



Covid-19 in vulnerable districts

Knowledge, attitudes and practices in Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo districts

1. Introduction

As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to evolve and spread across the world, Uganda has not been spared. At the time of writing (February 17, 2021), the country has officially recorded just over 40,000 confirmed cases, and 331 deaths. These numbers are lower than in many other countries, including neighbouring Kenya. Uganda's other large neighbour, Tanzania, continues to officially claim victory over the virus, though there is little doubt that this does not accurately reflect the situation, and various sources have reported an increase in cases since late 2020. Much attention in Uganda has therefore focussed on key points of entry – Kampala, the destination for most air travellers, and Tororo and Kyotera districts, on the borders of Kenya and Tanzania respectively.

This brief focusses on these three districts. Precise and up-to-date case numbers for each district in Uganda are not available. At the

time of drafting this brief, Uganda marks one year since the first case of Covid-19, and the need to strengthen border surveillance is still a priority at the points of entry.

This brief presents data on knowledge, attitudes and practices on matters relating to the Covid-19 pandemic among residents of Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo districts. How many residents remain unaware of the virus, or of cases in their district or neighbourhood? What actions are they taking to protect themselves and others against transmission? How do they rate the response of national and local government to the pandemic? And do they support the recent decision of government to re-open schools and relax some restrictions introduced in 2020 to slow the spread of the virus?


Data for the brief come from a special round of Twaweza's *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile-

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phone panel survey. This was created through random sampling from a database of contacts from previous surveys to establish a new representative panel of the population of each of the three districts. Statistical weightings have been applied to the panel, to ensure it is fully representative at district level. For this brief, data were collected from 2,121 respondents (807 in Kampala, 654 in Kyotera and 660 in Tororo), with interviews conducted between 20 December 2020 and 20 January 2021.

Key findings include:

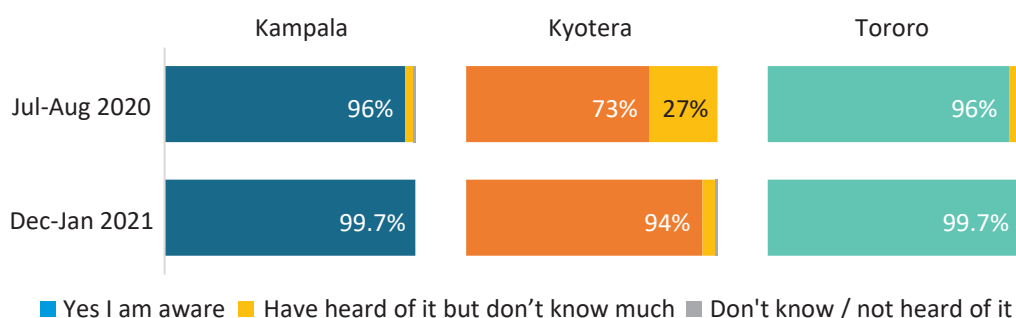
- Awareness of the Coronavirus is almost universal in the three districts
- Most residents of Kyotera and Tororo are aware of confirmed cases of Covid-19 in their districts
- 1 out of 5 Kampala households has had at least one Coronavirus test
- Residents of the three districts are more likely than before to wear a mask, but less likely to stay at home
- Residents of the three districts are more likely to rate the government's response to the Coronavirus positively than negatively
- Most residents across the three districts think there has been an increase in Covid-19 transmission
- Most residents in the three districts support the re-opening of schools
- Most residents say churches are adhering to Covid-19 guidelines, but social gatherings are not
- Most residents are willing to be vaccinated against the Coronavirus
- The main source of information in Kampala is TV, in Tororo is radio, and in Kyotera is both
- Most residents of the three districts say they have sufficient information about the Coronavirus situation

2. Knowledge, attitudes and practices on the Coronavirus in Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo

Insight 1: Awareness of the Coronavirus is almost universal in the three districts

Awareness of the Coronavirus / Covid-19 is high in all three districts. Though awareness is a little lower in Kyotera district (94%), it is an increase compared to six months earlier.

Figure 1: Are you aware of Coronavirus / Covid-19?



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 1 (Jul-Aug, 2020) and round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

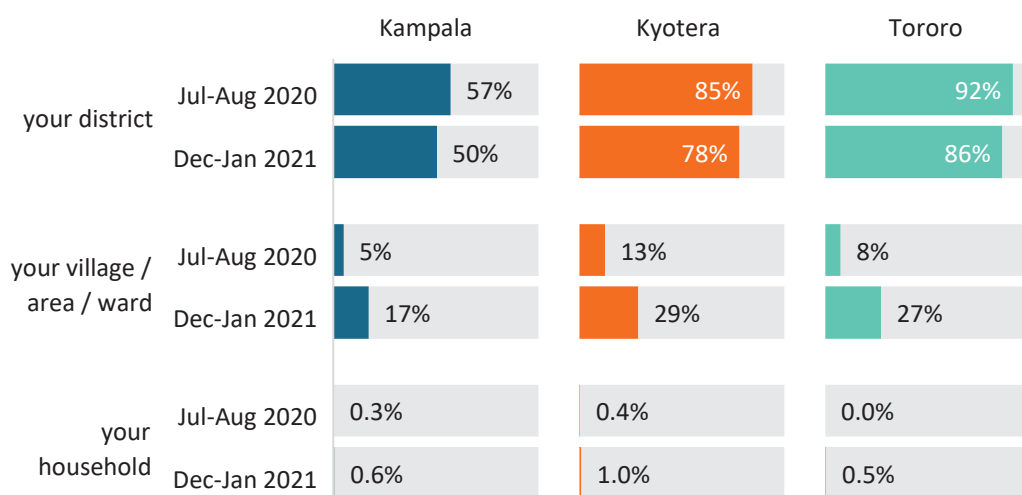
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 2: Most residents of Kyotera and Tororo are aware of confirmed cases of Covid-19 in their districts

A majority of residents in Kyotera (78%) and Tororo (86%) are aware of confirmed cases of Covid-19 in their district. Half of Kampala residents (50%) are aware of confirmed cases. These figures are all slightly lower than six months earlier.

In contrast, awareness of confirmed cases at more local levels (village, ward, area) and in households in the three districts has more than doubled from July-August 2020 to December 2020-January 2021.

Figure 2: Are there any confirmed cases of the Coronavirus in ...?

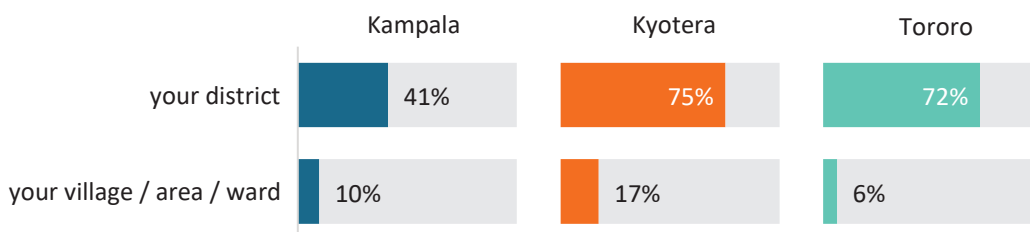


Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel,

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Most residents of Kyotera (75%) and Tororo (72%) are aware of deaths related to Covid-19 in their district, as are a significant number in Kampala (41%).

Figure 3: Are there any Covid-19 related deaths reports in your ...?

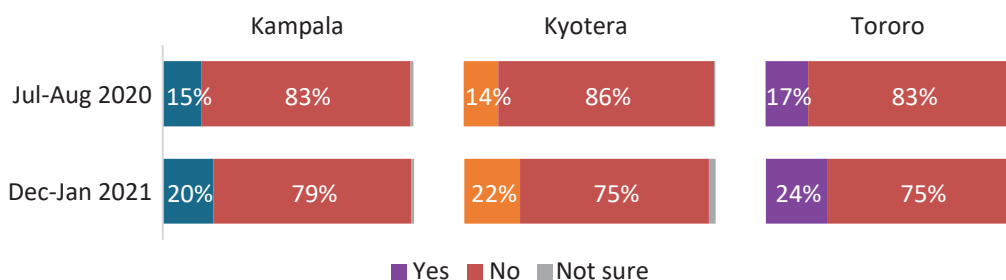


Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 3: 2 out of 10 households across the three districts has had at least one Coronavirus test

One out of five Kampala households (20%) report that than one or more household members has taken a test for the Coronavirus, and similar numbers have done so in Kyotera (22%) and Tororo (24%). These figures have increased a little compared to six months earlier.

Figure 4: Have you or any household member been tested for Coronavirus?



