

COVID-19: Impact on households well being monitoring

From February 10 to 22, 2021 **The Gambia**

Newsletter No 4. --March 2021



KEY MESSAGES

Only 13 percent of working-age individuals with jobs have employment contracts, three-quarters of which are verbal contracts.



Even if most (93%) households are aware of the recent increase in covid-19 cases, a significant share of households have become less vigilant about measures against covid-19.



More than 9 out of 10 households have sent all their school-going children back to school and over 60% and 50% report that schools are adopting hygiene measures and reduced class sizes to reduce the spread of the virus, respectively.

70% of households have received some form of social assistance, mostly food aid since March 2020. For most recipients, food aid form of social assistance was most helpful.



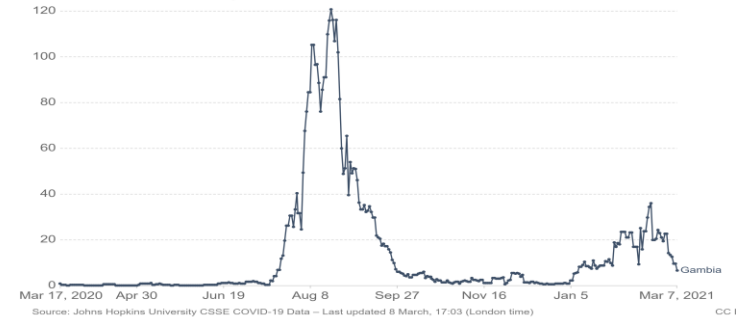
METHODOLOGY



The results in this note were prepared using data from the wave 4 of the High Frequency Survey on the COVID-19 Impacts on Households in The Gambia. A subsample of 1332 households (attrition rate) of the Labor Force Survey (LFS) were interviewed by phone between February 10 and 22, 2021. These same households have already been interviewed during the previous 3 waves. The data collection period corresponded to the period of increase in number of COVID-19 cases- the second wave. The results are representative at the national level and at strata level (Banjul and Kanifing agglomeration, other urban areas, rural areas).

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases

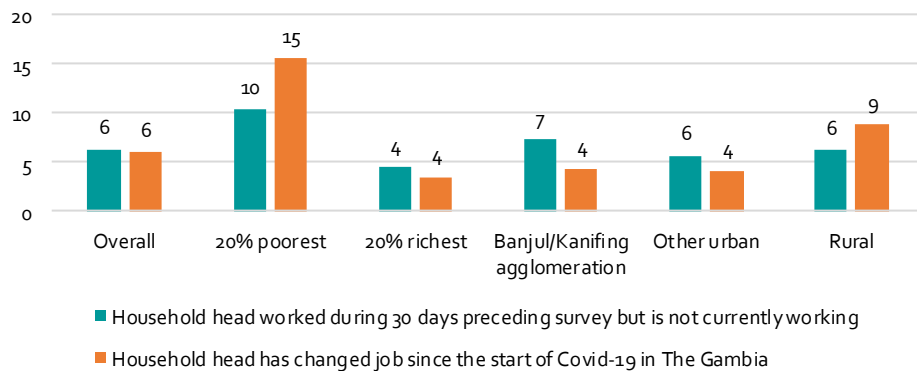
Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.



