BACKGROUND

This brief presents findings from the second round of the Uganda High-Frequency Phone Survey on COVID-19 (UHFPS) conducted in July/August 2020. In June 2020, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), with the support from the World Bank, officially launched the HFPS to track the impacts of the pandemic on a monthly basis for a period of 12 months. The survey aimed to recontact the entire sample of households that had been interviewed during the Uganda National Panel Survey (UNPS) 2019/20 round and that had phone numbers for at least one household member or a reference individual. The first round (baseline) of the survey was conducted from June 3rd to June 20th and the second round was conducted between July 31 and August 21, 2020. Of the 2,421 households targeted, 2,227 households were interviewed in round 1, and of those, 2,199 were interviewed in round 2, representing a 99 percent response rate between rounds.

BEHAVIOR AND CONCERNS RELATED TO COVID-19

Safe Practices

There was a drastic decline in the reported prevalence of safe practices in the second round. Compared to Round 1 in June, significantly fewer respondents reported that they reduced the number of times they went to the market; avoided groups of more than 10 people and physical greetings; and washed hands more frequently in the last 7 days prior to the interview in July-August. The change was observed across rural and urban areas and across both male and female respondents.

The practices of wearing a mask in public and handwashing after being in public are far from being universal and are highly correlated with the respondent’s education. Respondents were asked about the frequency of wearing masks and handwashing after being in public in the last 7 days prior to the interview in July-August. About 80 percent of respondents washed hands all or most of the times after being in public, while 66 percent wore masks all or most of the time while in public. The prevalence of these practices was constantly higher among respondents in urban areas and those with higher levels of education (Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 1. Prevalence of safe practices across two rounds, % of respondents

Figure 2. Frequency of washing hands with soap after being in public by education level in round 2, % of respondents

Figure 3. Frequency of wearing masks in public by education level in round 2, % of respondents

Awareness and assessment of COVID-19 measures

Awareness of easing of lockdown measures announced on June 22 was very high, but at least half of respondents felt that this move could escalate the spread of COVID-19. Respondents were asked if they were aware of the revised COVID-19 guidelines that were announced on June 22 leading to easing the lockdown measures. On average, 94 percent of respondents were aware about the policy change. The level of awareness was lower among the poorest quintile compared to the richest quintile and among rural residents compared to urban ones. Respondents were also asked if easing measures would escalate the spread of COVID-19. The largest concern was associated with allowing public and private vehicles to operate – about 67 percent of respondents felt this would escalate the
spread of COVID-19 (Figure 4). The lowest level of concern was related to allowing the food sellers to go home after 21 days of being in lockdown—49 percent of respondents felt this would escalate the spread of the disease. There was no significant difference in answers between rural and urban respondents. Existing lockdown restrictions were almost universally perceived as effective measures to curb the spread of disease. Very high shares of respondents in July-August thought that existing lockdowns measures were effective in curbing the spread of COVID-19 (Figure 5). At least 85 percent of respondents believed that any of the listed measures would curb the spread of disease. Despite very high numbers, there was a significant difference in perceptions between respondents living in the poorest 20 percent of household population versus those living in the richest 20 percent of households, as measured by the pre-COVID-19 household annual consumption per adult equivalent quintiles. Respondents living in households from the poorest quintile were more likely to think that lockdown measures would curb the spread of COVID-19 in comparison to their counterparts living in households from the richest quintile. For example, 93 percent of respondents from the poorest quintile believed that suspension of communal prayers or closure of churches would curb the spread of COVID-19 compared to 82 percent of respondents among the richest quintile.

**ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS**

**Basic goods and services**

The incidence of lack of access to essential needs in the last 7 days prior to the interview did not change much across rounds of the phone survey. Among households that needed to access medicine, 32 percent were not able to meet their medicinal needs (Figure 7). The prevalence of not being able to meet medical treatment needs (conditional on need) was 11 percent - representing a 7 percentage point improvement vis-à-vis the first round of the survey. The prevalence of not being able to meet the soap needs of respondents from the richest quintile increased from 4 percent in the first round to 7 percent in the second round. The lowest level of concern was related to allowing the food sellers to go home after 21 days of being in lockdown—49 percent of respondents felt this would escalate the spread of the disease. There was no significant difference in answers between rural and urban respondents.

