



**MEASURING THE SHADOW PANDEMIC:**

# **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DURING COVID-19**

**COUNTRY REPORT: KYRGYZSTAN**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the day-to-day lives of women in Kyrgyzstan: they feel less safe, are more socially isolated, and have seen negative impacts on their mental and emotional well-being. Congruently, the downstream impacts of COVID-19 vary in type and severity based on pre-existing factors, including socioeconomic status and vulnerability to other stressors. This research delves into the relationship between measures of violence against women (VAW) and the demographic, behavioural, and socioeconomic factors related to them.

This study found that women's baseline feelings of safety in Kyrgyzstan, whether it was inside or outside of their households, was directly related to their mental and emotional well-being. There were a number of stressors associated with these feelings; however, social isolation, food insecurity and loss of income stood out as having a significant impact not only on experiences of safety (or violence) but also on women's well-being overall.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Demographic and Health Survey led by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic revealed that 28% of ever-married women aged 15–49 had experienced spousal physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime,<sup>1</sup> which is consistent with the global estimated average of 27%.<sup>2</sup>

Since the pandemic began, rapid gender assessments (RGAs) conducted by UN Women using administrative data from police, VAW hotlines, and other service-providers suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased risk factors for women and intensified some of the existing forms of VAW. Measures implemented to limit the spread of the pandemic, such as lockdowns and curfews, have had an impact on VAW risk factors, especially for women and girls who faced multiple forms of discrimination. In Kyrgyzstan, based on official data gathered as part of UN Women’s RGA, by May 2020 violence levels had increased by 65% compared to the same period in 2019 and while 41% of women said that they knew where to seek help for instances of domestic violence, only 33% said that they would actually seek help.<sup>3</sup>

Within this context, UN Women commissioned Ipsos to conduct an RGA survey specifically on the impacts of COVID-19 on women’s well-being and safety in 13 countries across regions. In adapting the surveying methodology to be feasible in the COVID-19 context, proxy measures on experiences of VAW were used to collect data on sensitive topics to reduce the risk to the respondents, and thus may not be directly comparable to other studies conducted before the pandemic.

Having reliable data that are collected in line with methodological, safety, and ethical standards, without putting women at greater distress and risk of violence, is critical to informing where policies and language can respond to the UN’s system-wide efforts to scale up actions to address VAW in the context of COVID-19.

This report details the findings of the survey, fielded between 19 August and 19 September 2021. The survey was conducted with women aged 18 and older who had access to a mobile phone. According to the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 93% of women aged 15–49 years in Kyrgyzstan own a mobile phone.<sup>4</sup>

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1 National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ministry of Health and Measure DHS. 2013. [Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey 2012](#). p. 255.

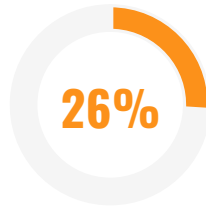
2 World Health Organization. 2021. “National Estimates 2000-2018” [Global Database on the Prevalence of Violence against Women](#).

3 UN Women. 2020. [COVID-19 Impacts on Livelihoods of Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic: Rapid Gender Assessment as of 15 May 2020](#).

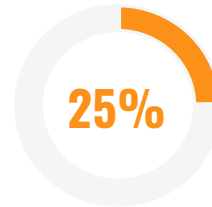
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4 National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. 2018. [“Proportion of woman who own a mobile telephone.”](#)

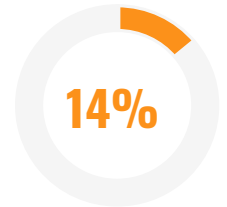
# KEY FINDINGS



Verbal Abuse



Involuntary Isolation



Physical Abuse



**11%**

of women feel unsafe in their homes.



**7%**

said this has gotten worse as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



**8%**

of women live in households with conflict among adults at least weekly.



**10%**

said conflict between adults has become more frequent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



**23%**

of women think that the experience of verbal or physical abuse at the hands of a partner is common for women in their community.



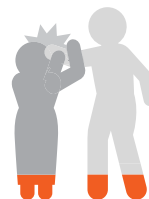
**33%**

said this has gotten worse as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



**29%**

of women think that physical harm, abuse and harassment are a problem for women in their community.



**10%**

of women think physical harm, abuse, and harassment has gotten worse since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.



**45%**

of women feel unsafe walking alone at night.



**22%**

of women feel unsafe walking alone during the day.



**16%**

of women think that it is common for women to be harassed in public.



# 2. EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## 2.1. Proxy measures of violence against women in the community

When considering measures of violence against women at the community level, it is important to keep the context of the study in mind. Due to the remote nature of this survey, indirect questions were asked as proxy indicators of VAW, meaning it was not possible to distinguish respondent experiences from those of other women in their community or whether this experience occurred within or outside of the household. Therefore, while data from this study should not be interpreted as prevalence data, it nevertheless provides critical information on the impact of COVID-19 on women's perception of well-being and safety.

