

Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

Regional Summary Report | February 2021



Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

Foreword | February 2021

A year since the global declaration of the pandemic, the deepening socio-economic impacts in the Caribbean are of grave concern. Under the leadership of CARICOM, the World Food Programme has supported the three rounds of the CARICOM COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Surveys, which have provided a wealth of information for national governments, regional entities and other stakeholders to make more informed policy and programmatic decisions to best meet the varied needs of the people throughout the Caribbean.

In times of crisis, existing inequalities in access to employment, food and other needs intensify and become more visible. Those living in poverty and facing vulnerability feel it most, and their food insecurity increases. At the onset of the pandemic, people tapped into their resources and made lifestyle changes to cope with movement and other restrictions, increasing food prices and lost jobs and income.

Over time, the realities of those earning above and below average wages tell a more nuanced story. While households with above and well above average incomes are better equipped to manage up to this point, poorer households are increasingly relying on reducing food consumption and negative coping strategies that undermine their wellbeing in the long run in order to keep food on the table today. They are increasingly struggling to access food due to lack of resources. The longer this crisis goes on, the greater the risk of deepening inequalities unless more is done.

The crisis has highlighted the importance of expanding social protection to reach those most in need, however gaps remain in providing assistance to some of the poorest households, including migrant communities. The crisis has also brought to greater prominence the well known need to strengthen Caribbean food systems from production to marketing to transportation to consumption.

While local production is more important than ever, evidence suggests that measures designed to curb the spread of the virus have also impacted livelihoods of people engaged in farming and fishing, highlighting a major gap in promoting and achieving food security in the region.

Caribbean governments face many challenges ahead. It is a balancing act to address the toll on major industries like tourism, navigate limited fiscal space while clearing external debts, supporting increasing needs due to loss of livelihoods, while managing a COVID-19 response that protects both the health and the wealth of the nation. The availability of vaccines in the region represents a positive development in the fight against the spread of the virus with hopes of a return to a sense of normalcy and a greater predictability to pursue livelihoods.

The pathway to managing these impacts relies on strong partnerships in support of countries throughout the Caribbean, putting people at the centre of economic response and recovery efforts. There is a need to balance macro and microeconomic perspectives in the recovery from COVID-19. Governments, regional institutions, the international community and the private sector can come together to help countries get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

WFP Caribbean is grateful to partner with the CARICOM Secretariat, to administer these surveys and to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency management Agency (CDEMA) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for their contributions. These surveys are also made possible in partnership with the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).



Regis Chapman,
Representative and Country Director, a.i.
WFP Barbados and the Multi-Country Office for the English and Dutch Caribbean

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The COVID-19 pandemic is dramatically altering how people earn a living and meet their critical needs. The Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey was launched by CARICOM to gather data on livelihoods, access to markets and food security and provide snapshots of these impacts over time. This report analyses data collected from 25 January to 12 February 2021 and complements the findings from the previous survey rounds conducted in April and June 2020. Implemented by the World Food Programme, the short online survey was circulated via social media, traditional media outlets, and emails. The survey link was also distributed by telecommunications service providers via text messages in Barbados, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago.

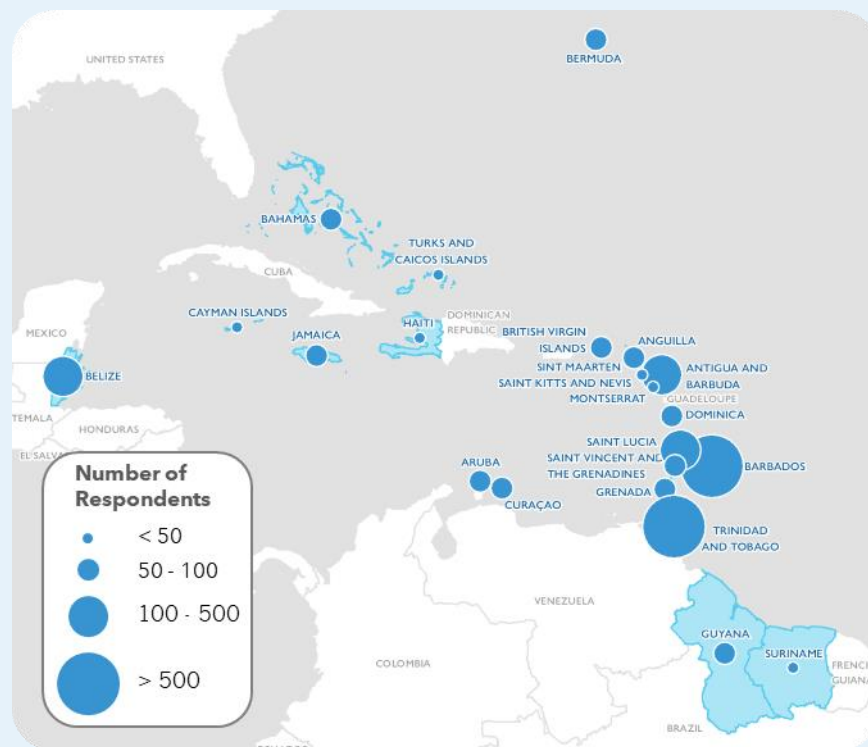
February 2021



June 2020



April 2020



SUMMARY | February 2021

- The impacts of COVID-19 continue to evolve nearly one year on from the initial declaration of the pandemic, with spikes in cases in late 2020 and early 2021. People in the English-speaking Caribbean have endured multiple lockdowns, changes in travel protocols and drastic declines in tourism during this time.
- Governments have put in place various measures to provide support, with food hampers and income support or cash transfers the most widely reported. While 15% of respondents have received some form of government assistance, only 3% still received it in February 2021.
- Impacts to livelihoods remain widespread, reported by half of respondents. The main factors behind the disruptions continue to be concerns about the outbreak, movement restrictions and increasingly the price and accessibility of livelihood inputs. Nine out of ten respondents continue to predict at least moderate impacts to their livelihoods in the future.
- Job loss and income reductions are still common, affecting 63% of overall respondents and 90% of those from lowest income groups. Disproportionally affected are households whose primary income sources are petty trade, informal/casual labour or external assistance and younger age groups.
- The availability of key products in markets has improved consistently since the beginning of the pandemic, particularly for staple foods and hygiene items which are reported as almost universally available. Still, the availability of fresh foods or medicines remains partial or limited for 20-40% of respondents.
- Most respondents (71%) observe higher than usual food prices, with lowest income groups more commonly reporting increases. Access to markets remains difficult for one third of respondents. The main reason for this is the lack of financial means, which has increased significantly since April 2020 when restrictions and concerns about leaving the house were most common. This has influenced shopping behaviour, with preference increasing towards cheaper foods or smaller quantities.
- Food insecurity remains a concern, with a third of respondents cutting down food consumption in the week leading up to the survey, and average household food stocks continue to decrease. The number of people in the region estimated to be moderately food insecure has decreased slightly from 2.5 to 2.2 million between June 2020 and February 2021, but the number of those estimated to be severely food insecure has risen from 407,000 to 482,000 in this period. The total of 2.7 million people currently estimated as food insecure represents an increase of 57%, compared to 1.7 million food insecure from April 2020.
- Negative impacts on food security disproportionately affect respondents from low-income households. They are also the ones most worried about not being able to meet their food or other essential needs. They are much more likely to meet their food needs at the expense of selling productive assets and cutting spending on other priorities such as health and education.
- Negative impacts across key metrics of well-being are most acutely felt by households who perceive their income levels as well below average, who earn income from informal and casual sources or rely on external assistance, younger respondents and Spanish-speaking respondents residing in Trinidad and Tobago. On average, differences on key metrics of well-being appear minimal between men and women.
- Some signs of recovery are beginning to emerge, primarily among economically better off households, business owners and people relying on salaried work. However, poorer and younger respondents continue to struggle and seem to increasingly rely on external support, which suggests widening disparities and growing inequality.
- While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data are not representative, and the use of an online questionnaire limits inputs from those without connectivity. Responses were skewed towards Barbados with 36% and Trinidad and Tobago with 26% of total responses.

SUMMARY | February 2021

All respondents

		Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	51%	54%	74%
	Reduction/loss of income	63%	69%	48%
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	48%	48%	47%
MARKETS	Lack of market access	30%	27%	38%
	Change in shopping behaviour	84%	87%	84%
	Increase in food prices	71%	78%	59%
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	32%	32%	17%
	Lack of food stock	17%	13%	3%

Respondents with well below average perceived income*

*This information was not collected in the April 2020 survey round.

		Feb-21	Jun-20
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	73%	73%
	Reduction/loss of income	90%	88%
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	81%	78%
MARKETS	Lack of market access	59%	54%
	Change in shopping behaviour	93%	93%
	Increase in food prices	80%	85%
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	68%	69%
	Lack of food stock	40%	31%

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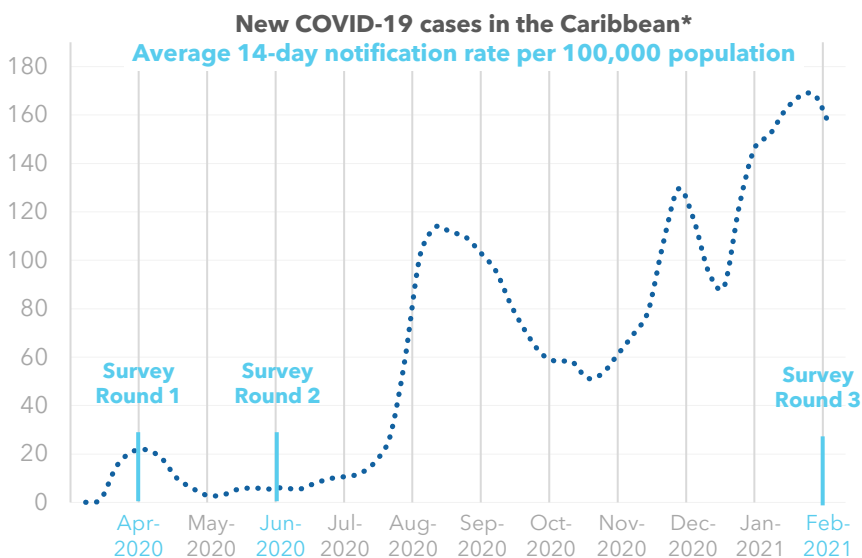
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COVID-19 | Situation and response

COVID-19 cases and government responses

Following the first registered case of COVID-19 in the Caribbean in early March 2020 and the official declaration of the pandemic, most governments in the region closed their borders to commercial travel, while establishing curfews and business and school closures. The first Caribbean COVID-19 Survey was launched in late March 2020 when most countries and territories had movement restrictions or lockdowns in place. Many governments extended these measures in the months that followed.