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 1 (Jul-Aug, 2020) and round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

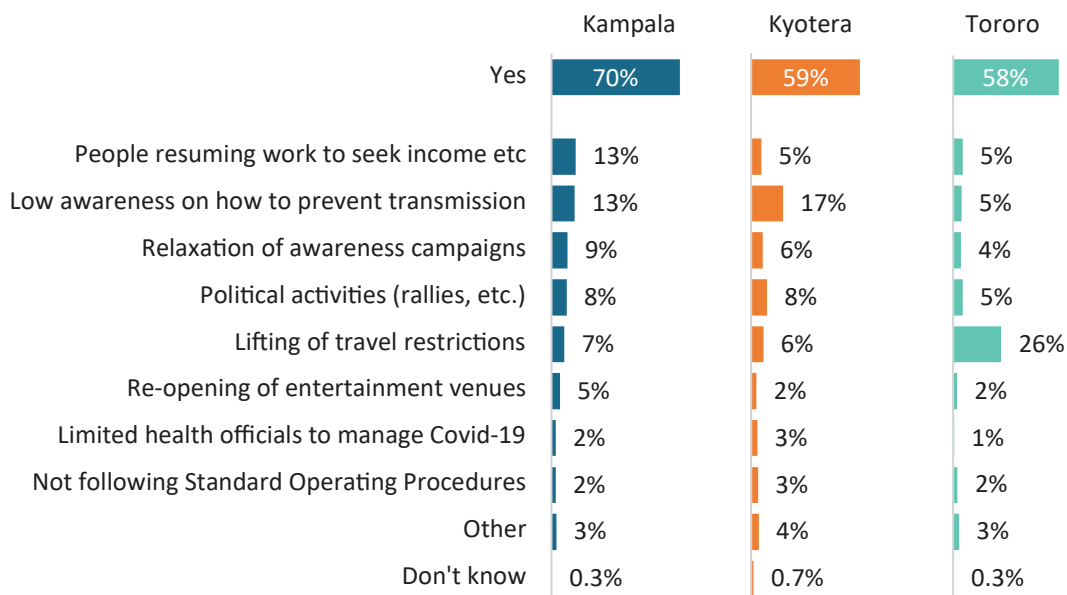
Insight 4: Most residents of Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo think there has been an increase in Covid-19 transmission

Seven out of ten Kampala residents (70%) and six out of ten in Kyotera (59%) and Tororo (58%) say there has been a recent increase in the transmission of Covid-19 in their district.

In Tororo, residents attribute this primarily to relaxation of travel restrictions. In Kyotera, the main reason given is low public awareness of how to prevent transmission, and in Kampala it is

attributed to a combination of people resuming work to seek income and low public awareness. In all three districts, some attribute this increase to relaxation of awareness campaigns or to an increase in political activities around the recent elections.

Figure 5: Do you think there is an increase in the transmission of Covid-19 in your district? If so, what do you think has contributed to this?



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

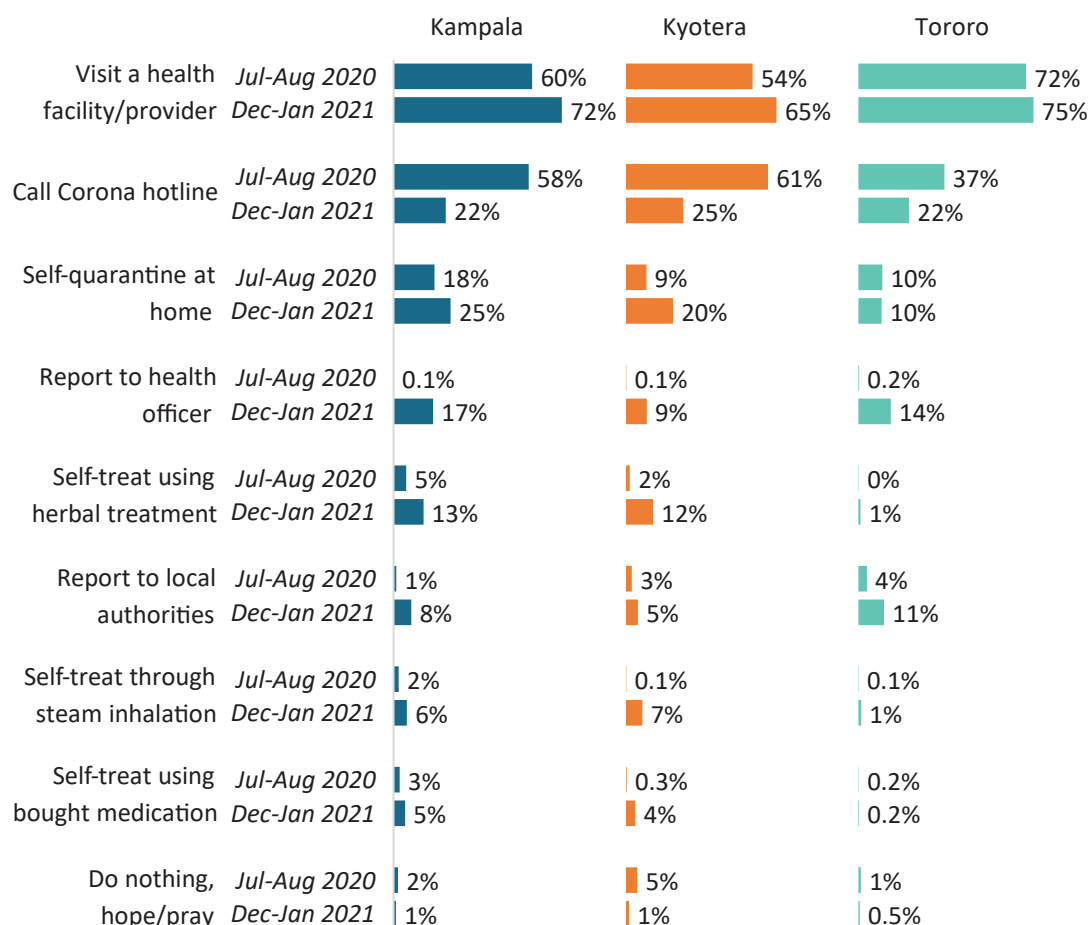
Insight 5: Most residents are now more likely to visit a health facility than call the Corona Hotline.

Most residents of Kampala (72%), Kyotera (65%) and Tororo (75%) say they would visit a health facility if they or a household member is suspected to have the Coronavirus, more than any other action.

The number of residents who report that they would call the government Coronavirus hotline has fallen sharply since July-August 2020. In Kampala, two out of ten (22%) now say they would do this, down from six out of ten (58%) in July-August 2020.

The number of residents who say they would self-medicate has increased, though it remains low compared to those seeking expert medical assistance. In Kampala, around one out of five residents would self-medicate using herbal remedies (13%), steam inhalation (6%) or over-the-counter medication (5%). These figures are similar in Kyotera but lower in Tororo.

Figure 6: What would you do if you or a household member is suspected to have Covid-19?
(multiple responses permitted)



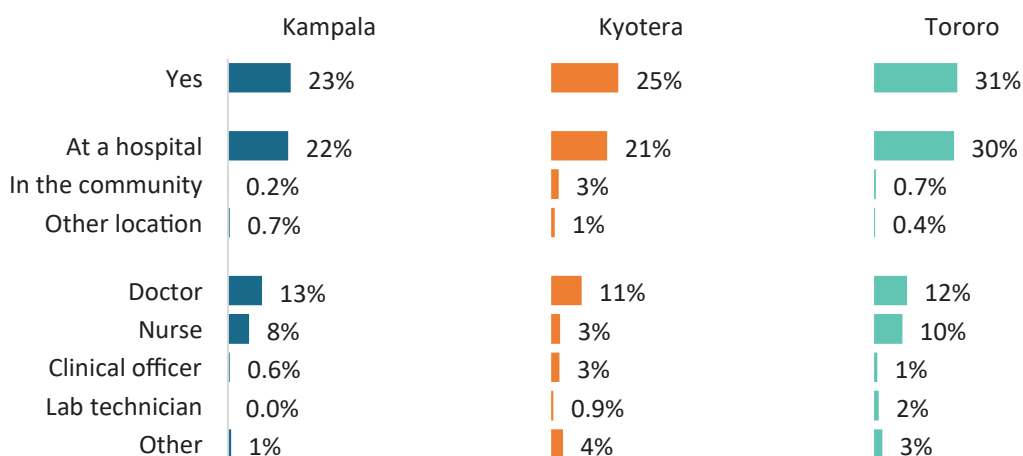
Source: Sauti za Wananchi mobile phone survey, special panel, round 1 (Jul-Aug, 2020) and round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 6: At least 2 out of 10 residents in the three districts had contact with a health worker in the previous month

One out of four Kampala residents (23%) and a similar number in Kyotera (25%) had contact with a health worker in the previous month. The number in Tororo is a little higher (31%).