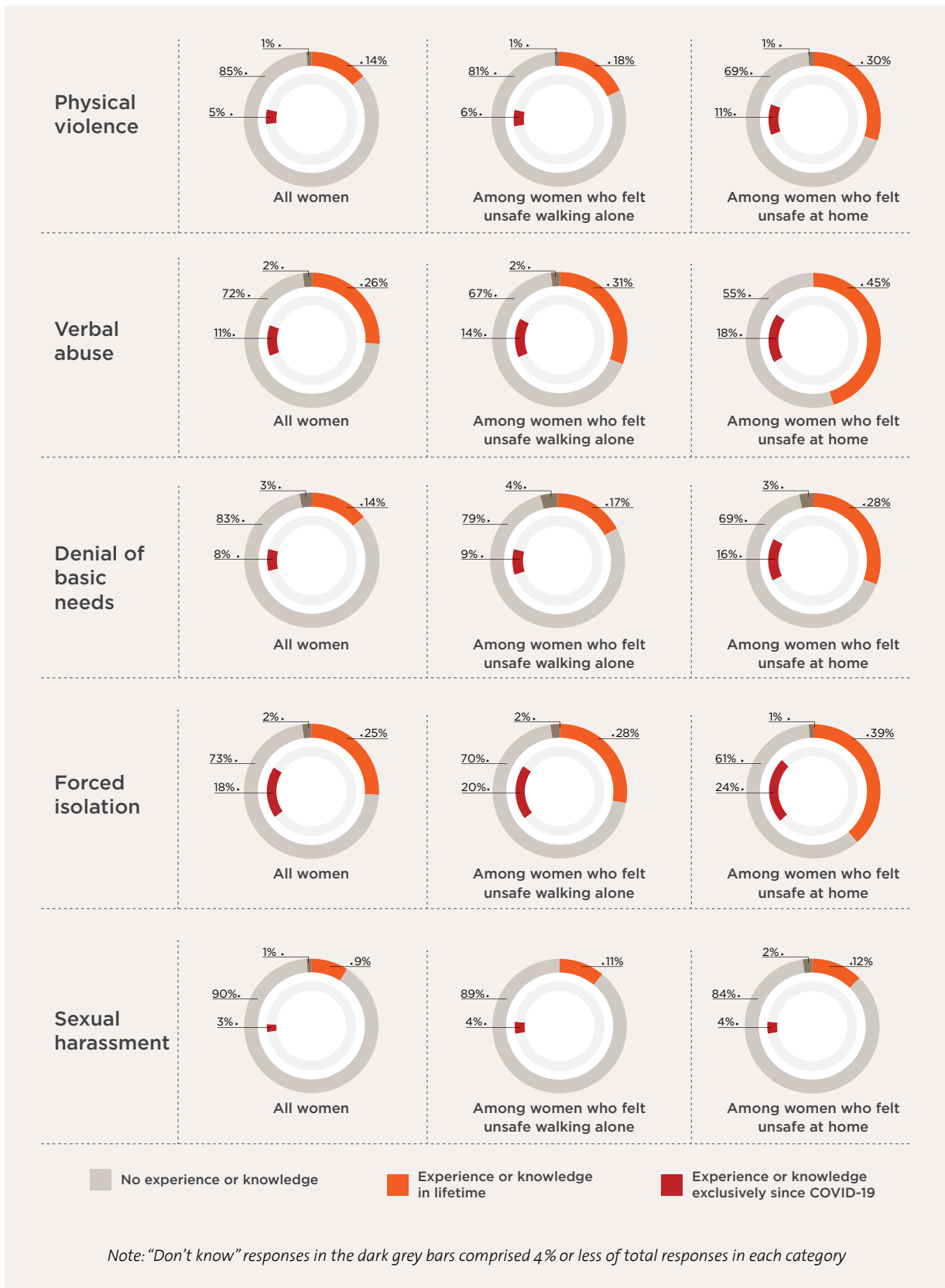
Despite few women considering VAW to be an issue in their community, half (47%) of women said they know a woman who has experienced a form of VAW in their lifetime or have themselves experienced VAW in their lifetime (including physical violence, denial of basic needs, sexual harassment, restrictions, or verbal abuse). For 21% of women, this experience was only since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across all women, verbal abuse (26%) and forced isolation (25%) were the most common forms of VAW, although forced isolation may have been as a result of measures related to the pandemic.<sup>5</sup> Women who reported having felt unsafe at home or in public, and particularly those who have felt unsafe at home, were more likely to have experienced, or know a woman who has experienced all forms of VAW in their lifetime, compared to women who have not felt unsafe.

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5 Cognitive testing of this question revealed that for many women forced isolation and denial of basic needs were influenced by COVID-19-related measures and economic stress. The results from this study suggest that women may bear a disproportionate burden when it comes to COVID-19 effects; however, it is important to keep the overall context in mind when interpreting results.

**FIGURE 1**

**Experience or knowledge of specific forms of VAW, over a lifetime and since COVID-19**



Several subpopulations of women were consistently more likely to report experiencing or knowing someone who experienced certain forms of VAW in their lifetime, including physical violence, verbal abuse and sexual harassment.

Women who had completed university were significantly more likely to have experienced or know a woman who has experienced VAW in their lifetime (53, compared to 42% of women with less than a college education). In particular, women with university degrees were more likely to have experiences or knowledge of physical violence, whether it was in their lifetime (20, compared to 10% of women with less than a college education) or only since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (7, compared to 3% of women with less than a college education).

Women who generated an income for their household were more likely than those who did not to have had knowledge of or experiences with physical violence (18, compared to 11%), verbal abuse (32, compared to 21%), or sexual harassment (11, compared to 7%) in their lifetime. They were also more likely than women who did not generate income for their households to have experienced verbal abuse or sexual harassment only since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (14, compared to 9% and 5, compared to 2%, respectively).

Women in urban areas were more likely to have experienced, or know a woman who has experienced, VAW in their lifetime (52, compared with 44% in rural areas), and more likely to know women who have experienced sexual harassment (13, compared to 6% in rural areas) in their lifetime. When looking at VAW since the onset on the COVID-19 pandemic specifically, women in urban areas were also more likely to know women who have experienced verbal abuse (14, compared to 9% in rural areas).

Marital status also has a substantial impact on experiences or knowledge of VAW. Separated or divorced women were those most likely to have experienced, or know someone who has experienced, a type of VAW in their lifetime (65%), followed by single women (58%), compared to partnered women (44%). This was particularly true of verbal abuse, as separated or divorced women were twice as likely as married women to know a woman who has experienced this or to have experienced it themselves (48, compared to 24%). This pattern was also true of sexual harassment, where 16% of separated or divorced women and 21% of single women knew a woman or had experienced this themselves, compared with only 7% of partnered women.

Women who said that they or another woman they know had experienced verbal abuse, resource restriction or isolation since the onset of COVID-19, were also significantly more likely to be severely food-insecure.

