



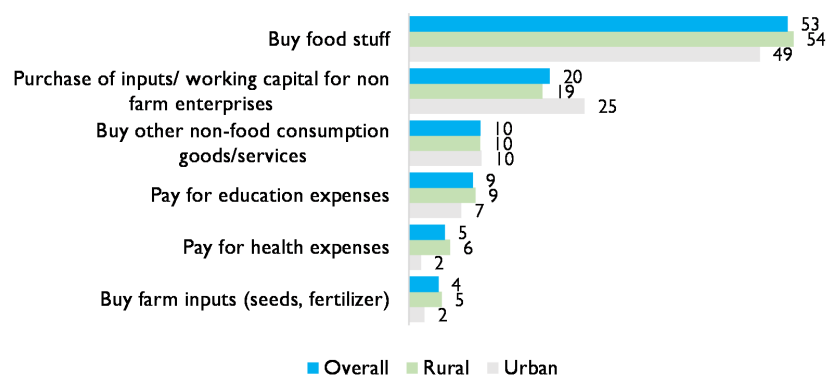
BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has socio-economic impacts on Malawians and there is need for timely data to monitor these impacts and support response efforts to the pandemic. In May 2020, the National Statistical Office (NSO), with support from the World Bank, launched the HFPS COVID-19; a monthly survey of a nationally representative sample of households previously interviewed as part of the Malawi Integrated Household Panel Survey to monitor the economic impact of the pandemic and other shocks. This brief presents the findings from the eighth round of the Malawi High-Frequency Phone Survey on COVID-19 (HFPS COVID-19) conducted between February 23 and March 15, 2021.

CREDIT

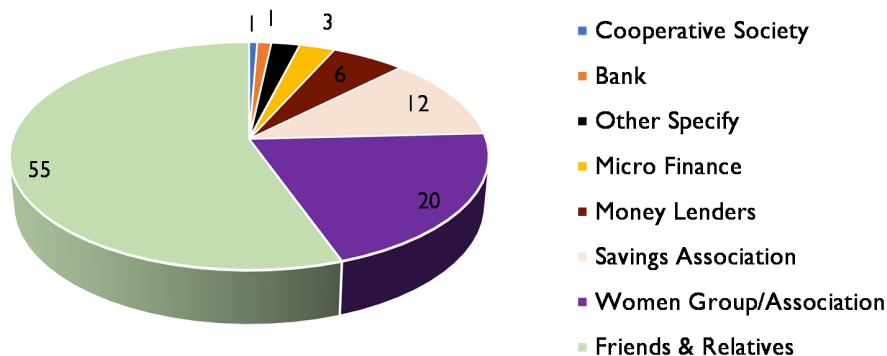
One in four households took a loan since January 2021. Rural households reported a slightly larger proportion of new loans (27%) in contrast to urban households (24%). Half of the households used the loan to buy food, especially in rural areas, while one in five households used it to purchase inputs or working capital, a behavior that was mainly observed among urban households.

Figure 1. Main Purpose for Borrowing Money Since January 2021 (% of Respondents that successfully obtained loan)



For those that successfully borrowed money the most common sources of credit were **friends and relatives** (55%), **women's groups** (20%) and **savings associations** (12%).

Figure 2. Sources of Credit since January 2021 (% of Respondents that successfully obtained loan)

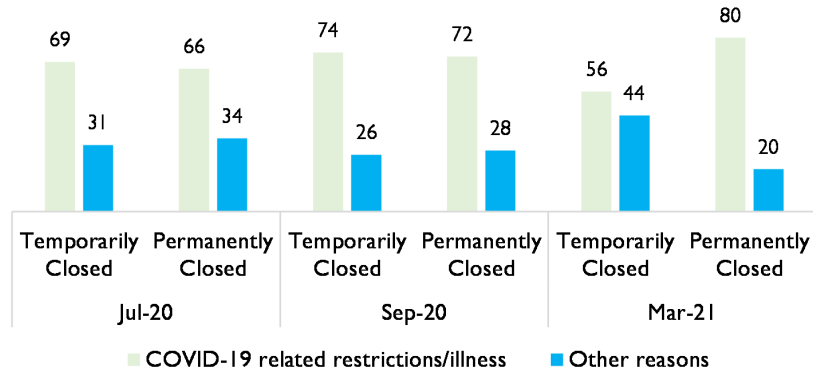


Nearly 75% of households that had not yet paid back the loan they took since January were either very worried or somewhat worried about not paying back the loan within the expected period.



