



HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD BANK **LSMS** PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 3, 2021 | NOT WITHOUT FP FORUM

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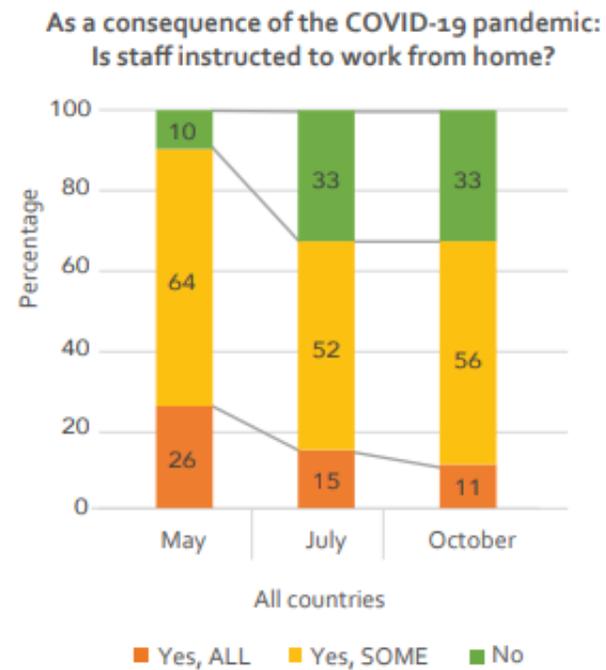
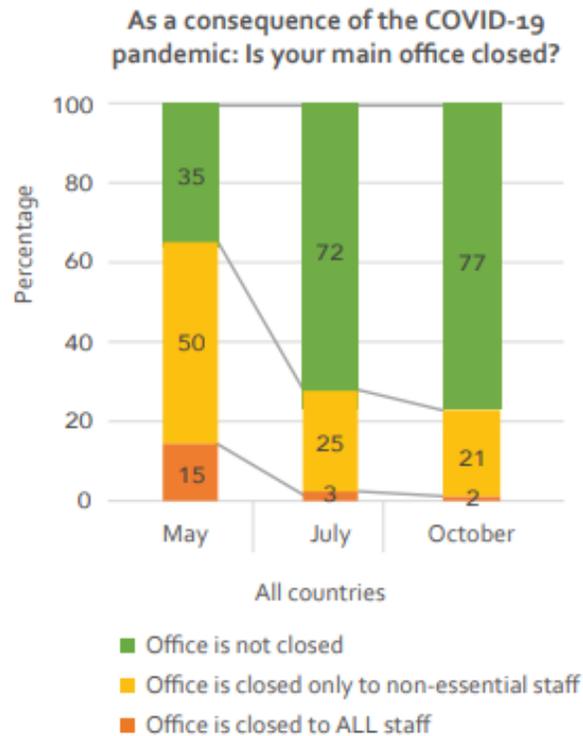
SENIOR ECONOMIST
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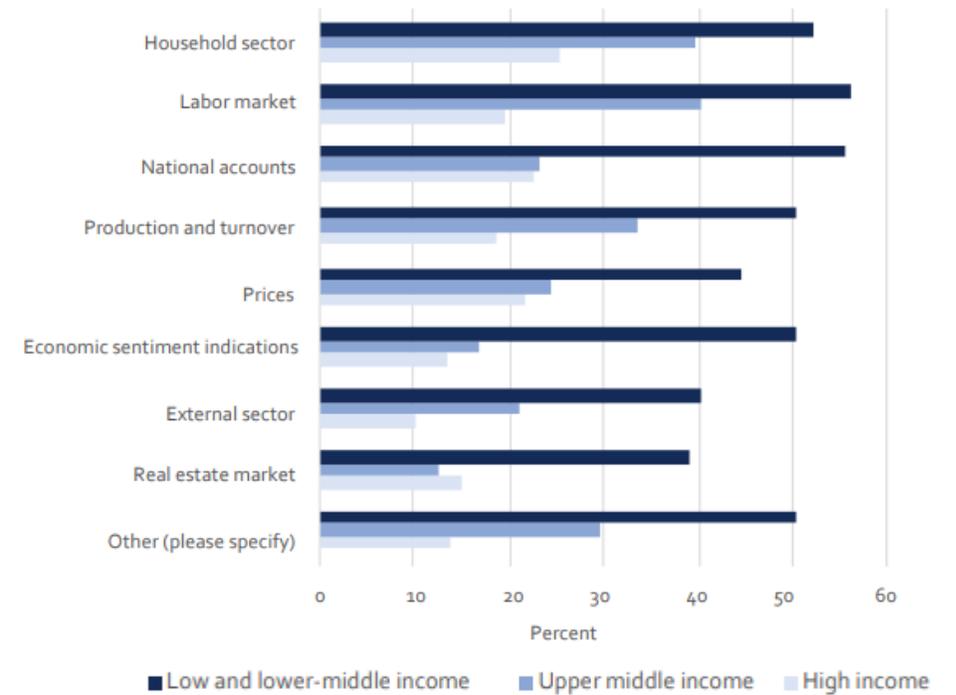
LIVING STANDARDS MEASUREMENT STUDY: OVERVIEW

