



## IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LIVELIHOODS OF SCEF BENEFICIARIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Frank Kyei-Arthur (Ph.D.)

### Summary

COVID-19 and its associated restrictions, especially the lockdown, had negative impacts on persons and economic activities. The poor and vulnerable were disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of COVID-19. The Street Children Empowerment Foundation (SCEF) conducted the Wash Coronavirus Away Survey to determine the impact of COVID-19 on the livelihoods of its beneficiaries and their families. The study found that COVID-19 affected both beneficiaries and their parents/guardians. COVID-19 adversely affected the education and welfare and well-being of beneficiaries. Besides, COVID-19 affected the weekly income, business, revenue projections, and sales of parents/guardians.

### Introduction

On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. COVID-19 confirmed cases, morbidity, and mortality has continued to rise. As of 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Ghana had recorded 45,313 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Globally, governments imposed national and localised lockdowns to help slow the spread of the virus. On 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the Government of Ghana (GoG) imposed a partial lockdown on the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), and the Greater Kumasi Accra Metropolitan Area and contiguous districts.

COVID-19 and its associated restrictions, especially the lockdown, had negative impacts on persons and economic activities (Danquah & Schotte, 2020; GSS, 2020a). The poor and vulnerable were disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of COVID-19.

To mitigate the plights of Ghanaians, especially the poor and vulnerable, the GoG implemented some social protection interventions such as the free provision of food (cooked and uncooked meals), cash transfers to Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) beneficiaries, free supply of water and electricity, and the establishment of the Coronavirus Alleviation Programme.

On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the GoG lifted the three-week partial lockdown, and reasons for lifting the lockdown included the severe impact of COVID-19 on the poor and vulnerable. The Ashanti region and Greater Accra region has approximately 1.84 million and 1.14 million people who are multidimensional poor respectively (GSS, 2020b).

The Street Children Empowerment Foundation (SCEF) conducted a study entitled “the Wash Coronavirus Away Survey” to determine the impact of COVID-19 on the livelihoods of its beneficiaries and their families

### Methodology

The survey was conducted over six weeks. The survey commenced in the first week of June 2020. Structured questionnaires were administered face-to-face by SCEF staff to parents/guardians whose children were SCEF scholarship beneficiaries. The data was analysed using SPSS version 25.



## Results

In total, 58 parents/guardians completed the questionnaires (Table 1). The majority of the parents/guardians were middle-aged (36-59 years), females, and lived in Ashiedu keteke sub-metropolitan district. A little over one-third of the parents/guardians (36.2%) had 1 - 3 children while less than one-fifth had 6 and above children (15.5%). Seven out of 10 parents/guardians owned and operated their businesses. In terms of industry of work, less than half of the parents/guardians (46.6%) were engaged in retail sale of food (petty trading) while a few (12.1%) were engaged in restaurants and mobile food service activities. Majority of the parents/guardians earned less than GH¢ 100 per week before the emergence of COVID-19.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of parents/guardians**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
25 – 35	8	13.8
36 – 46	21	36.2
47 – 59	26	44.8
60 and older	3	5.2
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	55	94.8
Male	3	5.2
<b>Metro of reside</b>		
Ashiedu keteke	53	91.4
Ablekuma	4	6.9
Okaikoi	1	1.7
<b>Number of children</b>		
1 – 3	21	36.2
4 – 5	28	48.3
6 and above	9	15.5
<b>Are you a sole proprietor?</b>		
Yes	41	70.7
No	17	29.3
<b>Industry of work</b>		
Non-profit	9	15.5
Petty trade	27	46.6
Restaurants/Food services	7	12.1
Other	15	25.9
<b>Income per week before COVID-19</b>		
< GH¢ 100	45	77.6
GH¢ 100 - 399	13	22.4

Generally, COVID-19 negatively affected the education and studies of SCEF beneficiaries. Majority of parents/guardians (84.5%) reported that COVID-19 affected the education and studies of their children (Fig. 1). During the emergence of COVID-19, 57 out of 58 parents/guardians (98.3%) earned less than GH¢ 100 per week (Fig. 2).

