WORLD BANK GROUP
Poverty & Equity

EUROPEAN UNION FOR ARMENIA

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COVID-19 Armenia High Frequency Survey
Brief – February 2021

This report[*] summarizes the main findings from the COVID-19 Armenia High Frequency Survey, Wave 1, Surveys I and II (COVID-19 AHFS-1 (I & II)) conducted by the World Bank's Poverty and Equity team in collaboration with UNICEF Armenia. The COVID-19 AHFS I and II were conducted by phone interview from July to September 2020. Results are based on a sample of 4,555 valid responses for AHFS-I and 1,648 for AHFS-II[†]. They are representative of the adult population and households with children respectively, at the national-, regional-, and Yerevan/other urban/rural-levels. This brief summarizes the key findings from the surveys.

Background

Armenia confirmed 161,415 cases of COVID-19 by early January 2021[3] – approximately 5.5% of the total population. The economic shocks derived from the pandemic are expected to contract the economy by -8% in 2020, a sharp contrast to initial forecasts of 5.2% GDP growth held at the beginning of 2020.[4] According to the latest poverty projection by the World Bank, the 2020 international poverty rate could increase by 12.8 percentage points compared to the poverty rate without the COVID-19 to 46.4%, when measured against the upper middle-income international poverty line of USD 5.5.[5]

Topics Covered & Key Questions

AHFS-I & II covers wide range of topics. Main topics and questions considered in the brief are as follows:

COVID-19 Cases
Has any member of your family/household been tested positive on Coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic?

Government Assistance
Has your household or anyone in your household received any assistance (cash, food, etc.) from government during the state of emergency?

Effects on Employment
How was your employment status affected by Coronavirus or announcement of state of emergency during that period?

Effects on Learning
Since the beginning of the state of emergency did school-aged children in the household take part in distance learning?

Food Security
In the past month, were you worried about not having enough food to eat because of a lack of money or other resources?

Impact on Health
Since the beginning of the state of emergency, everyone in the family in need to see a doctor, could do so during this period.

Mental Health
On the scale 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest score and 5 is the highest, please, rate at what **extent you felt down, depressed, or hopeless** due to news, threat and restrictions related to coronavirus?

Expenditure
Since the beginning of the state of emergency our family/household has been able to Pay for medical supplies; etc.