In most cases, this contact took place at a hospital, and involved either a doctor or a nurse.

**Figure 7: Did you have exposure to a health worker in the last month?
If so, where? And what type of health worker?**



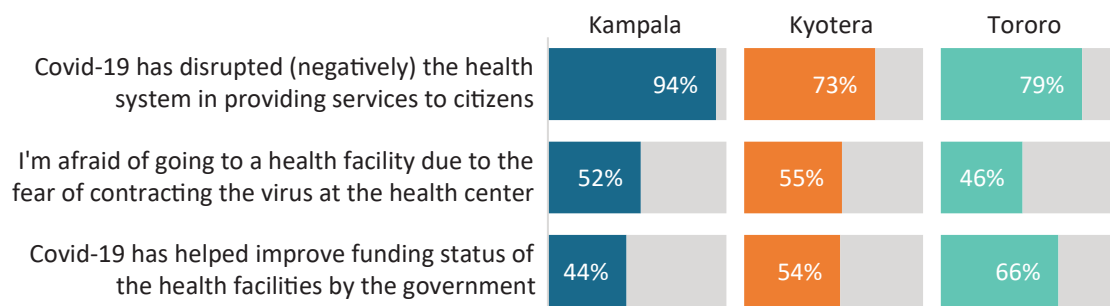
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 7: Most residents agree that Covid-19 has disrupted the health system in providing services

A clear majority of residents in Kampala (94%), Kyotera (73%) and Tororo (79%) agree that Covid-19 has negatively affected the health system's ability to provide services to citizens. Half (46-55%) say they are afraid to visit a health facility for fear of contracting the virus.

A significant number (44-66%) also say the pandemic has helped improve the funding of health facilities by the government.

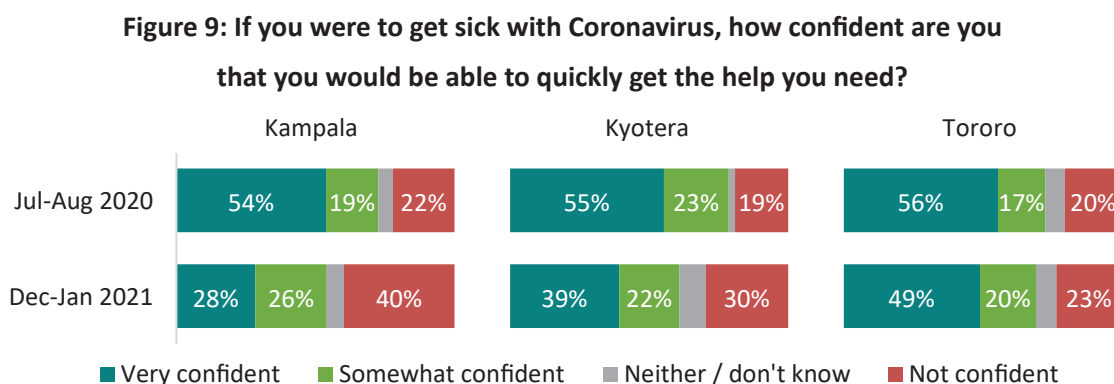
Figure 8: Percent who agree with the following statements:



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 8: Residents are less confident that they could get help if they become sick with Coronavirus

Compared to six months earlier, residents of the three districts are now less confident that they would be able to get the help they need quickly if they get sick with the Coronavirus. In all three districts, a majority are either very confident or somewhat confident that they would be able to get help quickly, but the numbers are lower than in July-August 2020, and a growing number say they are not confident.



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 1 (Jul-Aug, 2020) and round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 9: Residents of the three districts are more likely to wear a mask, but less likely to stay at home

A growing number of residents of Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo districts report that they and their households are wearing masks. Nine out of ten Kampala residents (88%) now report doing so, up from seven out of ten (72%) six months earlier.

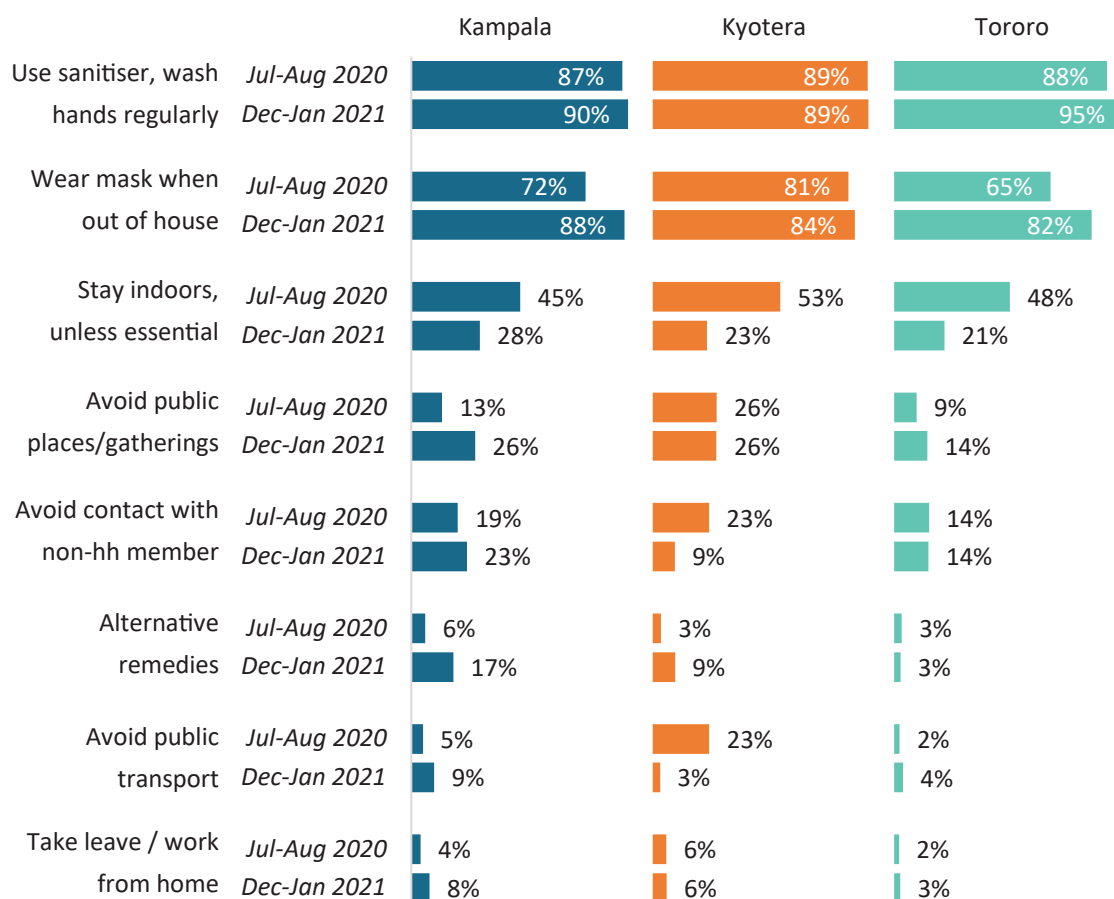
In contrast, the number of residents of these districts who report staying at home except for essential trips has fallen. In Kyotera, for example, half (53%) reported doing this in July-August, but half this number (23%) report doing so now.

Across all three districts, the most cited protective measure being taken by households is regular use of sanitiser or handwashing with soap and water. Nine out of ten residents in all three districts report doing this.

Reported use of alternative remedies such as steam inhalation or lemon and ginger has increased since mid-2020, particularly in Kampala, where one out of six households (17%) report doing this.

Figure 10: What actions have you/household taken to protect yourselves from Coronavirus in the last two weeks?