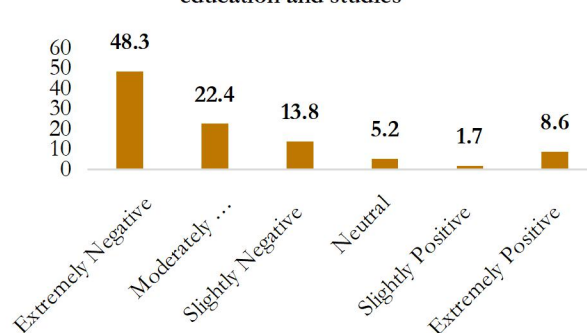
Parents/guardians reported that COVID-19 affected their business. Majority of parents/guardians (79.3%) reported that COVID-19 extremely affected their business (Fig. 3). Specifically, 74 percent of parents/guardians indicated that COVID-19 led to a decline in their business second-quarter revenue projection (Fig. 4) while three-fifths of parents/guardians (60%) mentioned that they could not sell their goods/commodities during the three-week partial lockdown in Greater Accra (Fig. 5).

Most parents/guardians were better able to cater for the welfare and wellbeing of their children before the partial lockdown ( $74.7 \pm 23.1$ ) compared to during and after the lockdown (Fig. 6). Also, parents/guardians were slightly better able to cater for the welfare and wellbeing of their children after the lockdown ( $45 \pm 18.6$ ) compared to during the lockdown ( $43.4 \pm 18.3$ ).

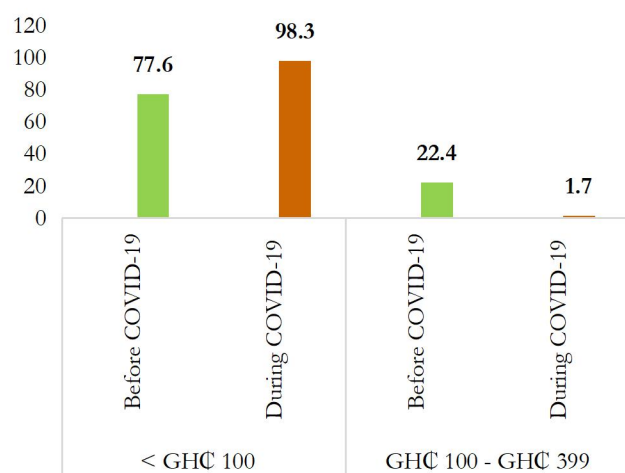
In terms of support received during the lockdown, majority of the parents/guardians (64%) received support from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) while a little over one-fifth of the parents/guardians (22%) received no form of support (Fig. 7).

Parents/guardians were asked the assistance government can provide to support people who are engaged in their type of business. The three main assistance mentioned were start-up capital (55.2%), funding (15%), and any form of support (15%) (Fig. 8).

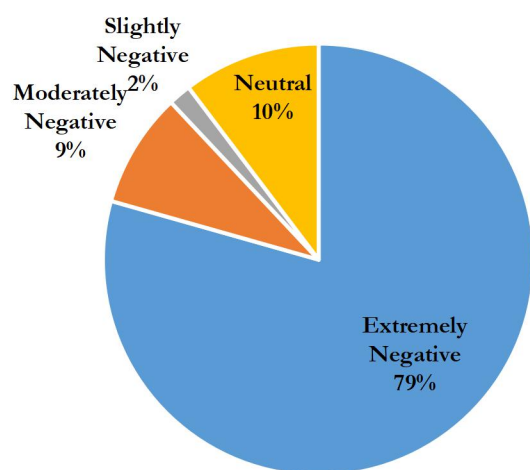
**Figure 1: How COVID-19 affected children education and studies**



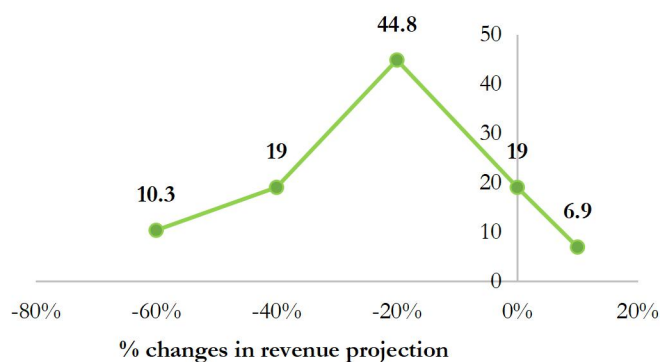
**Figure 2: Income per week before and during COVID-19**



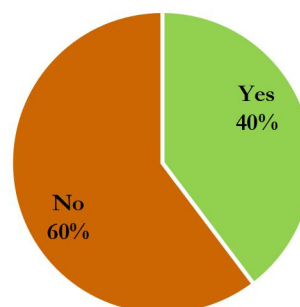
**Figure 3: How COVID-19 has affected your business**



