

Of the 5% of respondents who would not take the vaccine, almost 40% cite worries about its side effects.

23% of respondents trust doctors and healthcare professionals for vaccine information. 34% do not trust any persons or institutions for vaccine information.
Food Security & Financial Resilience
Across rounds, there was a **6pp** decrease in the share of respondents that had to limit portions at mealtimes.
The economic fallout from COVID-19 continues to hamper respondents’ ability to access sufficient food.

- **16%** report shortages in the markets prevent them from buying food.
- **59%** report drops in income prevent them from buying food.
- **55%** report the price of food was too high.
- **40%** of respondents say they’ve had to reduce the number of meals in the past week.
14% of respondents could not come up with Fr35,000 within 30 days.

One fifth of female respondents could not come up with Fr35,000 within 30 days.

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**Could not come up with the money**

- Family, relatives, or friends: 29%
- Money from working: 17%
- Savings: 17%
- Selling assets: 13%
- Borrowing (bank/employer/private lender): 8%
- Some other source: 2%

Total (N=1355)
While urban and rural respondents could access emergency funds at similar rates, urban respondents are more likely to rely on their savings and rural respondents are more likely to sell their assets.
Between Round 1 and Round 2, the proportion of respondents needing to deplete their savings to cover basic expenses since June 2020 decreased by 17pp.
Education
55% of poor respondents’ children received school meals before March 2020, when schools closed.

Since schools closed, 45% of children’s diets were reported to have maintained their level of nutrition.
76% of parents indicate receiving sufficient and timely information from children's schools.
Between rounds, parents’ concern of their children falling behind in their education decreased by 11pp.

92% of respondents considered distance learning (March-October) to be effective or very effective for their children.
42% of children spend at least two hours per day on education.

Radio Rwanda and students’ own school books were reported to be the most popular distance learning tools.
Economic Activity & Employment
There was a 7pp increase in the share of respondents working in the last week since Round 1. Among those working, 41% are working fewer hours and 71% experienced decreased earnings.
Poor respondents and heads of household are more likely to be self-employed or have worked on a family business or farm in the past 7 days.

Respondents and heads of household from rural areas are more likely to be self-employed or work for a family business.
Policy Implications and Recommendations

- **Education-Meeting students at their learning level**
  - One-on-one assessments are particularly effective to assess reading and numeracy skills. (e.g. ASER, ICAN, and Uwezo)

- **Cash Transfers**
  - Cash can boost food security (quantity/quality of diets) and economic well-being for the poor.

- **Vaccination messaging and uptake**
  - Leverage high rates of vaccine acceptance to develop nudge campaigns and reduce barriers to convert intent to action.
Questions and Answers Session
Partner with us

As a Researcher:
- We connect researchers with partners, assist with research design, implement data collection, and much more.

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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