(multiple responses permitted, selected responses shown)



Source: Sauti za Wananchi mobile phone survey, special panel, round 1 (Jul-Aug, 2020) and round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

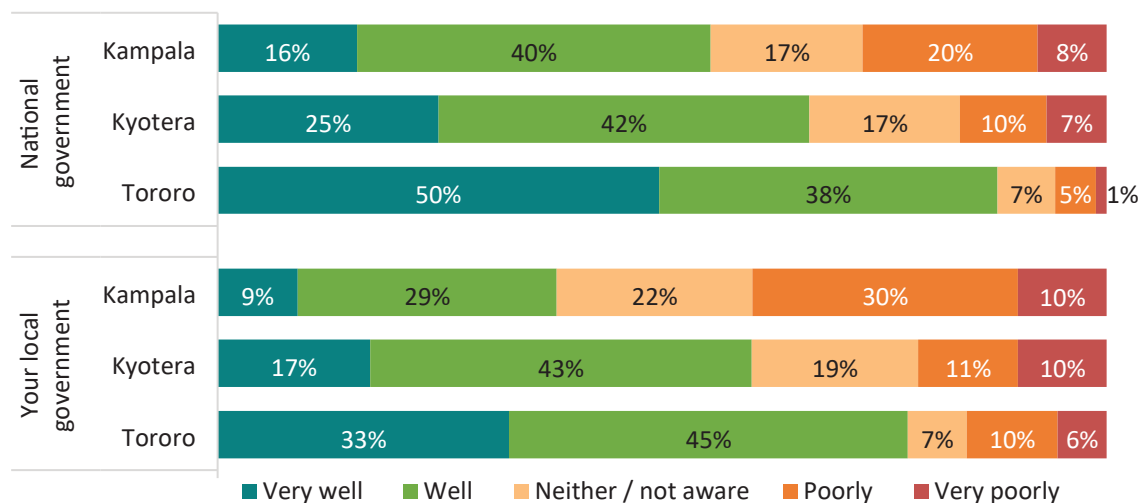
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 10: Most residents in the three districts rate the government's response to Coronavirus positively

Residents of all three districts are more likely to say the government has handled the Coronavirus outbreak well than poorly. Residents of Tororo are particularly positive about the government response, with nine out of ten residents (88%) saying the national government has done well or very well. Kampala residents are the least positive, though even here, more than half (56%) rate the national government's performance as good.

In all three districts, ratings for local government's handling of the outbreak are lower.

Figure 11: How well has the national government / your local government handled the Coronavirus outbreak?



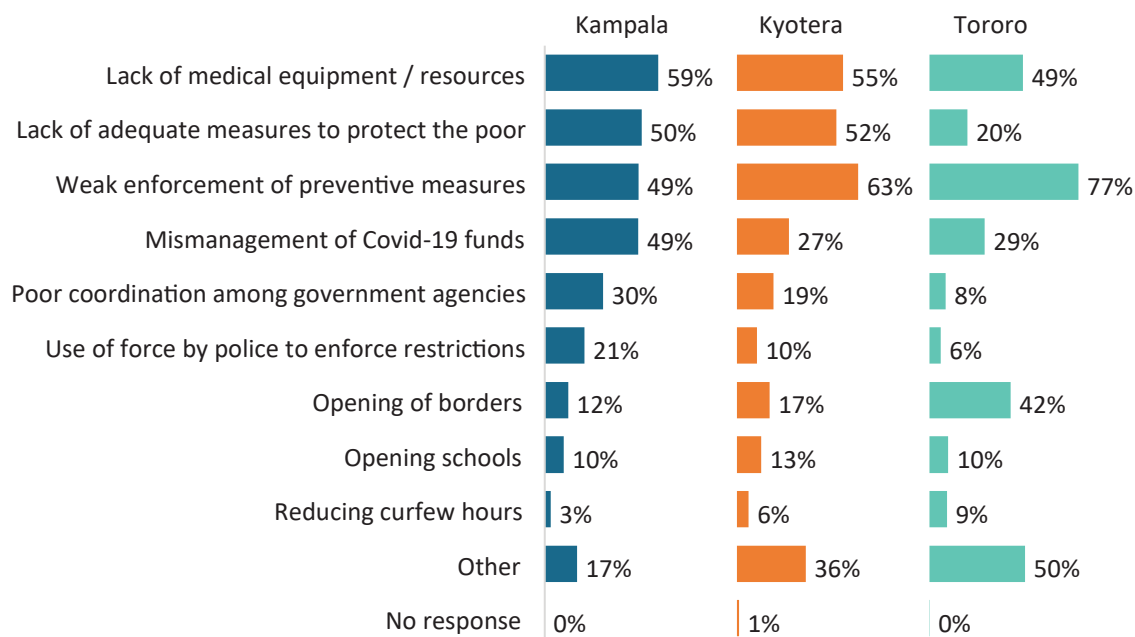
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

In Tororo, residents point to weak enforcement of preventive measures as the main area where the government could have done better, cited by three out of four residents (77%). This is also the most-cited concern in Kyotera (63%). More broadly, the other main issues highlighted by residents are inadequate supplies of medical equipment and resources, inadequate measures to protect the poor, and mismanagement of Covid-19 funds.

Residents of Tororo are particularly concerned by the opening of borders, cited by four out of ten (42%) as an area when the government has not performed well.

Figure 12: In what ways has the government NOT performed well while containing the spread of Covid-19?
(multiple responses permitted)



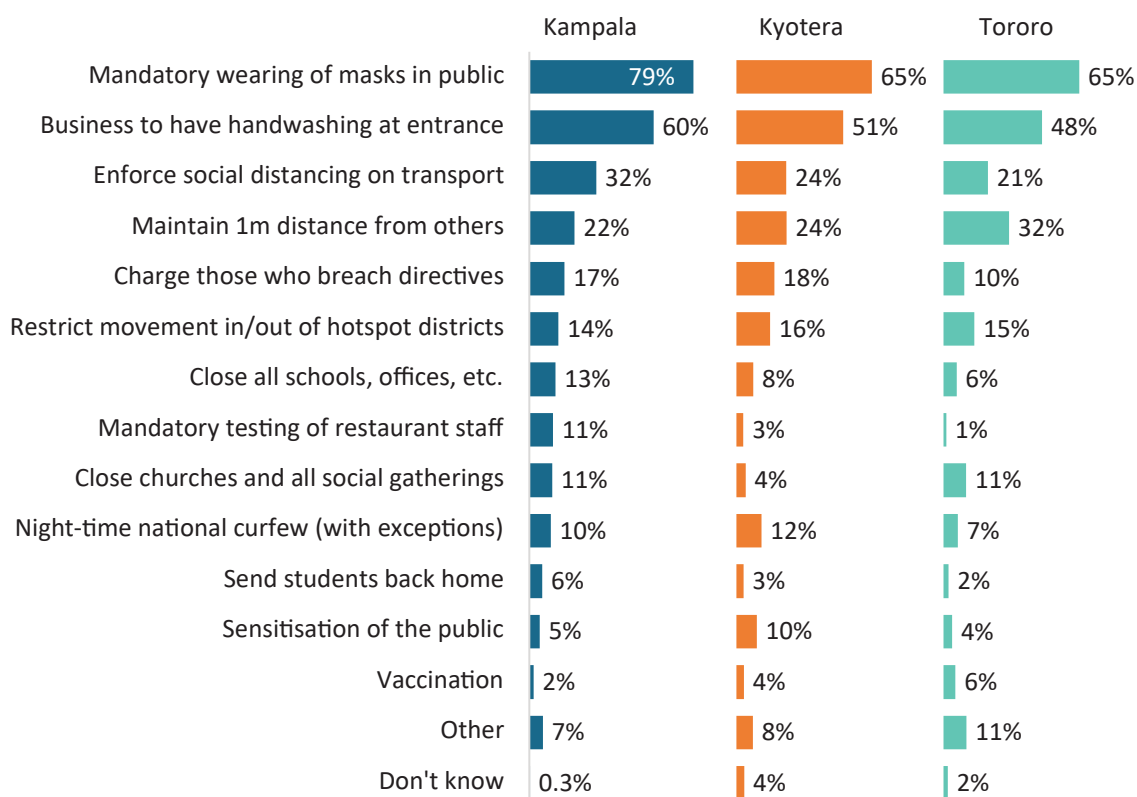
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 11: Residents emphasise mask-wearing and hand washing as the measures government should re-enforce to contain Covid-19

The two measures residents of Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo suggest the government should re-introduce or re-enforce in order to curb rising case numbers are mandatory wearing of masks in public (65-79%) and businesses to have handwashing facilities at entrance points (48-60%).

Other popular suggestions include enforcing social distancing on transport and in other spaces, charging those who breach directives, and restricting movement in and out of hotspot districts.

Figure 13: Which measures should the government re-introduce/re-enforce to curb the surge in number of Covid-19 cases?
(multiple responses permitted)



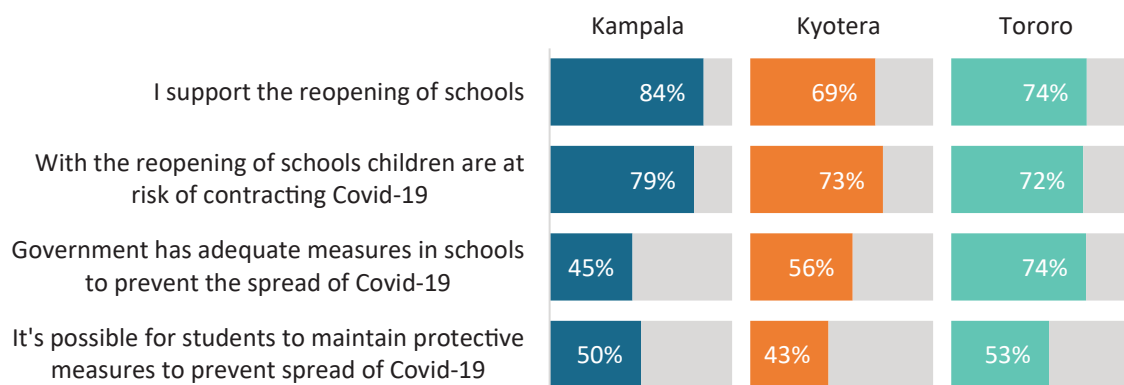
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 12: Most residents of Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo support the re-opening of schools; but with good measures in place.