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**Figure 4. Share of respondents who felt that easing measures would escalate the spread of COVID-19 in round 2, (%)**

**Figure 5. Share of respondents who felt that existing lockdown measures would curb the spread of COVID-19 in round 2, (%)**

**Figure 6. Share of respondents who agreed with a set of statements and concerns related to the COVID-19 crisis, (%)**

**Figure 7. Share of households without access to selected basic needs when needed by residence and consumption per adult equivalent quintiles in round 2, (%)**
needs (conditional on need) was also lower in the second round. However, it continued to be the lowest among the poorest households and those in rural areas—the main reason for unmet need was stated as the inability to afford it. Finally, the prevalence of not being able to meet drinking water needs (conditional on need) was 5 percent. This estimate was higher among the poorest households and those in rural areas.

**Health**

About two percent of households had at least one member who received laboratory testing for COVID-19. Respondents were asked about different COVID-19 related symptoms household members experienced in the last 7 days prior to the interview conducted in July-August. As shown in Figure 8, the most widespread symptoms were fever (28%), headache (27%), and cough (27%). All three symptoms were more pronounced among rural residents and this can be partially attributed to malaria and other common infections. Respondents were also asked if any family member received a laboratory test for COVID-19. On the whole, two percent of households got this test, however the share of households with at least one member having tested for COVID-19 was higher among sub-samples of households with at least one member with a COVID-19 symptom (Figure 9).

**Education**

The rural-urban gap in participation in any education or learning activities widened according to the findings in the second survey round. Respondents were asked in July-August about each child’s participation in any education or learning activities in the past 7 days—this represented a richer body of information on education vis-à-vis the first round of the survey conducted in June. In turn, the information from the second round was used to construct a comparable indicator to the first round—participation of any child (3-18) in any learning activities at the household level.

The lack of change in this variable at the national-level between the two survey rounds masks differences between households residing in rural versus urban areas. The share of households with at least one child participating in any education or learning activities declined slightly in rural areas (56 versus 54%) and increased in urban areas (67 versus 73%). This further widened the existing gap between rural and urban areas, from 11 percentage points in the first round to 19 percentage points in the second round. Further, according to the data from the second round, only 42 percent of children (3-18) living in households in the poorest quintile engaged in any education or learning activities. The comparable estimate was 69 percent for children living in households in the richest quintile.

The most frequent reasons for children not participating in any education or learning activities were lack of learning materials, low student interest, no access to radio/tv and increased household chores. Respondents were asked for each child the reason why he or she was not participating in learning activities at home. Not receiving materials from school (53%) or government (43%) were the key reasons that were mentioned, particularly among children in rural areas and those living in households in the poorest quintile. No interest from student was reported to be the reason for 35 percent of children and this reason was more likely to be mentioned for boys than girls.

*Figures 8, 9, 10*
No access to radio and tv was mentioned to be the reason for 31 percent of children, particularly among those living in rural areas and in households in the poorest quintile. Finally, increased household chores were reported to be the reason for 13 percent of children, with much large shares in rural areas and older children of secondary age.

Only 16 percent of children did not face any problem while learning at home, while many children faced multiple difficulties, especially those in rural areas. Respondents were asked about the key challenges that school-age children were facing while learning at home. Lack of skilled instructors was mentioned in 39 percent of cases and was more important in rural areas. Limited access to learning materials from government and from school was mentioned in 31 and 26 percent of cases and was again more important for rural areas. Among other important reasons mentioned were increased household chores (especially among the poorest) and limited access to tv/radio.