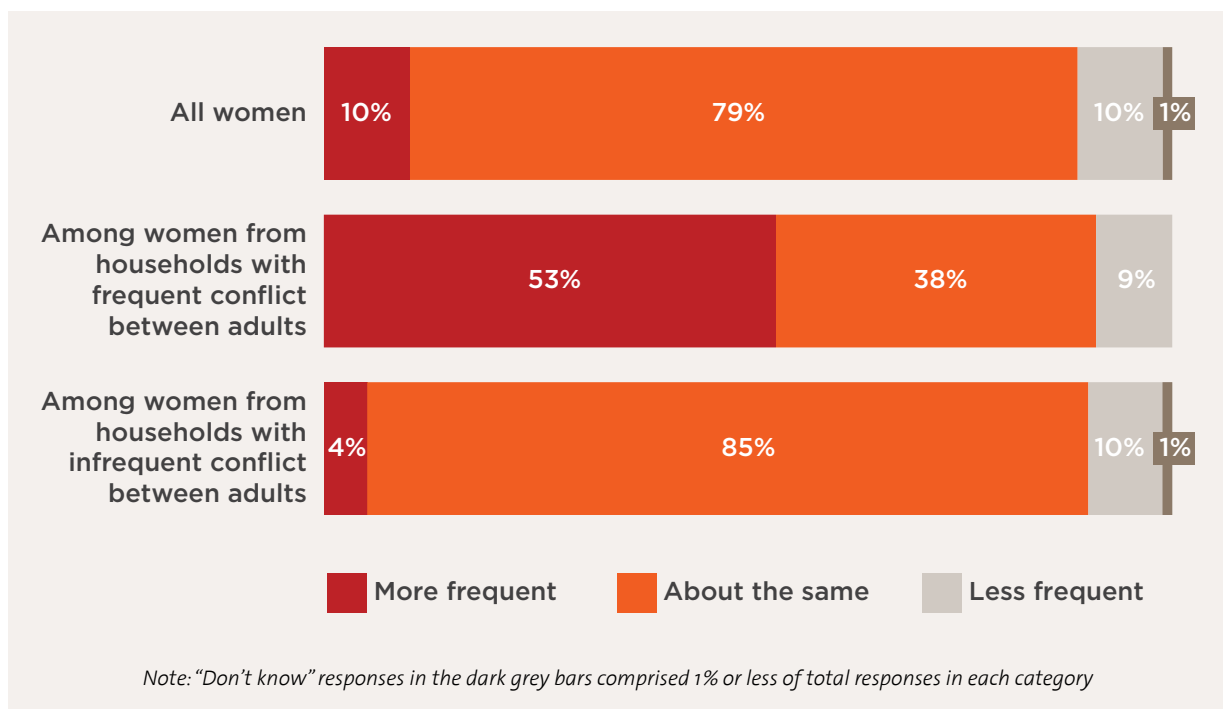
# 3. FEELINGS OF SAFETY

## 3.1. Personal safety inside the home

When it comes to safety within the household, 8% of women said that there has been conflict between adults in their household at least weekly over the past six months and 10% reported that conflict had become more

frequent since the onset of COVID-19. Women who reported frequent conflict in their household were more than five times more likely to say it had become more frequent since the onset of COVID-19, suggesting that existing tensions have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

**FIGURE 2**  
Changes in frequency of household conflict as a result of COVID-19



More than 1 in 10 (11%) women said that they had felt unsafe in their household in the last six months. Women who reported frequent conflict between adults in their household were more than four times more likely than women who did not to say that they had felt

unsafe in their home in the past six months, and four times more likely to say that COVID-19 had made things worse, again suggesting that existing household tensions have been made worse as a result of COVID-19.



**FIGURE 3**

**Perceptions of women's safety in the household, by frequency of household conflict**



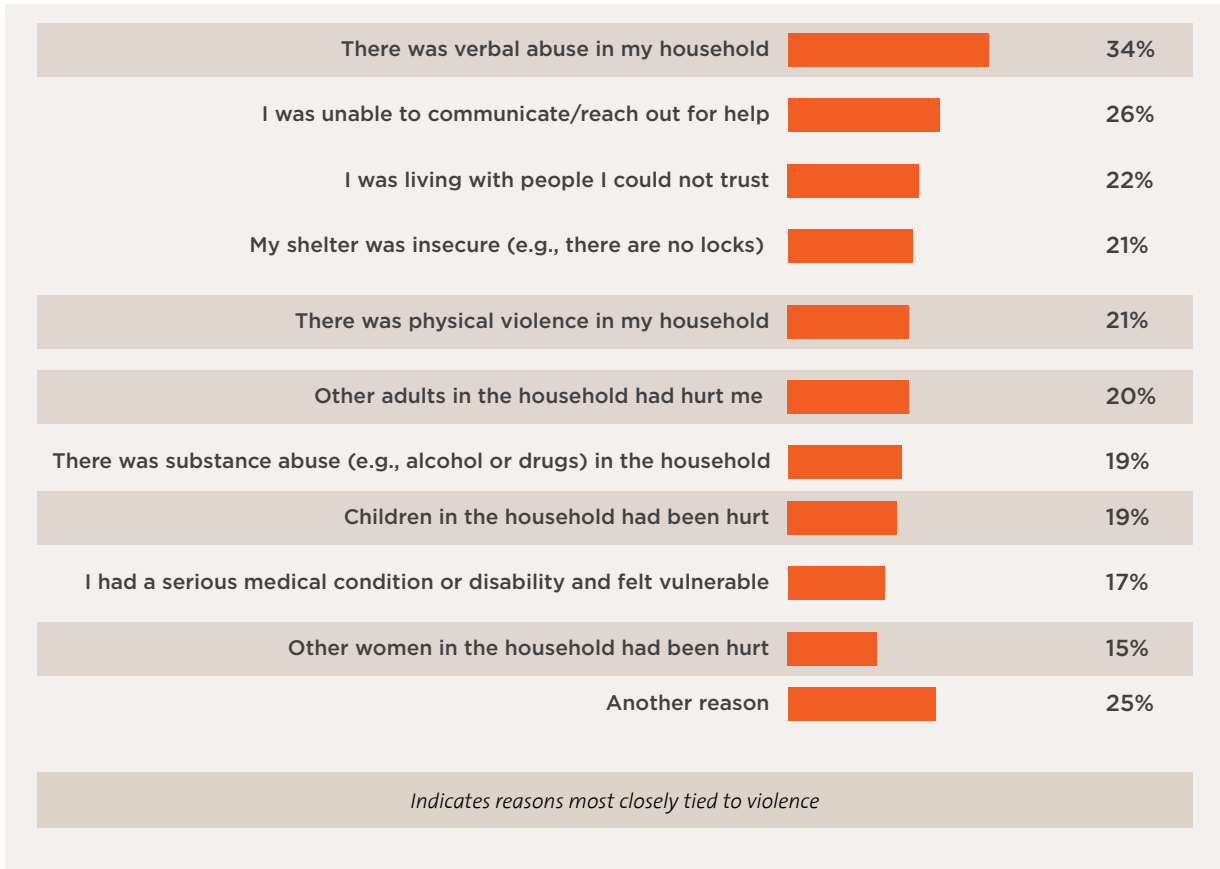
Women who participated in income-generating activities were more likely than those who did not to have felt unsafe at home in the past six months (13, compared to 9%), as were women who said that they were living with a disability (18, compared to 9% of women who said that they do not have a disability) and those who reported that they or another woman they know had experienced VAW in their lifetime (16 compared to 7% among women who did not). Women who felt unsafe in their homes were three times more likely to be severely food insecure (9, compared to 3% among women who have not felt unsafe in their homes), indicating that external stressors can impact household dynamics.

Women who had felt unsafe in their home in the past six months were more likely to report that COVID-19 has had an impact on how safe they feel in their home, but they were split on the nature of this impact. A quarter of women (25%) said that COVID-19 has made things worse in terms of how safe they feel in their home, while 16% said it has made it better.

Among women who have felt unsafe in their home, verbal abuse (34%), inability to reach out for help (26%), and mistrust among people they live with (22%) were the most commonly reported reasons. Women who were married or living with a partner were more likely to report verbal abuse (40%) as a reason for feeling unsafe, while women who said that they or another women they know have experienced verbal abuse in their lifetime were significantly more likely than those who did not to say they have experienced nearly all identified reasons for feeling unsafe. For example, women who said they or another women they know have experienced verbal abuse in their lifetime were five times more likely to feel unsafe because of substance abuse (45, compared to 8%) and three times more likely to feel unsafe because of physical violence (40, compared to 12%), or being hurt by other adults (37, compared to 13%) than those who have not had knowledge of or experiences with verbal abuse in their lifetime.