At the time of the second survey at the end of June 2020, many governments had begun to relax restrictions as cases decreased. Several reopened their borders, while introducing strict entry protocols to curtail the spread of the virus. Others though continued or re-introduced measures as cases increased or resurged.



* Average rate for the 23 countries and territories covered by this survey
Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2021

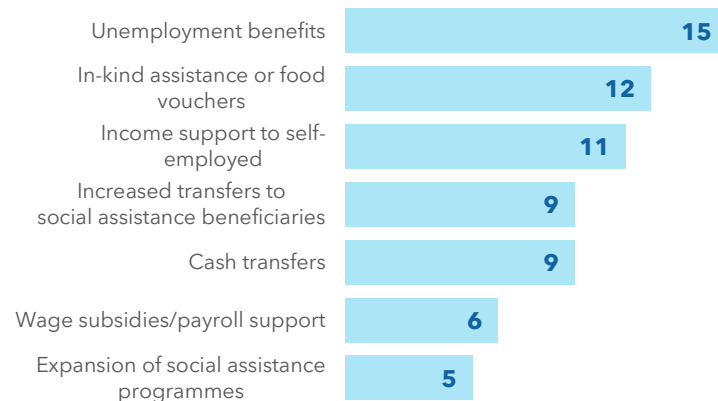
In January 2021, cases in the Caribbean increased to their highest levels since the beginning of the pandemic. When the survey was implemented in January/February 2021, some governments had again put in place restrictions on movement, commercial activity and in-person school attendance.

Social protection measures

Faced with the widespread economic repercussions of the pandemic, all governments in the English- and Dutch speaking Caribbean have turned to social protection to support people, through existing programmes or ones introduced in the wake of COVID-19. Target groups have been primarily people and businesses who have lost jobs and income as a result of movement restrictions, declining tourism and disruptions to commercial activities. In some countries, farmers and fisherfolk have also received assistance in the form of food, seeds, tools, fertilizers, animal health interventions, animal feeds, provision of livestock, fishing gear and farm labour assistance.

Main social protection responses to COVID-19 in the Caribbean*

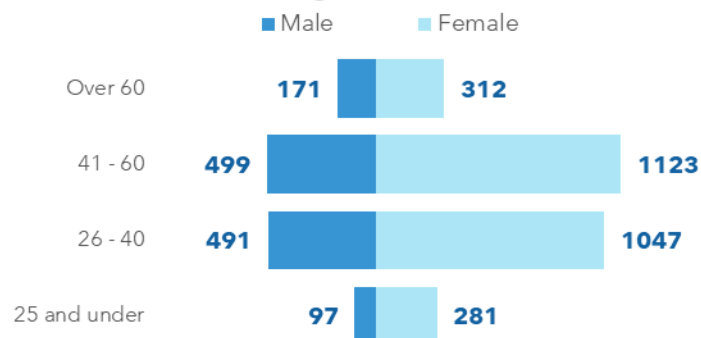
By number of countries that adopted the measure



*Includes all survey countries and territories except for Haiti
Source: Authors' own compilation

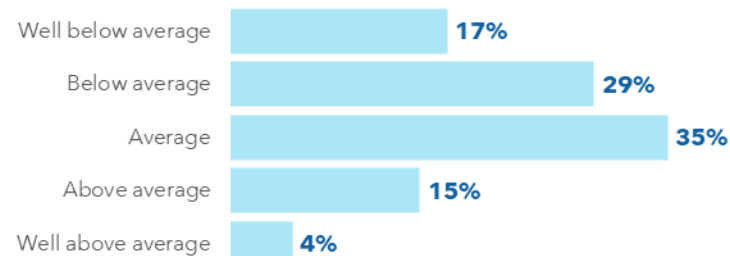
RESPONDENTS | Demographics

Age and sex

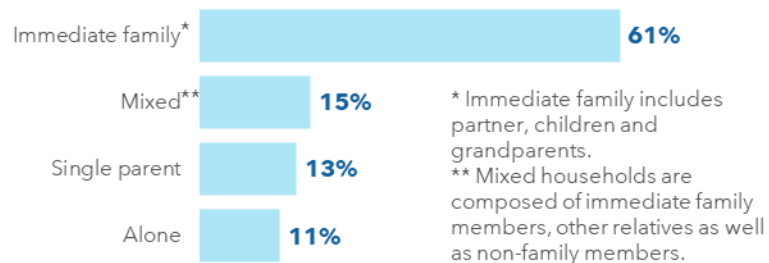


Perceived income levels

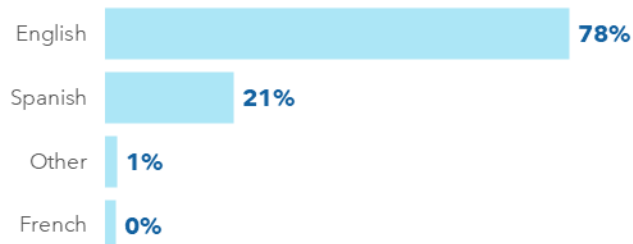
Respondents were asked to compare their household's income with the rest of their country



Household composition

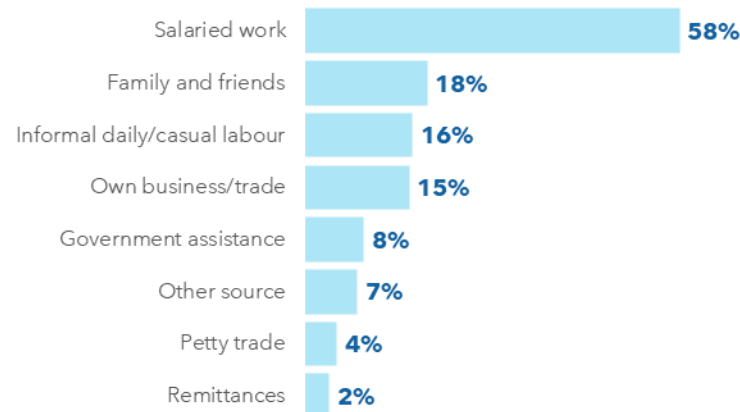


Language



Main income sources

Respondents were asked to indicate the main income source(s) for their household. Multiple choices could be selected.



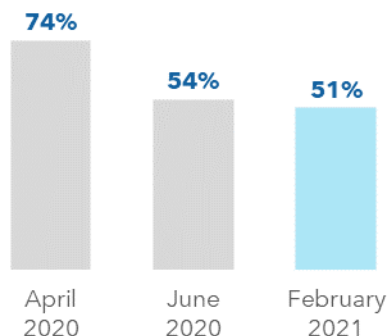
Urban/rural location



LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

- Impacts to livelihoods remain widespread, with every second respondent reporting disruptions.

Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 2 weeks prior to the survey

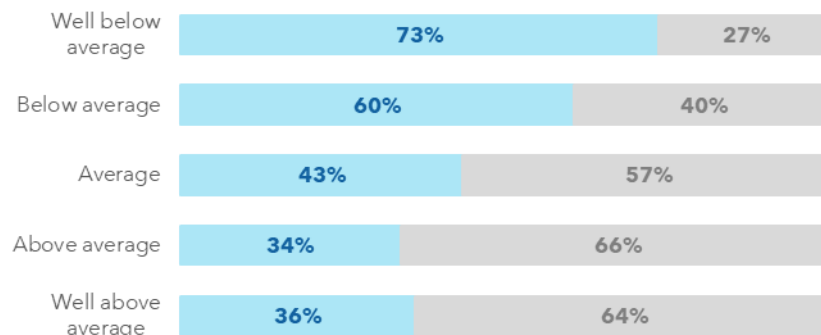


The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt livelihoods. For half of respondents the ability to pursue their livelihood was affected in the two weeks preceding the survey. This proportion has decreased from April 2020 (74%) but shows no significant change when compared to the June 2020.

When considering the different characteristics of people responding to the survey (such as age, sex, perceived income, household composition) the most marked differences are found related to people's sources and level of income. Of respondents who described their income as well below average, 73% reported livelihood disruptions, compared to 36% of those who consider their income levels as well above average. Those with livelihoods in the construction, transportation, retail, tourism and hospitality sectors seem to face more disruption relative to other sectors.

Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 2 weeks prior to the survey

By perceived income level



Between 66% and 76% of respondents with less stable household income sources (e.g., informal labour, petty trade, support from friends and family) reported their livelihoods being affected compared to 44% of those in households with salaried income.

Considering the household composition of respondents, the livelihoods of people living in 'mixed' households with extended family and non-family members appear to be most widely impacted, while people living alone appear to be the least. There are some differences across age groups, with respondents over 60 less frequently reporting livelihood disruptions compared to younger age groups. The regional averages differed slightly by gender, with men seemingly more commonly affected by livelihood disruptions compared to women, while the location of respondents in urban or rural areas does not seem to make any difference.

LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

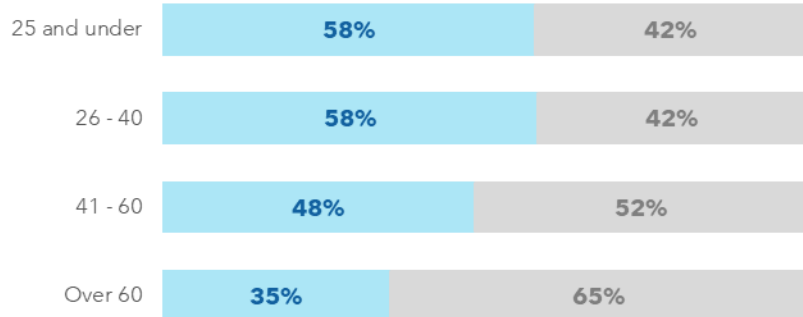
Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 2 weeks prior to the survey

■ yes ■ no

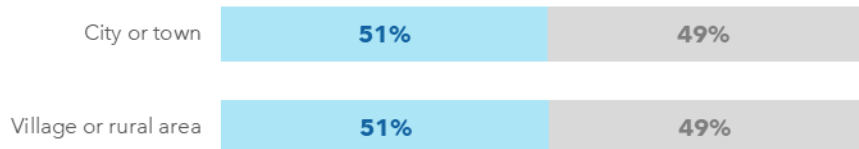
By sex



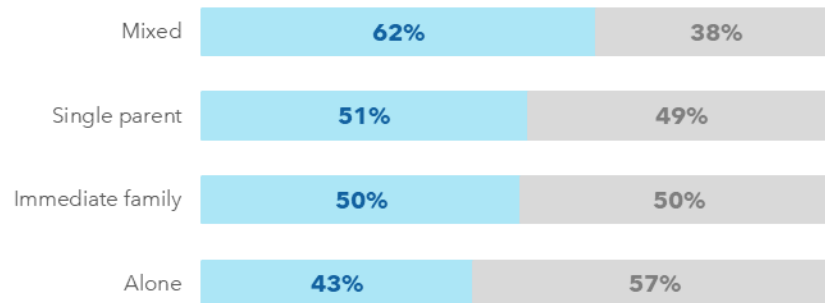
By age group



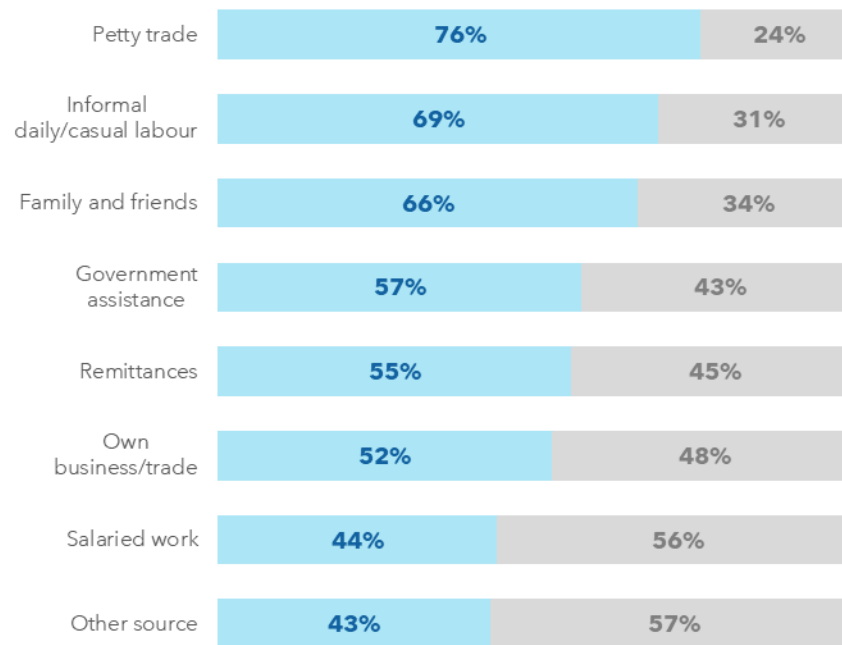
By urban/rural location



By household composition



By income sources

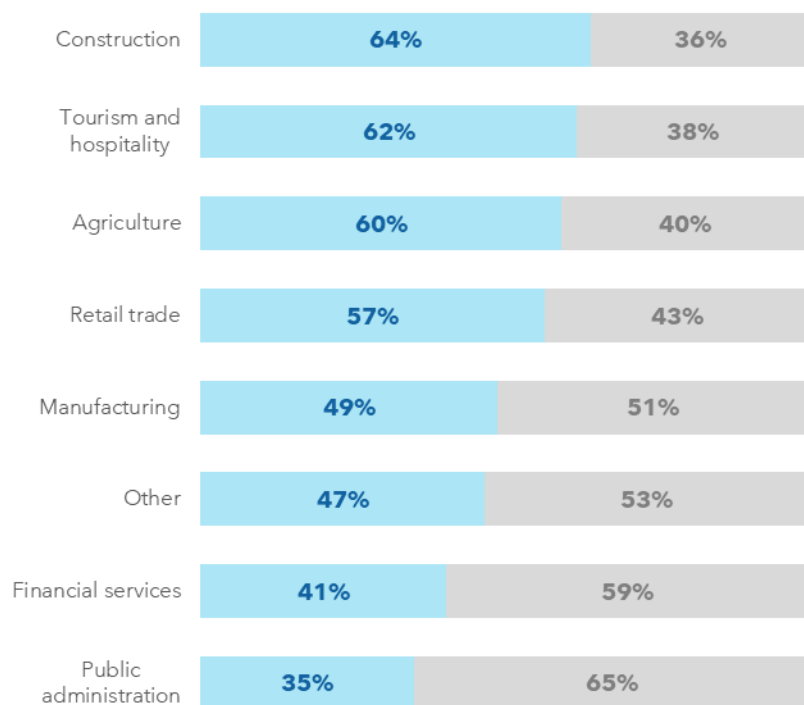


LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 2 weeks prior to the survey

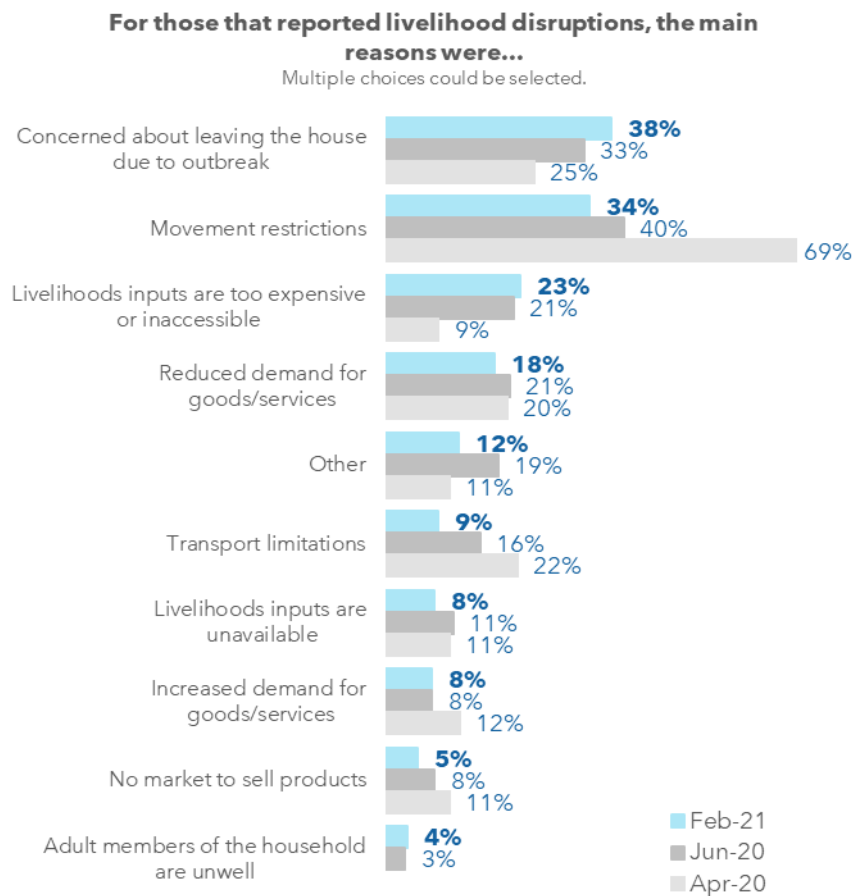
■ yes ■ no

By income sector



LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

- Concerns about the outbreak as well as movement restrictions are still the main drivers behind disruptions to livelihoods. The price and access of livelihood inputs is a growing factor, affecting mostly the lowest-income households.



A slight shift from the previous surveys is the top reason behind disruptions to livelihoods. While the main drivers have remained the same, concerns about leaving the house due to the outbreak were the most common factor, cited by 38% of affected respondents.

Movement restrictions are the second most important factor, though these are less of a driver compared to the early stages of the pandemic and the introduction of initial measures to contain it. The share of affected respondents who cited movement restrictions and transport limitations as a reason for livelihood disruptions has halved in February 2021 compared to April 2020.

Concerns about leaving the house or movement restrictions are much more likely to be cited as disruptive factors by respondents who rely on salaried work or who own a business compared to those relying on petty trade or informal/casual labour. Concerns about leaving the house seem to be more widespread among women and respondents over 60 years of age, while movement restrictions were more commonly cited by people living alone compared to those living with others.

High prices and limited access to livelihood inputs were reported as a cause by a growing share of respondents, in particular among those with a level of income perceived to be below or well below average, households engaged in petty trade and informal/casual labour as well as respondents living in mixed households with an extended family.

