

# Monitoring COVID-19 Impacts on Households in Ethiopia

REPORT NO. 6

6/ November / 2020



## Results from a High-Frequency Phone Survey of Households, Round 5

Authors: Alemayehu A. Ambel, Tom Bundervoet, Asmelash Haile Tsegay, and Christina Wieser

### OVERVIEW



The Ethiopian high-frequency phone survey of households (HFPS-HH) allows for a better understanding of the effects of COVID-19 on households and provides data in almost real time to support new responses to the pandemic as they become necessary. The HFPS-HH builds on the national longitudinal Ethiopia Socioeconomic Survey (ESS) that the Central Statistics Agency (CSA) carried out in 2019 in collaboration with the World Bank. The HFPS-HH subsample of the ESS sample is representative of households with access to a phone. The survey began in April 2020 with respondents of 3,249 households in Round 1. The same households are tracked for six months, with selected respondents, typically household heads, completing phone-based interviews every three to four weeks.

This one-pager summarizes the results of the fifth round of the HFPS-HH. This round took place about 5 months into the pandemic. In this round the survey interviewed 2,770 households in both urban and rural areas in all regions of Ethiopia—implemented between August 24 and September 17, 2020.<sup>1</sup>

### HIGHLIGHTS – ROUND 5

! The overall environment of access to essential medicines and staples remained similar to previous rounds. Approximately 91 percent of households that needed to buy medicine were able to do so. Most households were able to buy enough food staples—teff (65 percent), wheat (76 percent), maize (76 percent), and edible oil (77 percent). In both rural and urban areas, of those that could not buy enough medicine or food, the biggest problem was affordability, a concern for 90 percent of households.

! About 41 percent of households reported experiencing moderate and severe food insecurity. By place of residence the food insecurity prevalence was 44 percent in rural areas and 36 percent in urban areas. Severe food insecurity prevalence was about 6% in all areas.

! Nationwide, in households with children who had been in school before the outbreak, about 24 percent of primary school students and 32 percent of secondary school students were engaged in distance learning activities in July 2020. In August, as most distance learning activities would have been phased out due to the school holidays, this declined to 17 percent for primary school and 24 percent for secondary school students.

! No substantial change is observed in healthcare utilization trends. About 29 percent of households needed medical attention in the 4 weeks prior to the survey and of those needing medical attention, 94 percent reported that they were able to get treated.

! The top two household income sources reported in mid-July to mid-August are agricultural activities and wage employment. Less than a quarter of households who reported these sources indicated reductions in these types of income during the reporting period. However, over half of households who mentioned incomes from non-farm businesses, remittances, assistance (from NGOs and government) reported a reduction or total loss of income.

! Employment rates, which plunged in the early days of the pandemic have rebounded and almost reached pre-COVID levels in August 2020 with 88 percent of respondents employed.

! During the reporting period (mid July-mid August), farming and livestock activities do not seem to be impacted by COVID-19. For households engaging in farming activities (27 percent in urban and 93 percent in rural areas), 94 percent stated that they could farm normally. Similarly, for households reported owning livestock (14 percent in urban and 63 percent in rural areas), 92 percent stated that they held livestock normally.

For each round, the survey briefs, table of indicators, and microdata are available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/brief/phone-survey-data-monitoring-covid-19-impact-on-firms-and-households-in-ethiopia>

<sup>1</sup> The data were collected by Laterite BV Ltd. When R5 began on August 24, 2020, Ethiopia had 42,143 confirmed COVID-19 cases. By September 17, when R5 ended, confirmed cases had soared to 66,913. <https://twitter.com/FMoHealth> [Accessed on October 12, 2020]