**FIGURE 4**

**Reasons for women feeling unsafe in their homes (among the 11% who reported feeling unsafe)**



### 3.2. Personal safety in public spaces

When out in their communities, most women reported that they feel safe walking around the areas where they live during the day (77%). However, this drops to less than half (48%) when asked the same question about walking alone at night. About a quarter of women (25%) reported feeling less safe while out at night since the start of COVID-19.

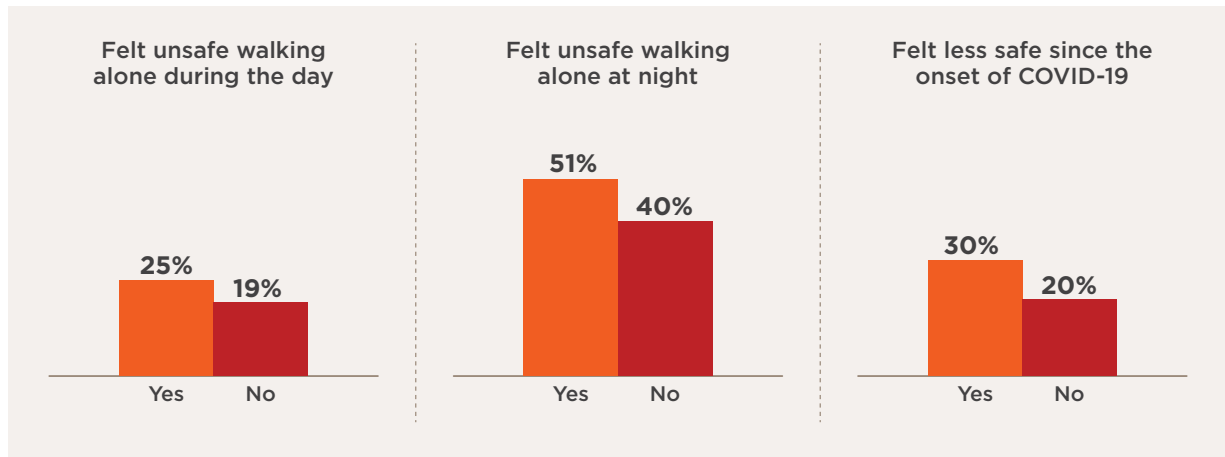
Women aged 60 years or older were significantly more likely to report feeling safe during the day (84%) and at night (56%) than women in other age groups. However, older women

were also those most susceptible to perceive the negative impacts of COVID-19, with 33% reporting they have felt less safe since the onset of the pandemic.

Women who reported that they or another woman they know had experienced VAW in their lifetime were significantly more likely to have felt unsafe walking alone, whether it was during the day (25%) or at night (51%), and women who had experience with or knowledge of VAW since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic were particularly likely to feel unsafe when walking alone at night (53%).

FIGURE 5

Perceptions of safety while out in public, by experience or knowledge of VAW in lifetime



## 4. PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

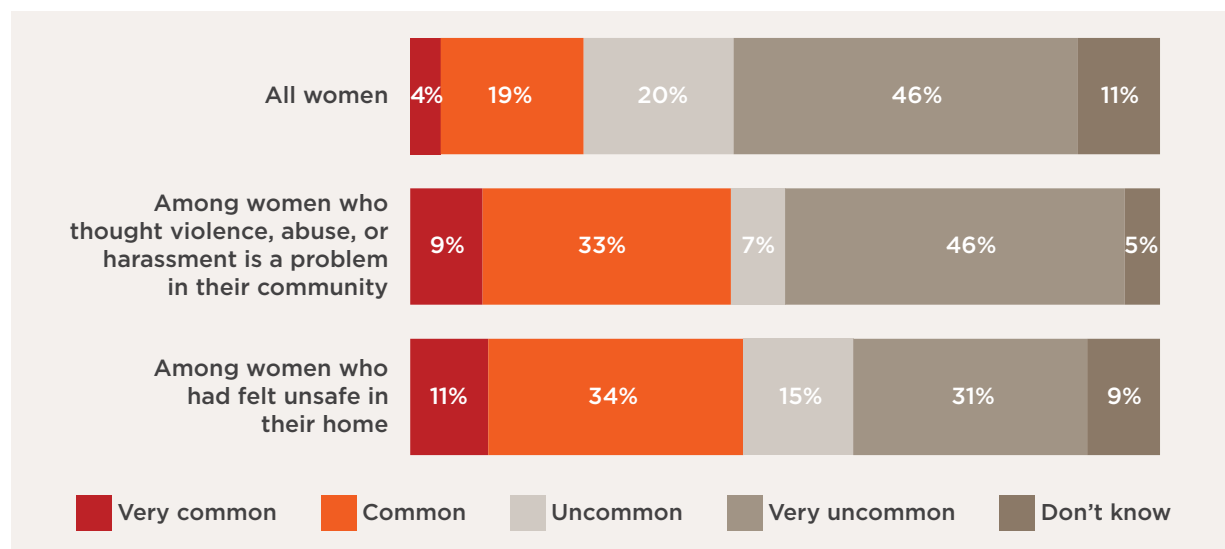
### 4.1. Women’s perceived safety inside the home

When considering the broader community, nearly a quarter (23%) of women said that they thought the experience of verbal or physical abuse at the hands of a partner was common

for women. Among women who perceived violence, abuse or the harassment of women to be a problem in their community, and those who have themselves felt unsafe in their homes, nearly half thought the experience of verbal or physical abuse at the hands of a partner was common.