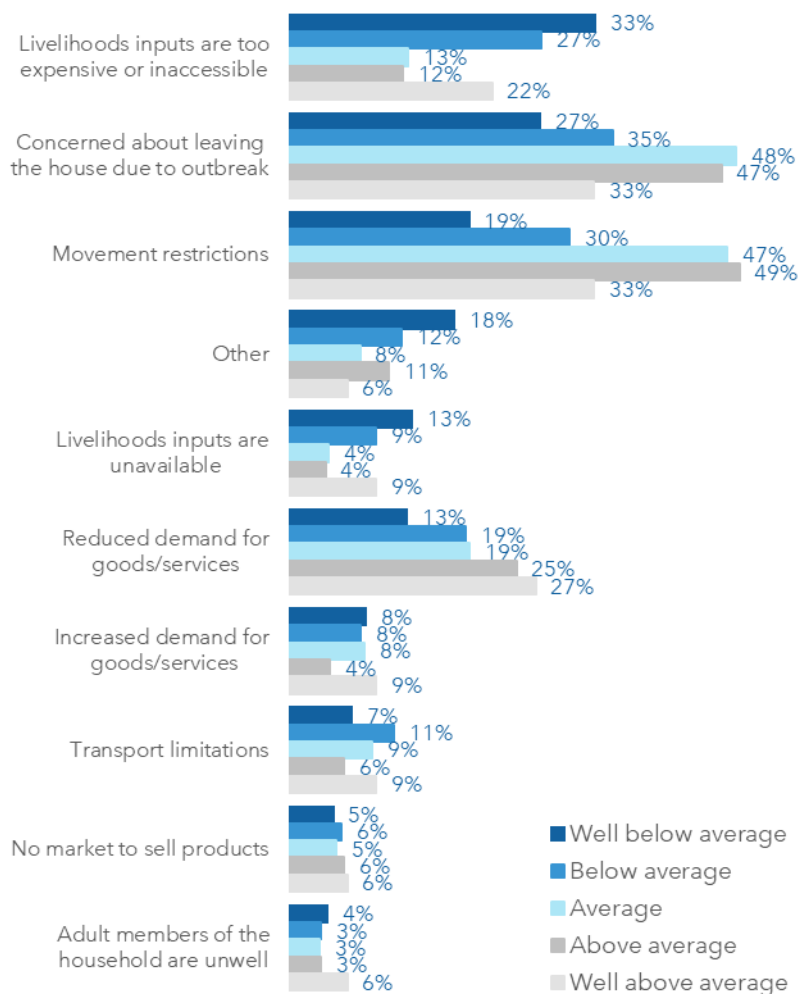
Reduced demand for goods/services continues to affect one out of five respondents facing livelihood disruptions and particularly those owning a business and those reporting an above or well above level of income. Lack of market to sell products appears to impact business owners and petty traders alike.

LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected.

By perceived income level



"I feel I will lose my small business very soon, as the banks are beginning to ask for payments and I don't have much income to pay them. I might lose everything that I've worked so hard for." – Male, 38 years

"I have been affected by COVID-19, I got no help from government and is also unemployed. Travel restrictions are very difficult because I move regionally to shop and to sell items." – Female, 35 years

"I am affected by not get a job and relying on govt monthly cash to hold my family out till the next monthly govt cash. And trying to budget it to pay the utilities and to squeeze out money out that bit of money balance to pay for groceries." – Female, 52 years

"Have been unemployed since April 10th 2020 and can't fully provide for my son and grandchildren have to stay weeks without eating so he can eat now I have no more help from anyone" – Female, 39 years

"No money to survive" – Male, 42 years

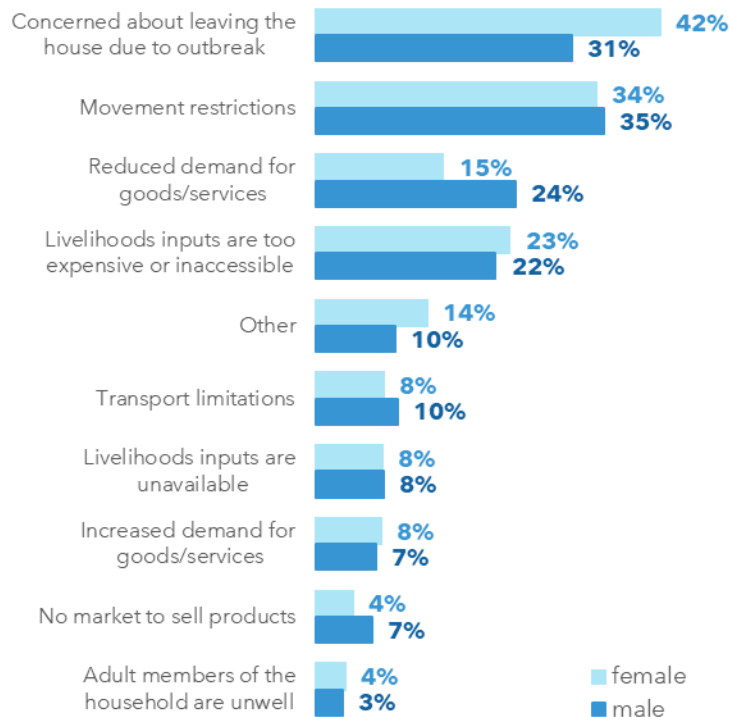
"Clients are less able to pay for services rendered. My spouse cannot generate income during lockdowns and so though we may be ok for the 2 week lockdown any further lockdowns may be concerning." – Female, 45 years

LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

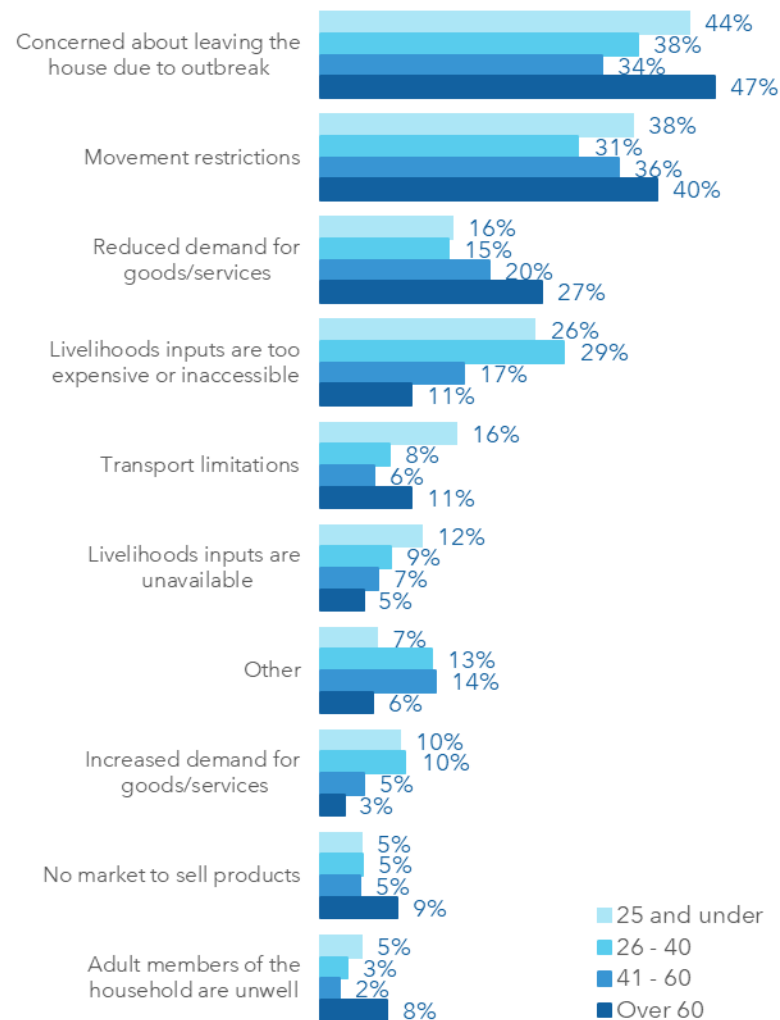
For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected.