NON FARM ENTERPRISES

Figure 3. Reasons for Closure of Non Farm Enterprises (% of Households with Non-Farm Enterprises closed)



Of the businesses reported by households over the last 8 rounds of the survey; 35% were still or recently temporarily closed and 5% were still or recently permanently closed in February-March 2021 (Round 8).

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, two-thirds of households with non-farm enterprises reported in either this round of data collection or previous rounds reported either temporary or permanent closures due to COVID-19 related restrictions (e.g., place of business closed, lack of customers, difficulties getting inputs or traveling, falling ill with COVID-19). In September 2020, those restrictions affected mainly temporary closures, yet by January 2021, most permanent closures (80%) were mainly due to fewer customers and failure to get inputs for the business and these were also the main causes for income reductions in non-farm enterprises.

VACCINATION, CONCERNS AND BEHAVIOR ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19

The survey asked respondents about their willingness to get vaccinated against COVID-19 if it was free of charge and available in November 2020 (Round 5) and February-March 2021 (Round 8). In November the proportion of those willing to get vaccinated was 83% but it dropped to 52% between February and March 2021. In February-March 2021 (Round 8), among the 48% of respondents that indicated they were not willing to get vaccinated, 76% were either worried about the side effects or didn't think the vaccine would be safe.

Figure 4. Willingness to get Vaccinated against COVID-19 for free (% of respondents)

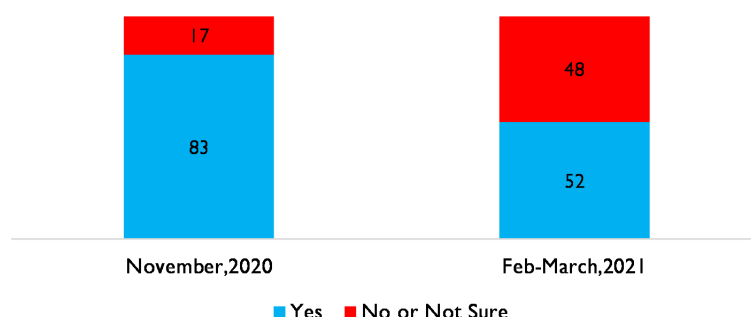
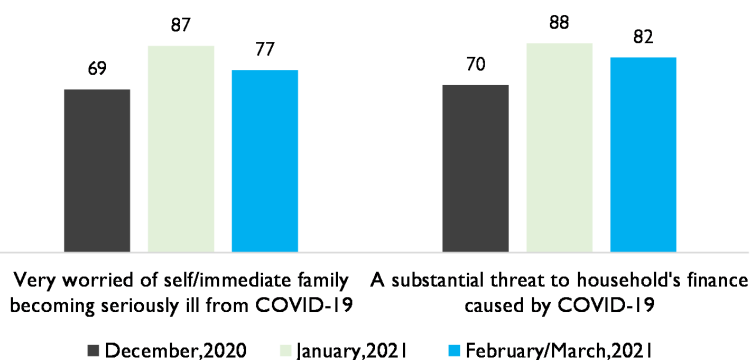


Figure 5. Perception of threat to self/immediate family becoming ill and threat to household finances caused by COVID-19 (% of respondents)



Between January and February 2021, the proportion of respondents who were worried of their family or themselves becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 and those that perceived COVID-19 as a threat to their households' finances slightly declined. The proportion of respondents who perceived the virus a threat to their finances declined between January and February; 88% to 82%. The proportion of respondents who perceived the virus a threat to their health or that of their immediate family members declined from 87% to 77% between January and February.



