

BASELINE INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

A mixed methods study on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on low and middle income people in **Burkina Faso** and opportunities for policy and programmatic intervention

28 Jan, 2021



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1. Introduction

Since the first case was confirmed in Burkina Faso on the 9th March 2020, Like most other countries, the Burkinabe government is attempting to manage a delicate balancing act to protect their population from COVID-19 while battling against total economic collapse. The government acted quickly, adopting several containment measures, which has seen the number of reported new daily positive cases of COVID-19 broadly decline. However, there is an understanding that this battle is not over yet because if they fail to help their vulnerable populations survive the economic crises induced by the public health crises, the consequences will be long-lasting.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has progressed and national lockdowns lifted in places, people have started to see some respite, but many still struggle to cope with the financial and psychological setbacks. Food insecurity is a reality for many, whose mounting debts are still unpaid and income volatility is high. Social relationships have both provided for and become strained due to the toll that the pandemic has taken on individuals and communities.

Closure of international borders, lack of governmental aid and limited support from the international community have further magnified the issues due to COVID-19. As the pandemic continues, the negative impact on sectors like education, mental health, gender equality, access to primary healthcare, security & violence, access to information, food security & agriculture, livelihoods & informal sector, among others has started to become evident.

Most decisions require trade-offs, as delivering on one can mean jeopardising the other, particularly for majority of the population who survive on low incomes and have minimal access to support. Public, private and third-sector responses must navigate these stark choices, recognising if they are unable to help their vulnerable populations survive both the public health and economic crises, progress could be handicapped for a generation.

OSIWA has partnered with [Dalberg](#) to conduct a mixed methods study to understand the social, economic, financial and psychological impacts of COVID-19 on low and middle income people in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal as well as the reach and efficacy of policy and programmatic support targeted at these communities.

Our study builds on and adapts the mixed methods research methodology evolved during similar work in Nigeria and Kenya in April-May 2020. For this study, we conducted the following across all 6 countries:

- In-depth remote Human Centred Design (HCD) interviews with 74 participants
- Macro analysis of existing programmatic and policy responses, reports and surveys on the impacts of COVID-19
- *Phone-based survey, to test emerging findings and insights, with a nationally representative sample*
- *Expert interviews with NGOs/CBOs*

Our hope is that by capturing representative human stories backed by data, and identifying unmet needs, we can inform OSIWA's decision making process and engagement across West Africa and compel a compassionate and effective policy and programmatic response across the national and international community.

We structured our research around four main thematic areas, for which we generated findings, insights, and programmatic policy recommendations:

- Financial health & livelihoods
- Awareness & access to support services
- Attitudes & psychological wellbeing
- Programmatic/policy gaps & best practices

However, we believe there are opportunities and scalable interventions that can support many low and middle income people survive this crisis. We hope the outputs of this study can play a pivotal role in helping ensure that both the response and recovery is anchored on the needs of the many vulnerable in our society.

2. Research methods



RESEARCH THEMES

1. Financial health & livelihoods

We explored the impact of COVID-19 on people's financial health, including changes in people's financial behaviors and attitudes since the crisis began; the drivers of income loss and impact on livelihoods; and strategies to cope (e.g. borrowing, new income generation, relocation, cost-cutting, risky behavior like theft, gambling).

2. Awareness & access to support services

We mapped awareness of and access to health services and information; economic and financial support programmes; schooling and education programmes; needs, capability, behaviours, and preferences of vulnerable people across different types of support services; and trusted people/channels for disseminating information during the crisis.

3. Attitudes & psychological wellbeing

We assessed pervasive attitudes towards different aspects of the pandemic response; the effect of the crisis on mental health; potential drivers of poor mental health such as time poverty, overcrowding, anxiety, community unrest, and gender-based violence.

4. Programmatic/policy gaps & best practices

We identified public, private and third-sector response and corresponding gaps; local or international best practices that could be scaled; and broader macro-economic trends and sector-specific pressures that are likely to shape the crisis in the months ahead.

3. Burkina Faso

Country overview & insights summary

Burkina Faso overview

COUNTY PROFILE

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES ^[11]

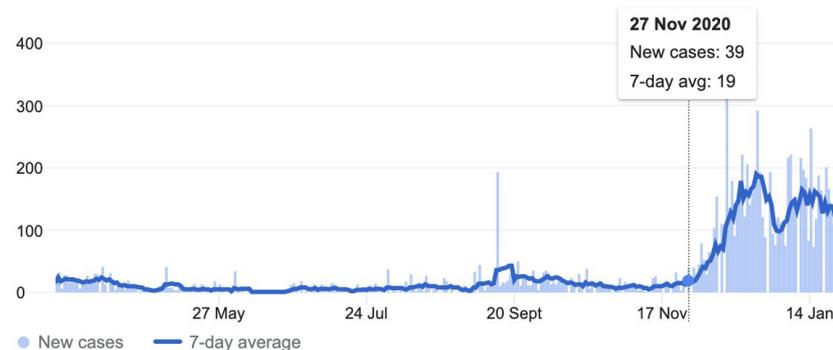
Population size: 20.32M^[1]
 % Urban population: 29.98^[2]
 % Rural population: 70.02^[3]

Health spending per capita:
 40.25 USD^[4]
 Physicians per 1000: 0.085^[5]

Labor force: 7.71M^[6]
 % Unemployment: 6.41^[7]
 % Employment in
 agriculture: 24.65^[8]
 % Employment in industry:
 33.93^[9]
 % Employment in service:
 41.42^[10]

- 1) Lowering import duties and VAT for hygiene and healthcare goods and services critical to tackling COVID-19 and for tourism businesses
- 2) Lowering other selected tax rates
- 3) Delaying tax payments and waiving late payment fines and penalties
- 4) Suspending government fees charged on informal sector operators for rent, security, and parking in urban markets
- 5) Lowering the licensing fee for companies in the transportation and tourism sectors
- 6) Suspending on-site tax inspection operations
- 7) Donating food and assisting households and local small businesses
- 8) Supporting water and electricity bills, including through cancelation, for the most vulnerable social groups
- 9) Securing adequate stocks of consumer products and strengthening surveillance of prices.

[12] Burkina Faso Covid-19 data as of the completion of HCD research



Location	Cases ↓	Recovered	Deaths
 Burkina Faso	10,038 +71	8,088 +100	112 +3

[1] United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision.
 [2] United Nations Population Division, World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision.
 [3] World Bank staff estimates based on the United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision.
 [4] World Health Organization Global Health Expenditure database (apps.who.int/nha/database).
 [5] World Health Organization's Global Health Workforce Statistics, OECD, supplemented by country data.
 [6] Derived using data from International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database. The data retrieved in June 21, 2020.
 [7] International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database. Data retrieved in September 20, 2020.
 [8] International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database. Data retrieved in September 20, 2020.
 [9] International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database. Data retrieved in September 20, 2020.
 [10] International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database. Data retrieved in September 20, 2020.
 [11] <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#>
 [12] JHU CSSE COVID-19 Data

Burkina Faso insights summary

FINANCIAL HEALTH & LIVELIHOODS

- 1** **GENDER & INCOME LOSS** - The closure of borders and movement restrictions between major cities has led to a loss of income for MSMEs, especially women-owned, as they can no longer ship out their products or import material.
- 2** **AGRICULTURE & FOOD** - The closure of borders and limited access to inputs and markets has further weakened already fragile agricultural value chains, forcing farmers to sell their produce locally at low prices and resulting in income loss amongst producers.
- 3** **MSMEs REGISTRATION** - Unregistered MSMEs have been unable to benefit from government interventions dedicated to registered businesses, therefore locking them out of aid that could assist them in economic recovery and resulting in many MSMEs having to scale down their operations due to reduced revenues.
- 4** **JOBS & INCOME** - A preexisting entrepreneurial mindset has allowed people to quickly pivot to find new ways of making money as COVID-19 has driven a loss of income. Many people have been forced to make budget adjustments and prioritize basic needs such as food, resulting in an overall drop in household consumption.
- 5** **ATTITUDES TOWARDS FSP** - Lower-income earners prefer to transact with Microfinance institutions, mobile money operators, and community banks due to the perception that formal financial institutions are expensive and bureaucratic, which has limited their avenues for accessing credit during the pandemic.
- 6** **FAMILY SUPPORT** - The family unit is seen as the first resort when seeking financial aid, even though people are aware that the widespread loss of income has lowered the level of support they can give or get.
- 7** **ACCESS TO EDUCATION** - School closures have negatively impacted students, with teachers reporting a drastic drop in student performance on their return. The decline in performance is attributed to the digital divide between urban and rural households and the high cost of studying at home.

AWARENESS & ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES

- 8** **SOCIAL PROTECTION** - Despite the establishment of government economic recovery packages, the lack of a transparent feedback process for applying and selecting government aid and interventions has left many business owners feeling disenfranchised and marginalized.
- 9** **ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION** - Community health workers have been instrumental in sharing COVID-19 information in rural communities that rely on word of mouth. Nonetheless, TV and radio are the primary sources of information accessed by people, as health information from these channels is believed to be verified and handled by experts.
- 10** **ACCESS TO PPEs** - The cost of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has increased by up to 5 times since the COVID-19 crisis, therefore becoming unaffordable for many people, which results in the unsafe reuse of masks and the denial of service in public facilities for people who go without masks.
- 11** **ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE** - People are less willing to seek formal health care in hospitals out of a fear of exposing themselves to the COVID-19 virus at the hospital and being forced to go into quarantine as a result.

ATTITUDES & PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

- 12** **HEIGHTENED TENSION** - There has been an increase in tension due to the curfew imposed between police and informal workers, street vendors, and those who benefited from a once-thriving night-time economy—resulting in cases of increased police brutality against those who flout curfew.
- 13** **SOCIAL DYNAMICS** - People feel disconnected from the broader society due to the ban on mass gatherings and movement restrictions. People have limited avenues of getting emotional support; it has led to a negative feeling of isolation, loneliness, having an adverse psychosocial impact.

Opportunities summary

FINANCIAL HEALTH & LIVELIHOODS

How might we foster better transparency during the distribution of government financial support; ensuring support packages are fit for purpose; have the maximum reach; and people have timely access?

How might we create sustainable partnerships that better identify at-risk households, create tailored financial support that matches peoples' pre-existing financial habits, and nudge them towards better habits in their interest?

How might we reduce the financial burdens associated with schools' closure and costs of homeschooling children?

- Provide strategic and sequential financial assistance packages that openly communicate the prioritized list of eligibility and offer visibility on how/when households can apply for financial assistance.
- Use partner channels to build trust, and raise awareness on available support programs, including trusted community leaders, community organizations, and MNO operators' shortcode services.
- Provide financial education to households on available financial packages and tools, and demystify loans from formal finance
- Tailor food assistance to people's needs as more households preferred receiving food inputs compared to processed food. Consider using needs assessments among families to inform food aid packages.
- Encourage a return to school when it is safe to do so. By equipping schools to comply with COVID-19 measures by providing resources to implement social distancing - e.g., partitioning classrooms for rotational learning shifts and adapting learning content through a standardized and replicable curriculum to ease teachers' workloads.
- Subsidizing children's tuition in select private schools by channeling government funds to partially cover the cost of COVID-19 measures in public and private schools

How might we better equip business owners with the tools and resources to engaging in alternative pathways to earning a meaningful livelihood?

How might we strengthen existing networks that provide support to MSMEs to ensure they still have a route to market for their produce remains open during COVID-19 restrictions?

- Supporting entrepreneurs to stay on their pathway via access to
 - financial support packages tailored to informal MSMEs
 - expanded networks of mentors, customers, and potential partners; and
 - expertise through training on COVID-19 measures to protect themselves/customers, digital education, and tools they can use to operate their enterprises, and financial education on tools and strategies to adapt to economic uncertainty
- Reinforcing community groups as a channel to understand critical MSME needs at local levels, disburse aid/financial support packages, and promote transparency by clearly communicating application processes to communities. Explore partnering with business groups, such as women's business groups or farmer groups, to reach MSMEs networks systematically.
- Promote businesses that strengthen existing value chains to minimize the disruptions to crucial sectors—for example, promoting food aggregation and transport to urban markets.

Opportunities summary

AWARENESS & ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES

How might we encourage higher uptake of the support on offer to communities from government and aid organizations?

How might we enhance the reach of and provision of PPE to rural communities while ensuring proper use and understanding?

- Anchor support services on communities' needs assessments ensuring that their most pressing needs are being effectively addressed.
- Have clear communication and procedures for social support services. Build trust by sharing information on eligibility criteria, application processes, timelines, and provide accessible contact points for clarification.
- Leverage existing local infrastructure for last-mile PPE distribution. For example, pharmacies to distribute subsidized masks or setting up hygiene stations at communal points such as schools, churches, and mosques.
- Explore first instances of remote care infrastructure, such as adapting existing mobile care centers, equipping community healthcare workers to provide support outside hospitals, or using pharmacies to address COVID-19 concerns and direct potential cases to hospitals

How might we leverage trusted community figures and institutions to disseminate reliable information and expand the communication channels on COVID-19 preventive measures, ensuring it reaches the most marginalized communities?

- Employ targeted education strategies. Involve community leaders in education efforts, position posters in community hubs such as markets, shopping centers, and food distribution points. Explore channeling tailored information to specific demographics to address concerns based on the communities' priorities.
- Equip community members to identify and address misinformation through informal, verified communication platforms such as chatbots and building MNOs capacity to push COVID-related information
- Educate at a community and structural levels. Sensitize health workers on addressing COVID-19 concerns and dissuading fear among community members.
- Produce timely, location-specific data to provide a clear picture of the COVID-19 situation in respective localities and disseminate in local languages through appropriate channels.

Opportunities summary

ATTITUDES & PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

How might we better advocate and equip community members with sufficient tools to health mental health issues within their localities?

How might we continue to foster social cohesion in this period of heightened tensions within the home and broader society?

- Invest in understanding community-wide needs and perceptions to design, structure, and prioritize tools/programs to promote cohesion.
- Build networks of community engagement officers who educate and rationalize COVID-19 measures to resistant community members and redirect them to potential assistance in the form of available aid packages, financial support, and other programs.

How might we better strengthen community and government institutions' capacity to provide clinically-robust mental health services, ensuring that mental health care is accessible to all that need it during this period?

- Engage religious leaders as pillars of well-being support systems by sensitizing them on mental health issues
- Provide access to mental health resources and support through better funding of NGOs, CBOs, and appreciate incentives and training to healthcare workers.
- Facilitate access to safe community gatherings, for example, by supporting places of worship to set up small remote religious groups for fellowship and support
- Build capacity among governmental social departments to provide psychosocial support to vulnerable groups, especially children whose parents have been victims of COVID-19.

4. Burkina Faso

Insights & opportunities

GENDER & INCOME LOSS

The closure of borders and movement restrictions between major cities has led to a loss of income for MSMEs, especially women-owned, as they can no longer ship out their products or import material.

Imposed curfew

The government of Burkina Faso introduced various measures to curb the spread of Covid-19, including introducing a lockdown in the main cities of Ouagadougou and Bobo Doulassao, a 7 pm to 5 am curfew, and a ban on intercity transportation.