- World Bank's flagship household survey program established in 1980
- Collaborates with national statistics offices (NSOs) and Bank operations to implement multi-topic, national- and sub-national **household surveys**
- Provides **technical assistance** to NSOs and Bank operations on survey design, implementation and analysis, with a strong focus on **capacity building**
- Conducts and publishes **research** on survey methods and policy questions
- Documents and publicly releases **open-access data** and **survey tools**

DISRUPTIONS IN NSO OPERATIONS DUE TO COVID-19



Proportion of countries where the current COVID-19 pandemic is affecting NSO's ability to produce essential monthly/quarterly statistics, by type of statistics



Source: [Global COVID-19 Survey of National Statistical Offices \(Rounds 1-3\)](#).

LSMS-SUPPORTED SURVEYS IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Permanently Suspended/Postponed Indefinitely

- Nigeria Feed the Future Baseline Survey (subnational - suspended in March '20 – at 75%)
- Malawi Fifth Integrated Household Survey 2019/20 (suspended in March '20 – at 92%)
- Nepal Living Standards Survey (Paused in March '20 (two weeks in) and postponed)

Paused and Finished with COVID-19 Protocols

- Malawi National Crop Cutting Survey
 - Paused in April '20, resumed and finished in June '20
- Tanzania Feed the Future Endline Survey (subnational)
 - Paused in March-June'20, resumed in July'20, finished in November '20

LSMS-SUPPORTED SURVEYS IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Postponed by 12 Months

- Malawi Methodological Survey Experiment on Time Use (subnational – new start: Sept' 21)
- Nigeria General Household Panel Survey (new start: July '22)
- Senegal Feed the Future Baseline Survey (subnational – new start: Jan '22)
- Uganda National Panel Survey and Annual Agricultural Survey (new start: May '21)
- Uganda National Study on Objective Measurement in Agriculture (new start: May '21)

SURGE IN PHONE SURVEYS TO FILL DATA GAPS

- Surge in implementation of high-frequency phone surveys (HFPS) brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic to document adverse impacts and transmission channels
- HFPS often touted as more cost-effective, flexible tools to fill data gaps faster and with enhanced temporal resolution, vis-à-vis face-to-face (FtF) surveys
- HFPS can be adapted to changing data needs and leveraged when FtF surveys cannot be fielded or need to be complemented
- Rapid accumulation of experience with HFPS design and implementation in low- and middle-income countries
 - Significant scope for survey guidance and harmonization
 - Bolster on-going efforts to modernize data systems at the country-level