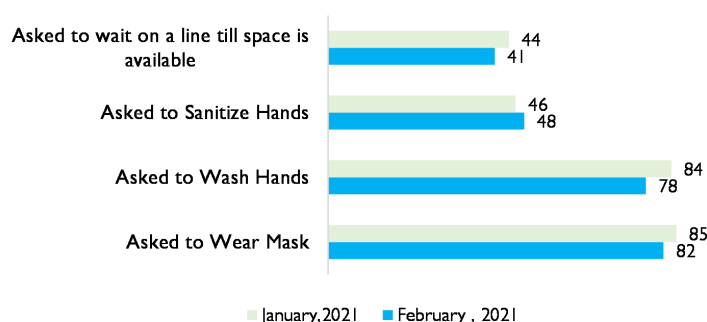


For all respondents, it was observed that there was a decline in the proportion of individual washing hands with soap after being in public all the times from 60 percent in January to 58 percent in February 2021. Similarly, the proportion of individuals wearing a mask in public all the times has decline from 64 percent in January to 62 percent in February 2021.

For respondents that needed to access shops or supermarkets, the survey results have revealed that there

was a decline in the proportion of people who were asked to wash hands before entering the shop or supermarket from 84 percent in January to 78 percent in February-March, 2021. Equally, there was decline in the proportion of individuals who were asked to wear mask before entering the shop from 85 percent in January to 82 percent in February 2021. Overtime, it appears there is more laxity in following the COVID-19 preventive guidelines set by the authorities.

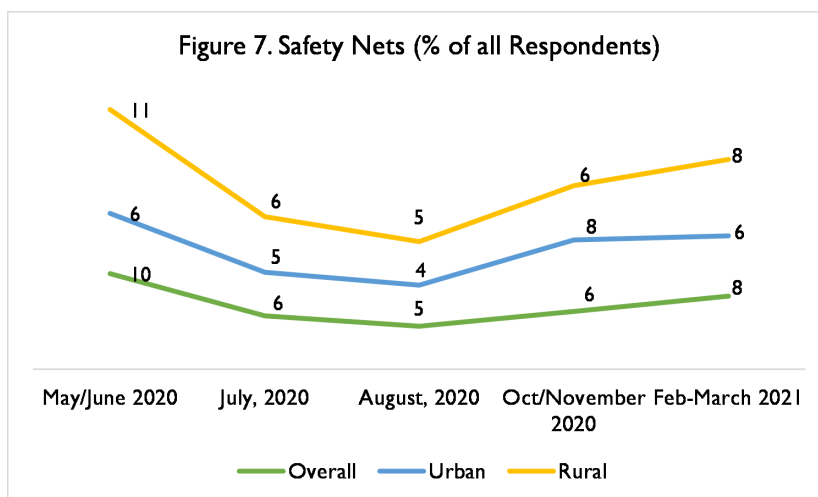
Figure 6. Adherence to COVID-19 Preventive Guidelines
(% of respondents that needed to access a shop/supermarket)



SAFETY NETS

Since August, there has been a slight increase in the share of households receiving any form of social assistance. However, between November and February, this share has declined among urban area residents from 8% to 6%.

Figure 7. Safety Nets (% of all Respondents)



Among households that received any form of social safety net, **government contribution** remains the main source steadily increasing over time from 23% in June 2020 to 65% in February 2021.

Data Notes: Malawi High-Frequency Phone Survey COVID-19 (HFPS COVID-19) is implemented by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on a monthly basis during the period of May 2020 and June 2021. The survey is part of a World Bank-supported global effort to support countries in their data collection efforts to monitor the impacts of COVID-19. The financing for data collection and technical assistance in support of the Malawi HFPS COVID-19 is provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank. The technical assistance to the Malawi HFPS COVID-19 is provided by a World Bank team composed of staff from the Development Data Group—Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) program and the Poverty and Equity Global Practice. This survey is the eighth of a planned 12 rounds of the survey. 1701 households from the baseline were contacted and 1,551 households were fully interviewed in the eighth round. These same households will be contacted in subsequent rounds of the HFPS COVID-19. The 2019 IHPS data are representative at the national- and urban/rural-levels and phone survey weights were calculated (i) to counteract selection bias associated with not being able to call IHPS households without phone numbers, and (ii) to mitigate against non-response bias associated with not being able to interview all target IHPS households with phone numbers. For further details on the data, please visit <https://www.worldbank.org/lsmc-covid19> and email enquiries@statistics.gov.mw.