Disproportionate impact of women

Ouagadougou is a critical lifeline to many businesses, and the inability to move goods freely between Ouagadougou and smaller towns due to lockdown restrictions has crippled many small business owners who have been unable to access their products. Most small entrepreneurs get their supplies from wholesalers in Ouagadougou, and it is women who have been more affected by the containment measures since many of them get their supplies more directly in rural areas. Due to the restricted mobility and a decrease in supply, 52% of women have had to suspend their activity.^[1]

Closure of borders

The closure of international borders has also impacted traders who cannot import inputs and raw material for their businesses from other countries. The ease of restrictions has only seen a return to normality for air travel, which has locked out MSMEs that cannot afford to transport their products via air instead of ground transport. With this restricted mobility and decline in the production of goods and trade, the country is projected to lose ~\$630 million, representing 3,7% of its pre-COVID-19 2021 estimated GDP ^[2]



^[1] UNDP, Socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, May 2020

^[2] IMF, 2020, IMF projection / Delberg analysis



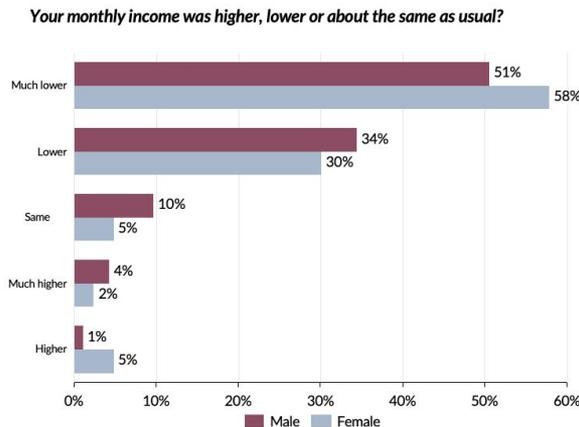
"We could not ship anything out, and it was going bad... we had to let it go for cheaper, or it would be all destroyed, so we went around selling it locally for cheap. We would sell a kilo of garlic at 1000 CFAF before COVID-19, and that went down to 800 CFAF."

Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

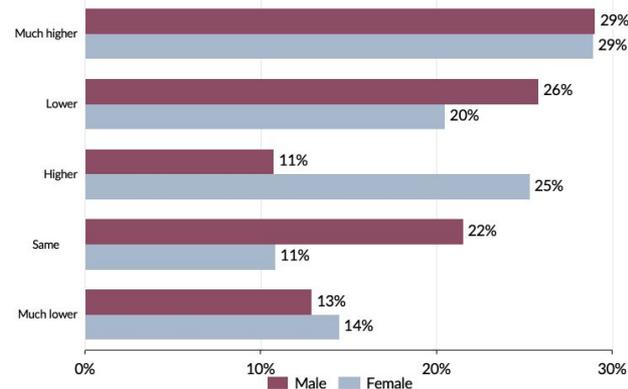
DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON WOMEN

The quantitative survey conducted by Dalberg in Burkina Faso revealed that **women are hardest hit**, with many reporting reduced monthly incomes to their businesses. **58% of women reported a much lower monthly income** since the pandemic began, compared to 51% of men.^[1]

A larger proportion of women also report higher expenditure on their business activity. A total of 54% of women respondents **report either higher (25%) or much higher (29%) expenses**, compared to a total of 40% of men facing similar circumstances.



Your monthly expenditure was higher, lower or about the same as usual?



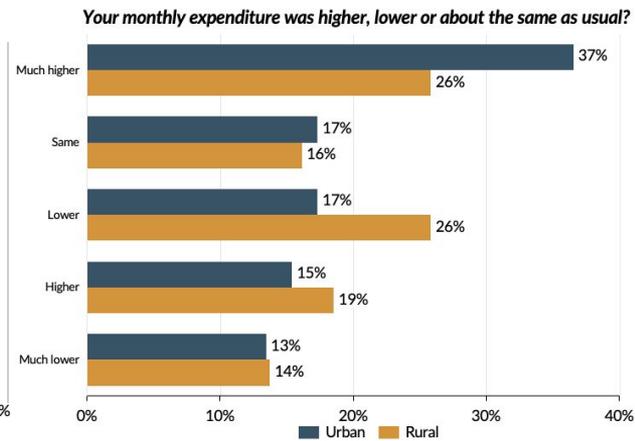
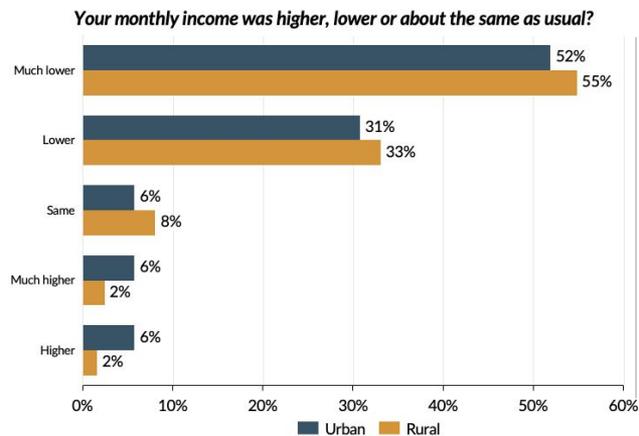


“I could not get material for my business from Nigeria due to the closure of borders, which is not allowing me to do my business as usual... The borders were also closed, so I could not reach some of our customers.”

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

A RURAL PERSPECTIVE

Rural entrepreneurs have faced sharper income drops while urban entrepreneurs have comparatively higher costs. **52% of urban respondents and 55% of rural respondents** reported a much lower monthly income since the pandemic began **37% of urban respondents and 26% of rural respondents reported a much higher monthly expenditure** since the pandemic began.



"I was producing pepper this season, and those outside the country have a fixed price, which is good for us, but when COVID-19 hit, we could not sell it outside the country. The product was ready, but we had to sell locally."

Aboubacar, 25 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso

"Shipping costs are still high since transport is still restricted in some areas. Alternatively, you can use regulated shipping companies, but the costs are high and are driving my business costs up."

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso



AGRICULTURE & FOOD

The closure of borders and limited access to inputs and markets has further weakened already fragile agricultural value chains, forcing farmers to sell their produce locally at low prices and resulting in income loss amongst producers.

The slowdown in imports & exports

As a result of high importation by consumers in Burkina Faso, farmers export a significant amount of their produce as it fetches a higher price. The closure of international borders has narrowed their market access, forcing them to sell their produce locally at much lower prices. Even though the restrictions have limited the amount of importation happening, it has also resulted in farmers having limited access to inputs, which brings up the cost of production.

Lack of adequate storage

The ban on inter-city travel and the temporary closure of markets has further weakened the agricultural value chains, leaving farmers with very few options on where they can sell their produce. With a lack of adequate storage facilities, farmers have been forced to sell their produce at low prices or see their products wasted.

Increase in poverty

Farmers have suffered a high loss of income that will consequently impact Burkina Faso's economy. 40.1% of Burkinabè live below the poverty line, with mainly rural agricultural workers contribute 94% to this state (EMC, 2014). Any reduction in agrosilvopastoral production and income automatically contributes to the increase in poverty. ^[3]

[3] UNDP, Socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, May 2020





“People who were in agriculture were affected... We were stuck with our produce. The local public market was shut down, and the town was on lockdown, so we could not even get it out of town to other people.”

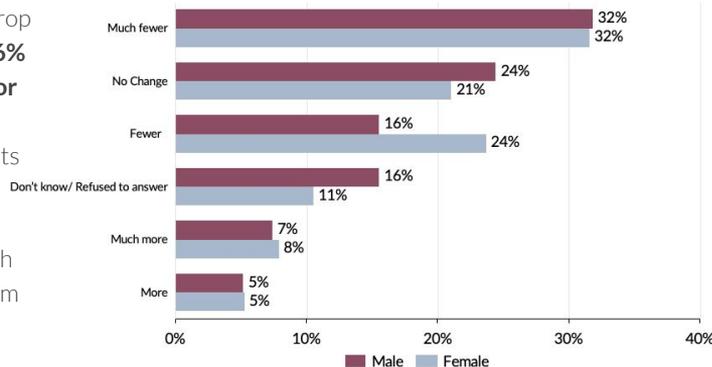
Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

REDUCED ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

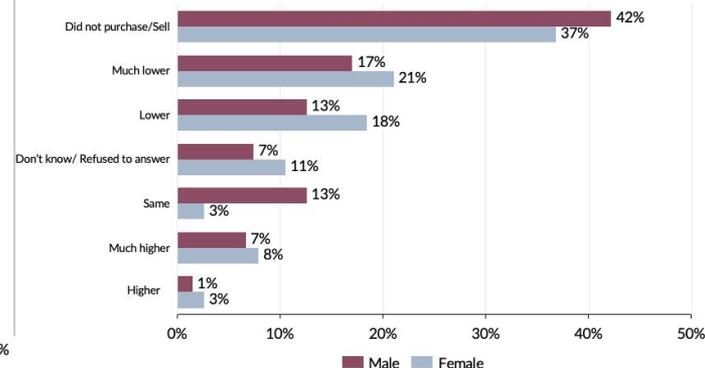
Since the beginning of the pandemic, a drop in sales has curtailed farmers' income. **56% of women and 48% of men sold fewer or much fewer produce/livestock.**

Majority of those who have found markets **accepted lower prices than before the pandemic.** In total, **76% of women** reported either no sales or lower or much lower sales of the produce from their farm or livestock, **compared to 72% of men.**

As a way to cope with the corona virus, has your household had to sell more or less produce from your farm or livestock?



Was the price you earned from selling your produce higher, lower or about the same as usual? Sold more or less produce from your farm or livestock





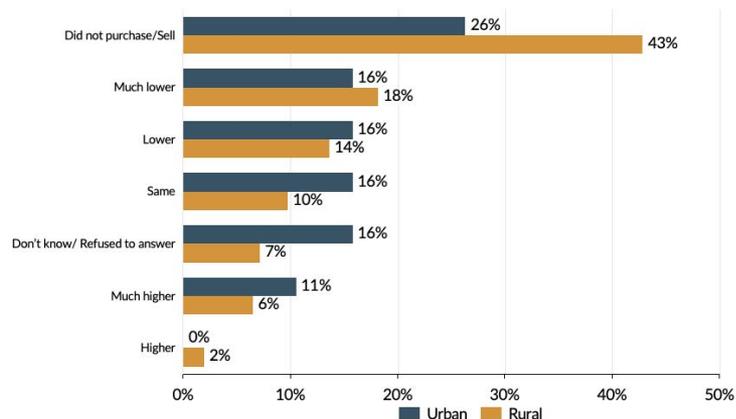
“Banana was the most affected by Covid. The harvest was during lockdown and we couldn’t move it to Ouagadougou. The price was low and most of it went bad... I lost almost 800,000 CFAF.”

Ali, 31 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso

A RURAL PERSPECTIVE

Rural farmers are significantly harder hit by lack of sales than urban farmers. **74% of rural respondents** reported **no sales or lower or much lower sales from their farm or livestock** since the pandemic began compared to **58% of urban respondents**. This could be attributed to disruptions in moving produce to urban trade centers. Although most farmers earned lower prices for their produce, a higher proportion of urban farmers benefited from stable prices. **16% of urban farmers and 10% of rural farmers received the same price as before.**

Was the price you earned from selling your produce higher, lower or about the same as usual?
Sold more or less produce from your farm or livestock



“In February, we would sell a bag of garlic at 45000 CFAF for export, but locally, it’s 10000 - 15000 CFAF. It was not good at all when borders closed. It was a real loss. We could not use trains or cars either”

Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

“We were supposed to train and do demos for farmers. The project was to start in March but the project started in June due to the lockdown. When you miss the [rainy] season, it is difficult to catch up, so there were losses”

Aboubacar, 25 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso

“Personally, I incurred losses from the lost contract I have with Agri Pro Focus to train farmers. If this had not happened, I would have afforded to pay the workers at my farm.”

Ali, 31 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso



“The government was supporting businesses that have incurred losses. My business is not registered, so I couldn’t submit my documents to benefit from these funds.”

Ouattara Ali, 28 years old, | Farmer | Urban, BOBO, Burkina Faso

Ali is a 28-year-old agricultural engineer living in Farakuba village. He is married with two children, and they live together in a family complex with 17 other family members. Ali has completed high school and holds a diploma in agricultural engineering. He’s been farming for most of his life. Now farms on 17 acres of land, out of which 12 acres was given from his parents, with another 5 acres leased from government and private entities. Depending on the season, Ali would typically employ 10-30 people, but he only needs 5-6 people to manage the farm for regular days.

Farming is Ali’s primary source of income, and last year he was able to earn approximately 1.8M CFAF. However, due to COVID-19, he has noticed an 800K CFAF loss income. Ali feels this loss in income is because importation and exportation channels have broken down. He cannot get his goods to the capital due to restrictions in interstate transport. Ali is a member of a few different associations, which has allowed him to be better protected during the pandemic. He is part of the maize growers association in his hometown of Farakuba and the regional cereal growers cooperative for Bobo. However, because his business is not registered, he has no means of accessing government support channels, which has resulted in him having to make many of his staff redundant.



MSMEs REGISTRATION

Unregistered MSMEs have been unable to benefit from government interventions dedicated to registered businesses, therefore locking them out of aid that could assist them in economic recovery and resulting in many MSMEs having to scale down their operations due to reduced revenues.

Lack of representation

In 2019, the share of the workforce in vulnerable employment in Burkina Faso was 86%.^[4] These workers lack representation in policy-making as they are typically not represented in trade unions and business federations. They are also more challenging to reach by government interventions. Many business owners, especially in the informal sector and agriculture, have not registered their businesses and are not legally recognized.

Government fiscal policies for registered small business

Burkina Faso's government provided a solidarity fund for the benefit of actors in the informal sector, particularly for women, to revive the vegetable and fruit trade activities, amounting to 5 billion FCFA^[5]. They also provided an economic recovery fund to acquire agricultural inputs and animal feed to support food and pastoral production, amounting to CFAF 30 billion.

Impact on unregistered MSMEs

Many smallholder farmers in agriculture considered farming to be for subsistence, therefore not seeing the need for registration, while others in the informal sector ignored it altogether to avoid paying tax. As a result, these people cannot receive any state-funded support created to help businesses recover from the pandemic's impacts. Small scale businesses that are now keen on registering their companies after learning that government intervention could only go to registered businesses have missed out on such funds, as it is too late to register and apply for aid. Due to declining revenues, they have been forced to scale down and reduce the number of workers they employ or risk shutting down, resulting in a loss of economic opportunities.



^[4]^[5] UNDP, Socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, May 2020



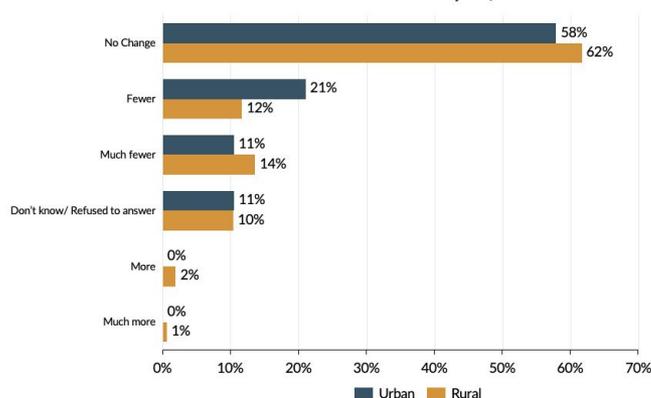
“I have had to use some of my savings to pay and keep my employees. At some point, I had to let all of them go. I rehired 2 of my permanent employees, and even then, I pay them 70% of what I used to pay them. I cannot bring back the rest.”