WORLD BANK-SUPPORTED PHONE SURVEYS



100+ countries,
since April 2020



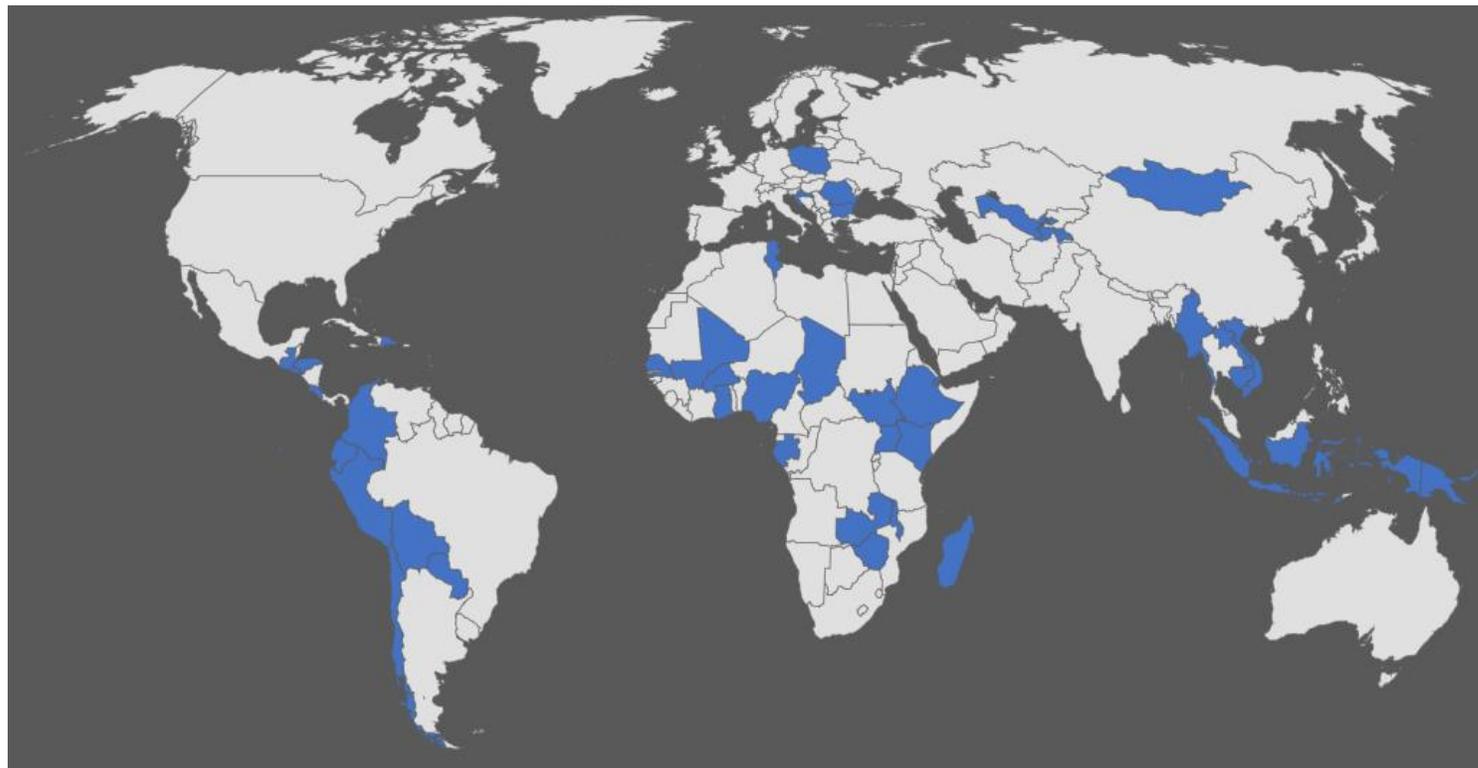
2 regional surveys:
SAR and LAC



45 countries on
global dashboard
highlighted in **blue**



11 surveys public in
Microdata Library



[COVID-19 High-Frequency Monitoring Dashboard](#)

EX-ANTE (SOFT) HARMONIZATION

- Technical working groups have developed:
 - [Questionnaire template](#) and [manual](#)
 - [Guidelines on sampling for phone surveys](#)
 - [Guidelines on implementation of phone surveys](#)
- Template questionnaire adapted to local context
- Core vs. optional questionnaire modules
- Balance between country focus and cross-country
- Introduction of new modules on policy relevant topics, as needed
 - Education
 - Credit
 - Vaccination
 - Early Childhood Development