**ECONOMIC SITUATION**

**Credit and safety nets**

Every fifth household had to borrow money to face the COVID-19 emergency since March 2020. Findings showed that slightly more than 20 percent of households had to borrow irrespective of whether they were living in urban or rural areas. Households from the poorest quintile were least likely to borrow money. Households from the Eastern (36%) and Central (27%) regions were more likely to borrow money. The households in Western region were least likely to borrow money (8%) (Figure 13). **The main reasons for borrowing ranged from employment shocks to loss of assistance from family or neighbors.** Those who had to borrow to face COVID-19 emergency situations were asked why they had to do so (Figure 14). The largest share of households had to borrow (27%) because they could not get assistance from family or neighbors. Several reasons were related to the situation in the labor market and overall economy. About 18 percent of respondents mentioned closure of business, 24 percent inability to sell produce and 25 percent mentioned a reduction in sales. A reduction in sales was a particularly important reason in the Central region, among the richest top quintile and urban residents. The inability to sell produce was a prominent reason in the Northern region, among rural residents and the poorest households. Business closure was most important in the Western region, among urban residents and the richest households. In the Eastern region the major reason was due to failure to obtain money from family or neighbors.
Borrowing from friends, relatives and neighbors was the main source of credit after March 2020, in particular among rural residents and among the poorest households. Access to credit from formal financial institutions such as commercial banks and credit institutions remained quite low (Figure 15). Only 12 percent of households used this source and access was much higher among urban residents and those from the richest quintile. In contrast, rural households and the poorest were more likely to borrow from saving groups/loan associations and from friends and neighbors.

Two thirds of households were worried about the repayment of borrowed money within the repayment period, with higher levels of concern among the poorest and rural residents. Respondents were asked if they worried about being unable to pay money within the repayment period (Figure 16). Almost 70 percent of respondents were very worried or worried about repaying money on time. This share was slightly higher among rural households (70%) compared to urban ones (62%); and among the poorest households from the bottom 20 percent of the population (79%) compared to the richest households from the top quintile (62%).

Safety net support has changed across rounds from prevalent food aid in the first round to in-kind non-food transfers in the second. Many urban households reported getting food aid during the first round following the food distributed after March 20 mainly targeting Kampala. About 9 percent of households reported getting food aid. During the second round conducted in July-August (Figure 17), when questions were asked about getting social assistance since the last interview in June, the share of households getting food aid dropped to about 2 percent. However, many households reported getting in-kind non-food assistance in

Figure 13. Share of households who had to borrow money since March 2020 to face the COVID-19 emergency, (%)
Employment and livelihood

Based on the second round of interviews, (July/August 2020) the employment situation was picking up back to pre-COVID-19 levels. Overall, the share of respondents reporting to have worked in the week preceding the second round of interviews (87%) was marginally higher than the share of respondent working before March 2020, when the outbreak occurred. However, there were significant differences across areas of residence and welfare quintiles. In rural areas the share of working respondents was 4 percentage points higher than the share pre COVID-19; while in urban areas, the share of working respondents was 8 percentage points lower with respect to March 2020 levels. At the same time the share of working respondents increased to levels higher than March 2020 in the three lowest quintiles, while the upper two quintiles still lagged behind the pre-COVID19 levels. Although the shares of working respondents were still behind the pre-COVID-19 levels in urban areas and in the richest quintiles, there was a fast improvement. Indeed, there was a 19 percentage points increase in working respondents with respect to Round 1 both in urban areas and in the richest quintile.

Figure 19 presents the distribution of working and non-working respondents in July-August interview across their employment status in June. The vast majority of respondents working in August were already working in June (65%), and in particular in rural areas where about two thirds of the respondents never quit working since the COVID-19 outbreak. About 12 percent of working respondents in August, were working before the COVID-19 outbreak, but were not working during the first round conducted after lockdown. The recovery of working activities was especially pronounced in urban area (18%) and in the richest quintile (18%). About 10 percent of the respondents started working in August for the first time. Significant differences for these respondents were found across the poorest and richest quintiles and across rural and urban areas: 19 percent in the poorest quintile versus 5 percent for the richest quintile, and 12 percent in rural areas versus 6 percent in urban ones. Among 14 percent of respondents who did not work during the week before the second interview, around 37 percent (corresponding to 5 percent of all respondents) stopped working with the COVID-19 outbreak. The share of respondents that were not working since the COVID-19 outbreak was relatively higher in urban areas and in the two richest quintiles.

