




Nearly Half of Liberias Workforce No Longer Working since Start of Ebola Crisis

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Negative Economic Impacts of Virus Seen Throughout the Country, with Serious Consequences for the Poor and Vulnerable
Ebola has substantially impacted all sectors of employment in the Liberian economy, in both affected and non-affected counties, according to the most recent round of mobile phone surveys conducted by the World Bank Group in partnership with the Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services and the Gallup Organization. In all, nearly half of those working in Liberia when the Ebola outbreak began are no longer working as of early November 2014. "Even those living in the most remote communities in Liberia, where Ebola has not been detected, are suffering the economic side effects of this terrible disease," said Ana Revenga, Senior Director of the Poverty Global Practice at the World Bank Group. "Relief efforts must focus not only on those directly affected by the virus, but also on those in the poorest communities for whom market access, mobility, and food security continue to get worse." Those engaged in self-employment activities have been the hardest hit, in large part due to the closure of markets in which they operate. The wage employment sector has also seen substantial job losses. Overall, only about 36 percent of previously self-employed workers outside of agriculture and about half of those originally engaged in wage labor are still working since the crisis unfolded. After an initial downturn, the agricultural sector is showing the most resilience in the face of Ebola. Existing problems, especially those related to food prices and food security, have only worsened. Liberia saw a large spike in imported rice prices (nearly 40 percent over the average for October) but when asked in the survey, over 70 percent of respondents said that regardless of price, they do not have enough money to afford food. More than 90 percent of those surveyed worried that their household would not have enough to eat. With the arrival of the harvest, these figures have and will likely continue to trend downward, but they remain alarmingly high. "This high frequency phone survey allows us to connect directly to the Liberian people and to track the impacts of Ebola over time. With the lifting of the state of emergency, we hope that the worst of the crisis has passed, and that we will see positive changes in the December round," said Kristen Himelein, Senior Economist at the World Bank Group and the reports author. "At the same time, we also want to identify those groups at risk of being left behind in the recovery process so that interventions can be accurately targeted." The survey questions, administered from Gallup offices in Nebraska, covered key areas such as knowledge of Ebola, employment, prices, food security, and migration; the resulting findings are available in the report. A third round of the mobile phone survey will conclude in mid-December, 2014. The World Bank Groups Response to the Ebola Crisis
The World Bank Group is mobilizing nearly \$1 billion in financing for the countries hardest hit by the Ebola crisis. This includes more than \$500 million from IDA, the World Bank Groups fund for the poorest countries, for the emergency response and to help speed up the deployment of foreign health workers to the countries, and at least \$450 million from IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, to enable trade, investment and employment in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. For more information: www.worldbank.org/ebola This survey complements a previously released World Bank Group analysis showing that if Ebola continues to surge in the three worst-affected countries and spreads to neighboring countries, the two-year regional financial impact could reach \$32.6 billion by the end of 2015, dealing a potentially catastrophic blow to already fragile states. The World Bank
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