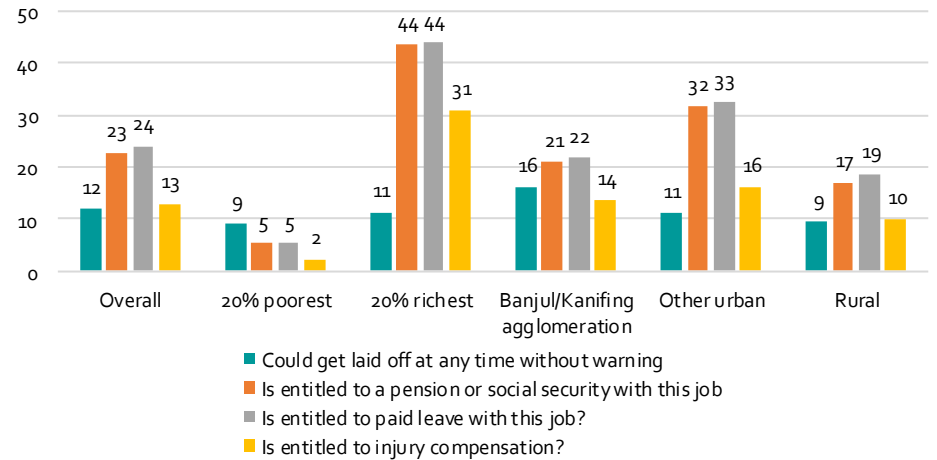
EMPLOYMENT



- Job losses are higher among households in the poorest quintile and in and around the capital city. Overall, 6% of household heads have lost their jobs – i.e. were working in the last 30 days prior to the survey (period) but not work in the last 7 days. Across the wealth distribution, job losses are higher among households in the poorest quintile than those in the richest quintile – 10% compared to 4%.
- Furthermore, since March 2020, 6% of heads of households have had to change jobs, 15% for those belonging to the poorest households, and 9% in rural areas. This change in employment is mostly attributed to participation in seasonal work. However, 13% and 11% of household heads changed jobs due to the cessation of activity and lack of activity, potentially related to the health crisis.
- Informal employment appears to be very widespread, as only 13 percent of working-age individuals with jobs have employment contracts, three-quarters of which are verbal contracts. Informal employment subjects most employees to high professional vulnerabilities (getting laid off without warning, non-entitlement to social security, to paid leave, to injury compensation), which are much more pronounced among the poorest strata.



Graph 1: Household head employment status

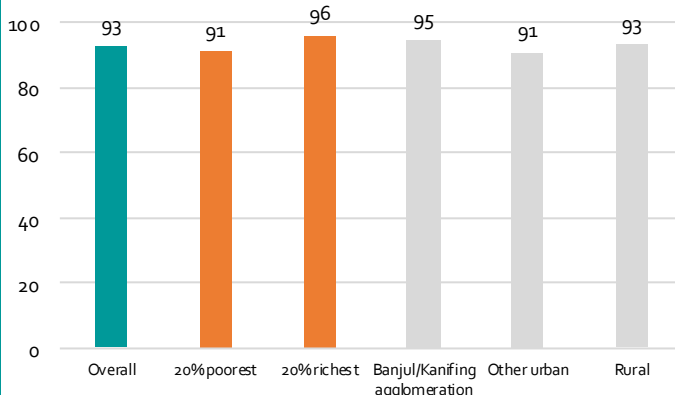


Graph 2: Informal employment: job vulnerability

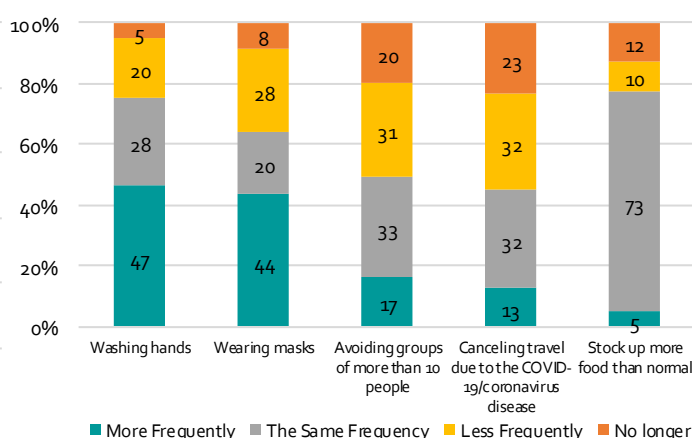


COVID-19 UPDATE

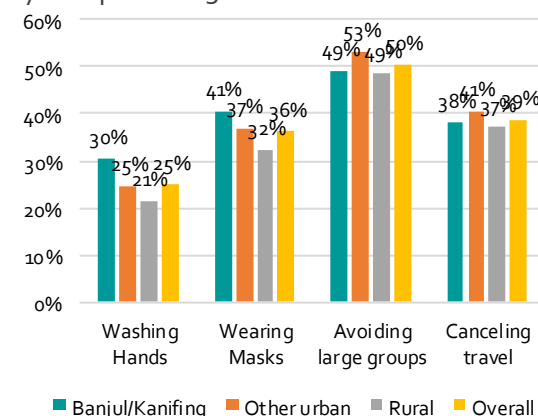
- Most (93%) households are aware of the recent increase in covid-19 cases in The Gambia. Slight disparities in awareness appear across wealth quintiles and area of residence- with lower awareness levels among households in the poorest quintile and in other urban areas. However, as the number of cases have risen, a significant proportion of households have become less vigilant about implementing measures to reduce the risk of contracting the virus. Respectively 25% and 36% of households have either less frequently applied or stopped regular hand washing and mask wearing. When it comes to measures such as avoiding groups and canceling travel, more than half (51% and 55%, respectively) of households have either reduced the frequency or are no longer following such guidelines. The share of households who are either no longer or less frequently adhering to the guidelines is higher in and around the capital city and in other urban areas, For instance, in terms of wearing masks, 36% of households overall report that they either no longer or are less frequently wear masks. In the Banjul/Kanifing area, and in other urban areas it is 41% and 37% respectively compared to 32% in rural areas.