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

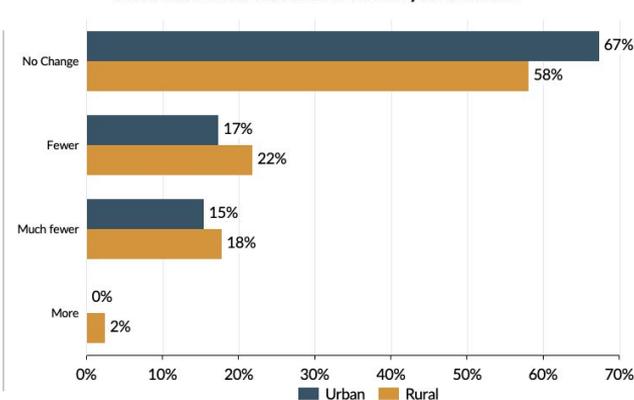
DOWN-SCALED BUSINESSES

Several business-owners have **shrunk their workforce** to sustain their enterprises. The workforce shrinking was most severely felt in rural businesses, with **32% of urban respondents compared to 40% of rural respondents** reported downsizing the number of hired laborers to varying degrees since the pandemic began.

As a way to cope with the corona virus, has your household had to do any of the following farm activities differently from how you would normally have done them?
Hired more or less labourers to work in your farm?



Hired more or less labourers to work in your business?

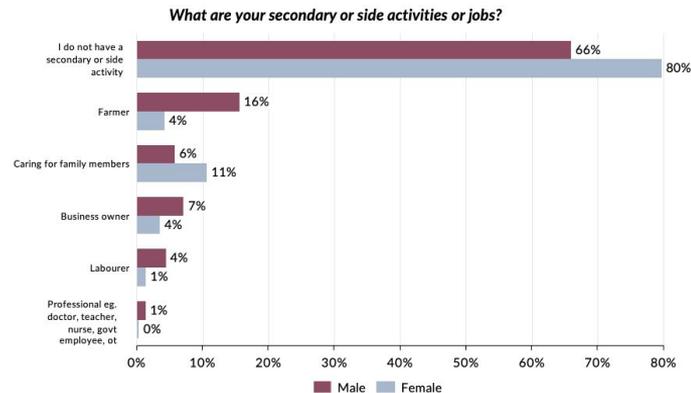
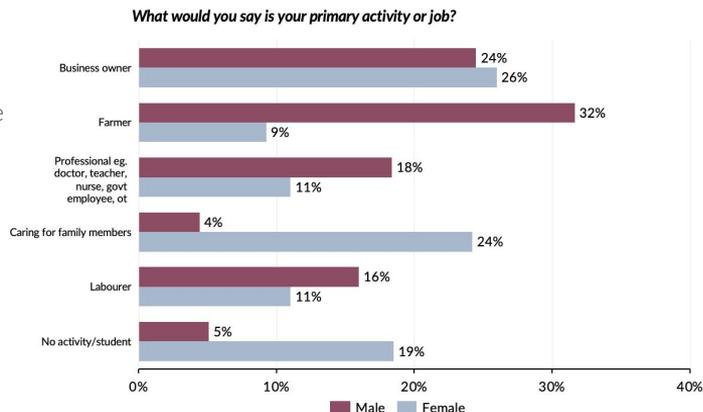




“The company had to let go of the interns and didn't get them back till after COVID-19. They couldn't afford to compensate them.”

Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Women are substantially more vulnerable to business closures and job losses than men. **80% of women** reported they do not have any secondary income source, compared to **66% of men**. From the Dalberg survey, it was evident that women are mainly business owners (26%), caregivers (24%), professionals (11%), and laborers (11%).



“I have had to use some of my savings to pay and keep my employees. At some point, I had to let all of them go. I rehired 2 of my permanent employees, and even then, I pay them 70% of what I used to pay them. I cannot bring back the rest.”

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

“The company had to let go of the interns and did not get them back till after COVID-19. They could not afford to compensate them.”

Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

“I had to let go of my permanent employees. I could not afford to pay them all. I paid them half, and they will come back in January for the rest of the money.”

Aboubacar, 25 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso



JOBS & INCOME

A preexisting entrepreneurial mindset has allowed people to quickly pivot to find new ways of making money as COVID-19 has driven a loss of income. Many people have been forced to make budget adjustments and prioritize basic needs such as food, resulting in an overall drop in household consumption.

Unemployment & inactivity

Burkina Faso's unemployment rate in 2019 was 6.26%, an increase from the previous year's unemployment rate. The Burkinabè population is growing at almost 3 percent per year, but the country does not create enough jobs to absorb its different people into the labor force. [6] Burkina Faso needs to create 300,000 jobs annually to match its demographic growth, while about 90 percent of its workers are in the informal sector. Though the unemployment rate is low, inactivity is widespread, making up for over one-third of the working-age population.

Entrepreneurship mindset in the young

Many young people, regardless of education level, go into self-employment and start businesses to earn a living for lack of jobs. This entrepreneurship mindset has worked to their benefit during the pandemic, as many of those who have lost their jobs or faced pay cuts have found new ways to supplement their income by taking up new job opportunities or starting small businesses of their own.

Readjusting of household budgets

Families have also had to adjust to their budgets, let go of items they now consider a luxury and focus on buying absolute necessities such as food and paying utility bills. People have also made adjustments to the types and brands of foods they now consume. As incomes have fallen due to the loss of production, consumption in the medium and long term have fallen.

[6]Burkina Faso: Country Private Sector Diagnostic via The World Bank



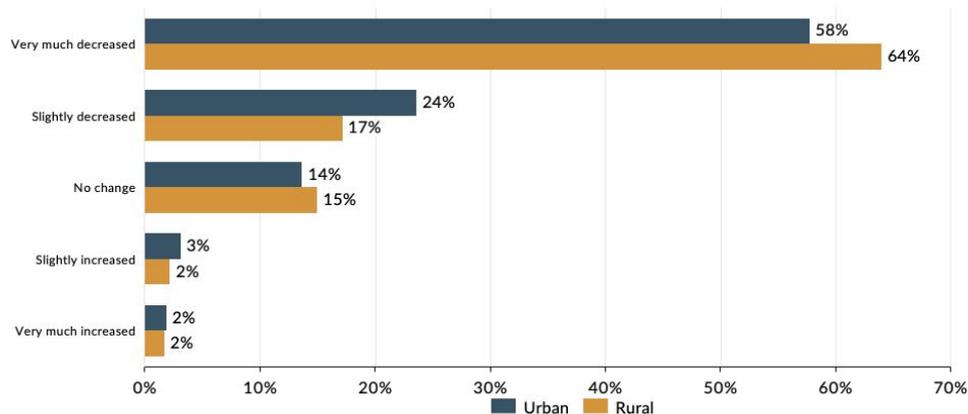
“Farming is my main source of income, but since I am already in the field, I have started selling inputs this year. I didn’t do it very well, but next season if I have funds, I will do my best to expand my input selling business”

Aboubacar, 25 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso

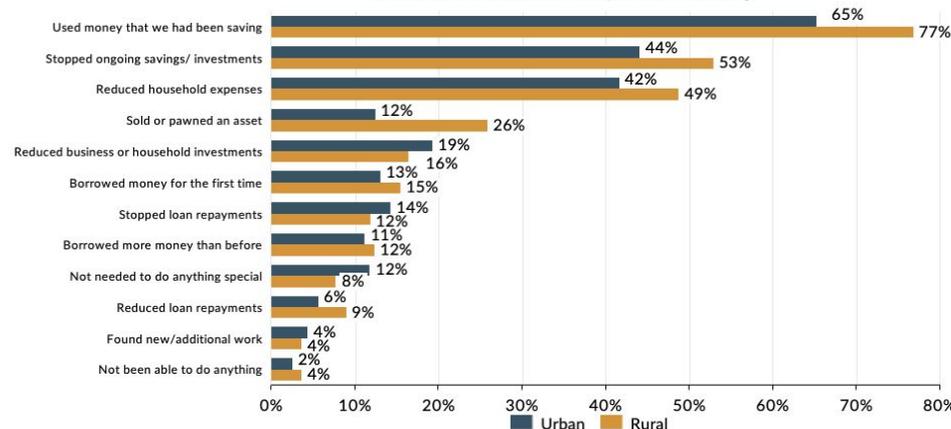
REDUCED INCOMES

Household income has reduced across the board in rural and urban areas to varying degrees; there is a slightly sharper impact in rural areas. **81% of rural** respondents and **82% of urban** respondents reported a decrease in their incomes. The main coping mechanisms for weathering the uncertainties of the pandemic are re-allocating savings and cutting expenditure. More specifically, **(i) using savings, (ii) stopping ongoing savings and investments, and (iii) reducing household expenses.**

How has coronavirus changed your household's income?



As a way to cope with the coronavirus situation, have you or anyone in the household had to do any of the following



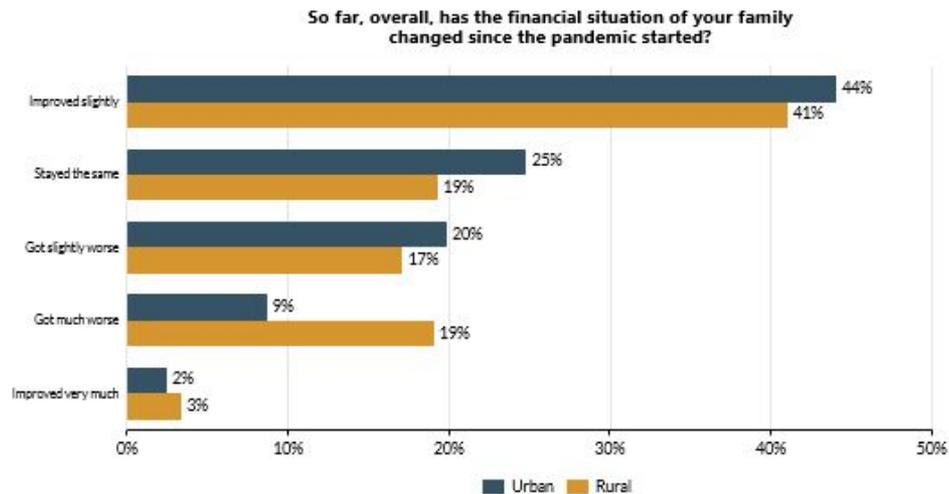


“I had to adapt and reduce my expenses to meet family needs like buying gas for my motorbike, transportation, electricity bills, and food, to cope with my reduced income during this period.”

Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

SHIFTING FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

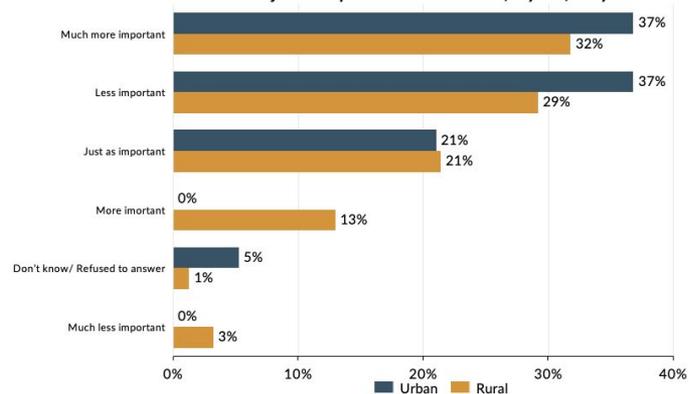
Despite reduced incomes, many families had managed to maintain the same financial situation as before the pandemic or noticed a slight improvement in their finances **due to effective cost** management. Among urban respondents, **44% have experienced a small improvement in their families'** financial situation while **25% stayed the same as before the pandemic**. In rural households, **41% of rural respondents shared that their families' overall financial situation has improved**, while **19% of them reported it being the same**.



“I had to cut down on my social activities, going out... and just focused all my expenses on health and basic food to help me get through the crisis.”

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban,
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

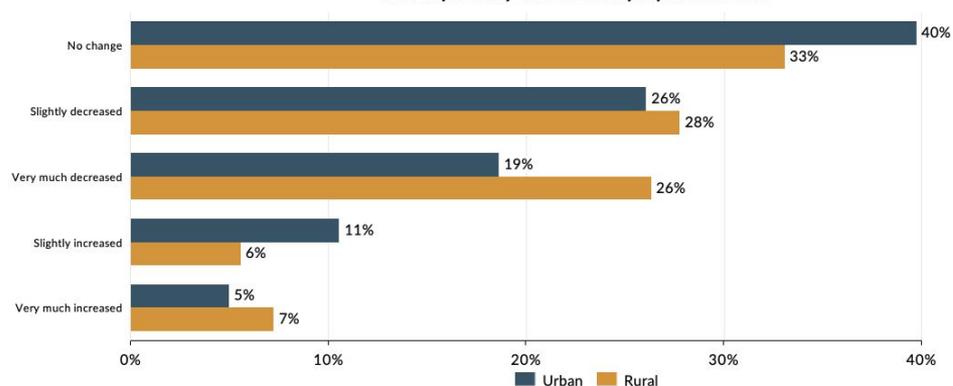
Since (first case of COVID-19 was reported) has farming become more, less or remained just as important as a livelihood for your family?



A RURAL PERSPECTIVE

Subsistence farming has become increasingly crucial for household food supply for a majority of rural families. 34% of rural respondents report that farming is much more important as a food source, compared to 21% of urban respondents. **However, to cope with COVID-19, most households have decreased their food consumption, more so in rural households.** A total of 54% of rural respondents reported a slight decrease or heavy decrease in food consumption, while 45% of urban respondents reported either a slight or heavy decrease in food consumption.

As a result of the coronavirus, have there been changes in food consumption in your household per person? Has it:



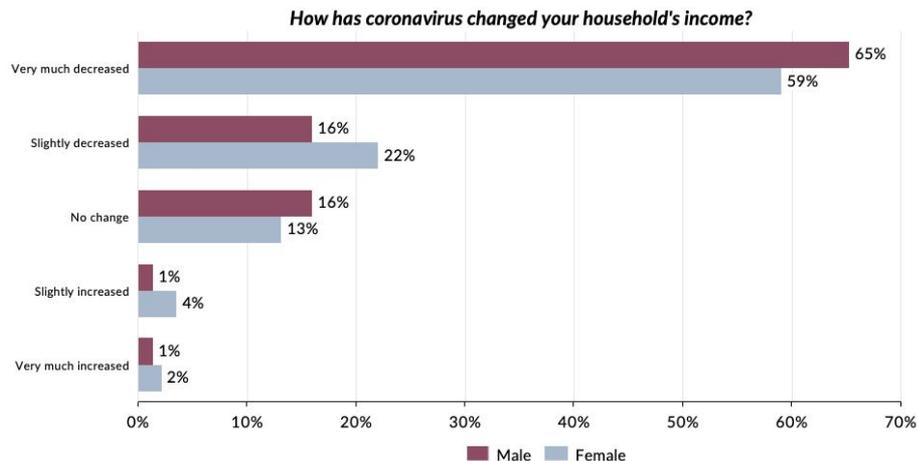


“I am also doing home education on the side. I am a homeschool teacher coaching physics and mathematics, which helps me make some extra income.”

Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Men find that their household income reduction is significantly sharper compared to women’s views on the same. 59% of women reported a very large decrease in their household’s income since the pandemic began, compared to 65% of men.



“My sister gave me a fridge as a gift and gave me advice on how to start this water business after the pandemic came and my income was affected. I get about 1500 - 2000 CFAF a day.”