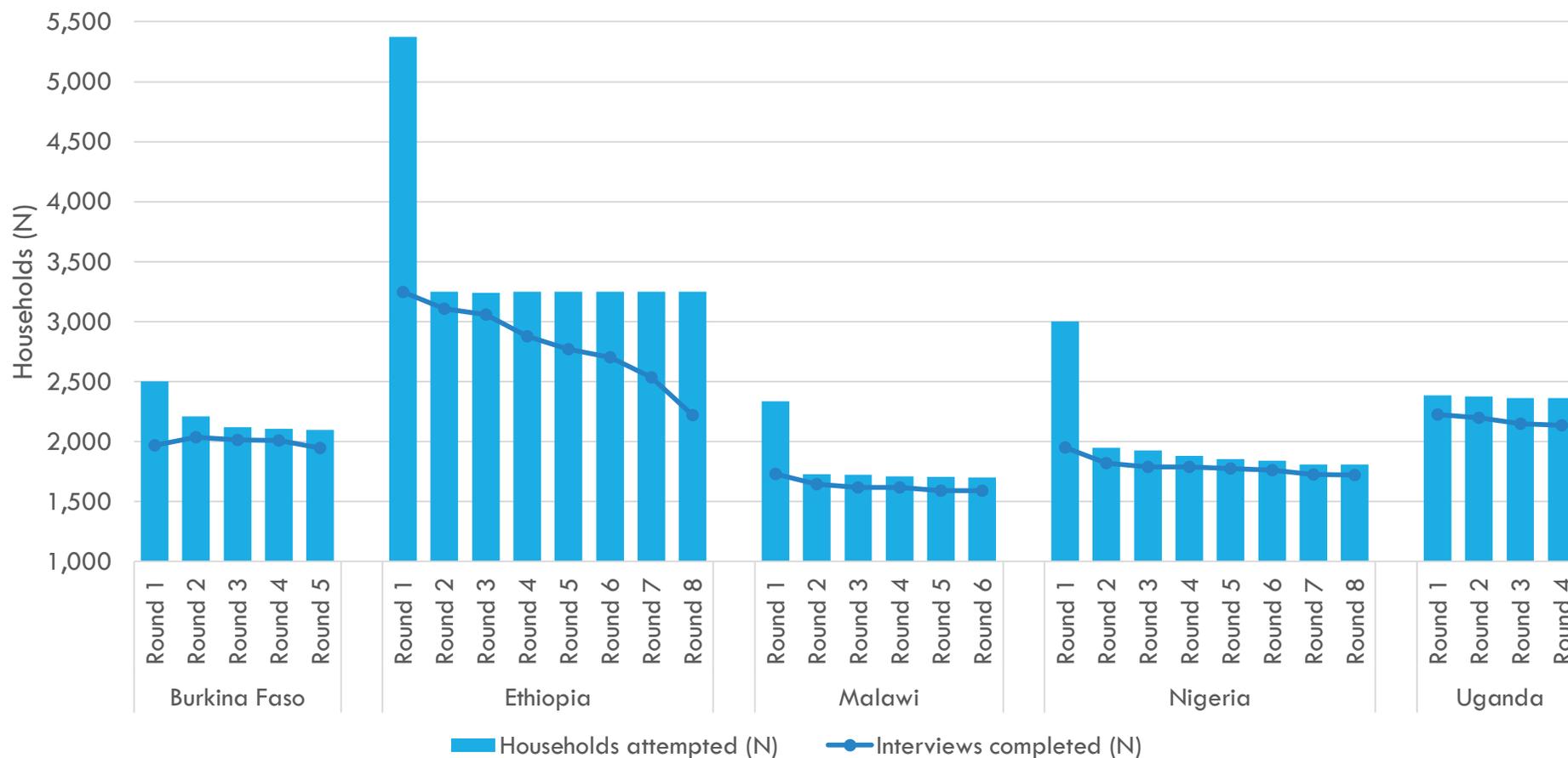
Core and Optional Questionnaire Modules



LSMS-SUPPORTED COVID-19 PHONE SURVEYS

- National phone surveys in **Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania**
 - An existing, recent, pre-COVID-19 national household survey used as a sampling frame
 - Sampling frame in Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania: Most recent round of the longitudinal household survey supported under the LSMS-ISA initiative
 - Builds on over a decade of institutional relationship and capacity building
 - Sampling frame in Burkina Faso: LSMS-supported cross-sectional household survey used for official poverty monitoring
 - Pre-COVID-19 survey data used not only in the analysis of the phone survey data but also in the calculating sampling weights that counteract potential selection bias in phone survey samples
 - Implemented **monthly**, across a 12-month period, starting in April/May/June (depending on country)
 - Round-specific unit-record survey data and documentation at [Microdata Library HFPS Collection](#)
 - Additional phone surveys supported in **Cabo Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.**