Graph 3: Awareness of the recent increase in the number of the COVID-19 cases in The Gambia



Graph 4a: Changes in compliance with COVID-19 guidelines

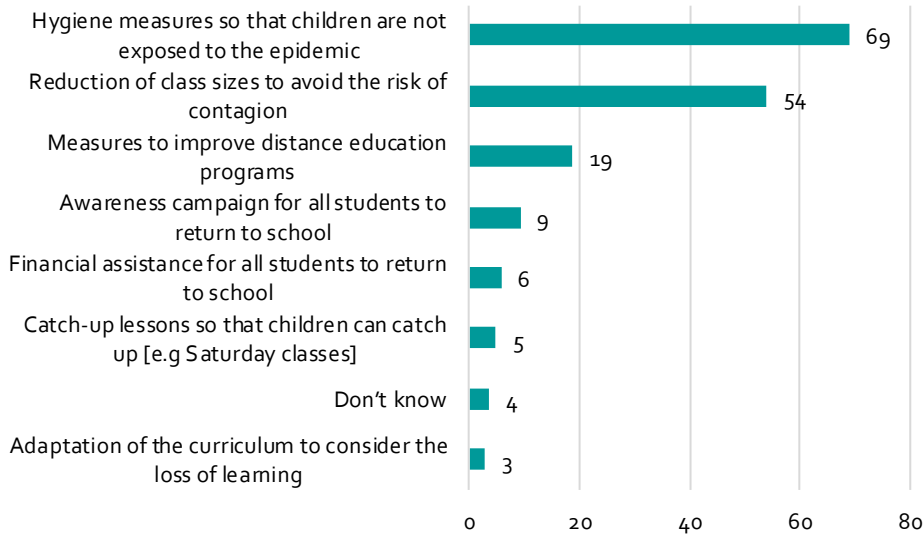


Graph 4b: Share of households less frequently /no longer applying covid-19 guidelines

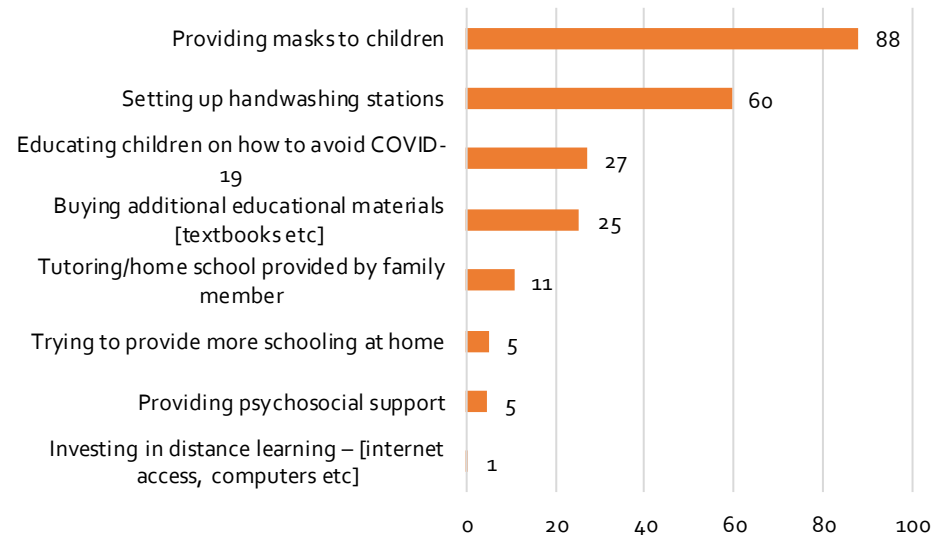


EDUCATION

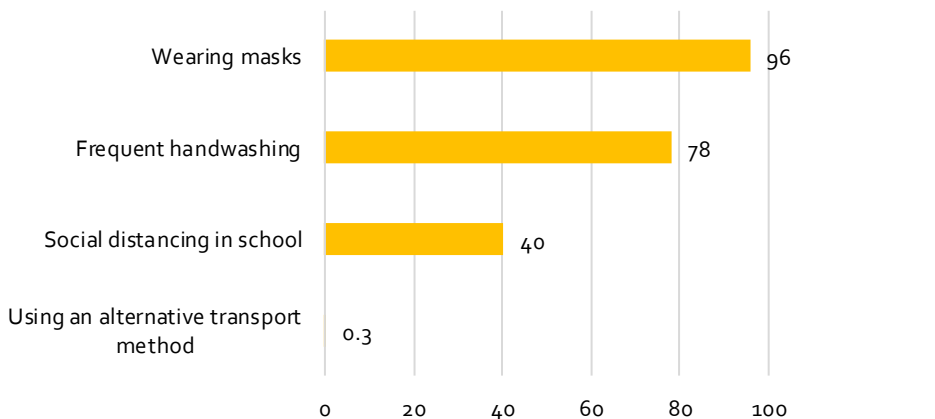
- More than nine out of ten households sent all of their school members back to school for the new academic year, and about 5% sent only some. For most households (60%) that did not send any or all of their children back to school in the current school year, the registration process has not yet been completed and will be completed soon.