By sex



By age group

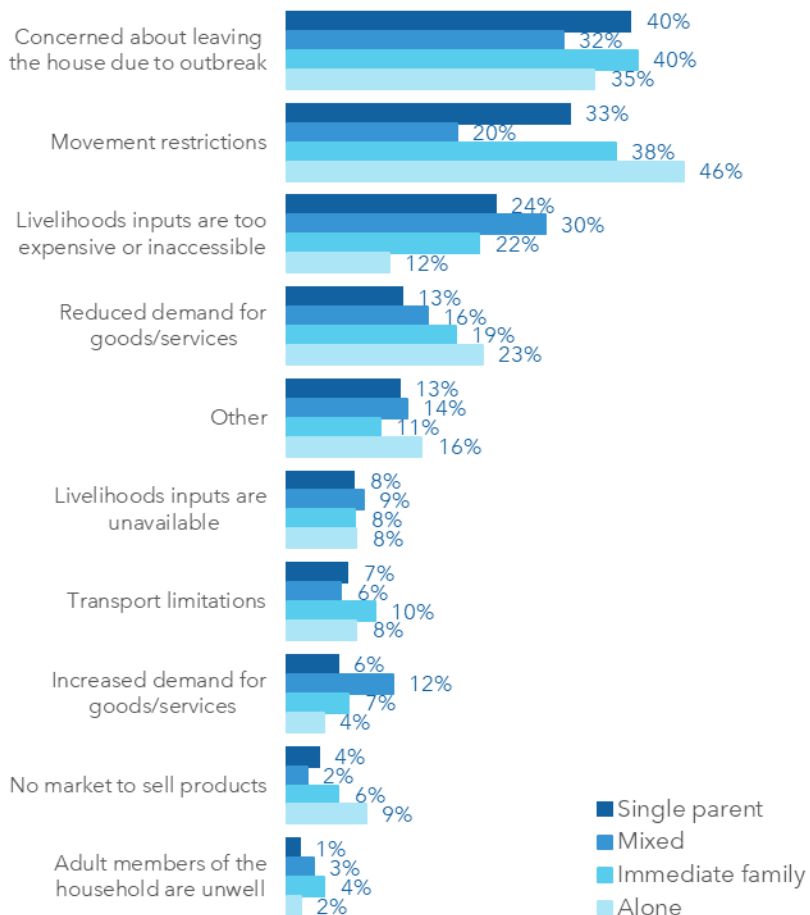


LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

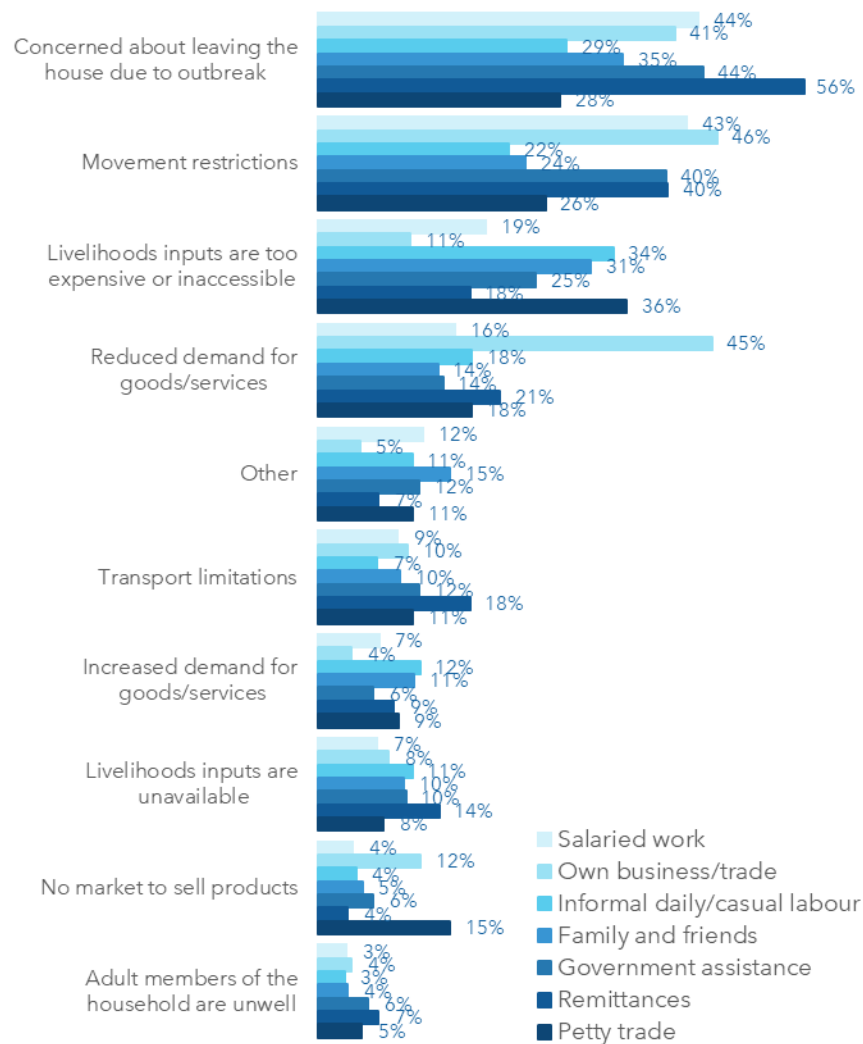
For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected.

By household composition

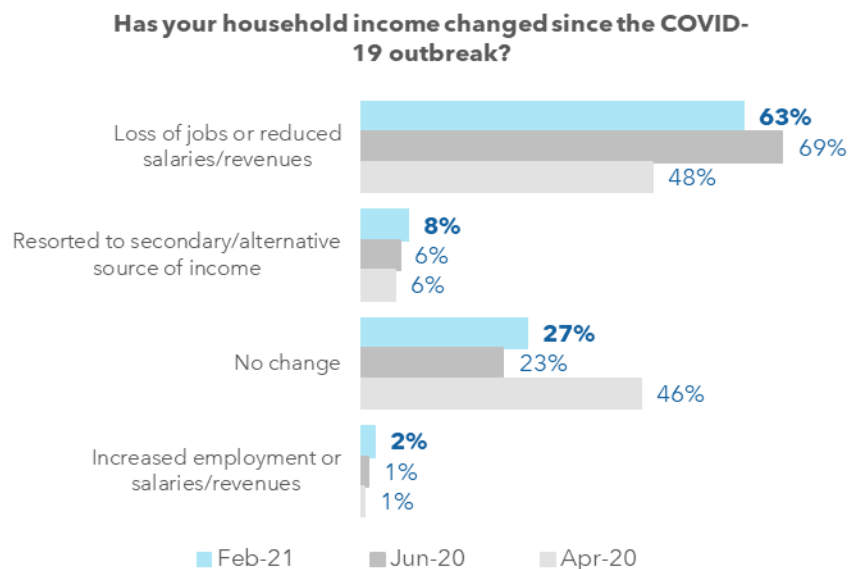


By main income source



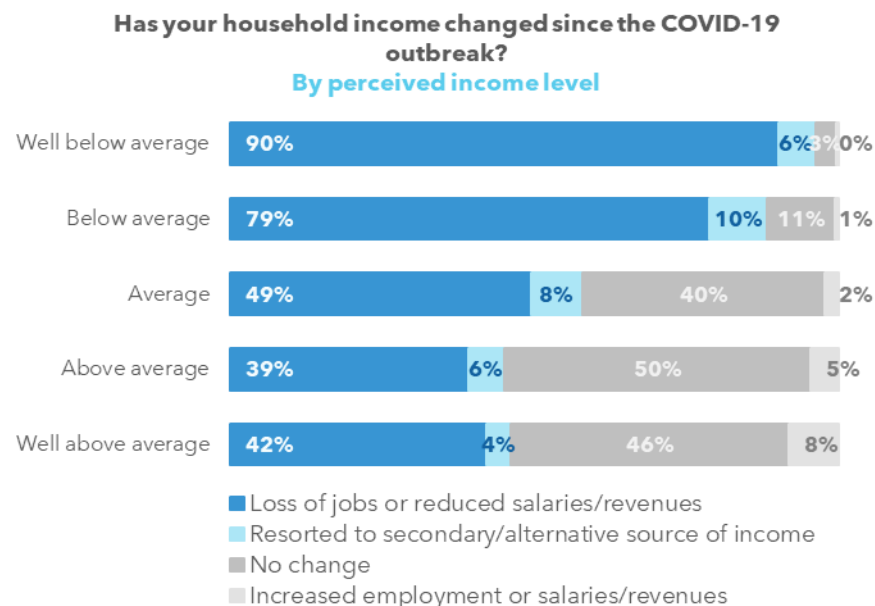
LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents have faced job loss or income reductions in their households.



Impacts to income continue to be widespread, with 63% of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries since the COVID-19 outbreak, slightly lower compared to June 2020 (69%). The figure remains higher compared to April 2020 (48%) and suggests the continuation of economic impacts crisis with many people facing decreased income.

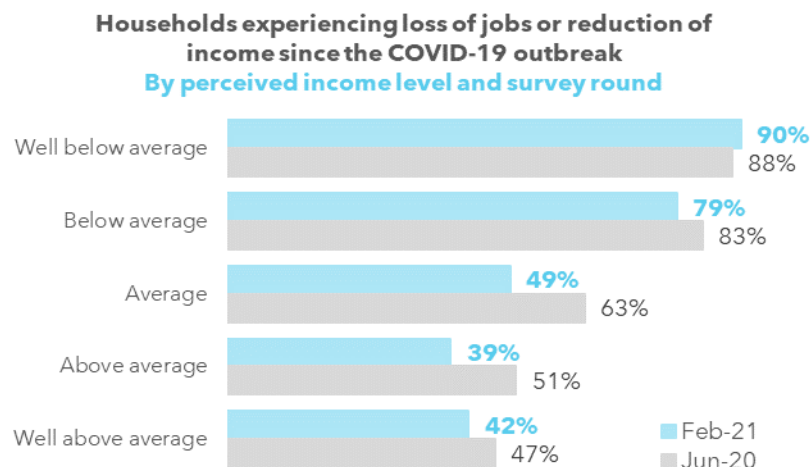
The most marked differences in responses were found across income groups and sources of income and between age groups, with job and income losses most widespread among the younger respondents, those with informal and casual income sources and lowest income levels.



Job loss or reduced income was reported by the vast majority of respondents describing their household income as well below average (90%) or below average (79%), compared to less than half of those describing their income as above or well above average. Respondents with household income from petty trade, informal labour and support from friends and family were much more likely to report job loss/reduced income compared to those with salaries. Income and job losses also have been most widely reported by households active in tourism and hospitality, followed by those in construction, retail trade, agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income

- The lowest-income households continue to report the most widespread impacts to income.



The share of respondents facing job losses or a reduction in household income has continued unchanged for those reporting income as well below average (about nine out of ten respondents in both June 2020 and February 2021). Among respondents from all other income groups this share has fallen, and the improvement has been most pronounced among respondents who classified their income as average or above average, with a difference of 14% and 12% respectively compared to June 2020. This suggests some signs of recovery could be occurring but unevenly across income groups, with the poorest households still facing the most significant struggles.

Compared to June 2020, for several income sources the share of respondents who experienced job or income losses remained similar in February 2021, at over eight out of ten respondent. This includes those whose income sources include petty trade, informal daily/casual labour, or support from family and friends, suggesting continued hardship for these groups. Impacts remain widespread but with slight improvements for those respondents whose primary income sources include business/trade (76% in June 2020 and 65% in February 2021) or salaried work (64% in June 2020 and 55% in February 2021).

Respondents aged 25 or younger were twice as likely to report income or job loss (76%), compared to those 60 years or older (38%), suggesting a disproportionate impacts on younger persons. Job and income loss is also widespread among respondents living in mixed households with extended family and non-family members (77%), while people living alone appear to be least impacted (45%). No major difference was observed in the regional averages between women and men or the location of respondents in urban versus rural areas.

"Because of lockdowns my income dropped and I have to do other jobs for survival." - Male, 31 years

"I am a seamstress so I am suffering a great loss of income especially as there will be no carnival. My debts are suffering" - Female, 45 years

"No job, no cash flow, soon no food and no assistance from our Govt. at this time. soon not able to send my child to school cant pay school fee, will lose my home, cant pay rent, electricity, water, internet ,nor buy food...I need HELP.." - Male, 59 years

LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income

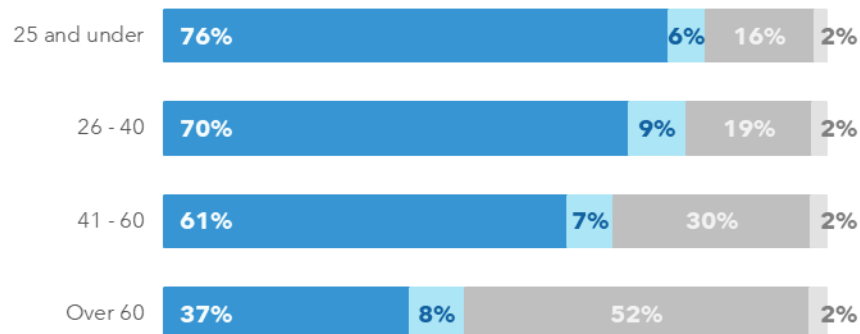
Has your household income changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?

- Loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues
- Resorted to secondary/alternative source of income
- No change
- Increased employment or salaries/revenues

By sex



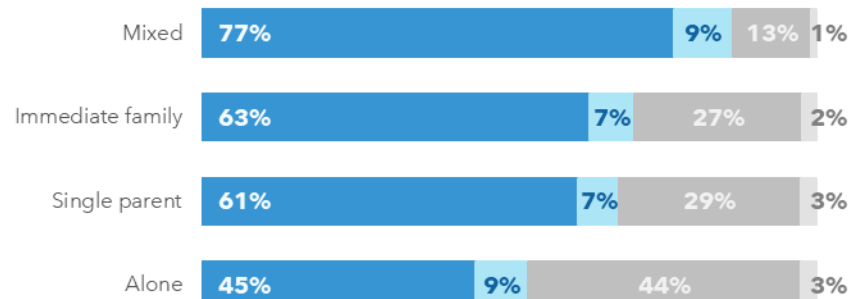
By age group



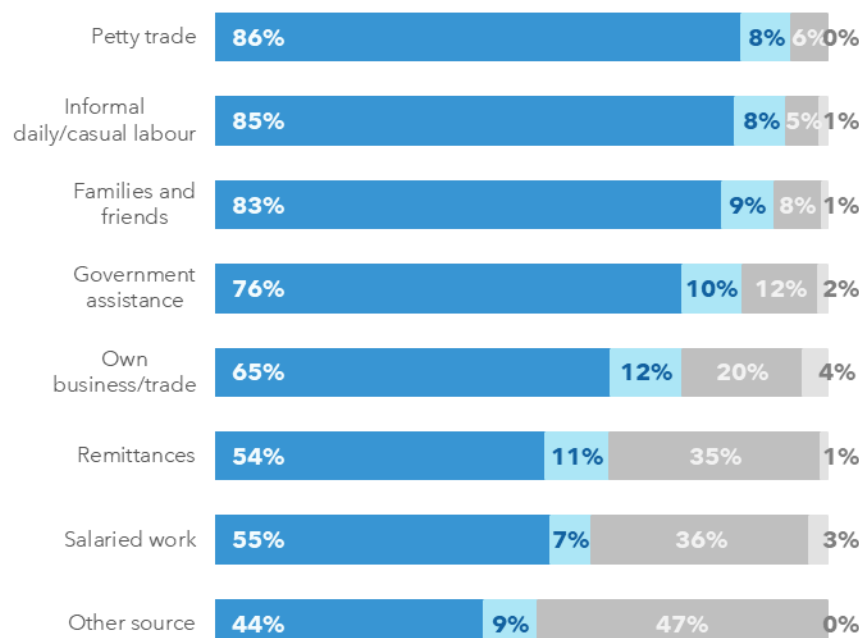
By urban/rural location



By household composition



By income sources

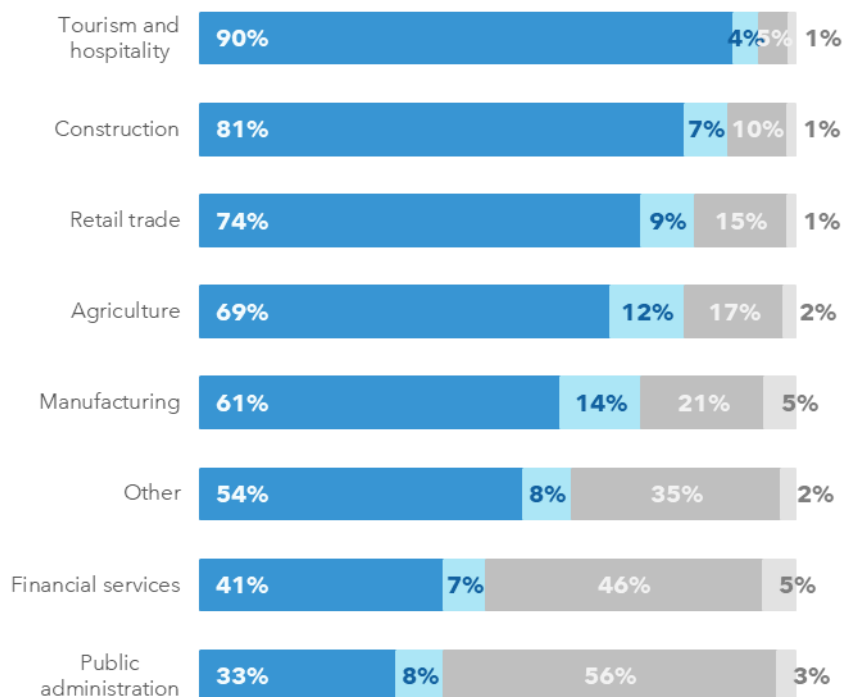


LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income

Has your household income changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?

- Loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues
- Resorted to secondary/alternative source of income
- No change
- Increased employment or salaries/revenues

By income sector



"Worried about credit card and loan, I will not be able to pay my bills, I will be earning half of my regular income and even that not sure for how long the company will be able to survive. My savings will only last for 2-3 months." - Female, 62 years

"Worried about future job loss as a result of COVID-19. Adapting by increased prayers/meditation and looking at more opportunities for working in the virtual space/getting clients" - Female, 46 years

"My deepest concern is how do I continue to provide for my family and pay bills when there's nothing to sell. I am just planting some veggies as inputs, especially tilling, seeds and potting soil are expensive. Most veggies will be ready in three months time. Between now and then God alone knows." - Male, 41 years

"I think about my children's health and education. It also bothers me that a lot of other children are been abused at home because they're not able to go to school. I get a headache everyday thinking about it." - Female, 44 years

"It has raised my concern for my Mummy, myself & others with underlying health conditions. I am also scared for the elderly in our Nation. Mental health issues and abuse of children in the Nation hurts me. I've adapted, (kind of), by reaching out to family and friends more often, via social media, and praying. Whoever reads this, I pray for safety for all those around you. Blessings!." - Female, 54 years

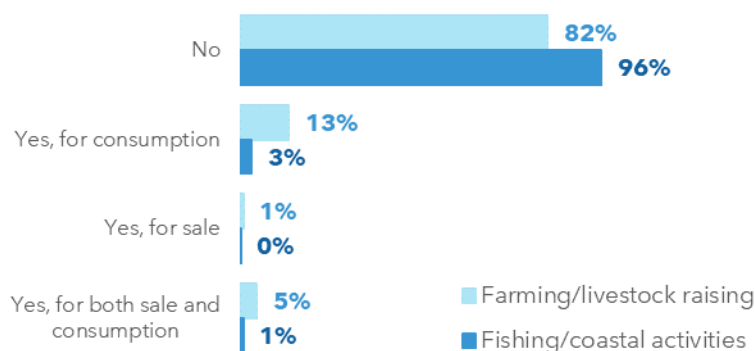
"Loss of income. Adapting poorly. Anxious, scared. Worried about future, housing, food, and all other aspects of financial security for myself and children." - Female, 37 years

"I travel with asthma and I'm scared to leave my house at all time. I can't go to the store without proper protection. I can't afford to risk my life, so I stay in or ask someone to buy for me. I am trying my best to protect myself. Food and water is limiting day by day and yet I don't have everything I need. All I can do is try to be safe" - Female, 20 years

LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

- Respondents engaged in fishing activities seem among the hardest hit, but more detailed assessment is needed.

Is your households engaged in farming/fishing?

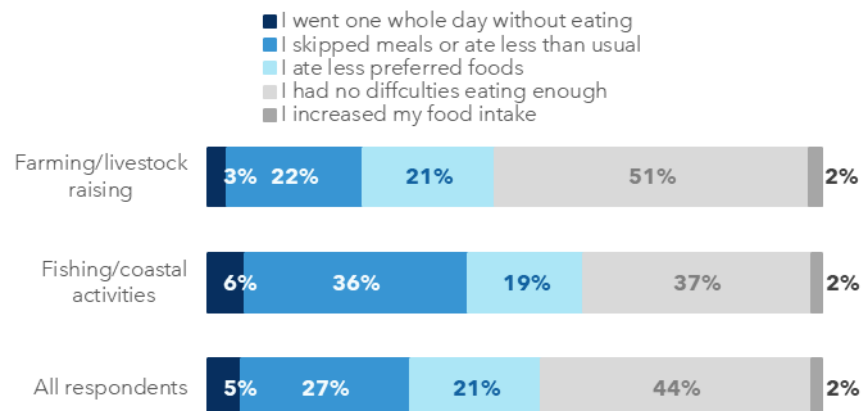


Nearly one in five respondents reported engaging in farming, gardening or livestock raising and 4% in fisheries/coastal activities. In both cases these activities are primarily for own consumption, with vegetable production being the main farming activity. Most respondents undertaking farming (95%) or fishing (76%) also have household income from salaries, and one out of three pursue their own business or trade. Of those engaged in fishing/coastal activities, 25% derive household income through informal and casual labour as do 18% of those engaging in farming or livestock raising. Respondents aged 25 years or younger are most likely to be engaged in both types of activity, compared to other age groups.

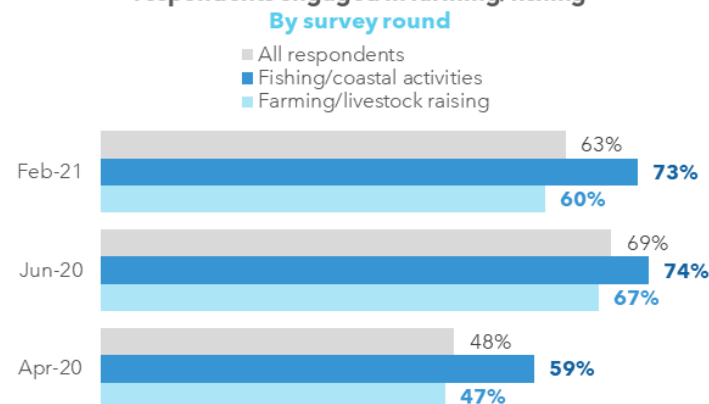
Those engaged in fishing/coastal activities appear to be facing more challenges related to income and food consumption. During each survey round they were more likely to report loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues compared to farming and average respondents.