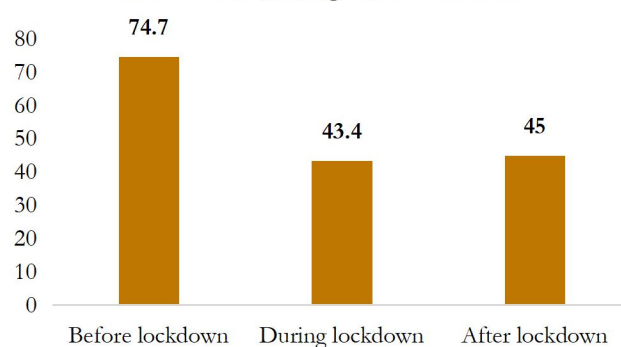
**Figure 4: Distribution of changes in business second quarter 2020 revenue projection due to COVID-19**



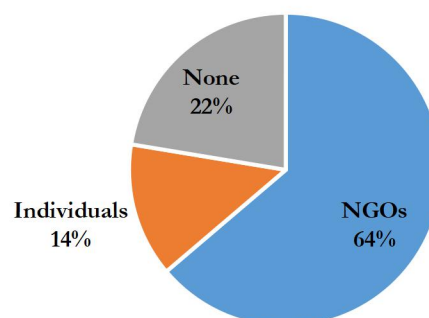
**Figure 5: Able to sell your goods or commodities during this lockdown**



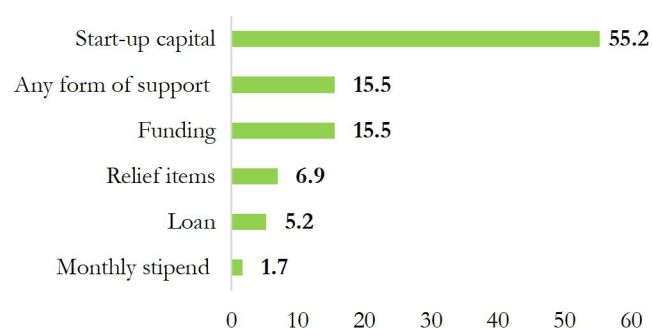
**Figure 6: Mean score of welfare and wellbeing of children before, during and after lockdown**



**Figure 7: Bodies parents/guardians received support**



**Figure 8: Support government can provide to support people who are in your type of business**





## Conclusions and Recommendations

COVID-19 affected the welfare and wellbeing of SCEF beneficiaries and their parents/guardians.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- a. The Government of Ghana should expand its social protection interventions, such as the COVID-19 Alleviation programme, to capture more poor and vulnerable households, and businesses since a little less than a quarter of the respondents (22.4%) didn't receive any form of support during the emergence of COVID-19 to mitigate their plights.
- b. NGOs should be strengthened and resourced so they can continue to assist the poor and vulnerable in society. In the study, more than half of the respondents received assistance from NGOs during the emergence of COVID-19.
- c. Parents should encourage their children to use SCEF's Learning Hub where they can learn while having fun. The Learning Hub is open to all Ghanaian children, especially children in James Town. The Learning Hub offers a library filled with interesting books on numerous subjects, e-learning facilities, creative activities in its Craft Lab, and assisting children with their homework.
- d. Parents must take interest in the studies of their children. Parents should develop innovative ways to encourage their children to study. For example, parents could encourage older siblings to teach their younger siblings.
- e. Parents should take advantage of the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service distance

Television (GLTV) to educate their children.

f.

## Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to SCEF staff and parents/guardians who participated in the Wash Coronavirus Away Survey.

The views expressed in this paper remain those of the author.

## References

Danquah, M., & Schotte, S. (2020). COVID-19 and the socioeconomic impact in Africa: The case of Ghana. *WIDER Background Note 5/2020*. Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/WBN/2020-5>

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). (2020a). How COVID-19 is affecting firms in Ghana: Results from the Business Tracker Survey. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). (2020b). Multidimensional poverty - Ghana. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

**Frank Kyei-Arthur (PhD)** is a population scientist, consultant, and volunteer of SCEF.

Email: [fkyeiarthur@yahoo.com](mailto:fkyeiarthur@yahoo.com)



## Street Children Empowerment Foundation (SCEF)

62/3 Ward D Amamomo Close Palladium

[www.scef-international.org](http://www.scef-international.org)

Founded in September 2010, the Street Children Empowerment Foundation (SCEF) is a registered Non-Government Organisation in Ghana (CG123552014) that seeks to rescue, rehabilitate and reintegrate street-connected children in James Town and Accra Central, Ghana through a unique social work concept. SCEF have branches in the USA, Germany, and Finland.