Graph 5: Measures in force in children's school in the first term of the new school year



Graph 6: Steps taken by households to support children education



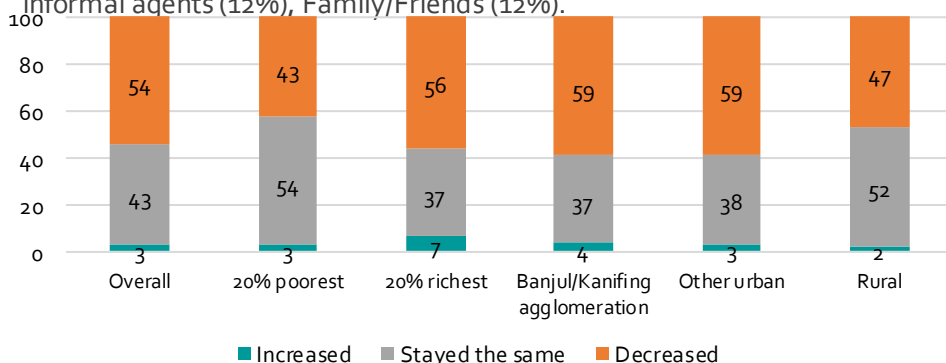
Graph 7: Steps taken by children to protect themselves against covid-19

- At both School and household levels, school-going children are being supported to adhere to social-distancing guidelines and hygiene measures. In the opinion of households, all the schools adopted at least one measure against covid-19 during the first term. Most schools are implementing hygienic measures to avoid exposing students to the virus (69%) and reducing class sizes to reduce the risk of contagion (54%). Households are also involved in supporting school-going children from contracting the virus. Households provide protective masks for children (88%), provide handwashing facilities (60%), and educate children on how to avoid contracting covid-19 (27%). Finally, the students protect themselves from covid by wearing masks(96%) and washing their hands regularly(78%). Maintaining a physical distance in school is however less applied.



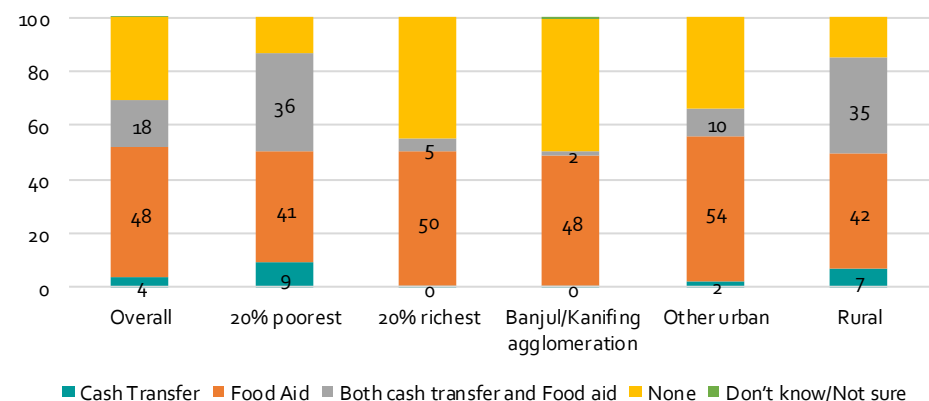
REMITTANCES AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Overall 22% of households received remittances since March 2020 with 7% received local transfers and 15% received remittances from abroad. About 34% and 14% of recipients received remittances as recent as January and February 2021 respectively. More than half of households in the poorest quintile and in rural areas report that remittance levels have remained the same whereas more than half of households in the richest quintile, in and around the Capital and other urban areas have reported declines in remittance levels.
- About 10% of households receiving remittances report changes in their transfer channel since March 2020. Changes in channel appear to be more common among recent recipients- jan. 2021 (29%); Feb. 2021 (17%); and those receiving through Western Union (31%); During last visit (27%); informal agents (12%), Family/Friends (12%).



Graph 8: Change in amount/volume of transfer since March 2020

- Approximately 70% of households report having received some form of social assistance, consisting of 48% food assistance, 18% both financial and food assistance and 4% financial assistance only, since March 2020. In contrast to the distribution of food aid, which is less variable according to wealth quintiles and areas of residence, financial assistance is much more oriented towards the most vulnerable strata and towards households in rural areas. The government is the main provider of social assistance-reaching 95% of households.
- Overall, households who have received social assistance consider food aid to be the most helpful- 65% of recipients. In rural areas and among the poorest households however, the share of households who prefer food aid is slightly lower at 60% and 57%, respectively.



Graph 9: Social assistance received by households since March 2020

For further details, visit <https://www.gbosdata.org>



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