



THE ASYMMETRICAL IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC IN UGANDA

Covid-19 is having asymmetrical impacts on different population groups, thereby magnifying already existing disparities. Here is some information on the initial results of a World Bank analysis: first data in Uganda confirm inequities in access both to essential goods and services and to educational services.

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In Africa, as in other more or less developed regions around the world, Covid-19 is having an asymmetrical impact on different population groups, intensifying already existing disparities. To design carefully-targeted policies and interventions in response to the crisis, it is essential that data and information vis-à-vis the impact of the pandemic on various aspects of the wellbeing of families be constantly updated. The World Bank has helped finance a coordinated survey initiative in several African countries whose aim is to analyze the socioeconomic consequences of Covid-19 by conducting ongoing, high-frequency phone surveys of a set sample of households.

Here is some information on the initial results of the survey conducted in Uganda, which revealed rising asymmetries among the population.

Firstly, **knowledge of the main symptoms of Covid-19** infection is not uniform, but instead correlated with the education levels of respondents. For example, on average 67% of the latter knew that fever was a possible symptom, but the figure dropped to 48% when respondents with no schooling were questioned. Furthermore, the poorest families, as well as those living in rural areas and those with low education levels, were less aware of important **preventive measures** such as the use

FIGURE 2 / SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ENOUGH SOAP TO WASH HANDS

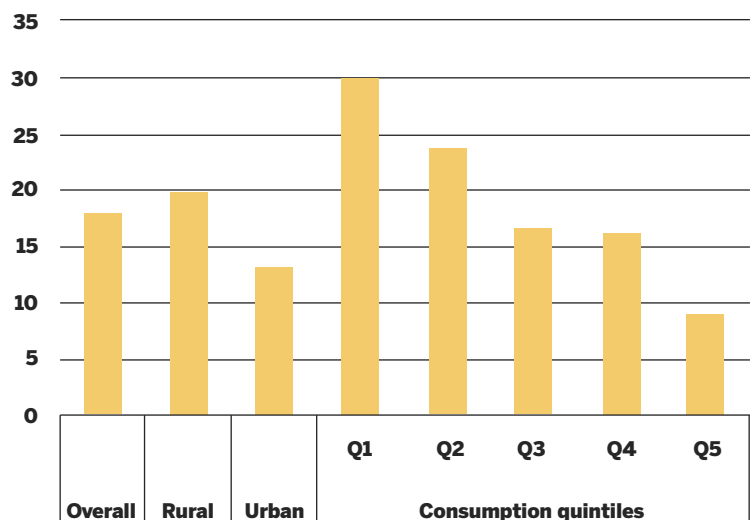
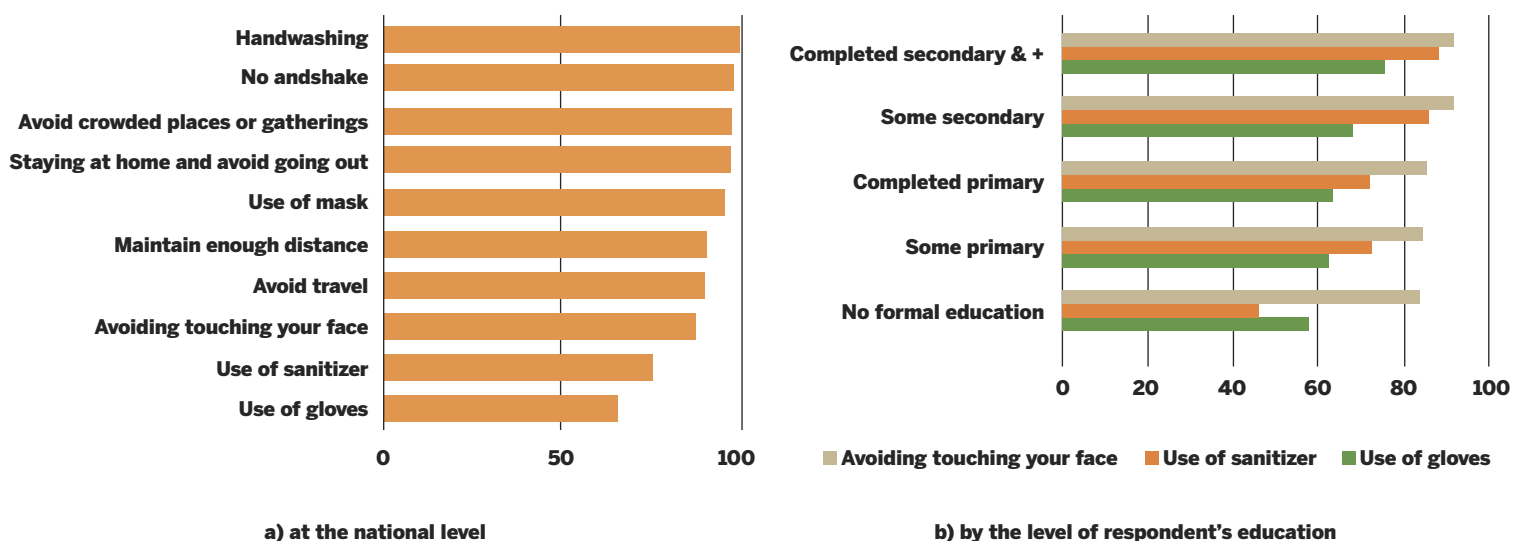


