

REBUILD

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19
POLICY RESPONSES ON WOMEN WORKING IN THE
INFORMAL URBAN ECONOMY IN **UGANDA**

 **ICRW** INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN



More than

88%

of employed Ugandan
women work in the
informal sector.



KEY FINDINGS

1.0 Socio-demographics of survey respondents



Age 18-65 yrs (Average 40 years)

59% had attained education above primary level. Over 60% were household heads and over half lived with children.

2.0 Informal Women Workers (IWWs) pre-existing characteristics



Health Insurance

Prior to the pandemic, **94.4%** of IWWs did not have any form of health-related insurance. During the pandemic, insured IWWs increased slightly to **8.4%**.



Exclusion: Access to credit

Most **(46%)** keep their money in savings groups, **23%** use mobile money accounts, & **25%** keep their money in commercial banks.

3.0 Policies effects on IWWs' care and domestic work burdens



Increased care burdens **reduced income for 76%** of respondents.

4.0 Effect on livelihoods of IWWs



Commonly reported challenges stemming from COVID-19 included reduced spending power (67%), ability to pay bills (66%), and opportunity to earn a living (64%).

5.0 Inadequate access to official COVID-19 relief measures



Nearly one-quarter of respondents knew of some social support programming but did not receive any support.

Around **44%** of IWWs had accessed a loan in the past 12 months, largely obtained from savings groups (33%), money lenders (22%), and relatives (17%).

6.0 High prevalence of Gender Based Violence (GBV)



Over half of the women surveyed knew of someone who had experienced GBV at home or work, and 35% had a personal experience of GBV during this period.

35%

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Test innovations that can enhance access to and increase investments in public, private, and community-based** childcare facilities to enable working mothers, including those in the informal sector, to devote more time to paid work while their children are in safe spaces.
- **Target macro-level and sector-specific policies and strategies to promote inclusive growth** within the informal sector, including addressing financial constraints through dedicated funding and negotiating with mobile data providers to reduce rates to promote the use of digital platforms for market transaction and business development.
- **Develop a comprehensive, all-inclusive social protection strategy** to guide the efficient implementation of social protection programs targeting the IWWs.
- **Implement a multi-sectoral approach for prevention and response in addressing GBV by prioritizing the needs of GBV survivors** and focusing on rehabilitation, financing existing GBV shelters, and setting up new ones. Adopt community-led participation in education and sensitization on GBV, as well as provision of psychosocial support at the community level.