Agriculture was the sector in which the majority of respondents worked prior to, as well as following the COVID-19 outbreak (Figure 20). Agriculture appears to have played an important role as a livelihood and risk management strategy following the outbreak. While the majority of the sectors show a contraction in terms of relative respondent participation, the share of respondents employed in agricultural activities has significantly increased since the start of the pandemic. During the first round in June, 44 percent of respondents reported that they or any other member of their households were operating a family business. 74 percent of these businesses were still open at the time of the second interview in August, while 22 percent were closed temporarily and 4 percent were closed permanently.
Figure 21 shows that the mobility restrictions that were put in place in response to the COVID-19 outbreak were most frequently reported as the main reasons why the family business had to close temporarily (55%). Among respondents whose businesses were permanently closed, COVID-19 related mobility restrictions (32%), fewer customers (31%), and the inability to get inputs (25%) were cited as the main reasons for business closures. All these reasons for closure can be attributed to COVID-19.

Figure 22 shows the top five sectors where non-farm family businesses operated across the two survey rounds. In Round 1 in June, commerce was found to be the predominant sector (68%), followed by service (10%), mining & manufacturing (9%), transport (6%) and agriculture sectors (5%). One month later and with the advance of the pandemic, we found a relative reduction in the share of businesses operating in the two sectors entailing the most interaction with the public: commerce (dropping to 62%) and services (dropping to 8.5%). On the other hand, the share of family businesses in the mining & manufacturing sector increased its share to 13 percent and the share of family businesses in the transport sector increased by almost 2 percentage points, likely benefitting from the easing of the lockdown measures.

Respondents whose households were operating a business or held a temporarily closed family business in August interview were asked to report the main challenges that the business faced due to COVID-19. The results, reported in Figure 23, show that the difficulty of selling goods and services to customers was indicated by most of the respondents (58%), followed by the difficulty of raising money for the business (45%) and in receiving supplies and inputs (42%). Significant differences were found between rural and urban areas in reported difficulty in paying rent for the business location (27% in urban versus 8% in rural areas) and reported difficulty in paying workers (10% in urban versus 4% in rural areas).

One quarter of households operating a family business reported that they implemented or planned to implement changes in doing business due to COVID-19. Overall, the most frequently reported measures include the requirement for customers to maintain distance (63%); wearing masks (46%) and reducing the number of customers at the business location (38%). For most of the options, significant differences were found across rural and urban areas. While requiring masks and reducing the number of customers, were measures that were more frequently reported in rural areas than urban areas, switching products or services was occurred more frequently in urban areas than rural ones.
Figure 25 shows the changes in family business revenues in the month prior to the interview for the first and the second rounds of the survey. Only firms operating in both rounds have been reported. In June, the overwhelming majority of businesses in each sector reported partial or total losses. However, the share of businesses reporting no or lower revenues in the prior month showed signs of improvement in August. The highest reported share of businesses reporting no or lower revenues was in the service sector (56%), followed by those in commerce (44%) and mining and utilities (41%). The sector with the greatest share of businesses reporting higher revenues in the prior month was the construction, transport and professional services sector (42%).

Figure 26. Share of households receiving income from specific sources during last 12 month across two rounds, (%)

By August, the share of households receiving income from each income source was higher than in June. The share increased from 42 to 47 percent for non-farm family business income, from 71 to 76 percent in agricultural income, and 16 to 19 percent concerning assistance from family within the country (Figure 26). Figure 27 shows the changes in income by source and over time. During the first round of inter-

views, respondents reported mostly losses or no earnings in all income generating activities since the onset of the pandemic. In the second round, most of the respondents reported a partial or total loss of income between June and July-August tied to (i) assistance from family within the country (65%) and (ii) non-farm family businesses (62%).

Agriculture

Impact of COVID-19 on harvest activities

Only 6 percent of respondents reported COVID-19 to have affected their crop harvesting decisions in July-August. Most of these respondents reside in the Northern and Eastern regions, where COVID-19 cases have been rising (in addition to Kampala). Among these respondents, the following changes in their harvesting activities were most common: delaying the harvest (mainly in the Central and Western regions); harvesting while undertaking COVID-19 related safety measures (mainly in the Northern region), and failure to hire labor (main in the Northern and Western regions). The main COVID-19 safety measures taken during the harvest period were no handshakes (75%), keeping social distance (96%) and use of masks (54%). And the main reasons for not hiring labor were the high cost of labor (45%), low labor supply due to COVID-19 (25%), and fear of contracting COVID-19 (19%).
Impact of COVID-19 on livestock production

