The Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 in Cambodia

Results from a High Frequency Phone Survey of Households
Round 1
Key Findings (I)

Knowledge and Behavior

• Most respondents are aware of social distancing and other preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
• A relatively smaller proportion of respondents apply these basic hygiene and social distancing measures.

Employment and Income

• Due to the COVID-19, 12% of the respondents stopped working.
• The economic slowdown due to the COVID-19 resulted in a reduction of income from all sources (except for pensions).
• Households relying on non-farm family businesses were the most affected, with 82% of them declaring a reduction of income.
• 8% of the respondents who continued to work switched job – of which more than half went to the agriculture sector.
Key Findings (II)

Food Security
• Because of income losses, 6 in 10 households resorted to reducing both their food and nonfood consumption.

Social Assistance Program
• Since the outbreak, about 30% of IDPoor households had received social assistance.
• At the time of data collection, the government had yet to announce its plan to provide COVID-19 relief cash transfers.
Cambodians show good knowledge of COVID-19 and recommended preventive measures…

“*What steps can you take to reduce the risk of infection with coronavirus?*”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preventive Measure</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handwashing</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of sanitizer</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of mask</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying at home and avoid going out unless necessary</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid crowded places or gatherings with many people</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain enough distance of at least 1 meter</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid travel</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of gloves</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No handshake or physical greetings</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding touching your face</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
...and frequently wash their hands with soap

“In the last week, did you apply any of the following preventive measures or social behavior?”

- Wash your hands with soap more often than you used to
  - Yes: 88%
  - No: 12%

- Avoid handshakes or physical greetings
  - Yes: 47%
  - No: 11%
  - Not applicable: 42%

- Avoid groups of more than 10 people
  - Yes: 45%
  - No: 29%
  - Not applicable: 26%
Respondents are aware of some of the actions the authorities took to curb the spread of the coronavirus; most mention one action only

“What steps has the government/local authorities taken to curb the spread of the coronavirus in your area?”

- Disseminate knowledge about the virus: 95
- Advised citizens to stay at home: 46
- Restricted travel within country/area: 20
- Closure of schools and universities: 12
- Curfew/lockdown: 10
- Closure of non essential business: 5
- Restricted international travel: 5
- Don't know: 2
- Building more hospitals or renting hotel to accommodate patients: 2
- Provided food to needed: 1
- Open clinics and testing locations: 0
While most respondents continued working, around 12 percent had stopped working since the COVID-19 outbreak.

...In the last 7 days, did you do any work...?

- Currently working (same job): 65%
- Currently working (change job): 17%
- Currently not working: 12%
- Did not work before and after the outbreak: 6%

...Reasons for not working ...?

- Business/office closed due to Covid-19: 40%
- Furlough (temporarily laid off): 19%
- Seasonal Worker: 8%
- Not farming season: 7%
- Ill / quarantined: 7%
- Other: 5%
- Need to care for ill relative: 3%
- Business/office closed due to other reasons: 3%
- Not able to farm due to lack of inputs: 2%
- Vacation: 2%
- Retired: 2%
- Not able to go to farm due to movement restriction: 1%
Among those who had switched jobs, many moved into agriculture from services/industry.
Non-farm family businesses were seriously affected by the COVID-19 outbreak

“Compared to last month, revenue from business sales...?”

- No revenue: 8%
- Higher: 4%
- The same: 15%
- Less: 73%

“Reasons for having less or no revenue...?”

- No customers/fewer customers: 70%
- Usual place of business closed due to Covid-19: 14%
- Other: 7%
- Can't travel: 4%
- Can't get inputs: 2%
- Seasonal closure: 2%
- Usual place of business closed for another reason: 1%
- Ill/quarantined: 0%
The economic slowdown due to the COVID-19 has resulted in a reduction of income from all sources (except pensions)

“Since the COVID-19 outbreak, how has your income from … changed?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th>Percent Changed</th>
<th>Percent Stayed the Same</th>
<th>Percent Increased</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family farming, livestock or fishing</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-farm family business</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage employment of household members</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remittances from domestic and abroad</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance from family</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from properties</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance from the Government</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total household income</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To cope with the COVID-19 crisis, households reduced both food and non-food consumption…

“Actions in response to COVID-19 outbreak…?”

- Reduced food consumption: 65
- Reduced non-food consumption: 61
- Credited purchases: 37
- Borrowed from friends & family: 27
- Delayed payment obligations: 20
- Relied on savings: 20
- Received assistance from friends & family: 18
- Engaged in additional income generating: 17
- Sale of assets (agriculture and non-agric): 17
- Engaged children in taking on responsibility: 14
- Took a loan from a financial institution: 13
- Received assistance from NGO: 9
- Received assistance from government: 5
- Sold harvest in advance: 5
- Took advanced payment from employer: 2
- Was covered by insurance policy: 0
About 1 in 3 eligible households have received social assistance since the COVID-19 outbreak…but the authorities plan to provide COVID-19 cash relief transfers to support poor and vulnerable households.

- **Share of social assistance beneficiaries since COVID-19 outbreak**
  - **All sample**: 13%
  - **ID Poor**: 30%

- **Types of social assistance (All sample)**
  - Food: 57%
  - Direct Cash Transfers: 13%
  - Other in-kind transfers (excluding food): 30%

- **Sources of social assistance**
  - Government: 67%
  - NGO: 18%
  - Religious body: 7%
  - Other: 8%

**Note**: At the time of the survey, the government had not yet announced the implementation of the cash transfer for the ID Poor households.
Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, most households can buy medicines and access health services

“In the last 7 days, was your household able to buy medicine?”

- Unable: 1%
- Able: 42%
- Not tried: 57%

“Since the COVID-19 outbreak, have you or any household members ...?”

- Need medical treatment:
  - 73% Yes
  - 27% No
- Access medical treatment:
  - 98% Yes
  - 2% No
Most households report that food is available as markets have continued to function

“*In the last 7 days, was your household able to buy... ?*”

- **Rice**
  - Not tried: 71%
  - Unable: 1%
  - Able: 28%

- **Fish or meat**
  - Not tried: 14%
  - Unable: 1%
  - Able: 91%

- **Vegetable or fruit**
  - Not tried: 8%
  - Unable: 1%
  - Able: 85%

This finding is in line with WFP-Food price update ([May 2020](#)), showing that despite the COVID-19, markets have continued to function.
About 63% of households with children (6-17) formerly attending school had them engaged in learning activities since school closures

“Before the school closures due to COVID-19, have children aged 6-17 attended school ...?”

Yes 92%  
No 8%

“In the last 7 days, have the children engaged in education or learning activities...?”

Yes 63%  
No 37%
Clarence Tsimpo Nkengene, Kimsun Tong and Wendy Karamba led the Cambodia High Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS) team that comprised of Maheshwor Shrestha and Sokbunthoeun So. Nuppun Research Consulting implemented the survey with technical and financial support from the World Bank. Additional contributions for the HFPS were received from the Public Financial Management and Service Delivery Trust Fund contributed by Australia and the European Union. The team is grateful to the National Institute of Statistics of Cambodia for their collaboration.

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