Yarro, 32 years old, Female | House Wife | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

“I had to adapt and reduce my expenses to literally family needs like gas for motorbikes and transport, electricity bills and food, to cope with the reduced income.”

Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

I invested in a mobile money business during Covid. Even though my business was profitable before, I observed a peak in electronic transactions, so I took advantage of that opportunity... I will retain it even after the pandemic because the income is good.”

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso



ATTITUDES TOWARDS FSP

Lower-income earners prefer to transact with microfinance institutions, mobile money operators, and community banks due to the perception that formal financial institutions are expensive and bureaucratic, which has limited their avenues for accessing credit during the pandemic.

Negative perceptions of banks

For many people, banks have never really been a source of economic support and are perceived as inaccessible for low and middle-income families. They consider the transaction fees to be expensive and their processes to be slow and bureaucratic. There is a preference to use local microfinance institutes, community banking solutions, and mobile wallets for these reasons.

Loan prerequisites

Small businesses believe microfinance solutions to be more accommodative of their needs, especially when it comes to borrowing loans, as they are quicker to access and have less demanding pre-qualification criteria. The pandemic has further reinforced this fact as many households have now been asked to use their land, house, car titles, and other smaller assets that they may own as collateral before being able to take out any loans. Some of these requirements have extended to government-funded interventions.

Fear of accessing loans

With the decreased access to financing and increasing debt, 42% of respondents in Burkina Faso say they have an outstanding loan, and 84% say they cannot repay their loan. ^[7] The Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) on 21st March 2020, announced some interventions such as introducing a framework inviting banks to accommodate demands from firms with Covid19-related repayment difficulties to postpone for a 3-month renewable period debt service falling due, without the need to classify such postponed claims as non-performing loans.^[8]



[7] UNDP, Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19, May 2020

[8] KPMG, Economic Stimulus Measures, Burkina Faso, 2020

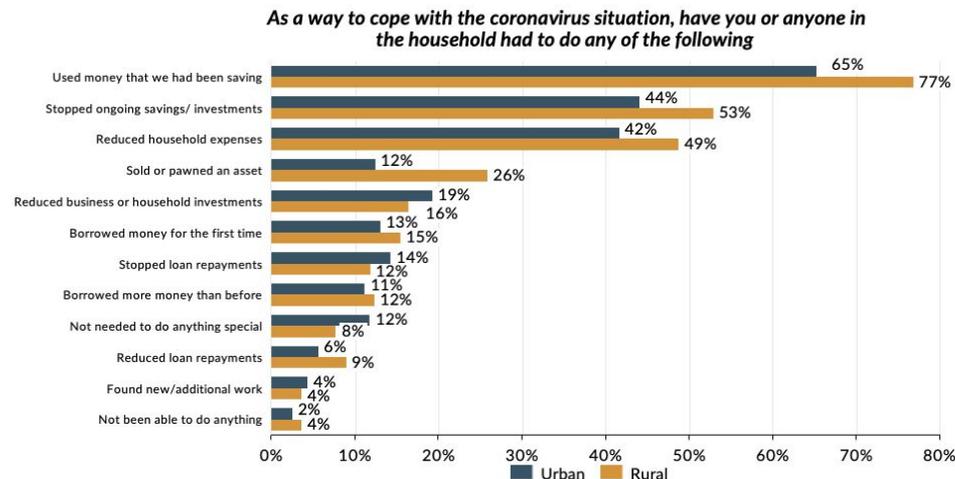


“It's hard to deal with banks because of the guarantor requirements. I'd rather work with local institutions... The union pays us through an MFI. I keep my money there other than just what I need to spend”

Ali, 31 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso

BORROWING EXPERIENCES

Financial assistance remains a crucial need. **65% of women reported that cash transfer would be the most helpful kind of support to them at this time, compared to 72% of men.** From a rural/urban perspective, 63% of urban respondents and 71% of rural respondents reported that cash transfer would be the most helpful kind of support to them at this time. Nearly a quarter of urban respondents and a third of rural respondents use **borrowing as a coping mechanism. 24% of urban households have either borrowed money for the first time (13%) or borrowed more money than before (11%).** Similarly, **27% of rural households have either borrowed money for the first time (15%) or borrowed more than before (12%)**



“I bank with a microfinance bank. I chose this over a bank because these institutions are the ones that will support a small business like mine... They gave me a loan to support my business.... a big bank would not.”

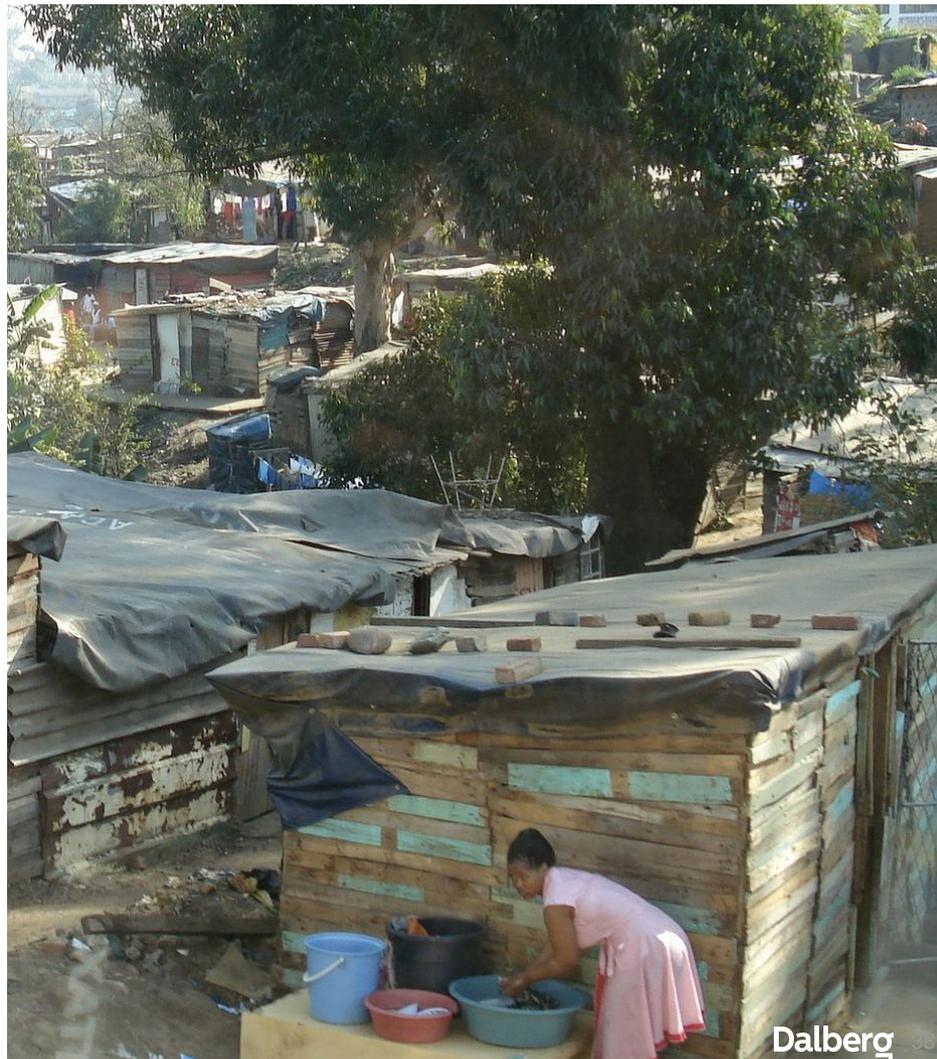
Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

“I save my money in a local finance institute. The communities that are far from big cities use such. I also use mobile money.”

Razack, 30 years old, Male | Day laborer | Rural, Mansory, Burkina Faso

“It's hard to deal with banks because of the guarantor requirements. I'd rather work with local institutions... The union pays us through an MFI. I keep my money there other than just what I need to spend.”

Ali, 31 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso



FAMILY SUPPORT

The family unit is seen as the first resort when seeking financial aid, even though people are aware that the widespread loss of income has lowered the level of support they can give or get.

Vulnerable workers in the workforce

In 2019, the share of the workforce in vulnerable employment was 86%, typically not included in social security schemes.[9] This percentage of people also usually find it challenging to seek financial support outside of their immediate family and close relatives. Family and friends are often the most reliable and assured means of getting financial assistance in times of trouble than more formalized financial support channels.

Reduced support channels

Covid-19 is a global pandemic that has resulted in the widespread loss of income for many people and has reduced the already limited support channels that households could turn to survive a financial crisis. However, due to the mass loss of income opportunities, a shared understanding among people that those among their support-systems that were once able to assist them can no longer continue to provide them with the same level of support. Families have thus had to make adjustments to their spending habits to make ends meet.

Alternative means of support

Family and friends' support has also been demonstrated in other indirect ways, such as taking up childcare to allow the primary caregivers to seek economic opportunities or assist individuals in their businesses pro-bono to cut down on costs.

[9] ECOWAS, *Humanitarian and Social Indicators, 2019* via Dalberg analysis





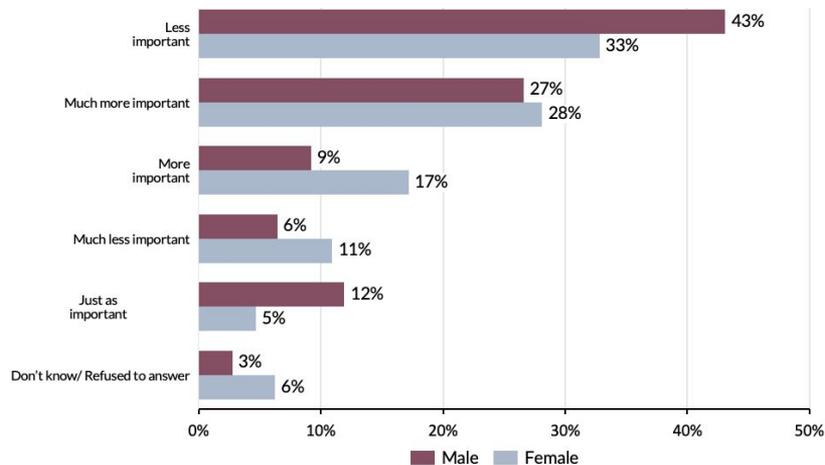
“I get 40000 CFAF, and 10000 CFAF goes to my mother, 10000 goes to my savings, and 20000 CFAF to feed my family and pay fees for my brother.”

Ganiau, 22 years old, Male | Mobile Money Vendor | Rural, Leo, Burkina Faso

HIGHER BURDEN ON INCOME EARNERS

As income sources dwindle due to COVID-19 disruptions, people are forced to lower their level of reliance on what was once a significant income source for family contributions. **33% of women reported that since the pandemic began, their wage or salary labor has become less important as a source of income, compared to 43% of men.** This creates a higher burden on ongoing income earners to support their families. **36% of men and 45% of women reported that their income has become more critical to their families as a source of livelihood.**

Since (First case of COVID-19 was announced) has your wage or salary labor become more, less or remained just as important as a livelihood (source of income) for your family?





“I asked for help from friends and family, other people in the community but most of it was not positive. Everyone was in the same crisis and needed to be safe themselves.”

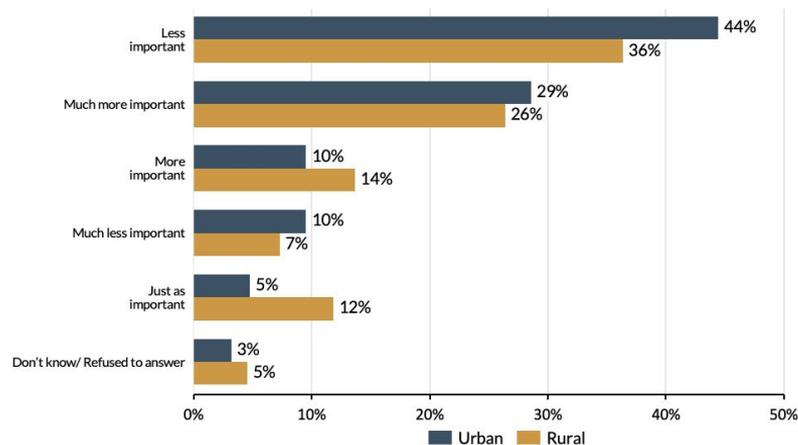
Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

A RURAL PERSPECTIVE

A majority of rural respondents find their incomes to be just as important or more to support their families. **A total of 52% of rural respondents perceive their wages/ salaries as much more important** (26%), more important (14%), or just as important (12%) contributions to the family income.

By contrast, most urban respondents perceive their incomes as less important in supporting their families. **A total of 54% find their wages/salaries to be a less important** (10%) or much less important (44%) income source for their family.

Since (First case of COVID-19 was announced) has your wage or salary labor become more, less or remained just as important as a livelihood (source of income) for your family?



“My sister is the one who supports me because she has a good job. My brother also used to help me, but since he lost his job when the project closed, he can no longer support me”

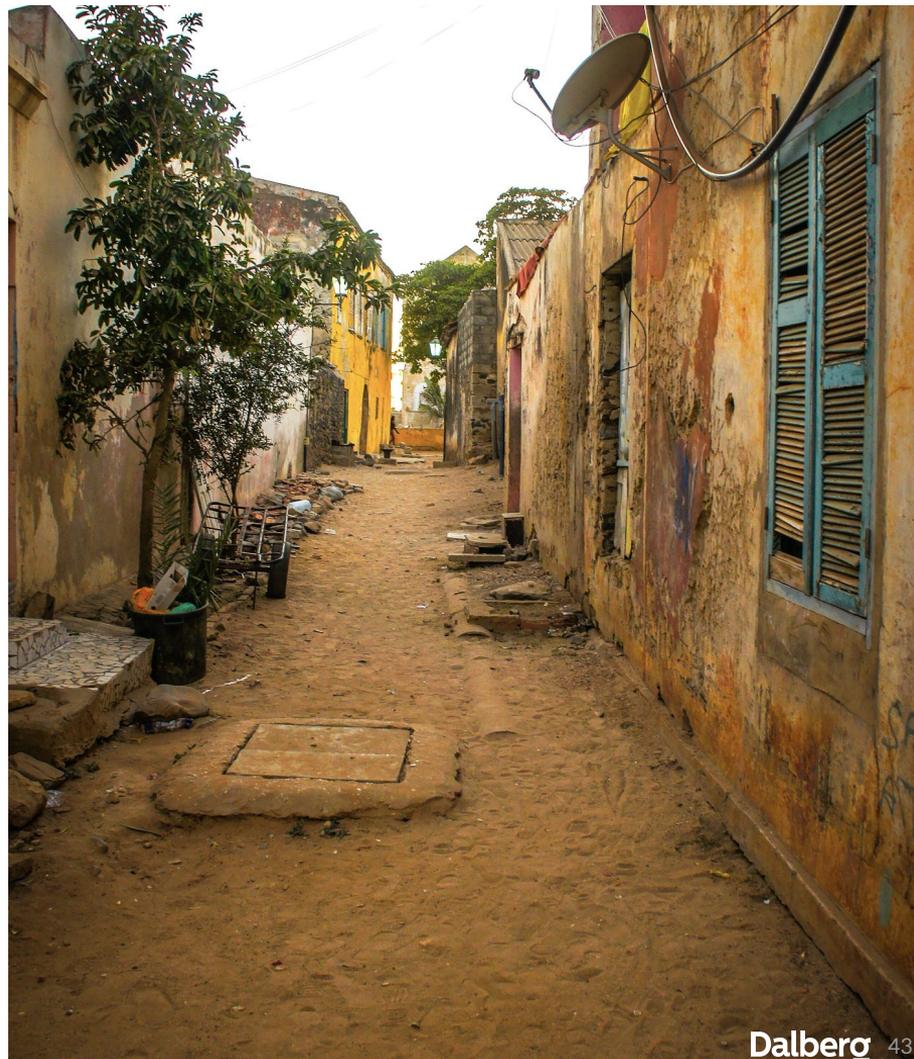
Yarro, 32 years old, Female | House Wife | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

“I asked for help from friends and family, other people in the community but most of it was not positive. Everyone was in the same crisis and needed to be safe themselves.”