Among respondents engaged in fishing, 36% reported to have skipped meals or ate less than usual in the week prior to the survey, compared to 27% of respondents on average.

Food situation among respondents engaged in farming/fishing



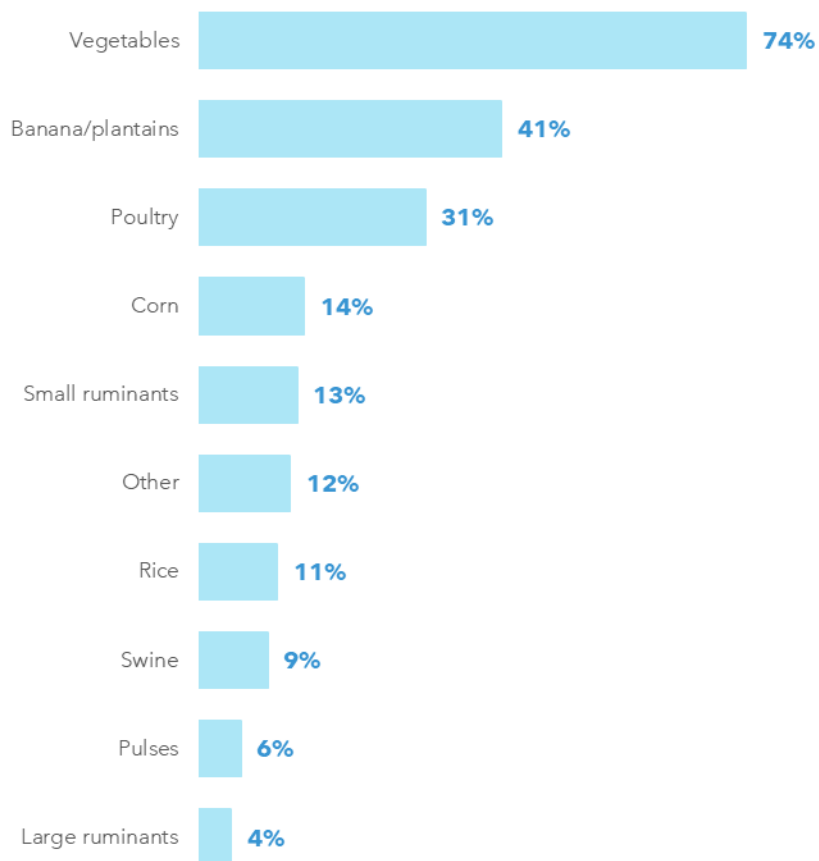
Loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues among respondents engaged in farming/fishing



LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

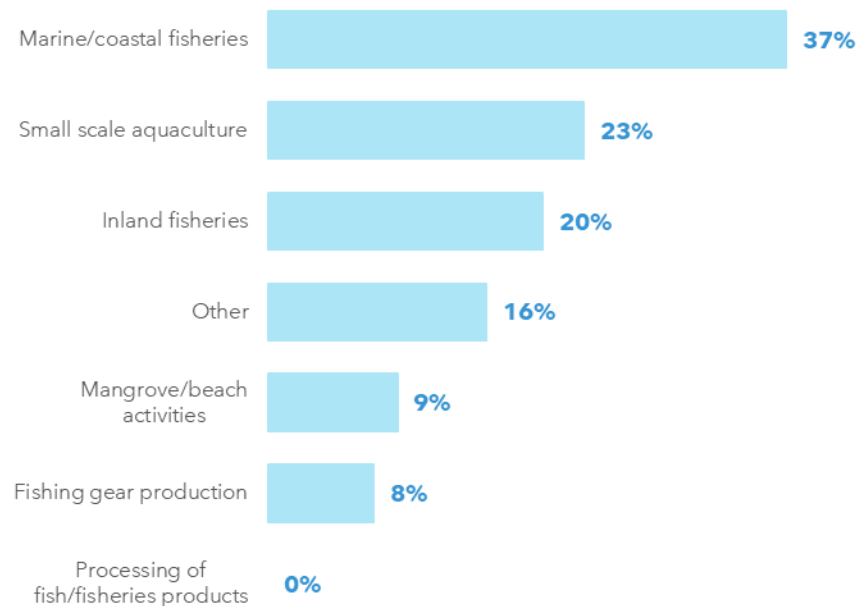
For those that engage in agriculture/livestock raising, the products are...

Multiple choices could be selected.



For those that engage in fishing/coastal activities, the activities are...

Multiple choices could be selected.

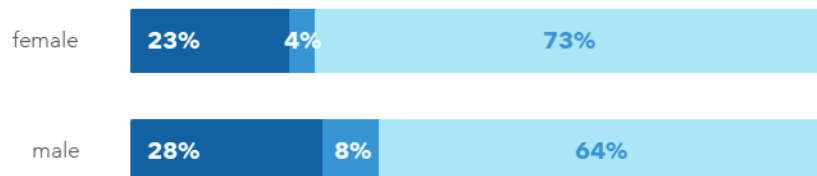


LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

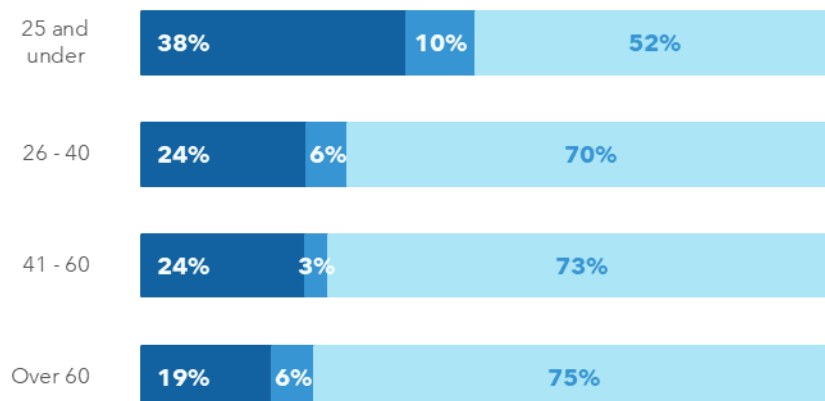
Households engaged in farming/livestock raising

- Yes, for both sale and consumption
- Yes, for sale
- Yes, for consumption

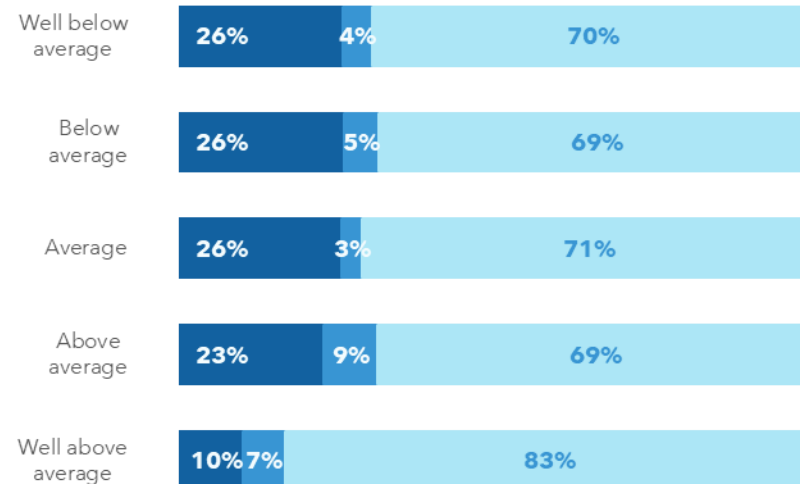
By sex



By age group



By perceived income level

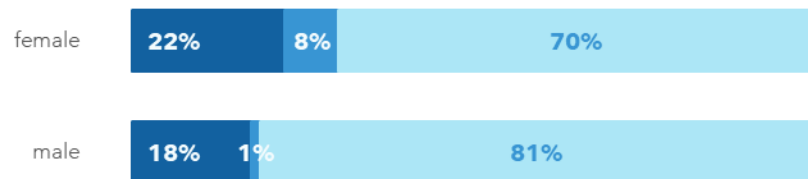


LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

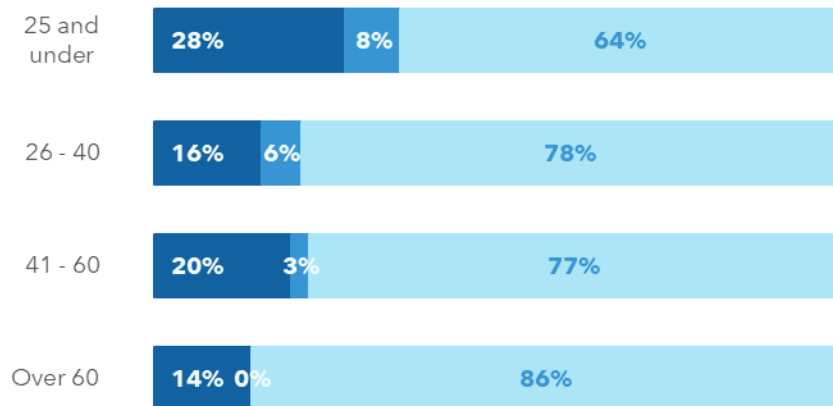
Households engaged in fishing/coastal activities

- Yes, for both sale and consumption
- Yes, for sale
- Yes, for consumption

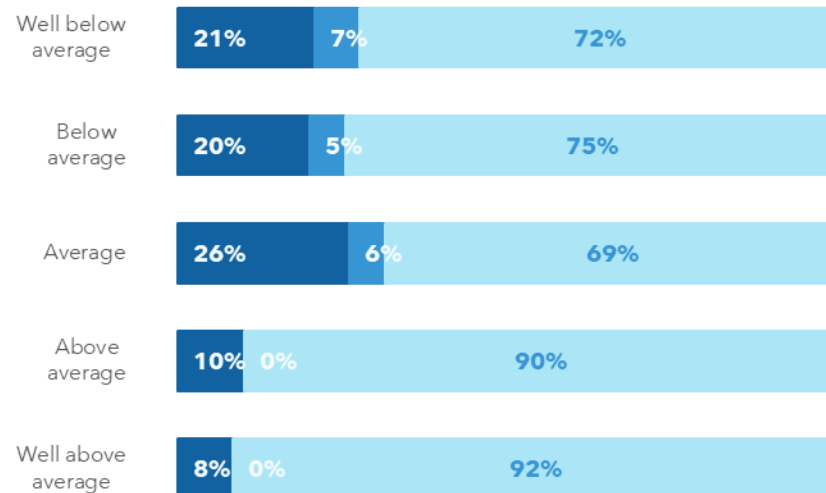
By sex



By age group



By perceived income level



LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

FAO and CARICOM assessment

Between August and December 2020, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and CARICOM conducted a detailed online survey of COVID-19 Impacts on Food Security, Agricultural Production and Livelihoods in the Caribbean, interviewing extension officers, farmers, fishers, vendors of agriculture inputs and food traders.

