

## COVID-19 and Women in the Informal Economy in Kenya, Uganda, and India

**Originally published by:** *International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)*

### Introduction:

This report explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women informal workers (IWWs) in Kenya, Uganda, and India. The research highlights the significant challenges faced by these women and emphasizes the need for targeted policy responses to support their recovery and resilience.

### Key Findings:

- **Disproportionate Impact:** IWWs, who make up a large share of the workforce in these countries, were disproportionately affected by the pandemic due to factors like business closures, reduced demand, and limited access to social protection.
- **Increased Care Work Burden:** Women shouldered a significant increase in unpaid care work due to school closures, sick family members, and additional household responsibilities, further limiting their income-generating activities.
- **Economic Hardship:** The pandemic resulted in significant income losses for IWWs, pushing many into deeper poverty and jeopardizing their food security and access to necessities.
- **Digital Divide:** Limited access to technology and digital literacy further hindered IWWs' ability to adapt to new work models or access essential services during lockdowns.
- **Gender-Based Violence:** The report also highlights the increased risk of gender-based violence faced by IWWs due to economic hardship and social isolation during the pandemic.

## Policy Recommendations:

- **Social protection programs:** Expanding social safety nets and providing targeted cash transfers to IWWs can help mitigate income losses and alleviate poverty.
- **Skills development and training:** Investing in skills development programs and financial literacy training can empower IWWs to adapt to changing economic realities and explore new livelihood opportunities.
- **Promoting access to technology and digital infrastructure:** Bridging the digital divide by providing affordable access to technology and digital literacy training can equip IWWs to participate in the digital economy.
- **Strengthening women's organizations:** Supporting and empowering women's organizations can provide critical resources, networking opportunities, and collective bargaining power for IWWs.
- **Addressing gender-based violence:** Implementing comprehensive measures to prevent and address gender-based violence, including access to support services and legal aid, is crucial for ensuring the safety and well-being of IWWs.

## Conclusion:

The report emphasizes the urgent need for policymakers and stakeholders to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of IWWs in the aftermath of the pandemic. By implementing targeted interventions and promoting gender-responsive policies, we can support their economic recovery, build their resilience, and ensure their equal participation in the post-pandemic economic landscape.

**Read More:** <https://www.icrw.org/publications/covid-19-and-women-in-the-informal-economy-in-kenya-uganda-and-india-key-insights-and-findings/>

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