

Context

As of late March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic had caused more than 180 countries to temporarily close primary and secondary schools (1) (2). By mid-April, it was estimated that more than 90% of the 1.57 billion primary and secondary students globally were out of school because of COVID-19 (3). For children, school closures mean the loss of important learning opportunities, sometimes permanently if young adults drop out to support financially-strapped families and never re-matriculate. For adults, losing a job or being unable to leave home to work because of parental responsibilities may place many households in jeopardy of greater financial hardship.

Authors

Paul Hutchinson, Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
 Leah Newman, Viamo
 Dominique Meekers, Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

3-2-1 COVID-19 Survey

Viamo, as part of our COVID-19 response, added COVID-19 information on our 3-2-1 Service (<https://viamo.io/services/3-2-1/>) in 18 countries, including messages on symptoms and prevention. As of July 1 2020, these key messages have been listened to 25 million times by more than 3.3 million users. To further understand the information gaps and needs of our users, we added the 3-2-1 Service COVID-19 Survey to poll our users about their knowledge of the disease, as well as the impact of the disease on their livelihood.

To keep the IVR survey short, 12 different questionnaires were used, each addressing a specific COVID-related topic area (knowledge of COVID-19 and how to prevent it, attitudes, preventive behaviors, motivation, impact on food security, income, mental health, COVID-related school disruption etc.). The surveys were implemented in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Madagascar, Malawi, and Rwanda. The first wave of the 3-2-1 COVID-19 Surveys, conducted in May 2020 and involving over 1,500 respondents for each of the 12 questionnaires, demonstrated the value of the 3-2-1 Service for providing rapid, reliable, low-cost data on country experiences during the pandemic. Compared to Random Digit Dial mobile surveys, 3-2-1 Service users are younger, slightly poorer, and more likely to get their information through their mobile phones.

We present here key findings from Wave 1 of the 3-2-1 Service COVID-19 Survey as longitudinal, cross-sectional data continues to be collected. These findings may be of interest to officials, planners, and policy-makers currently addressing the pandemic at all levels of the response.

Highlights



In nearly all countries, students stopped physically attending school. However, continuation of studies through home-schooling varies considerably. In Madagascar and Rwanda, more than two-thirds of children were continuing their studies. In the DRC, Malawi, and Nepal, only about half of children were continuing their studies.



The impact of children being out of school has important implications for labor force participation. In the DRC, Madagascar, and Rwanda, approximately three-quarters of adults with a child at home reported that they were less able to work because of the presence of children.



Coronavirus may have important impacts on the mental health of children. In all countries, most parents have spoken with their children about the virus. In Rwanda, more than three-quarters of children are reported to be worried about the virus.

Fig 1: Percentage of respondents with school-age children who reported their children stopped going to school due to coronavirus, and percentage who report their children continued their studies at home

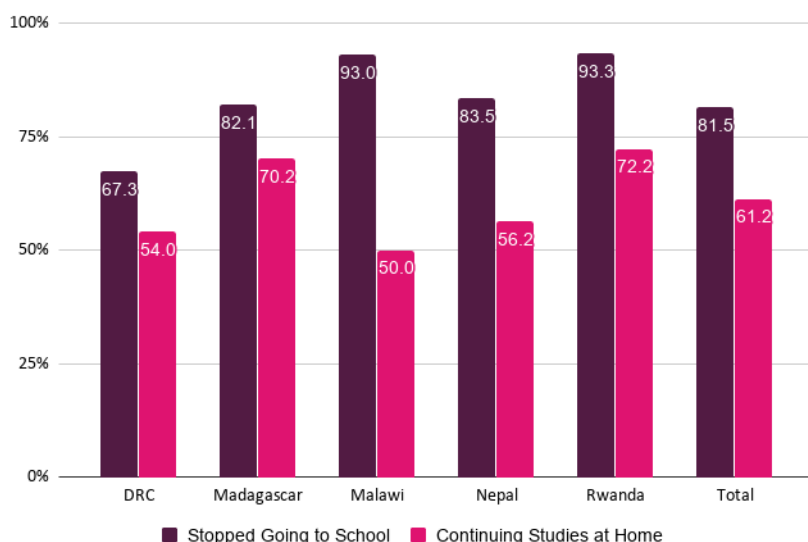


Fig. 1. In these five countries, 81.5% of parents of school-aged children reported that their children had stopped going to school because of the coronavirus. In Malawi and Rwanda, over 90% of children were no longer attending school. In Madagascar, Malawi, Nepal and Rwanda, over 80% of children were no longer attending school. The DRC was an outlier where only two-thirds of children were no longer attending school.

While overall 61.2% of parents reported that their children were continuing their studies at home, this varied by country. In Madagascar and Rwanda, more than two-thirds of children were continuing their studies. In the DRC, Malawi, and Nepal, only about half of children were continuing their studies. We do not have information available on the frequency or the quality of this education.