A clear majority of residents of Kampala (84%), Kyotera (69%) and Tororo (74%) support the government decision to re-open schools. However, this is despite concerns for what this could mean. In particular, a majority (72-79%) also say that re-opening schools puts children at risk of contracting Covid-19.

In Kampala and Kyotera, there is some concern as to whether the government has adequate measures in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in schools, and whether it is possible for students to maintain social distance and other protective measures.

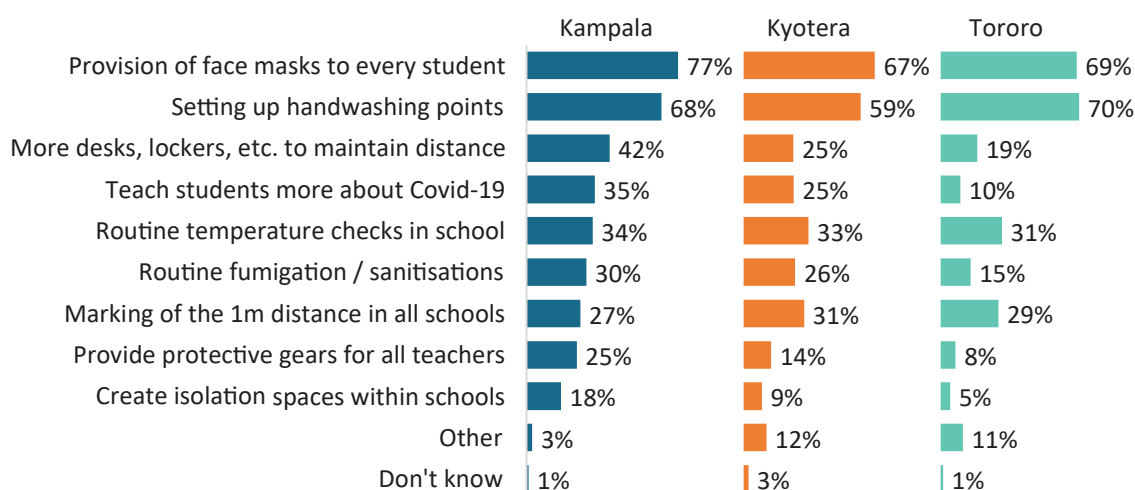
Figure 14: Percent who agree with the following statements:



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

The main measures residents suggest that should be in place before re-opening schools are provision of face masks to each student (67-77%) and setting up handwashing points (59-70%). There is also widespread support for other measures including adding desks to enable distancing, routine temperature checks and routine fumigation / sanitisation.

Figure 15: What measures (if any) do you think were necessary to put in place before reopening schools?
(multiple responses permitted)

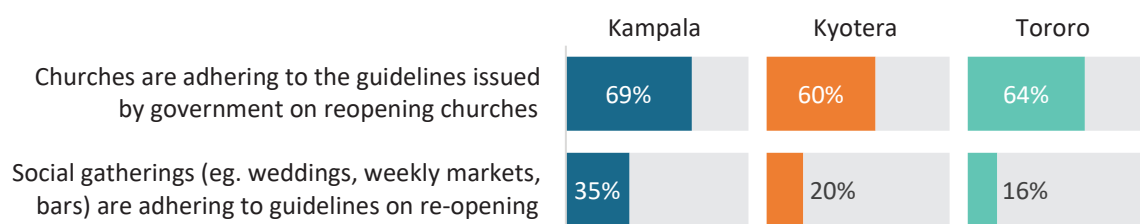


Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 13: Most residents say churches are adhering to Covid-19 guidelines, but social gatherings are not

Most residents of Kampala (69%), Kyotera (60%) and Tororo (64%) agree that churches are adhering to Covid-19 guidelines on re-opening issued by government. However, a minority (16-35%) say that social gatherings such as weddings, weekly markets and bars are doing so.

Figure 16: Percent who agree with the following statements:



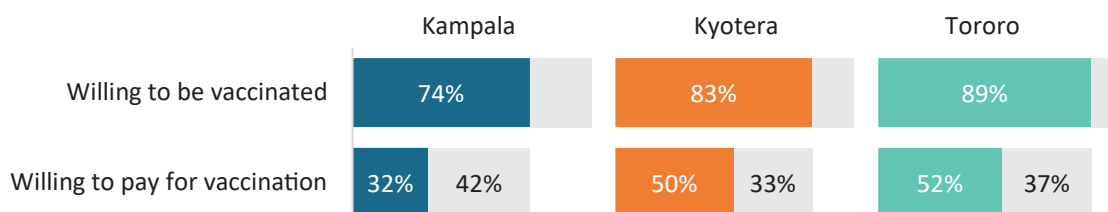
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 14: Most residents are willing to be vaccinated against the Coronavirus; cost is a deterrent.

A clear majority of residents of Kampala (74%), Kyotera (83%) and Tororo (89%) say they are willing to be vaccinated against the Coronavirus when the opportunity comes. A smaller number (32-52%) say they would be willing to pay for this.

Figure 17: When the Coronavirus vaccine gets to Uganda, will you be willing to get the vaccine? Will you be willing to pay for it?



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

The main reason given for unwillingness to have the vaccination is lack of money (10-23%). This is also the main reason given for unwillingness to pay for it. A very small number (0-3%) say they don't trust the vaccine, or that it may have side effects.

Figure 18: Why are you unwilling to have the vaccination / to pay for it?

		Kampala	Kyotera	Tororo
Not willing to have vaccine	Lack of money	23%	16%	10%
	Have strong immunity	2%	1%	0.0%
	Vaccine may have side effects / don't trust it	1%	0.0%	0.2%
	Other	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
	I am willing	74%	83%	89%
Not willing to pay	Lack of money	23%	26%	27%
	It should be free from the government	14%	3%	9%
	Vaccine may have side effects / don't trust it	3%	1%	1%
	They come with hidden motives	1%	0%	0%
	We pay tax to the government	1%	1%	1%
	When prices are affordable	1%	1%	0%
	I am willing to pay	32%	50%	52%

Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

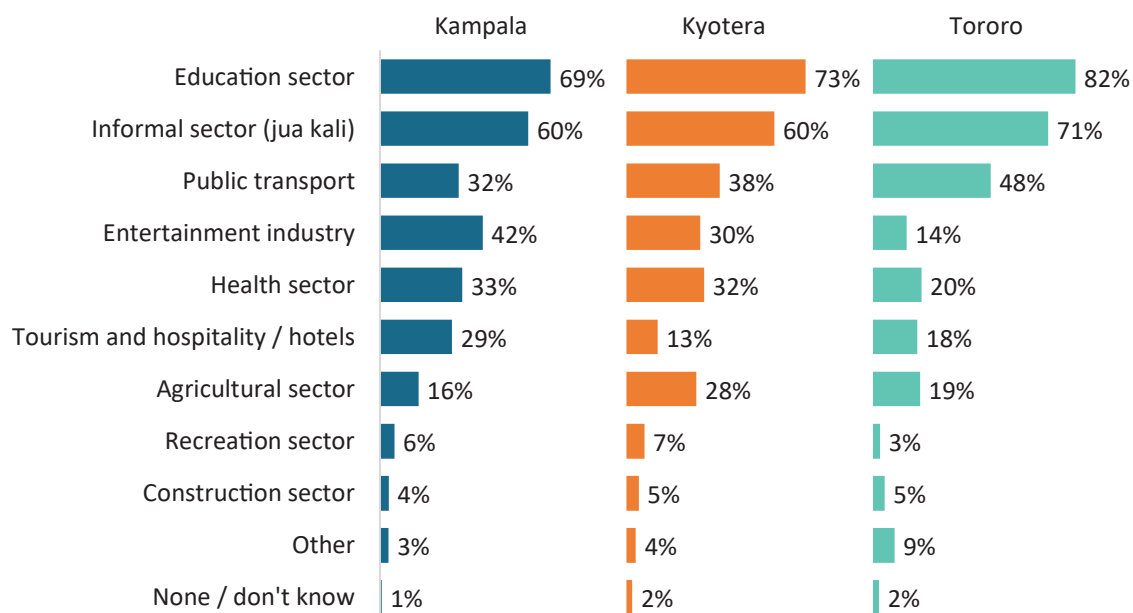
Insight 15: In all three districts, residents point to education and the informal sector as being affected most by the pandemic

Residents of Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo cite education as the sector most affected by the Coronavirus pandemic, seven out of ten in Kampala (69%) and Kyotera (73%), and eight out of ten (82%) in Tororo.