HIGH RESPONSE RATES IN LSMS PHONE SURVEYS



- Using pre-COVID-19 household surveys as sampling frames and NSOs as implementing agencies resulted in high response rates at baseline and follow-up rounds – more promising than [pre-COVID-19 experiences with phone surveys in LMICs](#)

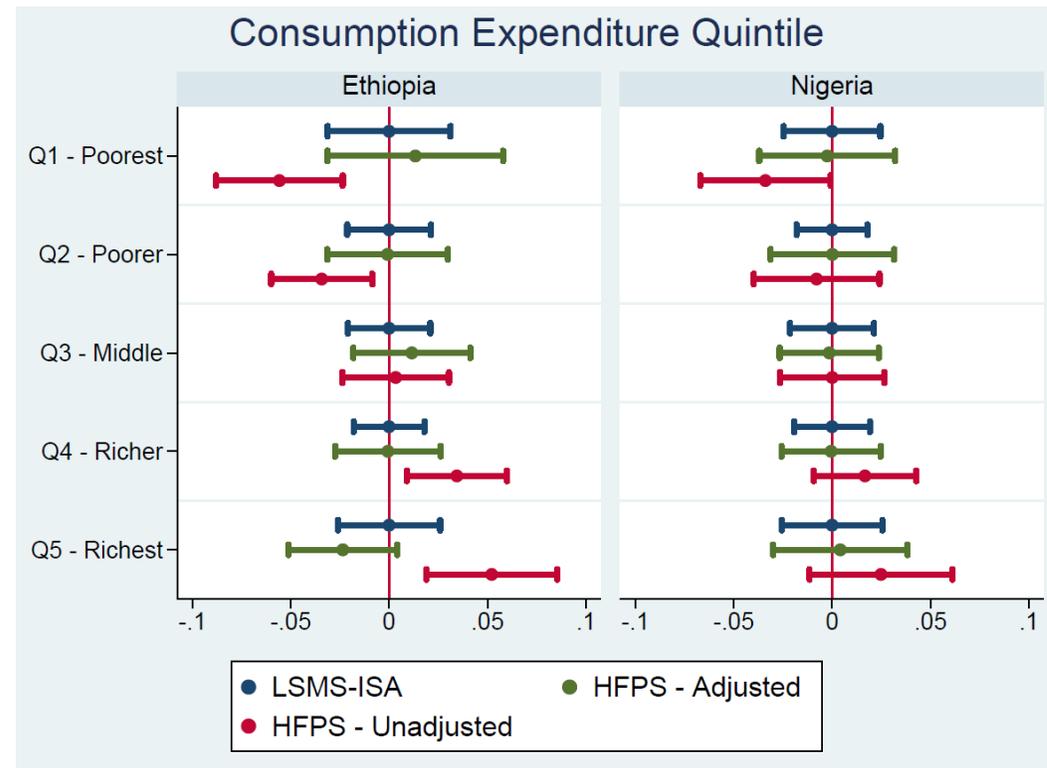
UTILITY OF EXISTING FTF SURVEYS AS SAMPLING FRAMES

Comparison of Confidence Intervals for Pre-COVID-19 Consumption Quintiles Under Different Weighting Schemes

1. LSMS-ISA: Based on the total Pre-COVID-19 household sample (irrespective of selection for phone calls), weighted with Pre-COVID-19 sampling weights

2. HFPS – Unadjusted: Based on the successfully interviewed HFPS sample , weighted with Pre-COVID-19 sampling weights adjusted only for selection for phone calls

3. HFPS – Adjusted: Based on the sample as specified in #2, weighted with the final HFPS sampling weight calibrated for potential selection and non-response bias



Source: Ambel et al. (Forthcoming) – Using data from the World Bank-supported HFPS on COVID-19 and the pre-COVID-19 LSMS-ISA-supported surveys serving as sampling frames.