FIGURE 6

Perception of partner abuse, by perceptions of safety



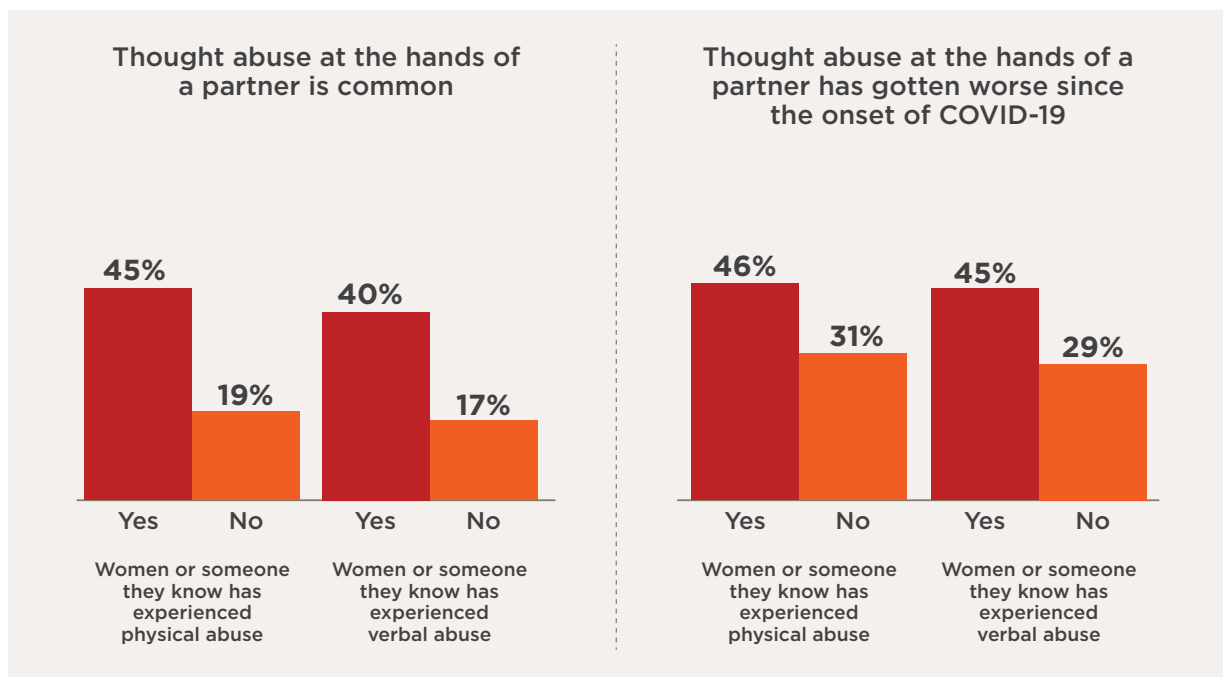
One-third of women (33%) thought the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation of women experiencing verbal or physical abuse at the hands of a partner. Women living in urban areas (41%), who participated in income-generating activities (38%), who do not live with children (39%), and/or who had a college education or higher (38%) were more likely to believe that COVID-19 had made things worse for women experiencing partner abuse.

Women who experienced or knew of women who experienced different types of VAW in their lifetimes were much more likely than those who had not to think that violence at the hands of a partner was common (34, compared

to 13%). Additionally, women who lived in a household with frequent conflict were nearly three times more likely to believe it was common for women to experience partner abuse than those who lived in a household with infrequent conflict (57, compared to 17%).

These data points suggest that women may be including their own experiences when reporting on the experiences of women in their community, as well as bolstering the evidence-based theory that women who report safety incidents happening within their homes are more likely to think that abuse is common in the community overall.

**FIGURE 7**  
**Perceptions of partner violence, by experience or knowledge of VAW in lifetime**



Women who said that they had a higher income compared to their partner were significantly more likely to think that physical and verbal abuse at the hands of a partner is common (36%).

Just over half of women (52%) said that they believe that a woman who experienced verbal or physical abuse at the hands of a partner

would seek help – lower than the percentage who believed a woman would seek help if she experienced abuse in public (67%). Women who said that they earn more than their partner were more likely to say that women experiencing partner abuse would not seek support (58%), suggesting that VAW may be particularly underreported in these cases.

Women primarily expected a woman experiencing partner abuse to seek support from family (52%) or women's shelters, centres, or NGOs (19%), and only 7% of women respondents thought partner abuse survivors would first go to the police. The latter rate is notable when compared to the 35% who thought a woman experiencing harassment or abuse in public spaces would contact the police. These findings offer evidence that domestic violence may be underreported to authorities in Kyrgyzstan in comparison to other forms of VAW.

Despite this, there were fairly high levels of awareness of the support available for women in communities in Kyrgyzstan: 61% said that information about security and crime prevention was available; 63% had access to basic needs like food, shelter and clothing; and 75% had access to medical support. Awareness and availability of financial support (48%) and mental health services (40%) were lower. Women who said that they or another woman they know had experienced any type of VAW in their lifetime were significantly less likely to say that any of these services dedicated to women were available in their community, suggesting that more work needs to be done to connect the most vulnerable women to the resources they need. For example, only 39% of women who had knowledge of or experienced VAW in their lifetime that said that they were

aware of financial services in their community, compared to 55% of women who did not have knowledge or experience of VAW in their lifetime.

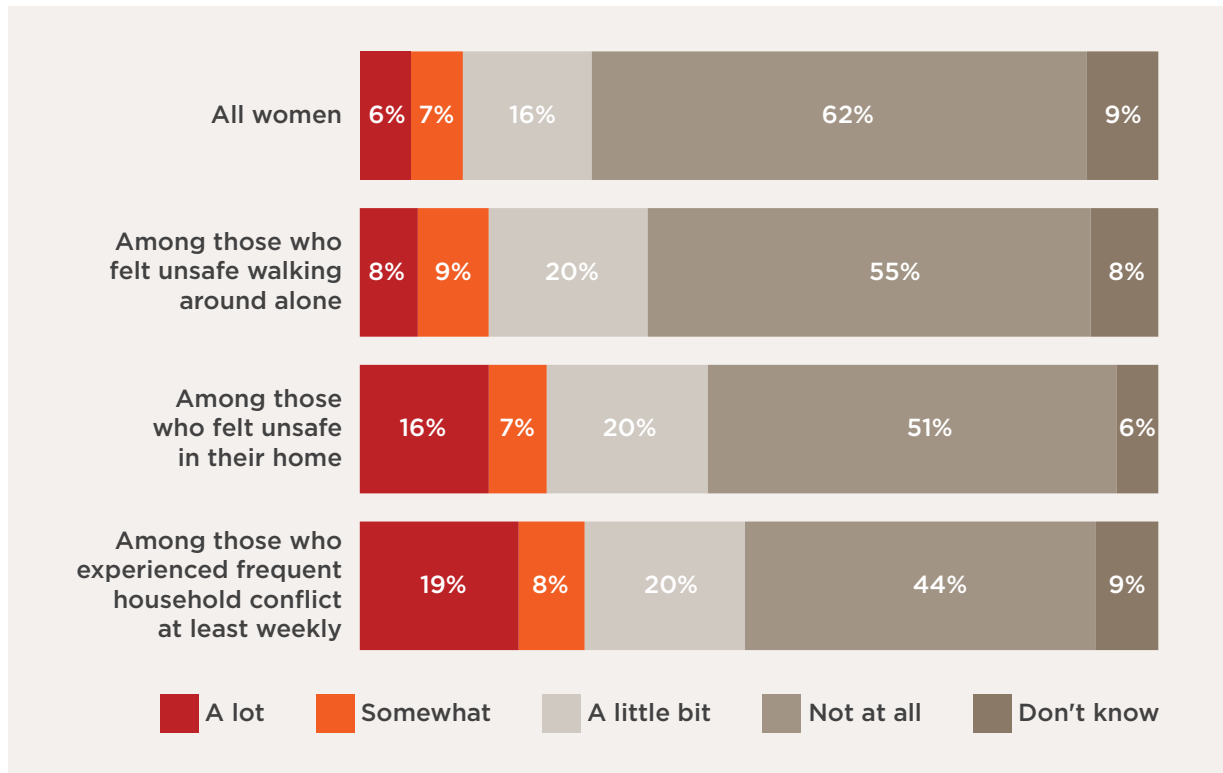
## **4.2. Perceptions of violence against women in the community**

When asked about violence, abuse or the harassment of women in their community, 13% of women said that they believe they are at least somewhat of a problem and an additional 16% said they are a little bit of a problem. Women were slightly more likely to believe that violence, abuse or the harassment of women were a problem in their community if they held a college or post-college education (16%) or participated in income-generating activities (15%).