FIGURE 1 / KNOWLEDGE OF SELECTED MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CONTRACTING CORONAVIRUS (% OF RESPONDENTS)



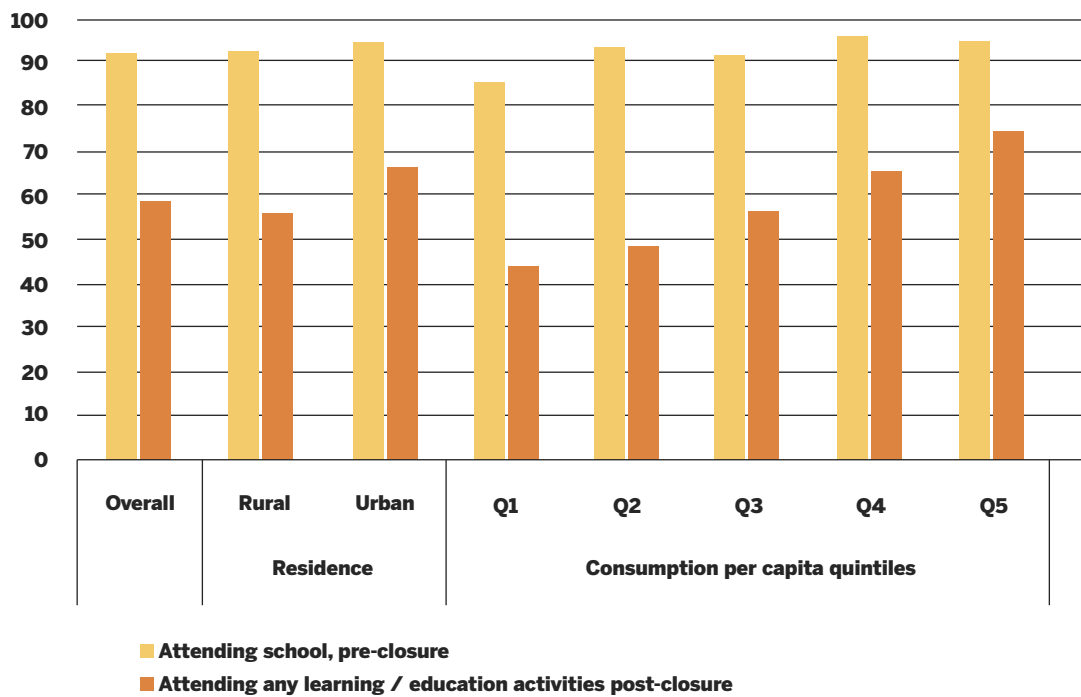
of sanitizers and gloves, and the need to avoid touching one’s face.

No significant differences were found among the population in terms of perceptions of and **concern about Covid-19**: in fact, the vast majority of respondents considered Covid-19 to be a serious health threat – with 76% expressing worry about the possibility of infection – while an even higher number (86%) were worried about the impact of the crisis on their household financial situation. Despite this shared awareness, there were major **inequities in terms of access to essential goods and services**: although most of the population had access to water, the poorest families found it much more difficult to purchase soap. In addition, a lack of savings and growing costs were cited

as key barriers with regard to the purchase of food items. In terms of **access to health services**, approximately 80% of the respondents stated that they had had a need for medicines or treatment during the week prior to the interview, yet 33% of them, on average, had been unable to gain access to health services (36% in rural areas and 26% in urban areas).

The underlying causes of these differences were fewer savings and means of transport among rural households. There were also inequities in the **use of educational services**: following the closure of all Ugandan schools (on 20 March 2020), the percentage of households with at least one child able to study by remote learning varied greatly among different population groups, from 44% among the poorest to 74% among the wealthiest.

FIGURE 3 / SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH A CHILD (3-18) IN SCHOOL PRIOR TO CLOSURES VS. SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ANY CHILD PARTICIPATING IN REMOTE LEARNING ACTIVITIES AFTER CLOSURES



SOURCE

1 World Bank and Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2020). High-Frequency Phone Survey on Covid-19: Impact Monitoring First Round. Available at

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/uganda-high-frequency-phone-survey-covid-19-results-round-1>