This is followed by the informal sector / jua kali, cited by six out of ten in Kampala (60%) and Kyotera (60%), and seven out of ten (71%) in Tororo.

Other sectors where citizens have seen a big impact include public transport, the entertainment industry, the health sector, tourism and hospitality, and agriculture.

Figure 19: Which sectors / occupations have been affected most by the economic impacts of Covid-19?
(multiple responses permitted)



Source: Sauti za Wananchi mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 16: Residents see positive and negative effects from the pandemic and response measures on their household

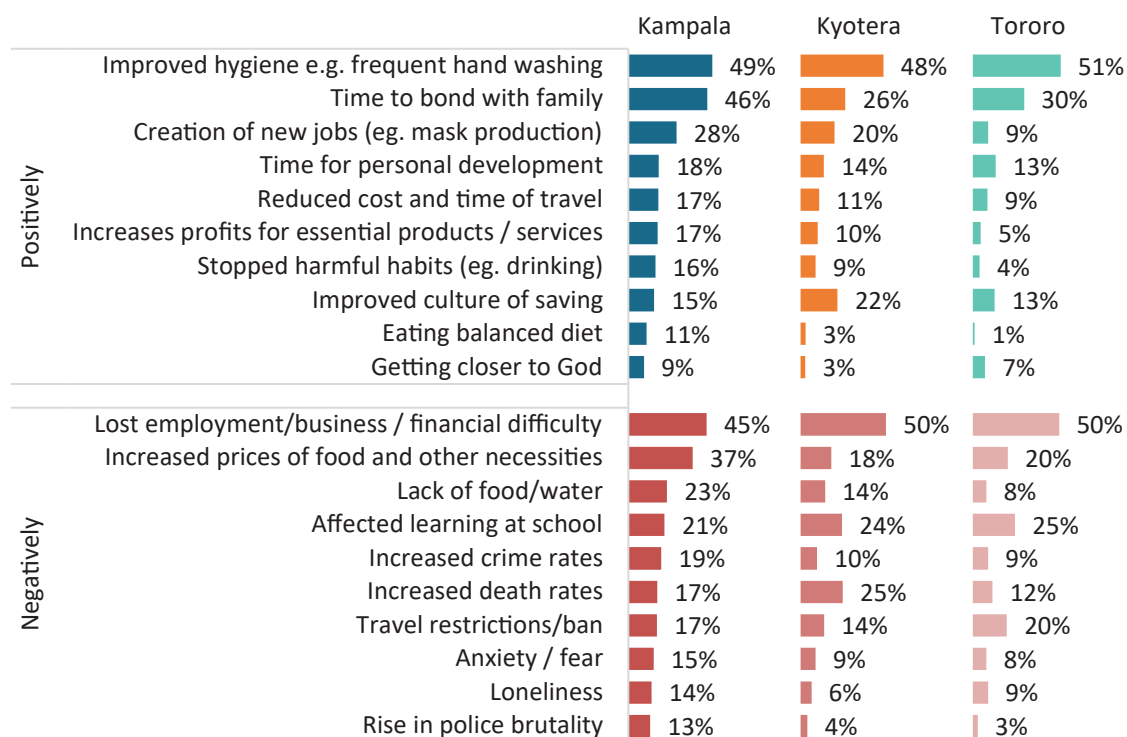
Residents of Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo districts cited improved hygiene (48-51%) and more time spent with family (26-46%) as the main positive effects on their household of the pandemic and lockdown measures introduced in response.

The main negative effects on households are lost income or financial difficulties (45-50%), and lost learning at school (21-25%).

In Kampala, problems with accessing food and water are also highlighted, along with increased crime, and police brutality.

Psychological concerns are also highlighted by some, including anxiety/fear (8-15%) and loneliness (6-14%). These figures are a little higher in Kampala than in either Kyotera or Tororo.

Figure 20: How have you/your household been affected positively or negatively by the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions introduced in response?¹
(multiple responses permitted)



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 17: Residents' main proposal is to provide financial support to mitigate the negative economic impact of Covid-19

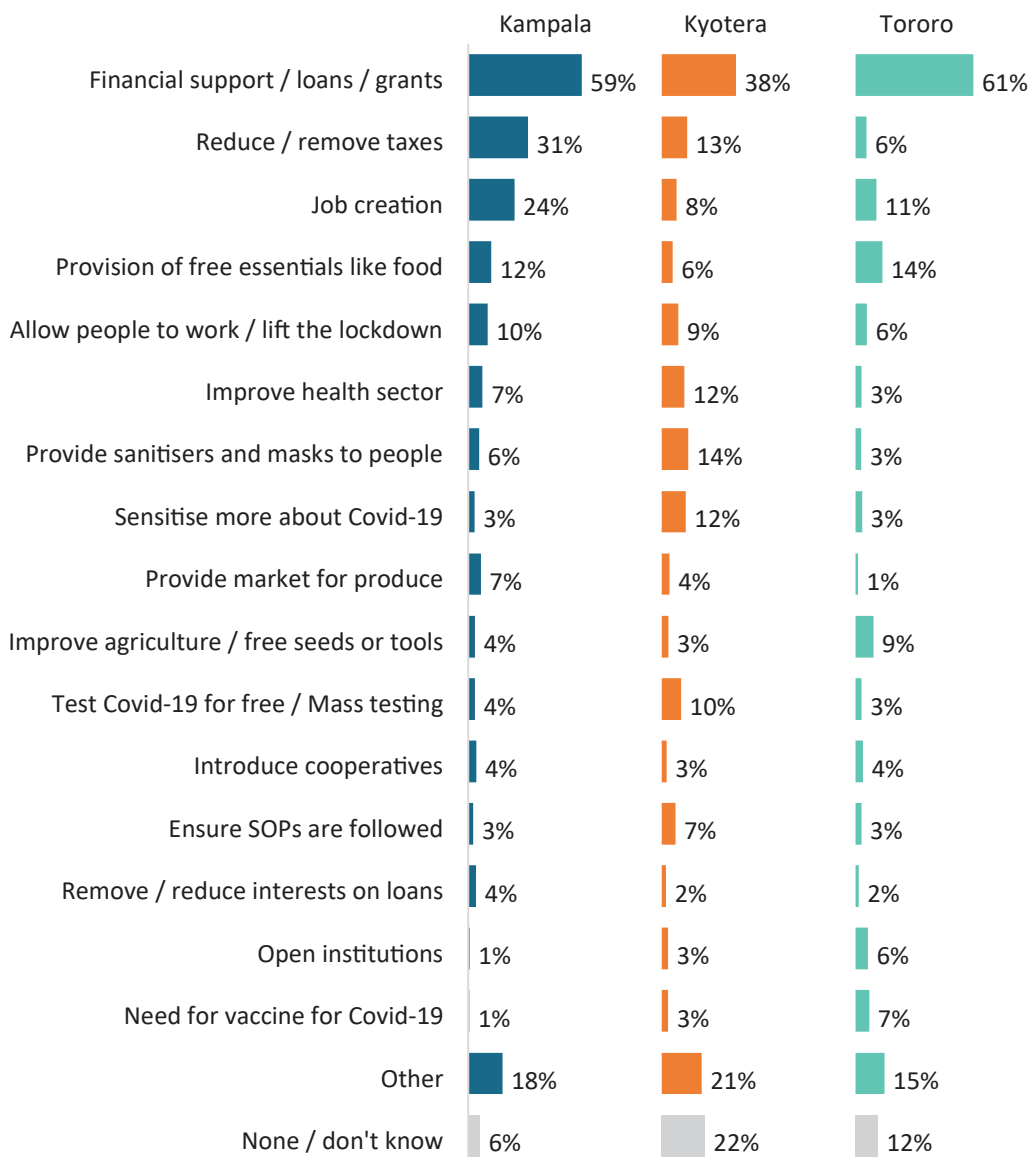
Residents' of the three districts top suggestion for helping people recover from the negative economic impacts of the pandemic and lockdown measures is to provide financial support in the form of grants or loans to those in difficulty.

Other popular suggestions include tax reductions, job creation efforts and provision of essential supplies such as food.

A substantial minority (6-10%) suggest that the government should allow people to work during lockdowns.

¹ Due to a mismatch between the question and responses, we have amended slightly the question presented here. The question as asked was "how has your household been affected by the easing of Covid-19 restrictions?" However, the responses relate to the effects of the restrictions rather than their easing.

