

Monitoring COVID-19 Impacts on Households in Ethiopia



Results from a High-Frequency Phone Survey of Households, Round 4

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OVERVIEW



The Ethiopian high-frequency phone survey of households (HFPS-HH) allows for a better understanding of the effects of COVID-19 on households and provides data in almost real time to support new responses to the pandemic as they become necessary. The HFPS-HH builds on the national longitudinal Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey (ESS) that the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) carried out in 2019 in collaboration with the World Bank. The HFPS-HH subsample of the ESS sample is representative of households with a working phone. The same households are tracked for six months, with selected respondents, typically household heads, completing phone-based interviews every three to four weeks.

This one-pager summarizes the results of the fourth round of the HFPS-HH—including 2,878 households in both urban and rural areas in all regions of Ethiopia—implemented between July 27 and August 14, 2020.¹

HIGHLIGHTS – ROUND 4

-  In R4, 93 percent of households that needed to buy medicine were able to do so. Most households were able to buy enough food staples—teff (65 percent), wheat (71 percent), maize (78 percent), and edible oil (76 percent). Of those that could not buy enough medicine or food, the biggest problems were higher prices or less regular income—affordability was a concern for 92 percent of households.
-  Nationwide, in households with children who had been in school before the outbreak, about 24 percent of primary school students and 32 percent of secondary school students were engaged in distance learning activities in July 2020. Twice as many urban children are engaged in distance learning activities compared to rural children.
-  About 30 percent of households needed medical attention in the 4 weeks prior to the survey (roughly July) and of those needing medical attention, 95 percent were able to get treated.
-  Losses in total household income are bottoming out with fewer households reporting a reduction or total loss of total household income in R4 than any other survey round. In fact, the percentage of households reporting increased household income doubled between June (R3) and July (R4) but is still modest at 8 percent.
-  Employment rates, which plunged in the early days of the pandemic but then rebounded, seem to have stabilized at about 86 percent, a level similar to that reported in R2 and R3. Employment rates, however, are still much lower than they were pre-pandemic.
-  Non-farm enterprises still seem to be hit hard with two thirds of households operating non-farm enterprises reporting a reduction or no income from the business in July. For those with lower business income, the reasons most commonly stated were no customers (73 percent) and that the usual place of business closed because of coronavirus (33 percent).
-  In July, farming activities do not seem to be impacted by COVID-19. For households engaging in farming activities (71 percent—27 percent in urban and 92 percent in rural areas), 94 percent stated that they could farm normally in the 4 weeks preceding the survey.

For each round, the survey briefs, table of indicators, and microdata are available at

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/brief/phone-survey-data-monitoring-covid-19-impact-on-firms-and-households-in-ethiopia>

¹ The data were collected by Laterite (Ethiopia) Ltd. When R4 began on July 27, 2020, Ethiopia had 14,547 confirmed COVID-19 cases. By August 14, when R4 ended, confirmed cases had soared to 27,242.