Overall, the proportion of households whose livestock activities were affected by COVID-19 increased from 8 percent in round one to 12 percent in round two. The highest increase in the proportion of households whose livestock activities were affected occurred in the Central region followed by the Northern and Eastern regions. In Western Uganda, the proportion of households whose livestock activities were affected by COVID-19 pandemic declined (Figure 29). This can be attributed to the fact that Western Uganda, so far, appears to have low infection rates and easing of the lockdown measures could have also helped. Overall, the main effects of COVID-19 on livestock production activities were reported to be reduced access to animal feed, veterinary services and markets. Overall, compared to the first round, the proportion of households reporting reduced access to animal feed declined, while those reporting reduced access to veterinary services and animal markets increased. While the easing of lockdown measures may have increased access to animal feed, the increase in cases and continued closure of markets may have affected access to veterinary services and markets. Presenting the results by region, the main effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on livestock production were reported to be reduced access animal feeds and veterinary services in the Central region; reduced access to markets and veterinary services in the Eastern region; and reduced access to veterinary services, followed by reduced access to markets in the Northern and Western regions (Figure 30).

Impact of COVID-19 on agricultural sales

Figure 31 provides an overview of the share of farming households that needed to sell agricultural produce by region and over the two survey rounds. The decline in the proportion of farming households that needed to sell agricultural produce was in Central and Western Uganda, while the proportion of households that needed to sell produce increased in Eastern and Northern Uganda. The latter finding could be associated with the fact that farmers harvested mostly seasonal crops, while the decline in the Western and Central regions could be linked to an increase in non-farm income opportunities and dependency on perennial crops that are continuously harvested. Moreover, the share of farming households that could not sell their produce despite the need to sell declined at the national level by 3 percentage points, and in Central and Western Uganda. Conversely, the share of farming households that could not sell their produce despite their need to sell increased in Eastern and Northern Uganda (Figure 32).
Respondents in livestock-producing households were also asked about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the sales of livestock products, namely milk, eggs, and meat. About 43 percent of these respondents reported that the sales of milk and eggs had declined (Figure 33). The share of respondents reporting a decline in milk sales was highest in Northern Uganda (52%), followed by those in Eastern (49%), Western (42%) and Central (38%) regions. The share of respondents reporting a decline in egg sales was highest in Northern Uganda (87%), followed by those in Central (67%), Western (23%) and Eastern (17%) regions. On the other hand, 56 percent of respondents reported an increase in meat sales, while 14 percent reported no change and 30 percent reported a decline (Figure 32). Much of the decline in meat sales was in Northern Uganda (87%), central (35%), Northern (29%) and Western (8%).

Finally, respondents in livestock-producing households were asked if the COVID-19 pandemic had increased or decreased sales, and/or changed the prices for the aforementioned livestock products. Nearly half (49%) of the respondents reported eggs prices to have declined, and the comparable figure regarding the decline in milk prices was 45 percent (Figure 34). The share of respondents that reported a decline in milk prices was highest in Northern Uganda (74%), followed by Western (52%), Central (38%) and Eastern (23%) regions. In the case of eggs, the share of respondents that reported a decline in prices was highest in Northern Uganda (87%), followed by Central (74%), Western (27%) and Eastern (26%) regions. The majority of respondents (59%) reported an increase in meat prices; 29 percent reported a decline; and 13 percent reported no change due to COVID-19.

Data Notes: the UGANDA COVID-19 Impact Survey First Round was implemented by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in June 2020. This survey is part of a World Bank global effort to support countries in their data collection efforts to monitor the impact of COVID-19. A World Bank team from the Development Data Group and the Poverty and Equity Global Practice provided technical support. This survey is the first of a planned 12 waves of the COVID-19 IMPACT SURVEY of households in Uganda. 2,421 were successfully interview households from the 2019/20 Uganda National Panel Survey were contacted and 2259 households were fully interviewed. These same households will be contacted in subsequent waves of the COVID-19 IMPACT SURVEY. The data are representative at the regional and national level and survey weights were calculated to adjust for non-response and undercoverage.

For further details on the data, visit [http://www.worldbank.org/lsms-covid19](http://www.worldbank.org/lsms-covid19)