ANALYTICAL OUTPUTS FROM PHONE SURVEYS

Public Disclosure Authorized

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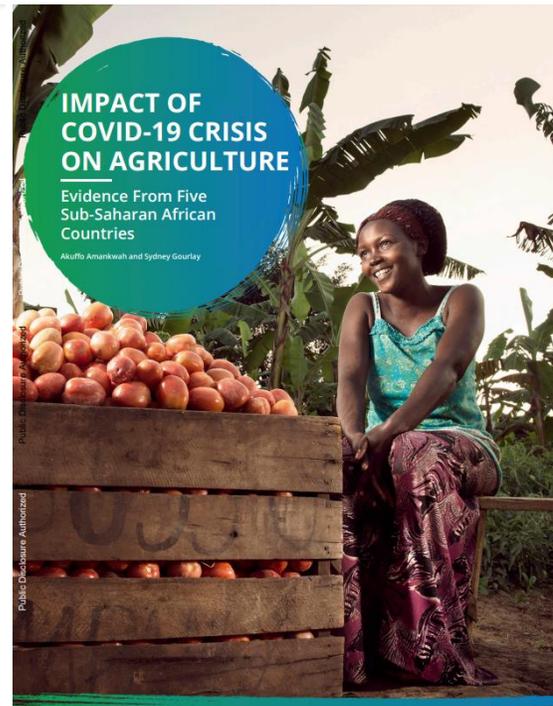
POLICY RESEARCH WORKING PAPER 9466

Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 in Four African Countries

*Anna Josephson
Talip Kilic
Jeffrey D. Michler*

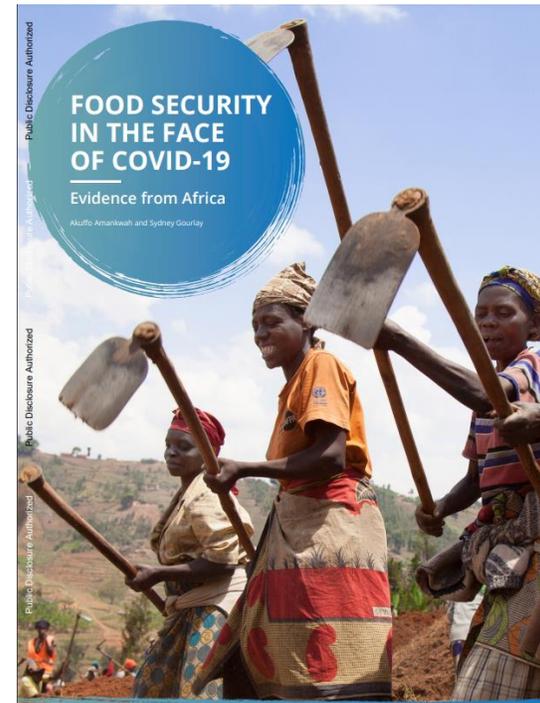
 **WORLD BANK GROUP**
Development Economics
Development Data Group
November 2020