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

“I get 40000 CFAF, and 10000 CFAF goes to my mother, 10000 goes to my savings and 20000 CFAF to feed my family and pay fees for my brother.”

Ganiau, 22 years old, Male | Mobile Money Vendor | Rural, Leo, Burkina Faso



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

School closures have negatively impacted students, with teachers reporting a drastic drop in student performance on their return. The decline in performance is attributed to the digital divide between urban and rural households and the high cost of studying at home.

School closure

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2,410 schools were closed or non-operational (24th February 2020) due to insecurity in Burkina Faso.^[14] Covid-19 aggravated the situation when the government ordered the closure of schools in March to curb the disease spread, forcing over 5.1 million children to miss out on more than 6 months of learning in Burkina Faso. It is estimated that the number of school children missing out on school meals due to COVID-related closures in Burkina Faso is 3,863,926.^[15] A child's ability to continue education during COVID-19 times is highly dependant on their geographical location and their parent's spending power.

Divide in access to education

Children living in urban areas have greater access to educational resources provided by the government - the TV channel Burkina Info was broadcasting educational programs during school closures, with particular emphasis on mathematics, physics, chemistry, French, and philosophy - but not everyone could afford to access these resources. The schools have recently reopened, but teachers and parents have noted a drop in students' performance. The students were also moved to the next level without completing the previous year's syllabus, further widening the knowledge gap between socioeconomic classes.

[1] OCHA, "Burkina Faso, Mali & Western Niger: Humanitarian Snapshot", 2020 - https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20200217_bfa_mli_ner_humanitarian_snapshot_en.pdf
 [2] World Food Programme via <http://www.oecd.org/COVID-19/policy-responses/when-a-global-virus-confronts-local-realities-COVID-19-covid-19-in-west-africa-8af7f692/>



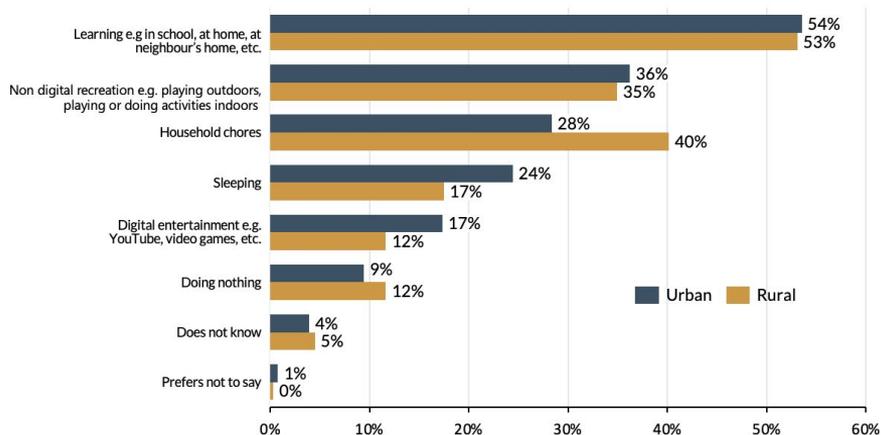
LEARNING BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

Before the pandemic, education was among the top activities that children devoted their time to. 65% of urban respondents and 61% of rural respondents reported their children had spent most of their time engaged in learning activities. **Due to Covid-related disruptions, learning activity has drastically reduced among rural and urban students.** Only 17% of urban students and 12% of rural students dedicate most of their time to continued learning. Students are spending more time on household chores, sleeping, digital entertainment, and idling.

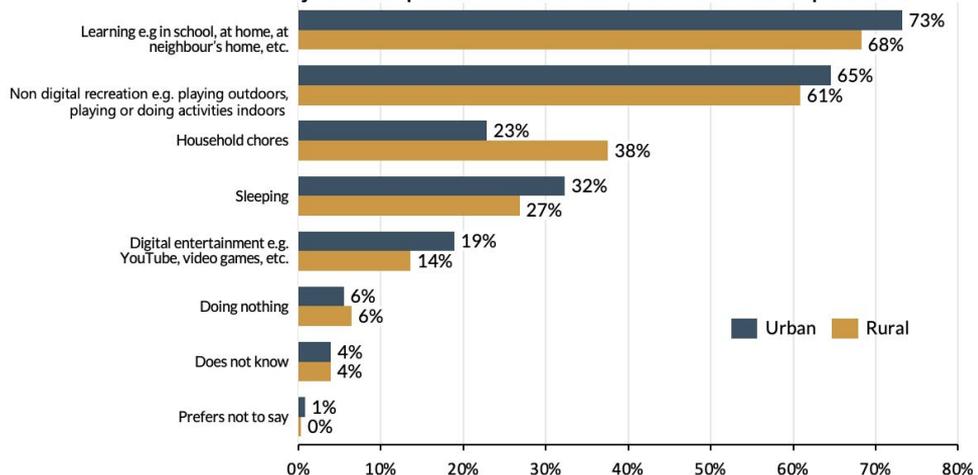
“There was a real decrease in the students level this year. When we closed school, people did not have the ability to carry on studying at home.”

Sanou, 33 years old, Male | Teacher | Rural, Bama, Burkina Faso

How did your child spend most of their time during the COVID-19 pandemic?



How did your child spend most of their time before the COVID-19 pandemic?



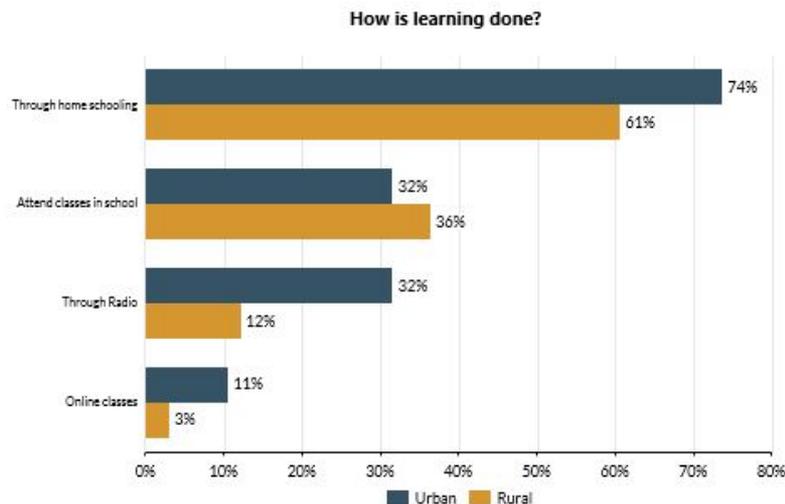


“Since I attend evening classes, it was impossible to go to class with the curfew. We had to do online classes then send assignments. It was hard for me to attend because I could not afford data bundles.”

Adeline, 30 years old, Female | Graduate Student | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

DISPROPORTIONATE BURDENS

Thus far, urban students have been better placed to leverage remote learning. **43% of urban students are using** tech-enabled learning through radio or online classes, compared to **15% of rural students accessing the same means**. Homeschool has disproportionately affected many women whose primary activity or job is as a caregiver to family members, increasing their poverty levels.



“My brother's grades were also affected during the pandemic, and he didn't get good grades to enable him to go to the next level of education.”

Ganiau, 22 years old, Male | Mobile Money Vendor | Rural, Leo, Burkina Faso

“I have a child at school. Last year they stopped and had decided to go to the next level. They can not cope because they have not caught up with that level.”

Elodie, 25 years old, Female | Accountant | Rural, Zinyare, Burkina Faso

“There were some measures that they took, like doing classes on TV. Some people still did not have access to it... people far from cities do not have access to TVs so these measures were not effective.”

Sanou, 33 years old, Male | Teacher | Rural, Bama, Burkina Faso



“COVID-19 has created a gap between people who are living in the countryside and the cities, because people in the cities have access to things like TVs and other options for getting an education. My job has gotten harder because the students have forgotten everything they have learned.”

Abdoulaye, 30 years old, Male | Teacher | Rural, Bobo, Burkina Faso

Abdou is a 33 years old government primary school teacher. He is originally from Bobo but is currently stationed in the outskirts of the city. Abdou feels that the impact of COVID-19 on his life is very interconnected with his profession as a teacher. COVID-19 has affected Burkina's education in many ways, which has affected his personal and professional life because he has observed an increase in his workload.

At the outbreak of the pandemic in Burkina Faso, the government stopped allowing schools to run. Despite continuing to pay government teachers during the closure period, Abdou still feels that the pandemic's negative impacts are far-reaching. This year, they start with a new program without letting the students finish the previous year's program. He feels that by doing so, many students, significantly more impoverished and more disadvantaged rural students, will be left behind, with little opportunities to bridge any gaps in their knowledge. He attributes this poor performance to the high cost and inadequate infrastructure to facilitate remote learning.



How might we foster better transparency during the distribution of government financial support ensuring support packages are fit for purpose, have the maximum reach, and people have timely access?

How might we create sustainable partnerships that better identify at-risk households, create tailored financial support that matches peoples' pre-existing financial habits, and nudge them towards better habits in their interest?

How might we reduce the financial burdens associated with schools' closure and costs of homeschooling children?

- Provide strategic and sequential financial assistance packages that openly communicate the prioritized list of eligibility and offer visibility on how/when households can apply for financial assistance.
- Use partner channels to build trust, and raise awareness on available support programs, including trusted community leaders, community organizations, and MNO operators' shortcode services.
- Provide financial education to households on available financial packages and tools, and demystify loans from formal finance
- Tailor food assistance to people's needs as more households preferred receiving food inputs compared to refined food. Consider using needs assessments among families to inform food aid packages.
- Encourage a return to school when it is safe to do so. By equipping schools to comply with COVID-19 measures by providing resources to implement social distancing - e.g., partitioning classrooms for rotational learning shifts and adapting learning content through a standardized and replicable curriculum to ease teachers' workloads.
- Subsidizing children's tuition in select private schools by channeling government funds to partially cover the cost of COVID-19 measures in public and private schools

BEST PRACTICES

Oxfam uses mobile money to target the most affected households because it is efficient, traceable, and minimizes duplication. They send it via mobile money to the head of the household.

Plan International uses a network of associations that passes aid on to other beneficiaries on the ground. They believe that this is a more efficient process of distributing aid as the associations are better equipped to vet and validate recipients and limit travel costs.

UNHCR distributed ~3,000 solar-powered radio sets targeting refugee children to ensure they can access the distance learning programs broadcast through national and community radios. In operational schools, they also donated WASH infrastructures such as wash stations and latrines, constructed additional classrooms to allow for social distancing measures, and provided school staff with personal protective equipment.

“At school, you also see the difficulty (complying with COVID-19 safety measures) with the students. We have busy classrooms, and it is difficult to split the classes”

KABA Ismaïla, Program Advisor, Plan International | Burkina Faso

How might we better equip business owners with the tools and resources to engage in alternative pathways to earn a meaningful livelihood?

How might we strengthen existing networks that provide support to MSMEs to ensure that a route to market for their produce remains open during COVID-19 restrictions?

- Supporting entrepreneurs to stay on their pathway via access to
 - financial support packages tailored to informal MSMEs
 - expanded networks of mentors, customers, and potential partners; and
 - expertise through training on COVID-19 measures to protect themselves/customers, digital education, and tools they can use to operate their enterprises, and financial education on tools and strategies to adapt to economic uncertainty
- Reinforcing community groups as a channel to understand critical MSME needs at local levels, disburse aid/financial support packages, and promote transparency by clearly communicating application processes to communities. Explore partnering with business groups, such as women's business groups or farmer groups, to reach MSMEs networks systematically.
- Promote businesses that strengthen existing value chains to minimize the disruptions to crucial sectors—for example, promoting food aggregation and transport to urban markets.

BEST PRACTICES

PEDL and the Ministry of Employment in Burkina Faso are conducting field research to assess the impact of government relief measures on SME employment and survival to inform policy in the country as the government seeks to support firms and workers.

The Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) has allocated \$250 million as emergency funds for onward lending to strengthen COVID-19 response efforts for its member states. ICD and Coris Bank International have partnered to provide ~\$18 million in loans to private sector enterprises, including SMEs.

“Markets were closed and that there are certain activities that could no longer be carried out, transportation was also stalled; people who lived from day to day and who could no longer have anything, so you see that they are financially stranded.”

Hema Adama, AIRE Project coordinator, Tres de Hommes | Burkina Faso

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Despite the establishment of government economic recovery packages, the lack of a transparent feedback process for applying and selecting government aid and interventions has left many business owners feeling disenfranchised and marginalized.

Government interventions

The government of Burkina Faso has devised various interventions to support economic recovery, such as the establishment of an economic recovery fund for companies in difficulty in the amount of CFAF 100 billion; the acquisition of agricultural inputs and animal feed to support food and pastoral production, amounting to CFAF 30 billion and the establishment of a solidarity fund for the benefit of actors in the informal sector^[10]

Lack of feedback & transparency

However, the process of acquiring these funds is perceived to be overly bureaucratic, unclear, and lacking proper feedback mechanisms. This lack of feedback and clearness has left many MSME owners without access to economic support from the government. Furthermore, for those who have applied for aid, presenting required documents is yet to receive feedback on their application status. Others have been denied the funds with no explanation or feedback as to what disqualified them.

Loss of trust in government claims

The experience of the process has left MSME owners with the perception of their government being disinterested in their livelihoods and just making unsubstantiated claims. Many of them have been forced to take various cost-cutting measures to stay afloat, such as letting go of their employees or entirely shutting down, denying many young people economic opportunities.

[10] UNDP, *Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19*, May 2020





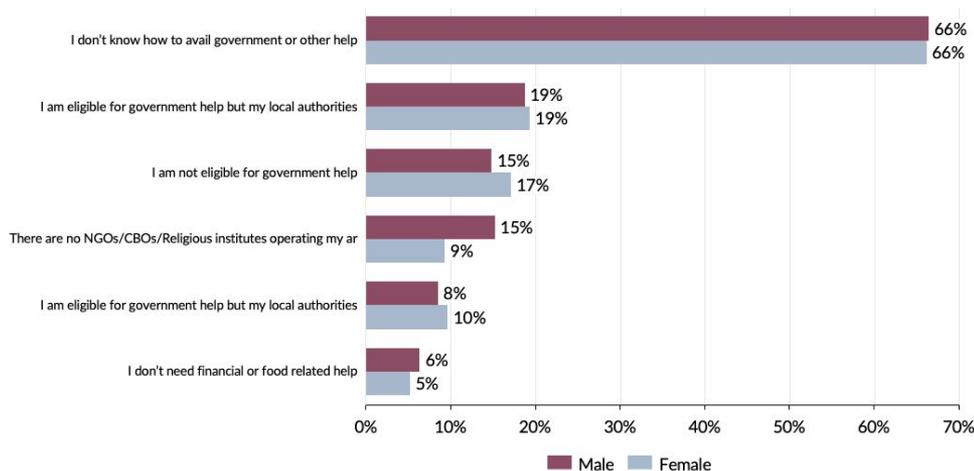
“Government provides a lot of funds here, I applied for it but my project wasn't selected... After selection, they put up the names of those who have not been selected. Nobody gives you feedback on why you were not chosen.”