Figure 21: What suggestions would you give government to help people recover from the economic effects of Covid-19?
(multiple responses permitted)



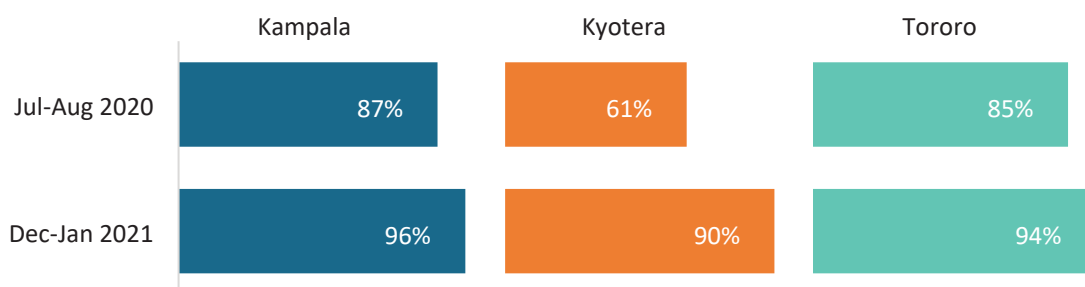
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 18: An increasing number of residents are seeing Coronavirus messaging

Nine out of ten residents (or more) in Kampala (96%), Kyotera (90%) and Tororo (94%) report having seen or heard Coronavirus-related messages in the previous month. This is an increase on the figures from July-August 2020.

Figure 22: Percent who have seen/heard messages on Coronavirus in the past month:



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 1 (Jul-Aug, 2020) and round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

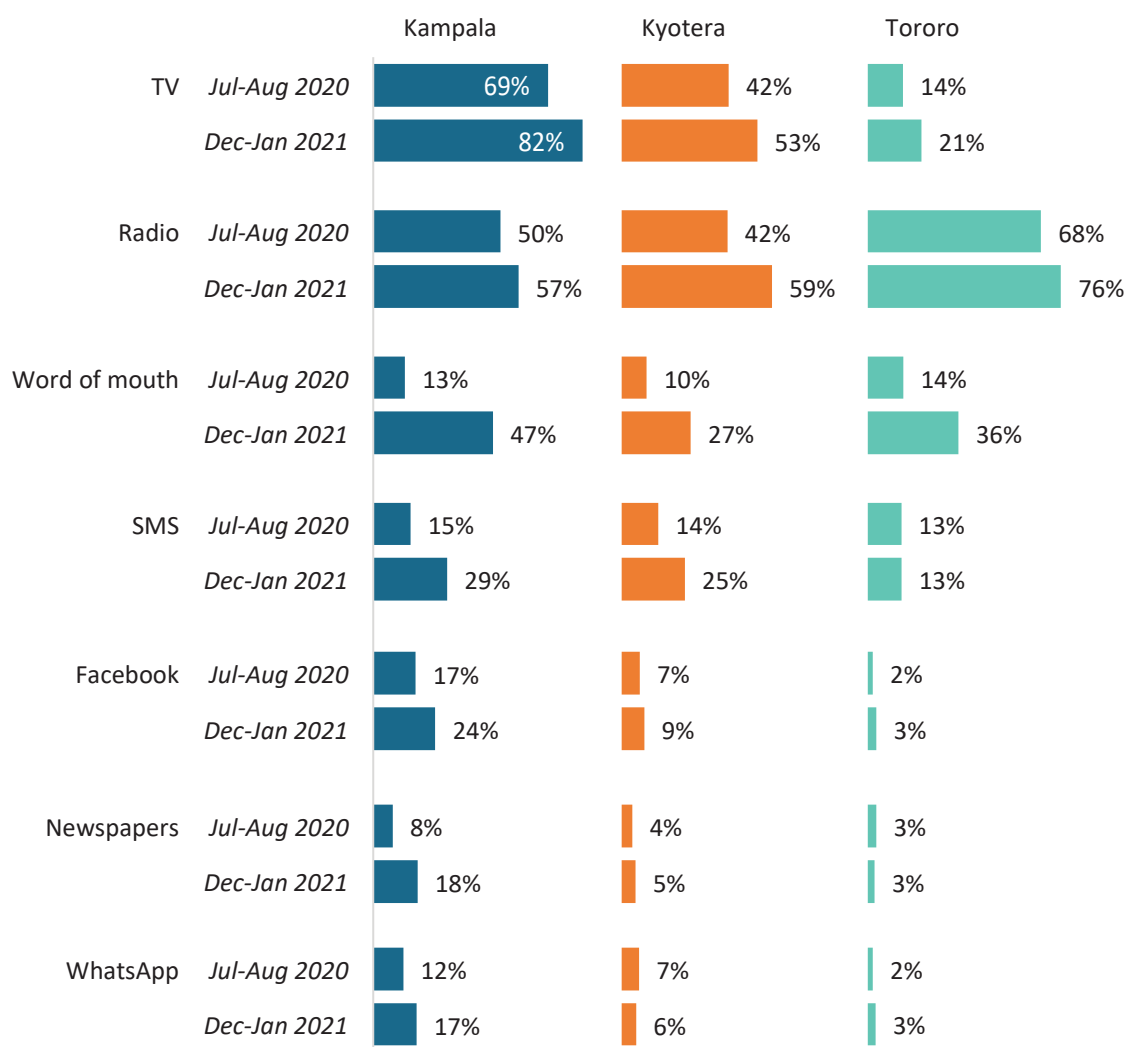
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 19: The main source of information on Covid 19 is TV and radio; word of mouth and SMS have shown traction recently

Residents' main source of information about the Coronavirus in Kampala is TV (82%), though radio (57%) and word of mouth (47%) are also substantial. In Tororo, radio is more significant (76%) than either word of mouth (36%) or TV (21%). In Kyotera, both radio (59%) and TV (53%) are the main sources.

Across all three districts and each of these main sources of messaging, more residents report receiving messages in December-January than in July-August.

Figure 23: Where did you hear or see the messages about Coronavirus?

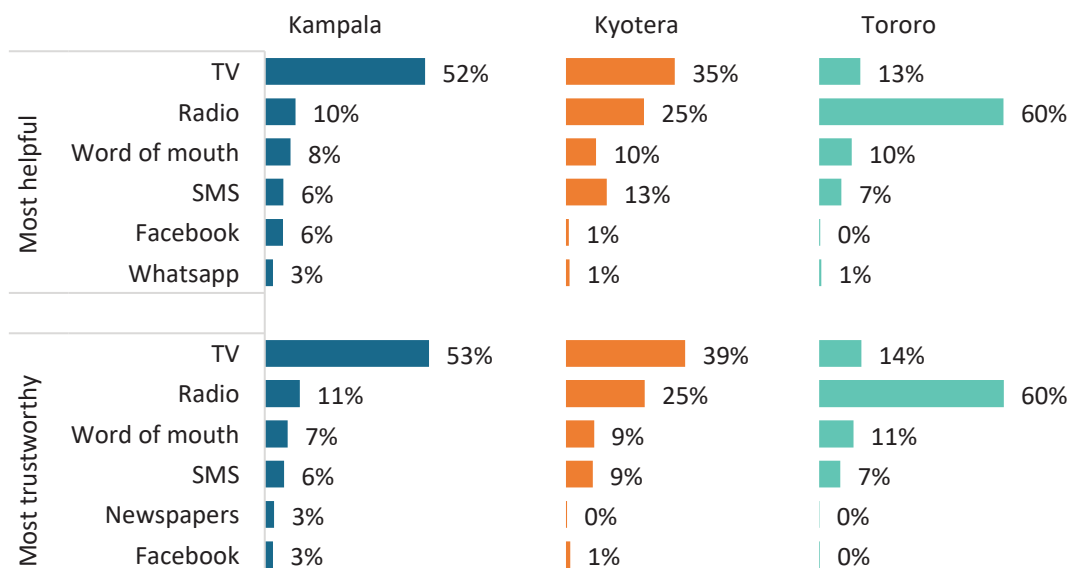


Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 1 (Jul-Aug, 2020) and round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Residents of Kampala also say that TV was both the most helpful and most trustworthy source, and in Tororo they say that radio was both the most helpful and most trustworthy. In Kyotera, both radio and TV are widely cited as helpful and trustworthy.

Figure 24: Which was the most useful/helpful? And the most trustworthy?