Fig 2: Percentage of parents with school-age children who reported they were less able to work because their children are at home

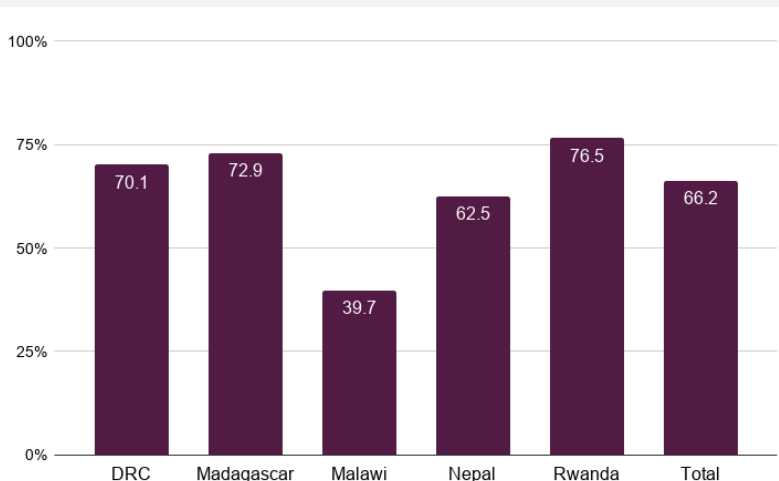
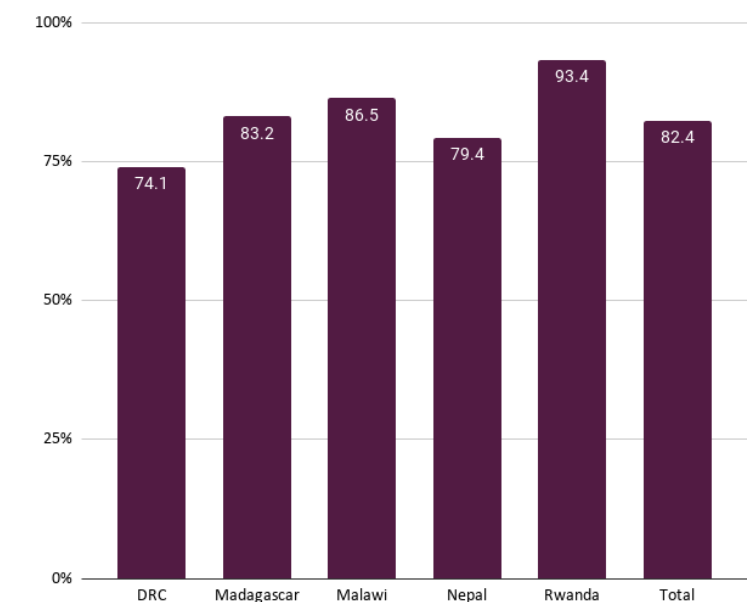


Fig. 2. Having children at home has significantly affected work by adult respondents in most countries. In the DRC, Madagascar, and Rwanda, approximately three-quarters of adults with school-aged children reported that they were less able to work because of the presence of children. In Malawi, however, only 39.7% of adults with school-aged children were less able to work.



66.2%
of respondents are less able to work with children at home

Fig 3: Percentage of respondents with school-age children who talked with their children about coronavirus



82.4%
of respondents reported speaking with their school-age children about coronavirus

Fig 4: Percentage of respondents with school-age children who report that their children are worried about coronavirus

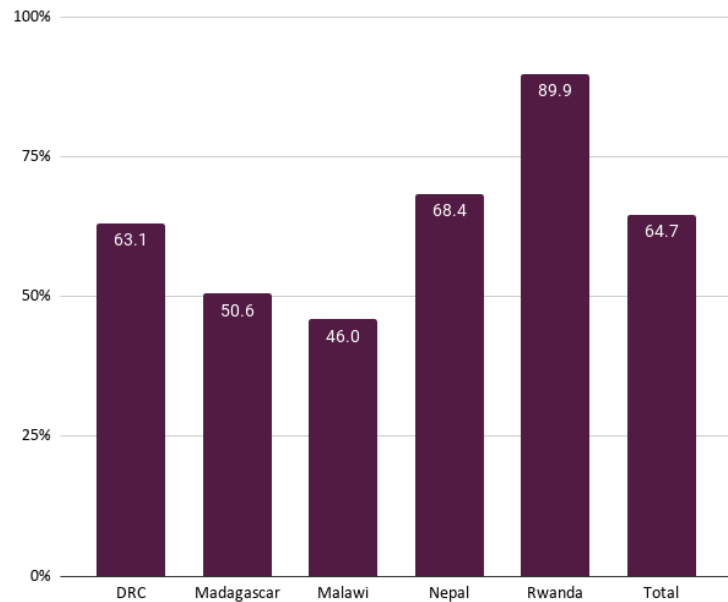


Fig. 3/4. In all countries, the majority of parents, ranging from 74.1% of parents with school-age children in the DRC to 93.4% of parents in Rwanda, have talked with their children about the coronavirus. Nearly 90% of parents in Rwanda reported that their children are worried about the coronavirus. Other countries, such as Madagascar and Malawi, show much lower concern. In those two countries, approximately half of parents reported that their children are worried about coronavirus.

References

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