Aboutacar, 25 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso

ACCESSING SOCIAL PROTECTION

Despite some government being made available, many respondents feel that they do not know how to access it. **70% of urban respondents and 65% of rural respondents reported not knowing how to avail themselves of Government or other help.** As the main reason they have not received any financial or food-related help during the COVID-19 pandemic, **66% of both women and men** reported not knowing how to avail Government or other help as the main reason they have not received any financial or food-related help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

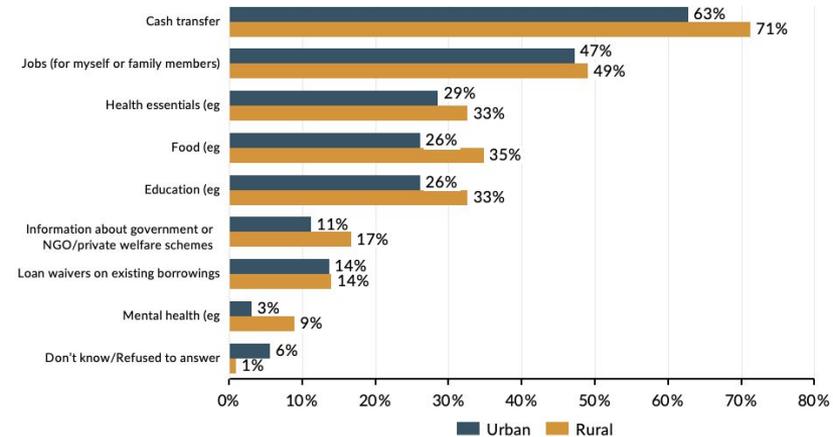
Why haven't you received any financial or food related help during the COVID-19 pandemic?



CASH TRANSFER

63% of urban respondents and 71% of rural respondents reported that cash transfer would be the most helpful kind of support to them at this time, with 65% of women and 72% of men. Due to the drastic reduction in the amount of money being made from the sale of goods, especially in urban centers with 53% of urban respondents and 13% of rural respondents reported fewer sales of produce from their farm or livestock since the pandemic began. 32% of both women and men reported much fewer sales of produce from their farm or livestock since the pandemic began.

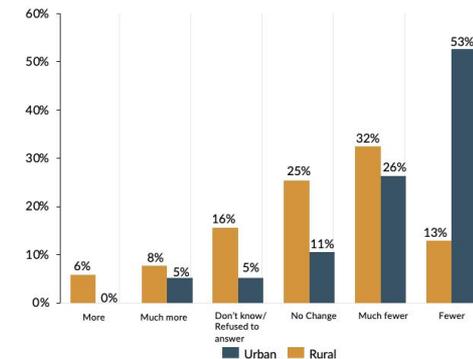
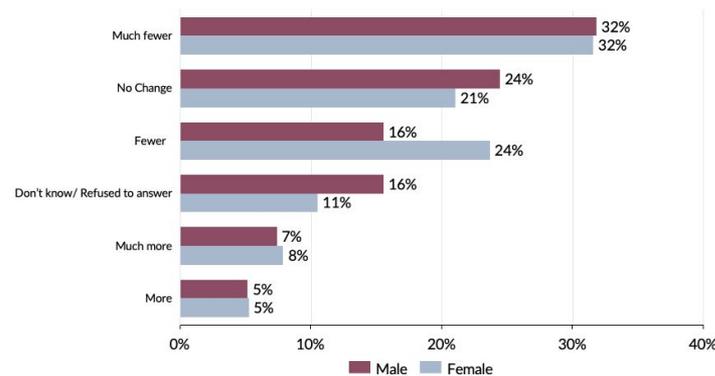
What kind of support would be most helpful to you at this time?



“The government aid was announced in the news and asked people who needed support to come in and apply for it. You could either use your car title to get a loan or go with another asset... I don't know what the status of my application is, and they haven't communicated. I also don't know anyone who has received the aid yet.”

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

As a way to cope with the COVID-19, has your household had to do any of the following farm activities differently from how you would normally have done them? Sold more or less produce from your farm or livestock



“Corporations are the ones who take advantage of any government help. Small businesses in agriculture can't even get close to that kind of help. We do not have any info on any type of government assistance for us.”

Zita, 25 years old, Female | Intern | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

“I didn't hear about any support the government was offering for night clubs and restaurants. Some people who were affected tried to get loans with MFIs. But since there was a pandemic, the MFIs were taking precautions and were not given the loans as before.”

Sanou, 33 years old, Male | Teacher | Rural, Bama, Burkina Faso



ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION

Community health workers have been instrumental in sharing COVID-19 information in rural communities that rely on word of mouth. Nonetheless, TV and radio are the primary sources of information accessed by people, as health information from these channels is believed to be verified and handled by experts.

Trusted channels of health information

Burkinabe access information on Covid-19 from various sources, including television and radio broadcasts, social media channels, messages from mobile network operators, healthcare field workers, and word of mouth; TV and radio are considered the most trusted source of health information. Many people stated that information broadcasted on such channels comes from experts and must be verified. Community health workers have also played an essential role in disseminating information on Covid-19 among people living in villages.

Gender disparity in accessing health information

Data showed that women in Burkina Faso and across West Africa were having a hard time accessing information. Women rely heavily on information networks, such as speaking with friends at the market, as sources of knowledge — channels that got blocked off during lockdown.^[11] Door to door initiatives in such a case helped disseminate information. Initiatives that were initially set up to spread awareness on Malaria and reproductive health, for example, are now training their audiences on how COVID-19 spreads and how to take the right preventive measures to curb its spread. UNFPA provided technical support for elaborating and reproducing a booklet on obstetric gynecology and neonatology in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic for maternity care providers. 75 ^[12] providers in nursing school were oriented on what to do in the context of COVID-19. Financial and technical support was provided to 7 health districts to train 700 maternity hospital providers on the prevention of COVID-19.^[13]



[11] <https://www.devex.com/news/in-burkina-faso-access-to-gender-data-is-complicated-by-conflict-97360>

[12][13] UNFPA, "West and Central Africa Region: COVID-19 situation report no.5", 2020

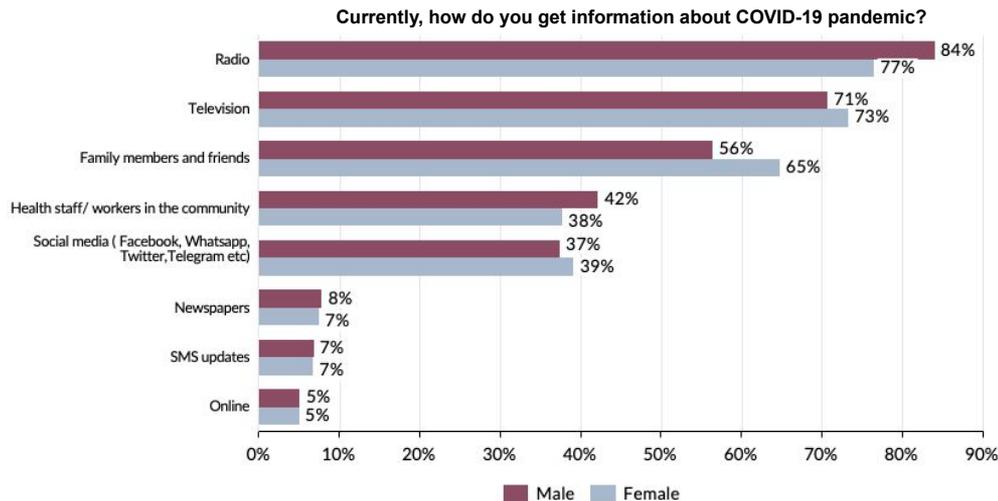


“We used to listen to the radio or watch TV to get information. The mobile network also sends us messages. Radio and TV are trustworthy... they are a serious institute, people cannot go there and lie, they are specialists.”

Ganiau, 22 years old, Male | Mobile Money Vendor | Rural, Leo, Burkina Faso

GENDER DISPARITY

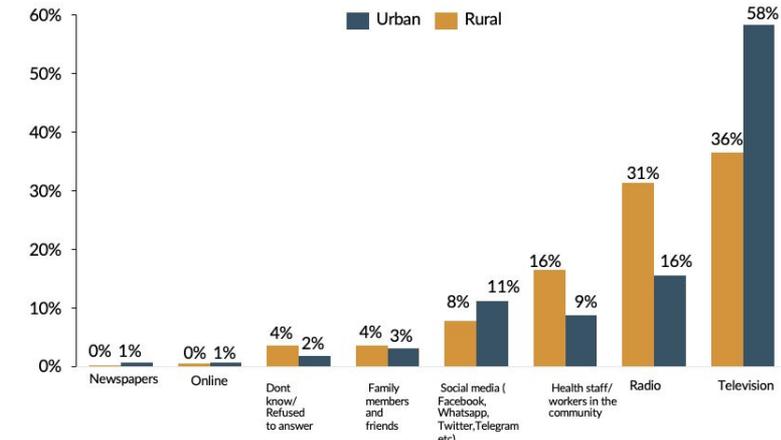
77% of women reported they currently get information about COVID-19 pandemic through **Radio**, compared to **84% of men**. However, there is a higher proportion on women accessing information through word of mouth, **family, and friends 65%**, and **social media 39%** which allowed them to be relatively more susceptible to misinformation as these sources tend to be more difficult to verify.



TRUST IN HEALTH INFORMATION

TV was most frequently reported as people's most trusted source of COVID-related information (reported by 43% of respondents). When split by location, the data shows that **36% of rural respondents reported the highest trust in TV**, and 58% of urban respondents reported this. **Newspapers were not highly trusted** – 0% of rural respondents and 1% of urban respondents put it at the top of their list of trusted sources. **49% of women reported trusting TV the most as their source of information**, compared to 36% of men.

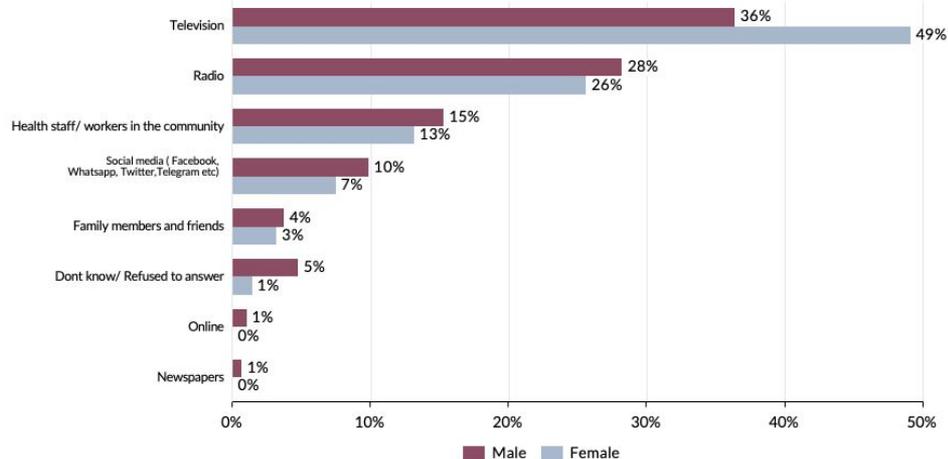
Which source of information do you trust most?



“I trusted the information that was being given by the government through TV and radio, and I believe that they were doing the right things.”

Aboubacar, 25 years old, Male | Farmer | Rurban, Bobo, Burkina Faso

Which source of information do you trust most?



ACCESS TO PPEs

The cost of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has increased by up to 5 times since the COVID-19 crisis, therefore becoming unaffordable for many people, which results in the unsafe reuse of masks and the denial of service in public facilities for people who go without masks.

Government provision of PPE

Public sector workers are provided with a limited amount of PPE by the Government, while people working independently of the Government are left to buy their own. The cost of PPEs has increased significantly since the pandemic began, which has made it difficult for individuals who are already suffering a loss of income to acquire masks and sanitizers for themselves.

Implications of a sudden increase in the cost of PPE

Many people stated their dissatisfaction at the sudden hike in the price of masks and hand sanitizers, with many reporting an increase in price from 100 CFAF to 500 CFAF. Some people reuse disposable face masks, buy washable ones to reuse or go without PPEs. Apart from increasing their risk of infection and spread of the virus, people who lack facemasks have been denied service at public facilities such as banks or government offices that require that anyone who enters their premises wear a mask.

Aid interventions

The lack of medical equipment to treat infected patients seeking emergency care is also glaring. There have been private interventions such as UNFPA, which provided technical support for elaborating and reproducing a booklet on obstetric gynecology and neonatology during the pandemic for maternity care providers. Twenty vocational training and learning centers have been equipped with a COVID-19 protection kit to facilitate learning after the closure of training centers.^[16]

[16] UNFPA, "West and Central Africa Region: COVID-29 situation report no.5", 2020





“When you go for fieldwork, you're given free face masks, but you have to buy your own for your work. It's expensive, and not everyone can afford it. Some people in the market are not wearing them because they cannot afford them, so that becomes a problem for us all”

Sawadogo, 42 years old, Male | Civil Servant | Rurban, Zitenga, Burkina Faso

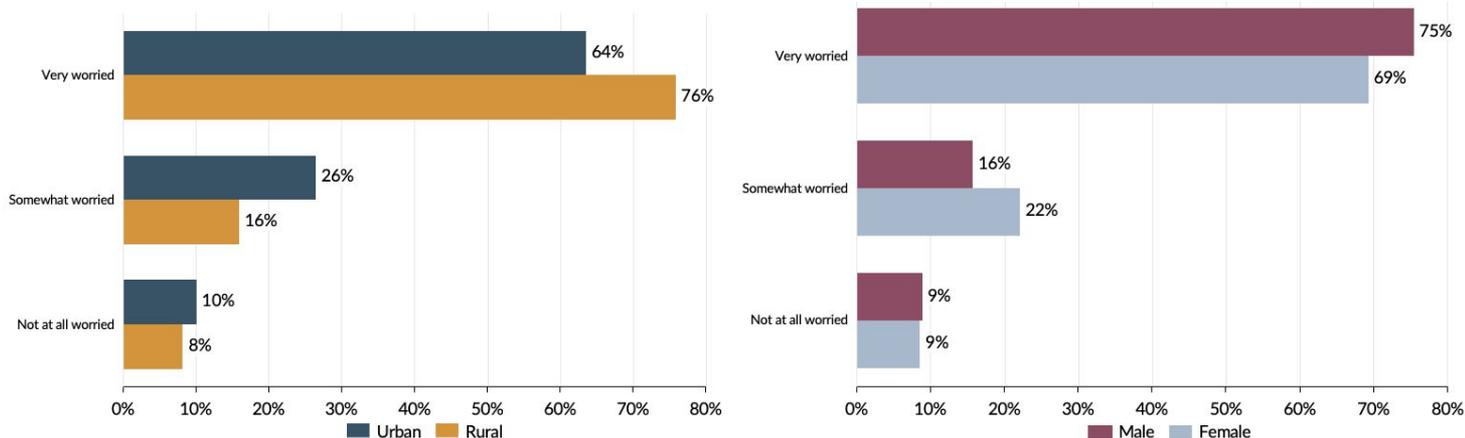
FEAR OF CONTRACTION

64% of urban respondents and 76% of rural

respondents reported being very worried about **getting infected with Covid-19.**

69% of women reported being very worried about getting infected with Covid-19, compared to **75% of men.**

How worried are you, if at all , about getting infected with Covid-19?



