

Long Economic COVID for Informal workers

The COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy Study (2020-2022), a mixed-methods longitudinal study, is a close research collaboration between **WIEGO** and local partner organizations, with support from **IDRC Canada**.

How are informal workers coping?



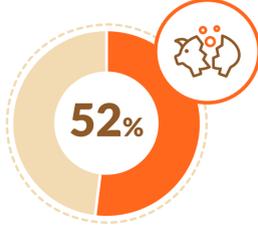
The typical worker is earning

64%

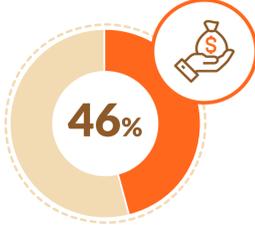
of their pre-COVID-19 earnings.



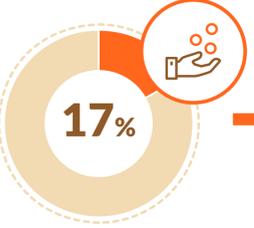
The crisis has forced workers into damaging survival strategies which can entrap households in poverty:



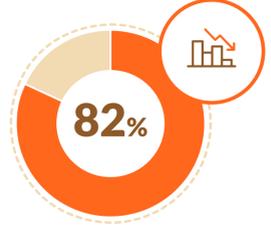
drew down on their savings



borrowed money



sold or pawned assets



were not able to replace any of the savings by mid-2021

Few informal workers received government relief to survive or rebuild their livelihoods:



7% received government loans to support their work



39% received cash relief



37% received government food relief

Care responsibilities impacted women's ability to engage in paid work. Women reported working, on average, **2** days less than men.



Food insecurity threatens urban informal workers.

Nearly **1/3** of workers said a member of their household had gone hungry.

57% reported eating less food.



Informal workers reported:

- Having no access to water while at work.
- Overburdened public health systems.
- Mental health and isolation issues.



How have informal workers responded?

Informal worker organizations have stepped in to provide support, where the market or state have failed by:

1 Providing food, cash, personal protective equipment.



2 Linking members with government programs (including vaccinations).

2

3 Providing legal, psychological, or alternative livelihood support.



4 Facilitating health information and implementing health and safety protocols in public spaces like markets.

4

5 Advocating for new forms of relief, access to workspace, and/or greater inclusion within social protection systems.



What do informal workers need?

Informal workers are calling for:



Food aid and a moratorium on tuition, rent, utilities and loan repayments.



Safe and secure access to work space.



Grants, loans and business capital.



Inclusive urban planning.



Health care, social security, childcare and equitable access to vaccinations.



Informal workers have a message for governments and global institutions to stimulate economic recovery from the bottom up: **invest in our livelihoods and well-being!**