The perception of violence, abuse or the harassment of women as a problem in the community was higher among women who themselves have experienced safety issues. Among women who felt unsafe walking alone, during the day or night, 37% believed violence, abuse or harassment are a problem in their community. This percentage increased to 43% among women who felt unsafe in their home, and 47% among women who experienced frequent household conflict.

**FIGURE 8**

**Extent to which violence, abuse or the harassment of women are a problem in the community**



Additionally, 10% of women said that violence, abuse or the harassment of women has increased in their community since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women who were residing in urban locations (12%), unemployed (24%), and/or who reported experiencing a decrease in household income (14%) were significantly more likely than average to report that violence, abuse, or the harassment of women had increased in their community since COVID-19.

**4.3. Women’s perceived safety in public spaces**

While nearly half (45%) of women in Kyrgyzstan had personally felt unsafe walking alone at night, fewer expressed concerns about safety of women in their community generally. About one in six women (16%) thought it was common for women in their communities to experience harassment and safety issues in public at night. Women aged 30–39 years

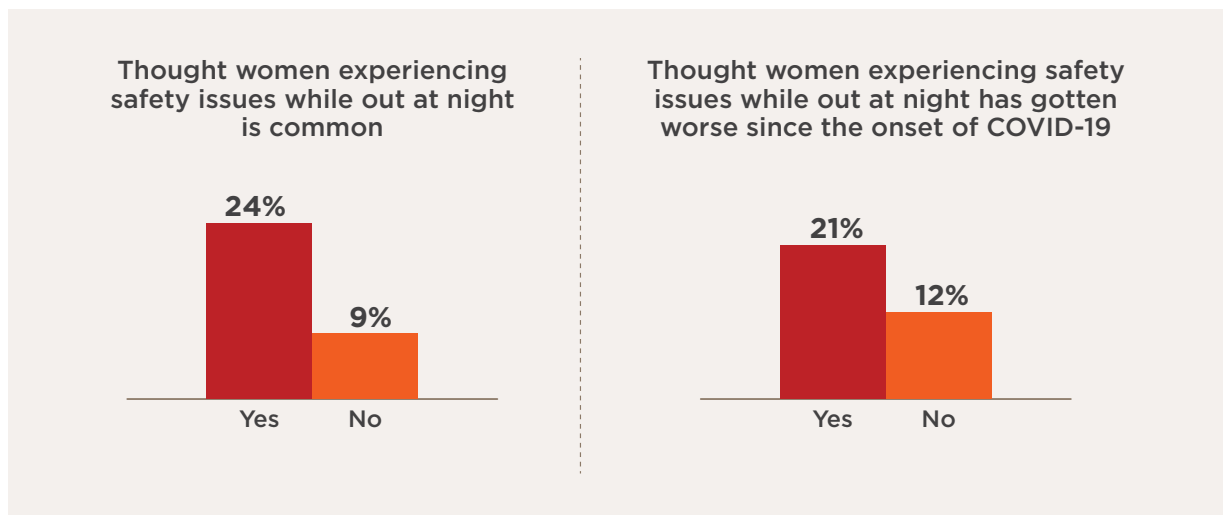
were those most likely to believe this was a common issue (19%), while women aged 60 or older were those least likely (10%). Women living in urban communities were nearly twice as likely to believe that safety issues were common for women when out at night (21, compared to 12% of women in rural areas).

Additionally, women who were college-educated and/or participated in income-generating activities were significantly more likely to believe harassment and safety issues in public are common in their community (21 and 19%, respectively), likely because of their increased engagement in public spaces. Indeed, when asked how often they have left the house alone in the past month, college-educated women were more than twice as likely as those with a secondary education or less to leave their house alone on a daily basis (32, compared to 15%), and women who generated income were more than four times as likely (35, compared to 9% among women who did not generate income for their households).

Women who said that they or another woman they know had experienced a type of VAW in their lifetime were nearly three times more likely to say that safety issues for women while out at night were common compared to those that did not (24, compared to 9%). This group was also more likely to say that safety issues

for women while out at night have gotten worse since the onset of COVID-19 (21, compared to 16% in the overall population). On the other hand, approximately 1 in 5 women in Kyrgyzstan said things had gotten better since the onset of COVID-19 in terms of safety issues for women when out at night (19%).

**FIGURE 9**  
**Perception of women’s safety in public at night, by experience or knowledge of VAW in lifetime**



Two-thirds of women (67%) expected that a woman who experienced harassment or abuse in public spaces would seek help. About 4 in 10 (42%) said that they expected the woman would primarily seek help from family and one-third (35%) expected the woman would first seek help from the police, despite 58% of women saying that legal support or help in reporting incidents or dealing with police was available to women in their community. Younger women aged 18–29 were significantly more likely than older women to say they thought a woman who experienced safety issues when out at night would first seek help from the police (41%), as were women who did not have children in the household (43%).

COVID-19 has limited women’s social opportunities in Kyrgyzstan, potentially creating increased risk for forced isolation or domestic