<http://bit.ly/wps9466>



<http://bit.ly/phonesurveyfsbrief>



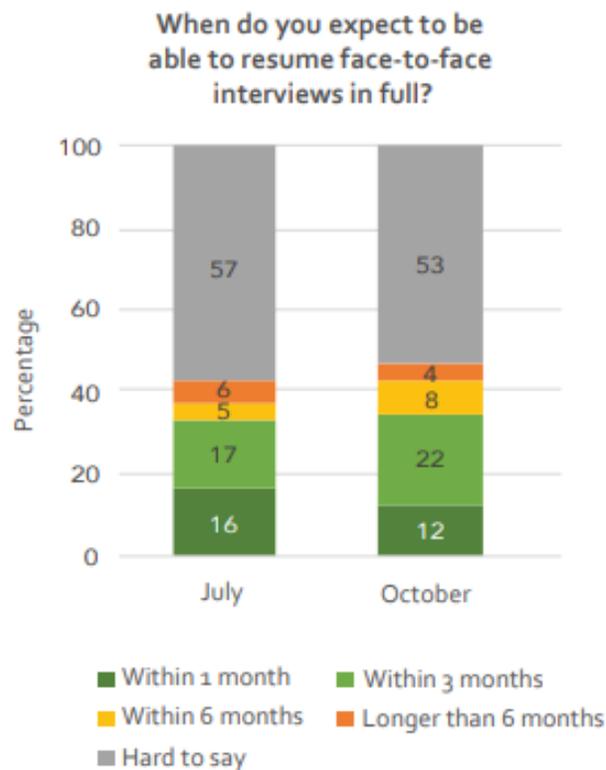
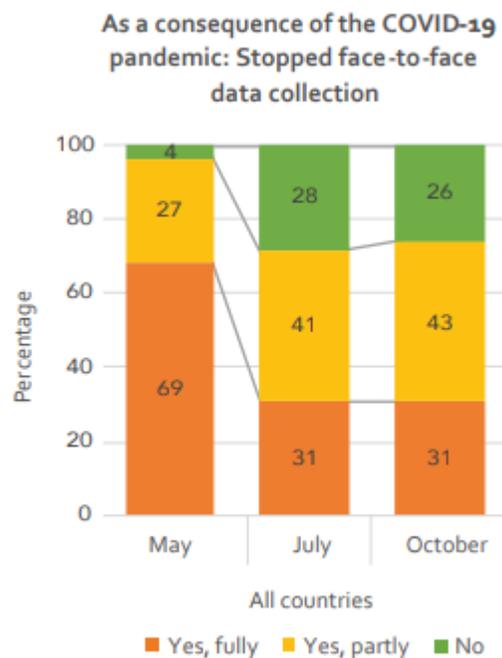
 

<http://bit.ly/phonesurveyagbrief>

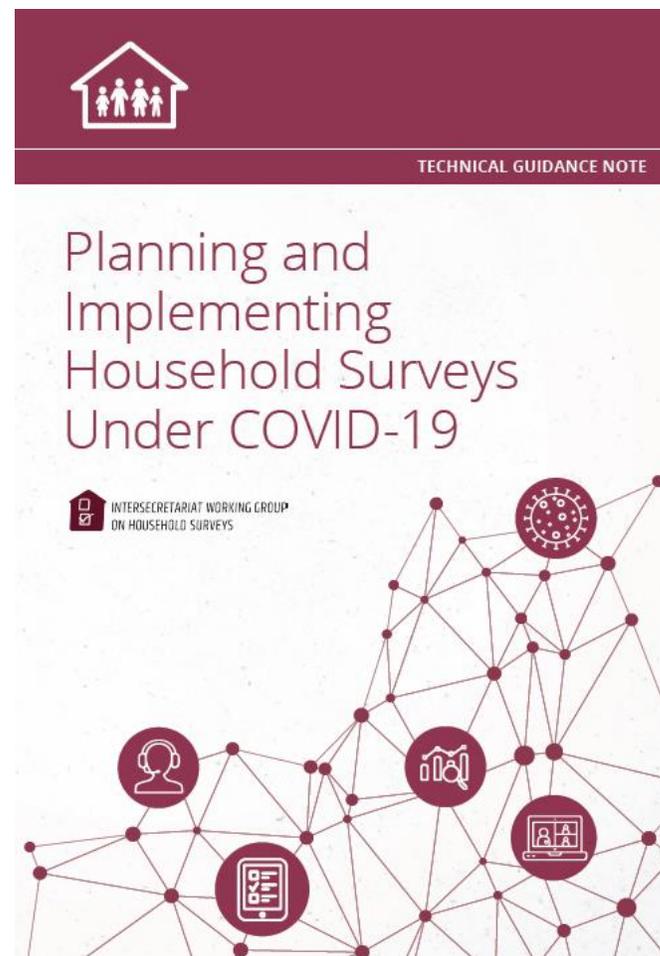
- Access survey round-specific
 - Questionnaires
 - Survey Reports
 - Summary Tables
 - Blog Posts