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[*] This report is produced by the South Caucasus Poverty and Equity Team led by Alan Fuchs Tarlovsky (afuchs@worldbank.org) and Natsuko Kiso Nozaki (nkiso@worldbank.org) and including Maria Fernanda Gonzalez Icaza (mgonzalezicaza@worldbank.org) and Laxman Timilsina (ltimilsina@worldbank.org), under the guidance of Sebastian-A Molineus (Country Director, ECCSC) and Salman Zaidi (Practice Manager, EECPV).
[†] There was an attrition rate of 38% for AHFS-II (2,653 HHs were eligible for the AFHS-II survey). Results from the COVID-19 AHFS may differ from other sources of data on COVID-19 in Armenia. The survey inquired about the perceived effects of the pandemic on households' welfare, incomes, opportunities, and expectations. All data were self-reported by randomly selected cell-phone users (>18-years old) who agreed to participate in a phone interview. The COVID-19 AHFS results should be interpreted as complementary to other analyses and data.
[3] According to the COVID-19 monitoring tool of the Johns Hopkins University (JHU), consulted on January 9th, 2021.
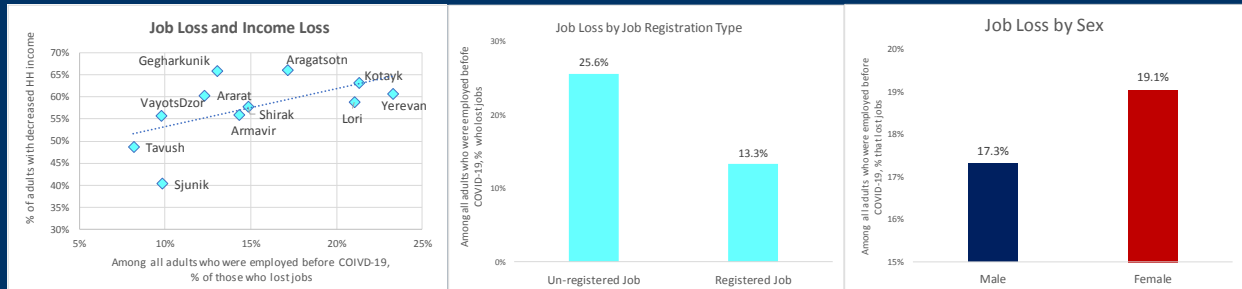[4] Global Economic Prospects (January 2021) and forecasts by the Macroeconomics Trade and Investment team of the World Bank (February 2020).
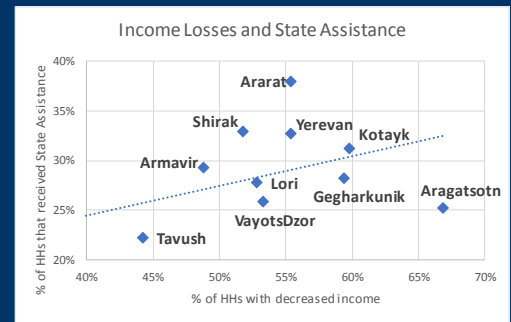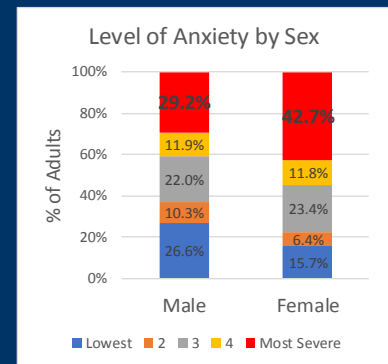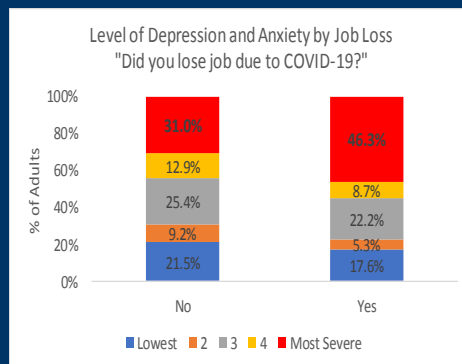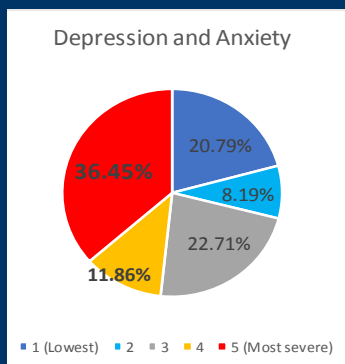[5] World Bank, December 2020.

💡 Key Findings

- **Infection**: 5.2% of all adults in Armenia had a family member who was tested positive for COVID-19 by September 2020, with huge variation across regions and across urban/rural. Confirmed COVID-19 cases were more prevalent in populated <u>urban</u> areas and in <u>central regions</u> (Ararat, Kotayk, Yerevan).

- **Job Loss**: Around 18% of adults who had jobs before COVID-19 (or, 241,442 adults) lost jobs due to COVID-19, with larger job losses observed among <u>unregistered</u> and <u>female</u> workers. Job losses are highly correlated with <u>income loss</u>, <u>mental health</u>, and <u>food insecurity</u>.

- **State assistance**: Government support was well-targeted providing support to adults who lost jobs and to households with decreased income.

- **Disruption with Learning and Internet Connectivity**: Accessibility to internet has important impact on distance learning among the school-age children, with <u>lower connectivity and lower participation in rural</u> areas and regions such as Aragatsotn, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Tavush, and Sjunik.

- **Interrupted Access to Health Services**: <u>1 out of 5 households</u> who needed medical assistance during the state of emergency did not or could not seek for assistance; almost <u>one-third of the households with children</u> who needed vaccination were not vaccinated during this period.

- **Anxiety and Depression:** Among many other possible factors, high level of anxiety and depression seems to be highly correlated with <u>job losses</u>. It is also higher among <u>female</u> population, who were affected by higher job loss.

The microdata, questionnaire, presentations and technical notes are available at
https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/armenia/brief/tracing-covid-19s-impact-on-households-and-firms-in-armenia