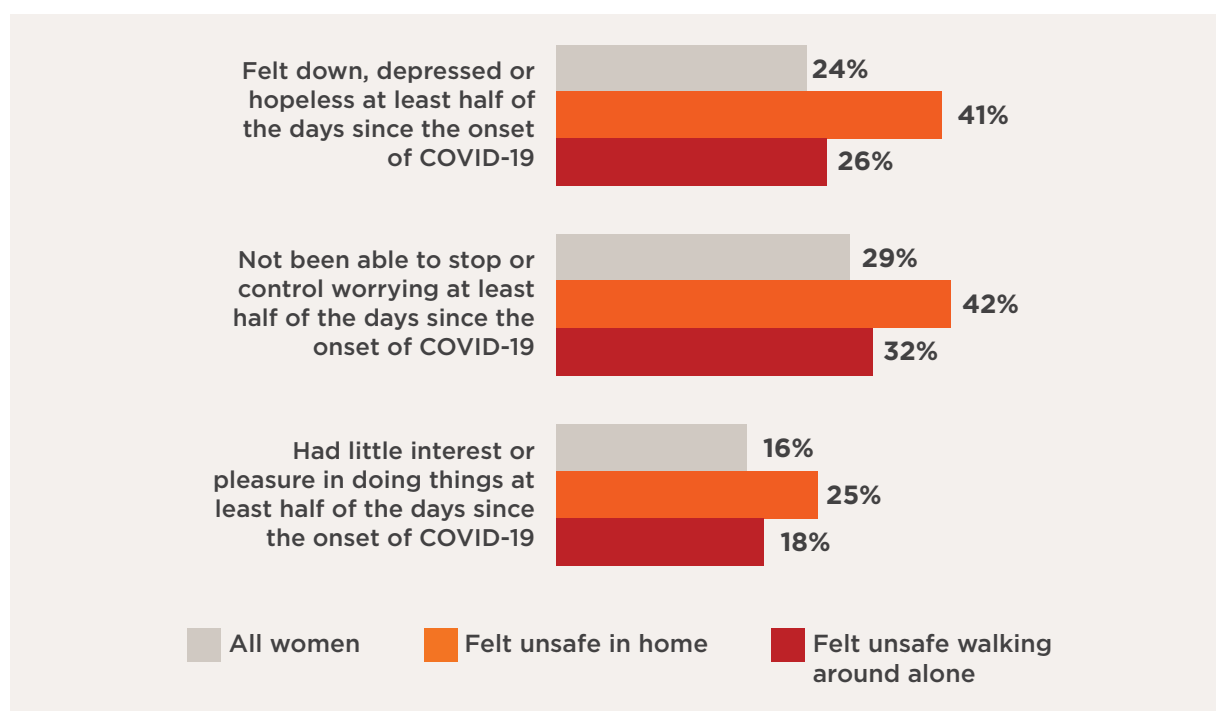
abuse. When asked how frequently women had left their house alone in the past month, nearly a quarter of women (23%) responded that it never happened. More than one quarter of women (27%) said that they left their house alone once or twice a month, and 40% reported having left their house by themselves two to three times per week or more. Women in urban areas were twice as likely (31%) to have left their home alone daily compared to those in rural areas (15%). Just over half of the women surveyed (52%) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had limited their interactions with friends and social groups in the past month. Women who have experienced or know a woman who has experienced VAW in their lifetime were significantly more likely to say that COVID-19 had limited their interactions with friends and social groups in the past month (60, compared to 44%).

# 5. IMPACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This study indicates strong relationships between measures of VAW and changes in women’s behaviours and their feelings of mental and emotional well-being. Impressions and experiences of safety (or lack thereof) may be strongly associated with women’s mental and emotional well-being. Women who felt

unsafe, and particularly women who had felt unsafe in their home, were more likely than the overall sample to report feeling depressed and anxious at least half the days since the onset of COVID-19, as were women who said that they or another woman they know had experienced a type of VAW in their lifetime.

**FIGURE 10**  
Measures of mental health, by feelings of safety



In addition to experiences of safety being associated with mental and emotional well-being, women who experienced symptoms of depression and anxiety at least half of the days since the onset of COVID-19 were more likely to be severely food insecure than those that did not. Women who had feelings of depression at least half the time were five to seven times

more likely to experience severe food insecurity when compared to those that said that they never had these feelings.

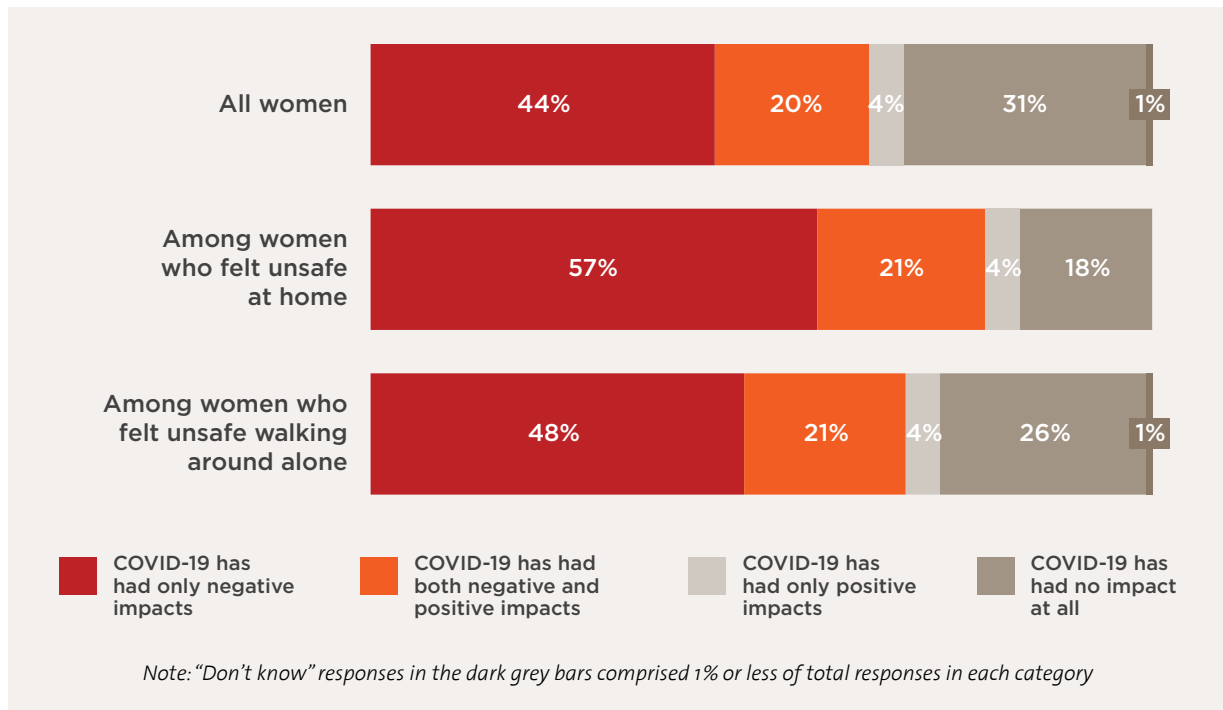
Women who experienced safety issues, and particularly those who had felt unsafe in their home, were also more likely to say that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an exclusively negative impact on their mental or emotional



health, compared to women who had not experienced safety issues. In addition, women who said that the COVID-19 pandemic had any negative impact on their well-being were twice as likely as those who said it had no impact to

be severely food insecure. This suggests, as previous reports have found, that the negative impacts of COVID-19 are felt the strongest by those already experiencing hardship.

**FIGURE 11**  
Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, by feelings of safety



The impacts of violence against women in public and private spaces was also observed when analysing women's socialization and movement patterns. The majority of women who had felt unsafe at home reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had limited their interactions with friends and social groups (62%).

Nearly a quarter (24%) of women who had felt unsafe in their home and 20% of women who had felt unsafe in public reported that since the start of COVID-19, they, or another woman they know had been forced to stay alone for a long period of time or denied communication with other people.