“The price of masks and sanitizers went up. Sanitizers used to be 3000 CFA and increased to 6000 CFA. People used it to get rich.”

Razack, 30 years old, Male | Day laborer | Rural, Mansory, Niger

“At the beginning, we used to buy our own PPE. It was 100 CFA then increased to 500 CFA. We now get it for free at the association.”

Elodie, 25 years old, Female | Accountant | Rural, Zinyare, Burkina Faso

“We had to buy sanitizer for ourselves. There was no government help. At some point, sanitizer ran out - you could not find it anywhere even if you had the money. The prices also went up.”

Zangre, 31 years old, Female | Business Owner | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

People are less willing to seek formal health care in hospitals out of a fear of exposing themselves to the COVID-19 virus at the hospital and being forced to go into quarantine as a result.

A decline in hospital visits

The COVID-19 crisis has negatively impacted people's attitudes towards seeking out healthcare. Healthcare professionals claim there has been a drop in hospitals' visits for routine checkups or other non-COVID-19 related visits. Many people are wary of going to public healthcare facilities out of fear of being wrongly diagnosed with covid, being asked to self-isolate, being quarantined at the facility, or being exposed to and contracting the virus.

Preference for self-treatment

Evidence from past disease outbreaks, as well as emerging evidence specific to COVID-19, suggests that utilization of essential health services is likely to decline, having potentially devastating consequences for people across the country.^[17] The stigma associated with contracting Covid-19, additional financial burdens that may come with hospital bills, and restrictions on movement further prevent people from seeking medical advice from hospitals. Those we spoke to mentioned that they would rather self-treat at home for mild symptoms such as headaches, visit herbalists in their locality or consult with health care workers known to them.



[17] Indirect Health Impacts of COVID-19 in Burkina Faso: http://www.healthpolicyplus.com/ns/pubs/18419-18750_BurkinaCOVIDHealthImpact.pdf

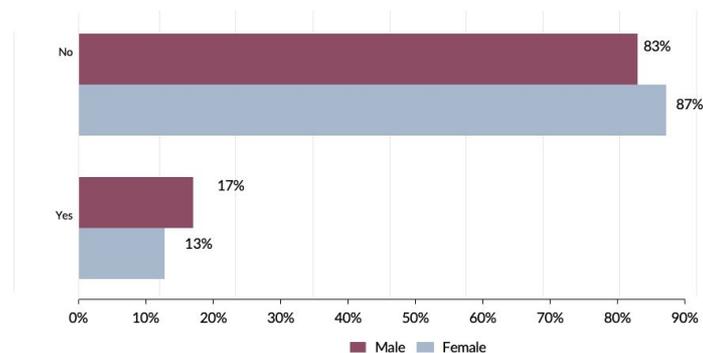
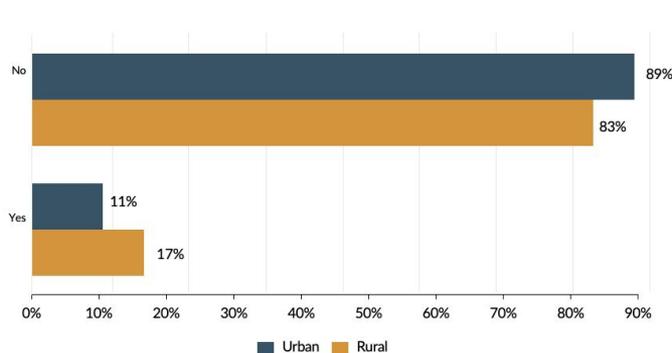


“People are more cautious about going to the hospital because of COVID. When you have a headache, you just buy medicine. People are afraid they might go and then be quarantined.”

Razack, 30 years old, Male | Day laborer | Rural, Mansory, Burkina Faso

Although most people feel there are no issues faced when accessing healthcare, **89% of urban respondents and 83% of rural respondents reported that they did not face difficulty accessing healthcare services.** People are still fearful of accessing healthcare due to fears of contracting COVID-19.

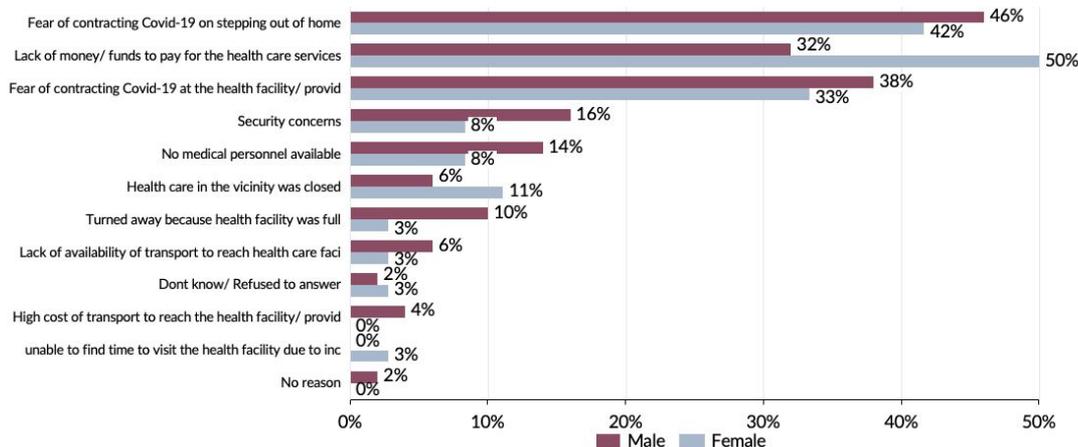
Have you or any member of your household faced difficulty in accessing health care since?



HIGH COST & FEAR OF HOSPITAL CARE

50% of women reported a lack of money/funds to pay for the health care services as to why they were unable to access health services, compared to 32% of men. Also, 41% of urban respondents and 45% of rural respondents reported fear of contracting COVID-19 at the health facility as to why they were unable to access health services.

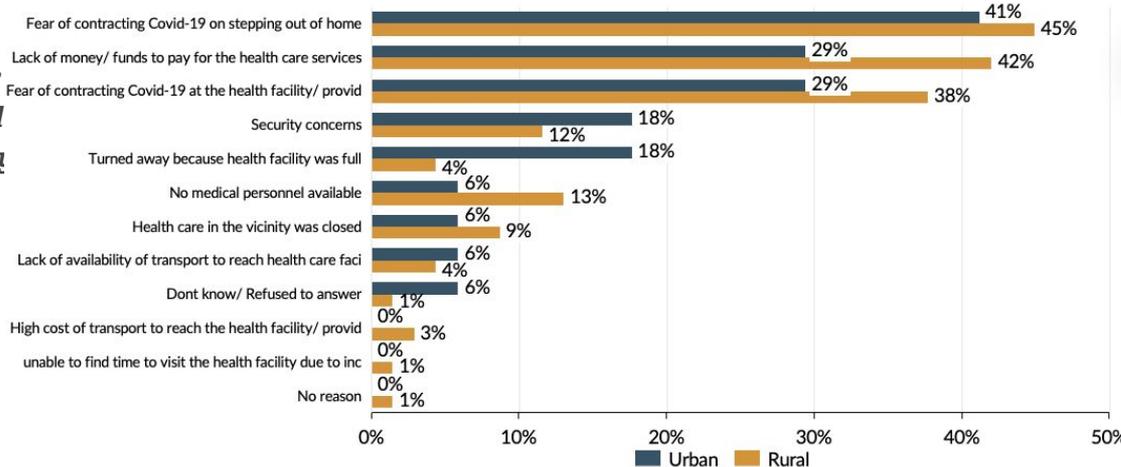
What was the reason you or a member of your family was unable to access health services?



“People were terrified to go to the hospital because of two reasons. The first is because they are worried they will be misdiagnosed and the second is the fact that they feel they will contract the virus there.”

Sanou, 33 years old, Male | Teacher| Rural, Bama, Burkina Faso

What was the reason you or a member of your family was unable to access health services?



How might we encourage higher uptake of the support on offer to communities from government and aid organizations?

How might we enhance the reach of and provision of PPE to rural communities while ensuring proper use and understanding?

- Anchor support services on communities' needs assessments ensuring that their most pressing needs are being effectively addressed.
- Have clear communication and procedures for social support services. Build trust by sharing information on eligibility criteria, application processes, timelines, and provide accessible contact points for clarification.
- Leverage existing local infrastructure for last-mile PPE distribution. For example, pharmacies to distribute subsidized masks or setting up hygiene stations at communal points such as schools, churches, and mosques.
- Explore first instances of remote care infrastructure, such as adapting existing mobile care centers, equipping community healthcare workers to provide support outside hospitals, or using pharmacies to address COVID-19 concerns and direct potential cases to hospitals.

BEST PRACTICES

Oxfam is researching to collect and analyze data on Burkinabe perceptions of COVID-19 as well as their immediate needs. This analysis will inform their response strategies and programs to ensure that they can effectively meet various communities' needs.

In June 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) trained nationally prominent radio hosts on risk communications and community engagement. The training emphasized radio presenters' critical role in influencing COVID-19 perceptions and helped them offer relevant answers to their listeners to counteract rumors and misinformation that circulates in communities. Some have since hosted WHO experts on their shows to facilitate further discussion and public debate on the COVID-19.

“It is necessary to target sensitization messages to specific trades. We must look at what to do in light of how in every person's practice of the trade, of his work, he is exposed to COVID. We have given people global measures, but each person in their daily practice must be able to explain them.”

Hema Adama, AIRE Project coordinator, Tres de Hommes | Burkina Faso

How might we leverage trusted community figures and institutions to disseminate reliable information and expand the communication channels on COVID-19 preventive measures, ensuring it reaches the most marginalized communities?

- Employ targeted education strategies. Involve community leaders in education efforts, position posters in community hubs such as markets, shopping centers, and food distribution points. Explore channeling tailored information to specific demographics to address concerns based on the communities' priorities.
- Equip community members to identify and address misinformation through informal, verified communication platforms such as chatbots and building MNOs capacity to push COVID-related information
- Educate at a community and structural levels. Sensitize health workers on addressing COVID-19 concerns and dissuading fear among community members.
- Produce timely, location-specific data to provide a clear picture of the COVID-19 situation in respective localities and disseminate in local languages through appropriate channels.

BEST PRACTICES

GIZ has trained 780 health personnel in Eastern, Southwestern, and North Central regions on prevention and care measures and managing infections related to COVID-19. GIZ has also invested in raising community awareness by working with 29 radio stations that design and deliver programs in local languages, such as Mooré, Fulfulde, Lobiri, Dioula, and Gourmanché.

Living Goods has been assisting with developing and maintaining DHIS2-based digital health tools supporting COVID-19 contact tracing and tracking border entry and disease call center alerts. They are currently layering the technology to be interoperable with UNICEF's mHealth tools, including case registrations and follow-up, self-check tools for the population, and case identification and follow-up modules community level.

“The state's decentralization is a good strategy. At the beginning, the intervention was vertical from Ouagadougou, and now all the health districts are involved, all the health centers, all the hospitals; this is the great opportunity at my level, so this is how we must seize the opportunity to strengthen the capacities of the different structures and the competence materials.”

KABA Ismaïla, Program Advisor, Plan International | Burkina Faso

HEIGHTENED TENSION

There has been an increase in tension due to the curfew imposed between police and informal workers, street vendors, and those who benefited from a once-thriving night-time economy—resulting in cases of increased police brutality against those who flout curfew.

Generalized insecurity & threat of terrorism

Since 2016, Burkina Faso has been confronted with generalized insecurity manifested acutely in the regions known as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger's three borders. This insecurity has leveraged the Defense and Security Forces (FDS) and community volunteers to help the FDS restore peace in the area. The government introduced a 7:30 pm curfew as part of the COVID-19 restrictions and assigned police and FDS to various locations to enforce the curfew. Some people thought positively about the feeling they brought a sense of security to their towns.

Instances of police brutality

Conversely, some small business owners felt that although the FDS helps protect their area, this has negatively impacted businesses that mainly operate in the evening. There have also been reports of police brutality during the curfew. Those who have been caught flouting rules even with valid reasons such as taking loved ones to the hospital at night have been beaten up and punished by the police and military.



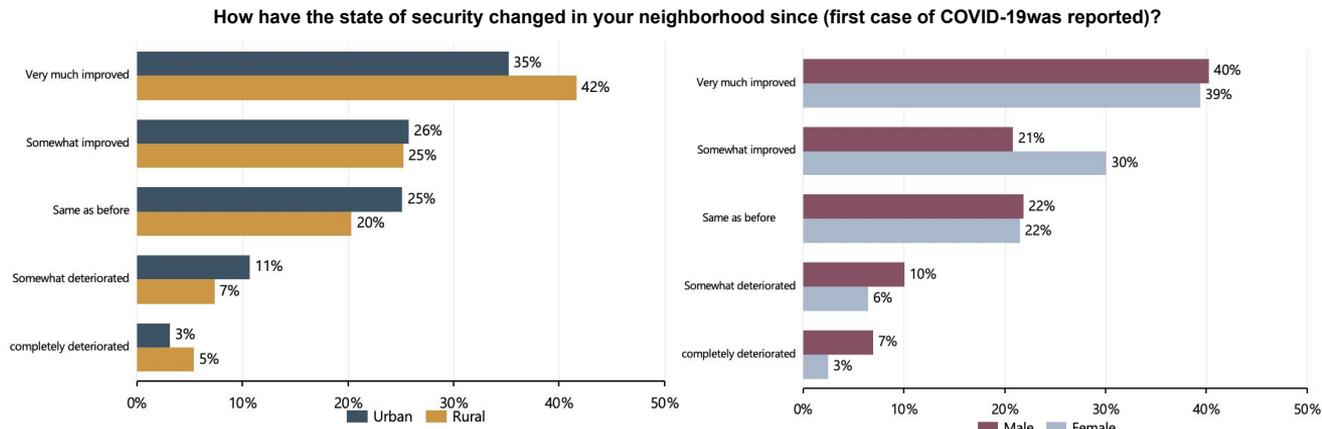


“There were police in my area to enforce curfew restrictions. I once had an issue with my wife and had to leave. They asked me why I was out, and I explained that my wife was not okay, so they let me pass, but for others, they were beating people up.”

Razack, 30 years old, Male | Day laborer | Rural, Mansory, Burkina Faso

GENERAL SECURITY IN THE AREA

Despite hearing about increased tensions between civilians and authority due to curfew restrictions, in Dalberg's phone survey, **35% of urban respondents** and **42% of rural respondents** reported that the state of security has greatly improved in their neighborhood since the first case of COVID-19 was reported.