www.worldbank.org/lsms-covid19

SLOW TRANSITION TO FIELDWORK



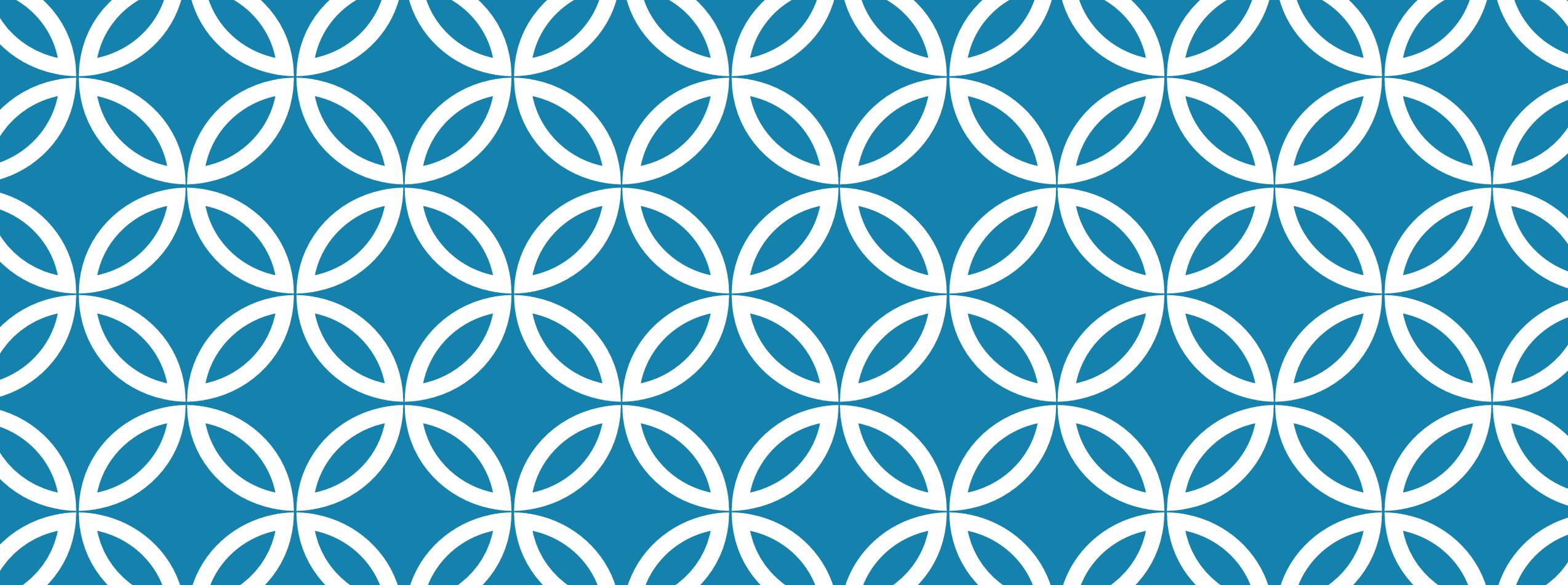
Source: [Global COVID-19 Survey of National Statistical Offices \(Rounds 1-3\)](#).



[ISWGHS Technical Note](#)

PARTING THOUGHTS

- Phone surveys are a good substitute in time of crisis, and a complement to F2F surveys under our new, collective normal, but we need to...
 - Invest in technological infrastructure and human capital to ensure sustainable use by NSOs for high-frequency monitoring and crisis response
- Sampling from a FtF survey minimizes bias due to non-universal phone ownership, non-response/attrition
 - (Ex-ante) representativeness and (ex-post) bias adjustment based on “baseline” information
 - Need to systematically collect data on phone numbers in future FtF surveys to develop sampling frames
 - Ideally design: Panel F2F augmented with Panel HFPS - to improve on the analysis of seasonal outcomes and to minimize recall bias in self-reported survey data
- COVID-19 is an opportunity for harmonizing guidance on phone survey design and implementation in LMICs
- Significant scope (and some on-going) for methodological research on
 - Survey mode and behavioral effects
 - Integration of FtF, HFPS, and alternative data sources (e.g., Facebook Gender Inequality at Home Survey)



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