# 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The impacts of COVID-19 on VAW in Kyrgyzstan are significant, having amplified both structural and interpersonal vulnerabilities and tensions for women. Women in Kyrgyzstan encounter violence in public and in private spaces, at the hands of strangers and from those closest to them. With a quarter of women in Kyrgyzstan (23%) likely experiencing food insecurity at the time of the study and 36% saying they had lost income in the past year, mostly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, external stressors that can increase the risk of VAW are on the rise.

As a result of the intersectionality of VAW, policy and programmatic interventions require tailoring to the factors driving different experiences of violence. Not only does the type of response that is best-suited to address VAW vary based on the specific experiences of women, but the resources they would seek out vary as well. This work stresses the importance of partnering with the existing infrastructure that supports women in vulnerable situations to empower communities with the full suite of resources they may need to support women. Considering this, the research supports three recommendations:

**1. Interventions that are meant to address VAW should consider how policy interventions in other areas may alleviate some of the root causes of VAW, including through fully integrating VAW measures in post-COVID-19 recovery plans as an opportunity to build back better.**

The intersection and continuum of VAW calls for a comprehensive policy framework, which mainstreams the issue and its impact across all policy areas, particularly when it comes to COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts. This study provides insights regarding some of the root causes of VAW, such as income fluctuations, food insecurity and household dynam-

ics that lead to factors of vulnerability. Each of these areas encompasses its own policy domain where there are tailored programmatic interventions; however, without integrating measures to combat VAW and address inherent gender dynamics, they will not create sustainable impact. This is particularly critical when it comes to COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts, given to the double burden COVID-19 has placed on women. Given that external stressors, such as financial hardship and food insecurity, increase women's vulnerability to VAW, all policy interventions should consider and address their impacts on women.

**2. Work to enhance the response and provision of essential services by authorities and civil society structures, and to improve trust, in order to improve reporting and bolster women's confidence and feelings of safety.**

It is important to recognize that VAW is likely underreported to authorities in Kyrgyzstan. Just over half of women believed that a woman would seek help if she experienced abuse at the hands of a partner – much lower than the percentage who believed a woman would seek help if she experienced abuse in public, and few thought women would report incidents to authorities, particularly when they happen inside the home. Initiatives that aim to improve feelings of safety for women both within and outside of the home and improve publicly available resources, including providing training or capacity building, may encourage women to report violence, abuse or harassment that happens in their communities.

For instance, awareness of many services is high, with the majority of women citing awareness of medical and legal resources, and information-based programmes that support women in their communities. However, the data show low intended usage, suggesting that more work needs to be done to build

trust among women in accessing the available resources. This research illuminates the reality that women are less likely to seek help for domestic violence experiences than for experiences of violence or harassment in public. Such circumstances require careful awareness-raising messaging in order to break the silence of survivors of domestic violence and their relatives, and to shift the burden of shame and guilt. Transformative action should also be implemented to build trust in service-providers and authorities to provide care to survivors and to respond to VAW. As with programmatic gender mainstreaming, it is important to consider the impacts that interventions may have on particular external stressors, such as intentional or accidental shifting of gender roles and norms that could easily do more harm than good if not carefully accounted for.

**3. Support further research that goes beyond understanding VAW prevalence to examine its underlying social norms and behavioural drivers, particularly around breaking taboos and help-seeking behaviours.**

While this study provides insight into the prevalence and attitudes surrounding VAW in Kyrgyzstan, further research that dives into the underlying behavioural drivers and social/

gender norms that are the root causes of VAW is needed. The effects of COVID-19 have intensified vulnerabilities for women in Kyrgyzstan, particularly where there were already environmental, economic or household-level stressors, which point to underlying factors that not only impact women's vulnerability but also influence whether or not they get help for their situation. Further research is needed to understand how the social and cultural expectations of women in their households and communities contribute to VAW and how shifting these expectations could improve the situation for women in Kyrgyzstan. In particular, in-depth qualitative research can unpack the "how" and "why" behind the attitudes and behaviours that surround VAW and the reporting process. Such research could be used to build a more thorough response framework, to understand the experiences of VAW for women in Kyrgyzstan and to help develop programming to end it.

# 7. METHODOLOGY

The survey was fielded via Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing using random-digit dialing to mobile numbers between 19 August and 19 September 2021. The total number of completed interviews was 1,201. During the survey period, Kyrgyzstan experienced a steady decrease in reported COVID-19 cases and a steady increase in reported vaccinations.<sup>6</sup> Most of the country was experiencing some form of lockdown or restriction throughout the study, but these have steadily eased up.

The sample was drawn via random-digit dialing among the population with mobile phone numbers, so the sample population is limited to women aged 18 or over with mobile phone access. Women over age 60 were also specifically targeted with an existing database to ensure adequate coverage of this age group. The percentages for each age group from this survey match the percentages for each age group Kyrgyzstan’s Census data.<sup>7</sup>

Age group	Percentage of adult women based on Census data	Percentage of adult women from sample data
18–29	29%	29%
30–39	24%	24%
40–49	17%	17%
50–59	14%	14%
60+	15%	15%

6 Reuters COVID-19 Tracker. 2021. “Kyrgyzstan” <https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/kyrgyzstan/>

7 National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. N.D. “Population”. <http://www.stat.kg/en/statistics/naselenie/>

# DEFINITIONS

**Community:** A term referencing the geographic area in which the respondent lives.

**Food insecurity:** This study used the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s formulation to measure food insecurity, with an eight-statement battery. These data can be used to establish estimates of the proportion of the sample who were moderately or severely food insecure, which can also be disaggregated by other variables of interest through the use of the FAO Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) module. Any references in the report to prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity represent estimates of the prevalence and should be interpreted as such.

**Partnered:** A term referring to women who were married or living/cohabiting with a partner.

**Violence against women:** Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or was likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

**Felt unsafe walking alone:** Refers to women who indicated that they felt “not very safe” or “not safe at all” walking alone outside during the day (at question Co2) or during the night (at question Co3).

**Experienced or knew someone who had experienced VAW:** Refers to women who indicated that they, or another woman they knew, had experienced any form of VAW. “Since COVID-19” is added to indicate women who indicated that these incidents had only been occurring since the start of the pandemic.

**Experienced frequent conflict:** Refers to respondents who indicated that they experienced conflict or arguments in their homes at least once a week during the last six months (at question C19).

**Experienced infrequent conflict:** Refers to respondents who indicated that they experienced conflict or arguments in their homes “once or twice” or “never” during the last six months (at question C19).

**Violence, abuse or the harassment of women are a problem the community:** Refers to respondents who indicated that physical harm, abuse or the harassment of women are “a lot”, “somewhat”, or “a little bit” of a problem where they live (at question Co7).

**Violence, abuse or the harassment of women are not a problem the community:** Refers to respondents who indicated that physical harm, abuse or the harassment of women are “not at all” a problem where they live (at question Co7).

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