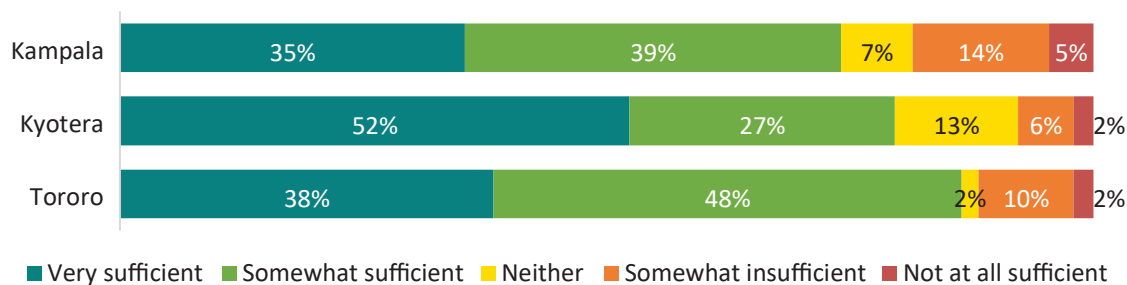


Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 20: Most residents of the three districts say they have sufficient information about the Coronavirus situation

A majority of Kampala residents (74%) say they have either very sufficient (35%) or somewhat sufficient (39%) information about the Coronavirus situation. The figures are a little higher in Kyotera (79%) and Tororo (86%).

Figure 25: Do you feel you currently have sufficient information about the Coronavirus situation?



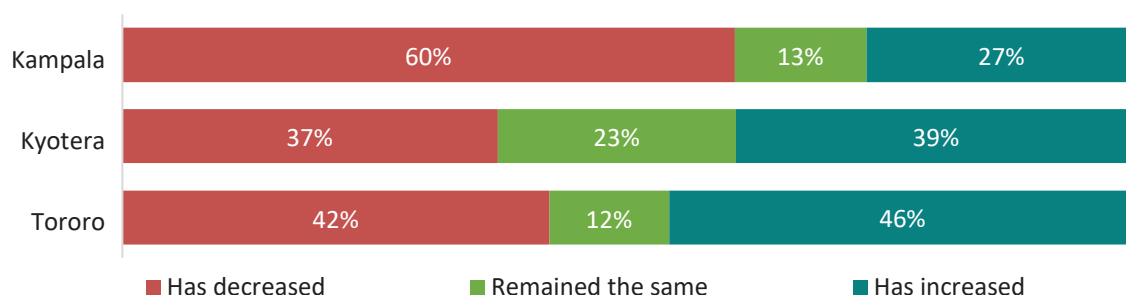
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 21: Residents of Kampala say Coronavirus messaging has decreased while in Kyotera and Tororo people are unsure

In Kampala, residents are twice as likely to say that Coronavirus messaging has decreased (60%) as increased (27%).

In contrast, in both Kyotera and Tororo, residents are very evenly divided on whether messaging has increased or declined.

Figure 26: Do you think that Coronavirus/Covid-19 public communication messaging has increased or gone down?

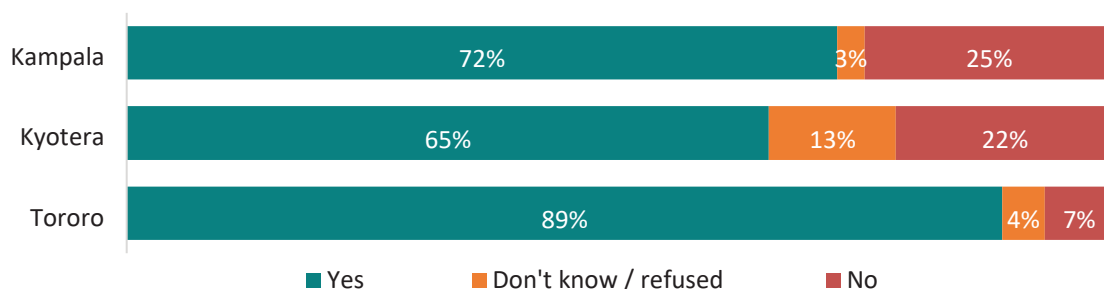


Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

Insight 22: Most residents say Ministry of Health daily briefings are still relevant

A majority of residents in Kampala (72%), Kyotera (65%) and Tororo (89%) say the Ministry of Health daily briefings on the Coronavirus situation are still relevant.

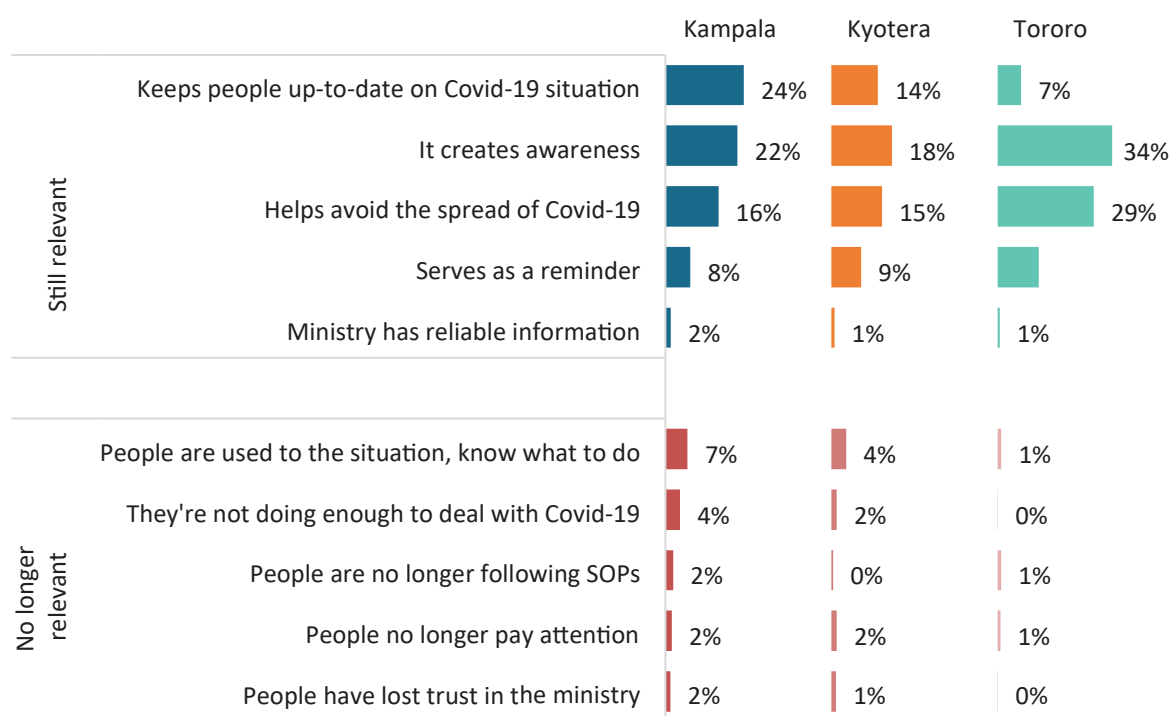
Figure 27: Do you think that the Ministry of Health's daily briefings on the status of Coronavirus/Covid-19 are still relevant?



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);
Base: all respondents (n=2,121)

The main reasons given are that the briefings keep people up to date, create awareness and help avoid spread of the virus.

Figure 28: Why do you say the daily briefings are still / no longer relevant?



Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey, special panel, round 2 (20 Dec 2020 - 20 Jan 2021);

3. Conclusions

In a number of areas, this brief represents good news. Awareness of Coronavirus in Kampala, Kyotera and Tororo is very high - most residents report seeing or hearing Coronavirus-related messaging in the previous month, and most say they have sufficient information about the situation. Further, self-reported hand washing and mask-wearing is high, and higher now than in July-August 2020. Residents are more likely to rate the government's response to the pandemic as positive than negative, and they broadly support the government's recent decision to re-open schools of course with sufficient measures in place.

But the data also reveals some grounds for concern. First, residents are now less confident than they were six months ago that if they were to become sick with Covid-19 they would be able to quickly get the assistance they need. Many are saying that the pandemic has led to disruption of other health care services at health centres. Second, most residents think there has been a recent increase in case numbers. (This corresponds with an increase in official case numbers recorded in mid-December, just as data collection was about to commence.) Third, residents are concerned that social gatherings are not complying with government guidance on keeping safe from Covid19. Additionally economic constraints still remain a challenge for many citizens during the pandemic; with provision of financial support, grants and loans being proposed to cushion the vulnerable.

Perhaps the most important insight however, is the good news on vaccine acceptance. A large majority of residents of these three districts report that they would be willing to be vaccinated when the opportunity arises, and almost all of those who are unwilling say that the reason is that they cannot afford it – an obstacle that the government, the World Health Organisation and other development partners could address. The number who raise concerns about whether the vaccine can be trusted is very low, at less than one out of twenty residents. In short, if vaccines prove to be a major part of the route out of the pandemic, this data suggests that Ugandan citizens will not be held back by misinformation or conspiracy theories and will take up the opportunity enthusiastically.