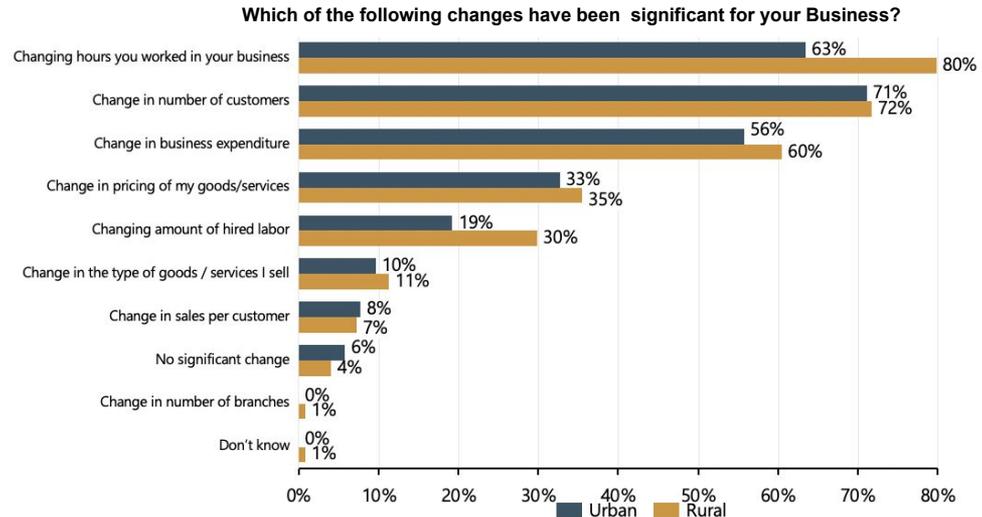


“When COVID-19 started, there was a lockdown in my town, and you could not go out after 7:30. The majority of the people who were working the night shift had a difficult time earning income.”

Sanou, 33 years old, Male | Teacher | Rural, Bama, Burkina Faso

IMPACT OF CURFEW ON BUSINESSES

The **change in working hours** had the most significant impact on people’s businesses. **63% of urban respondents** and **80% of rural respondents** reported **change in hours worked** as the **most significant change** for their business.



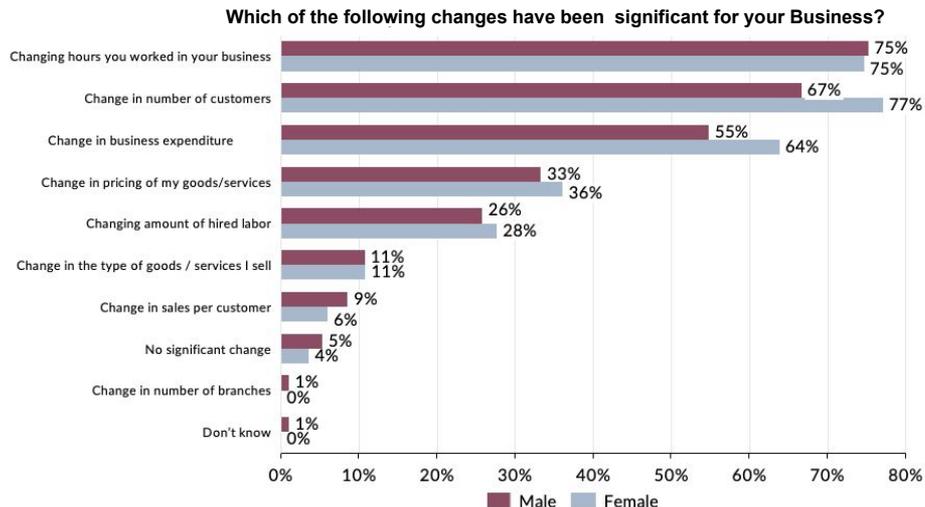


“At the beginning, people were following the rules, but people were frustrated and started going out after some time. The military took this as a personal insult, so they started beating up people.”

Sanou, 33 years old, Male | Teacher | Rural, Bama, Burkina Faso

A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

According to a phone survey conducted by Dalberg, **77% of women** reported a **change in the number of customers** as the **most significant change** for their business, compared to **67% of men**. **75% of both men and women**, reported that a change in hours worked was the most significant change for the business.



SOCIAL DYNAMICS

People feel disconnected from the broader society due to the ban on mass gatherings and movement restrictions. People have limited avenues of getting emotional support; it has led to a negative feeling of isolation, loneliness, having an adverse psychosocial impact.

Difficulties maintaining a sense of closeness

The inability to interact with friends and family due to movement restrictions and the ban on gatherings has impacted people's mental health and left them feeling disconnected and unable to get emotional support. The closure of borders and ban on inter-city travel prevented people from traveling to meet with family and friends. Places of worship, schools, markets, and entertainment venues that provided platforms for people to meet and socialize have temporarily closed, causing people to feel further isolated from one another. Families who have been forced by the pandemic to spend more time with one another in their houses can no longer do some activities they used to enjoy together, such as going to the park or eating out.

Changes to social interactions

Even with a slow return to normality and with places of worship and entertainment venues being reopened, Covid-19 preventive measures still do not allow people to interact as they used to. They can no longer embrace one another comfortably or meet in large groups like they used to. The shift in priorities in household budgets to focus on necessities such as food has also prevented people from spending their time and money on social activities, which they now consider a luxury. All these factors have contributed to a negative impact on people's mental wellbeing.





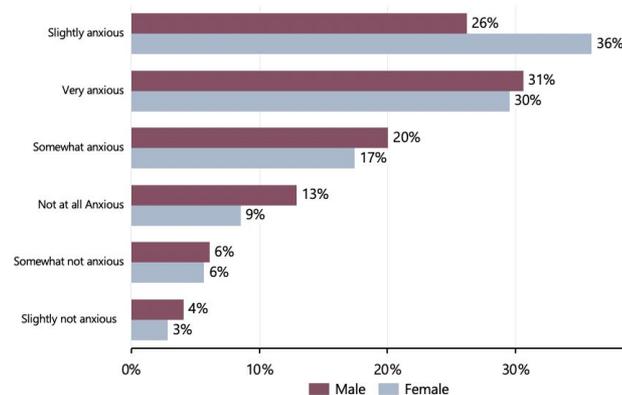
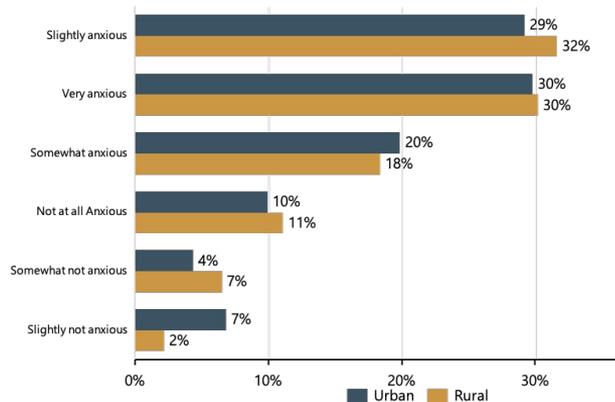
“After church, we had social gatherings where we could embrace one another, but now we can't do that, and I don't understand it up to date. It's really affected me.”

Adeline, 30 years old, Female | Graduate Student | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

INCREASED ANXIETY

A phone survey by Dalberg found that **29% of urban respondents** and **32% of rural respondents** reported feeling slightly anxious in the last 3 months, while an equal number of respondents (**30% in urban and rural areas**) reported feeling very anxious. Also, **36% of women** reported feeling slightly anxious in the last 3 months, compared to **26% of men**.

Overall, how anxious have you felt in the last 3 months?





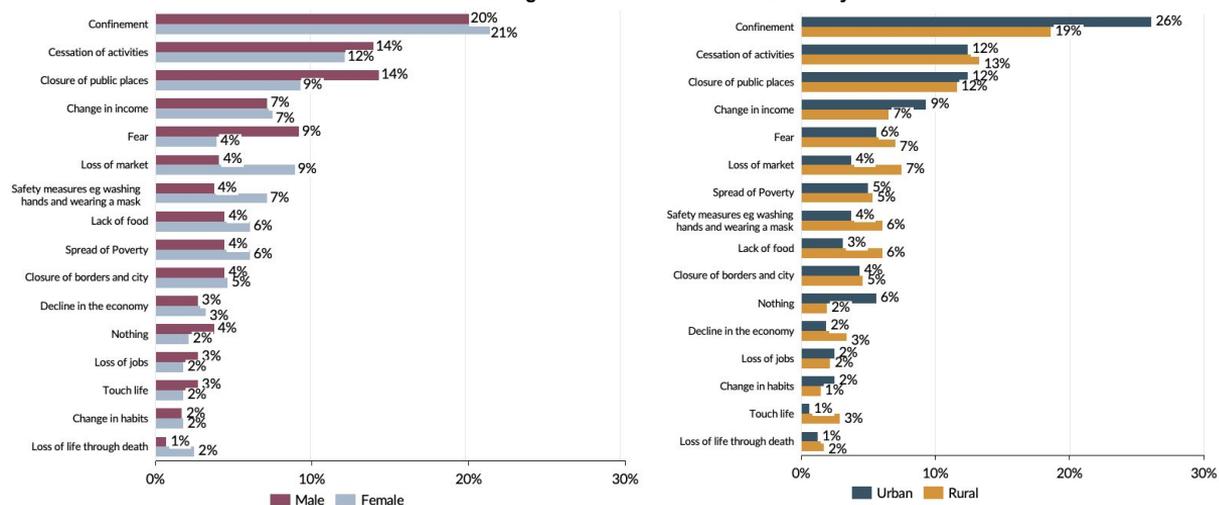
“Before COVID-19, I would enjoy going out with my children, we would go to the park and after that go have some pizza. I enjoyed spending that time with them. It has affected my happiness and that of my children too.”

Yarro, 32 years old, Female | House Wife | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

CONFINEMENT

In Dalberg's phone survey, **confinement, cessation of activities, and closure of public places** were reported to be **the most significant effects of COVID-19** on households. **26% of urban respondents and 19% of rural respondents** reported **confinement** as the most significant effect of COVID-19 on their households, while 21% of women reported confinement as the most significant effect of COVID-19 on their households, compared to 20% of men.

What has been the most significant effect of the COVID-19 on your household?





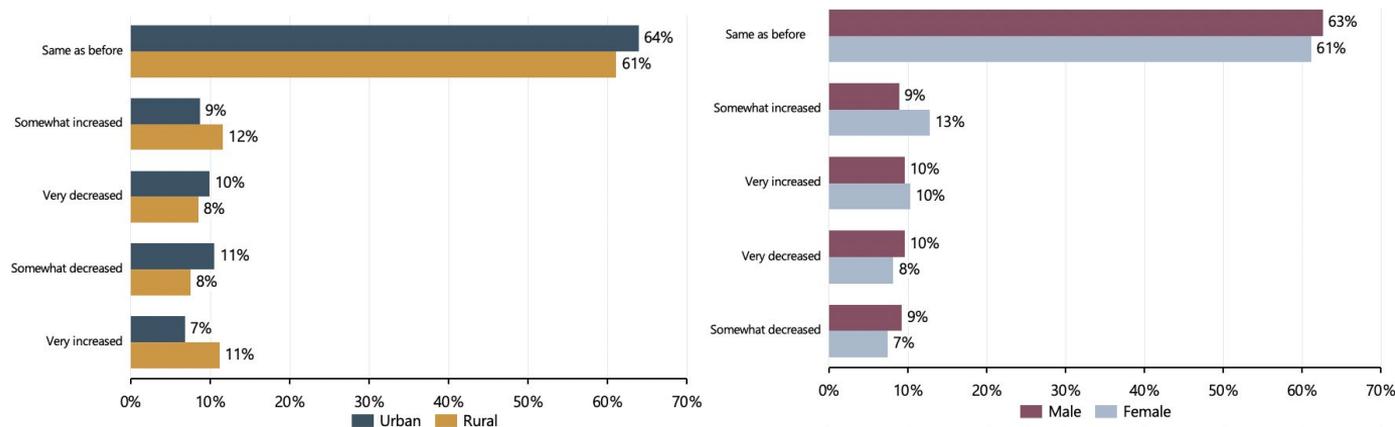
“You cannot interact with friends and family like before. Socialization was a means for us to get counsel and advice on personal problems. It has made it difficult to get any counsel now because of the restrictions.”

Sawadogo, 42 years old, Male | Civil Servant | Rurban, Zitenga, Burkina Faso

IMPACT ON DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIPS

In Dalberg’s phone survey, **64% of urban respondents** and **61% of rural respondents** reported **no change in home conflicts** since the pandemic began. The same sentiments were held by male and female respondents, with **61% of women** reporting **no change in the conflicts at home** since the pandemic began, compared to **63% of men**.

Have conflicts at home increased or decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic?



“It's stressful as a parent when you have children, and you can't provide for them. It is not easy. I was not sleeping enough due to worry and overthinking. I was also feeling frustrated.”

Yarro, 32 years old, Female | House Wife | Urban, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Yarro is a 32-year-old wife and mother of 3 girls. She lives in Ouagadougou with her family. She is a housewife and spends most of her time taking care of her children and doing household chores. Yarro discontinued her education in her first year of high school when her father died, and her family could not continue to pay for her education. She worked as a cashier for a bakery for two years before becoming a housewife. Her husband is the sole breadwinner.

Yarro's husband's income has reduced to the closure of borders, which has meant that he can no longer import goods for his business. This decrease in her husband's' income has decreased the amount Yarro gets from her husband monthly for their home's upkeep. She has had to use this money sparingly for necessities such as food and abandon the idea of buying little gifts for her children. Additionally, she says the pandemic has meant she cannot enjoy the things she once did, such as going to the park with her children and enjoying pizza after that, due to the closure of parks and restaurants. This frustration caused her to overthink and often lose sleep. Prayer has been her source of strength to tide through the difficult times.



How might we better advocate and equip community members with sufficient tools to health mental health issues within their localities?

How might we continue to foster social cohesion in this period of heightened tensions within the home and broader society?

How might we better strengthen community and government institutions' capacity to provide clinically-robust mental health services, ensuring that mental health care is accessible to all that need it during this period?

- Invest in understanding community-wide needs and perceptions to design, structure, and prioritize tools/programs to promote cohesion.
- Build networks of community engagement officers who educate and rationalize COVID-19 measures to resistant community members and redirect them to potential assistance in the form of available aid packages, financial support, and other programs.
- Engage religious leaders as pillars of well-being support systems by sensitizing them on mental health issues
- Provide access to mental health resources and support through better funding of NGOs, CBOs, and appreciate incentives and training to healthcare workers.
- Facilitate access to safe community gatherings, for example, by supporting places of worship to set up small remote religious groups for fellowship and support
- Build capacity among governmental social departments to provide psychosocial support to vulnerable groups, especially children whose parents have been victims of COVID-19.

BEST PRACTICES

Bibiss Laafi Batû, an initiative by Interpeace and Fondation Hirondelle, establishes dialogue spaces for youth to actively discuss challenges facing their communities and propose social cohesion solutions. The initiative tackles youth stereotyped as perpetrators of violence while offering constructive avenues to strengthen relationships, restore trust, and contribute to peacebuilding. By March 2020, there were dialogue spaces in 9 communities that engaged 300 people, 40% of whom were women.

UNICEF and its network of partners have provided mental and psychosocial support to ~50,000 people, including 14,000 children in 35 communities. The programs respond to stress factors related to the risk of contracting COVID-19 disease, contaminating others, its mode of transmission, the quarantine, and socio-economic consequences. The approach entails working in groups of 50 or less, fully respecting barrier measures and social distancing. Teenagers are also being engaged as educators to coach younger children on preventing COVID-19, under the supervision of partners' staff.

“We need to promote community involvement ... when the initiative has gone through the community itself, it means that there is strong community participation and that will effectively prevent this disease.”

Quedraogo Amado, WASH Manager, Oxfam International

THANK YOU

A mixed methods study on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on low and middle income people in **Burkina Faso** and opportunities for policy and programmatic intervention

28 Jan, 2021