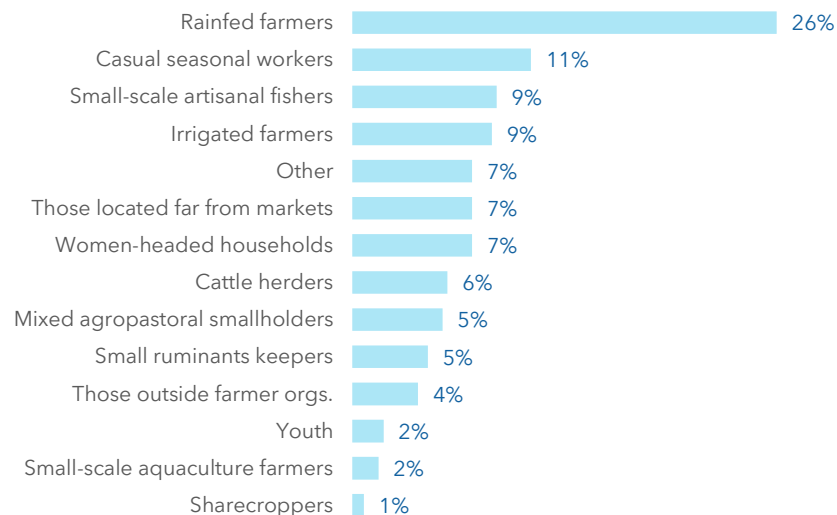
Data from Grenada, Guyana and Suriname collected as part of the survey provides insights into the range of impacts experienced by fishers in these three countries. Based on a sample of 142 households engaged in fishing, 52% reported a decrease in the amount of fish caught and 41% reported a decrease in the amount of time spent fishing. Respondents indicated challenges including difficulties to market fish (25%), restrictions/concerns related to COVID-19 (8%) and decreased prices of fish (6%). Disruptions in the supply chain of seafood and fish products were also reported by 38% percent of the respondents. These include disruptions in transportation logistics (15%) and sea freight (8%) and inadequate storage facilities (8%). Forty-three percent of the fisher household respondents stated unusual difficulties in accessing fishing materials or inputs including fuel (14%), gears (10%) and ice (7%).

Fisheries employ over 180,000 people in CARICOM countries, or 10% of the Community's population (FAO and CDB, 2019). Small-scale fisheries are also considered a social safety net for the poorest, providing seasonal employment when other sectors are less busy or employment of last resort in times of need (Waite et al., 2011). More information on how governments in Latin America and the Caribbean have supported small-scale fisheries facing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring the continuity of livelihoods is available through [additional resources](#).

During the 2020 season, crop and livestock producers have also experienced shocks but seemingly of a different nature. Interviewed extension officers indicated dry spells/drought (42%) and heavy rains/flooding (26%) as the most important shocks affecting crop production compared to normal, while lack of perspective and the difficulty to sell products was mentioned only by 5%. At the same time, economic disruptions (28%) and concerns/restrictions related to COVID-19 (25%) are among extension officers' most commonly cited shocks affecting livestock production, followed by lack of pasture or water (17%).

Full analysis, including additional household-level data on crops and livestock production impacts, will be featured in the assessment report that will be released by CARICOM and FAO in March 2021 and available for download.

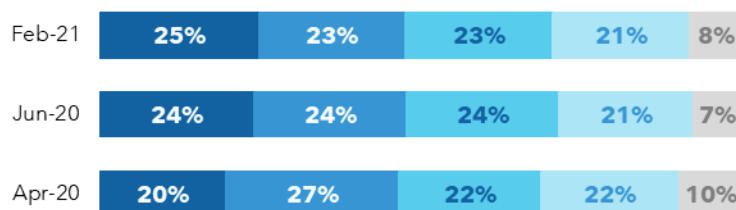
Types of farmers and fishers most affected by COVID-19



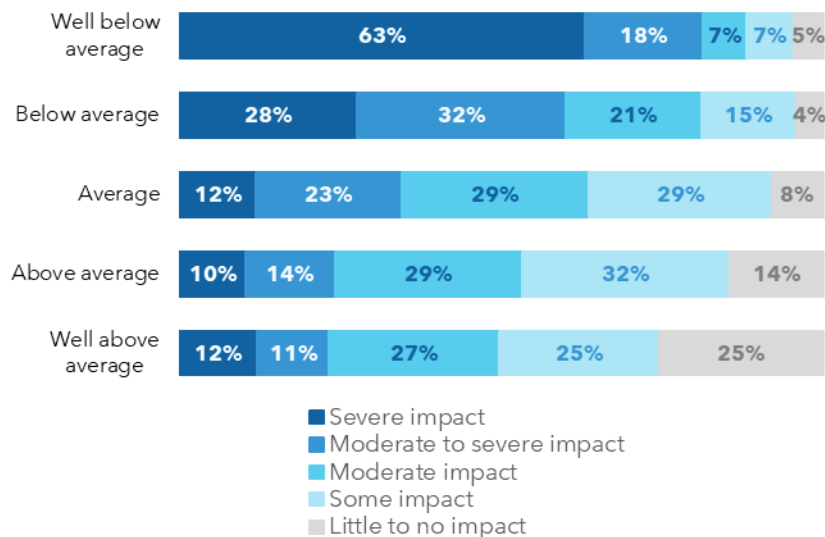
LIVELIHOODS | Future livelihood impacts

- Nine out of ten respondents expect at least a moderate impact on their livelihoods. For six out of ten lowest income households, this impact is expected to be severe.

How do you expect your livelihood will be impacted as a result of disruptions from COVID-19?



By perceived income level



Respondents continue to expect that the COVID-19 pandemic will impact their livelihoods in the future. Looking ahead, 48% anticipate “moderate to severe” or “severe” impacts to their livelihoods, which is almost identical to the prior two survey rounds. Only 8% expect little or no impact.

Respondents with different levels of income varied substantially in their perspectives. Of those with incomes perceived as well below average, 63% expect their livelihoods to be severely impacted in the future (similar to June 2021) and much higher compared to households with well above average income (11%).

While the vast majority of respondents anticipate at least some impacts regardless of their sources of income, those who rely on salaries were much less likely to predict severe livelihood impacts (17%), compared to respondents who earn their living from petty trade (41%) or have support from family and friends (41%) and the government (39%). Unsurprisingly, households who rely on more informal sources of income or external support are also those who most likely report income levels that are below or well below average.

Perception may be shifting somewhat among respondents with different income sources. Compared to June 2020, the proportion of respondents who expect their livelihood to be impacted severely as a result of disruptions from COVID-19 has fallen among respondents who own a business (from 32% to 22%) or who rely on salaried work (from 22% to 17%). At the same time, it has risen among those that rely on petty trade (from 33% to 41%) or government assistance (from 32% to 39%).

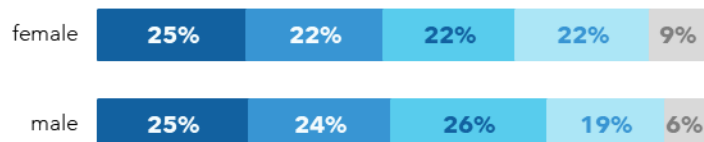
There are no differences in such expectations between women and men respondents and only minimal differences across age groups except for respondents aged 60 or above, who are least likely to expect moderate or severe impacts.

LIVELIHOODS | Future livelihood impacts

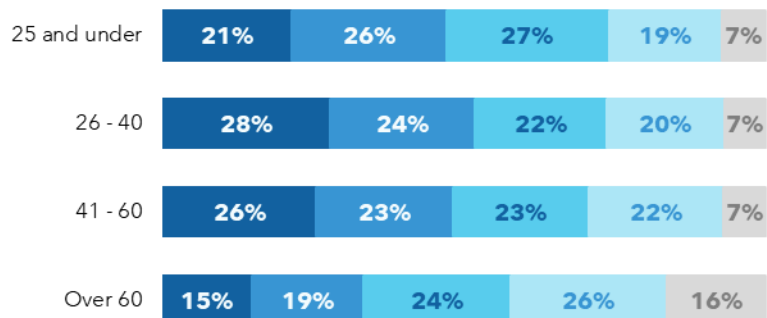
How do you expect your livelihood will be impacted as a result of disruptions from COVID-19?

- Severe impact
- Moderate to severe impact
- Moderate impact
- Some impact
- Little to no impact

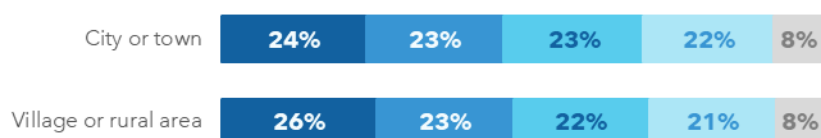
By sex



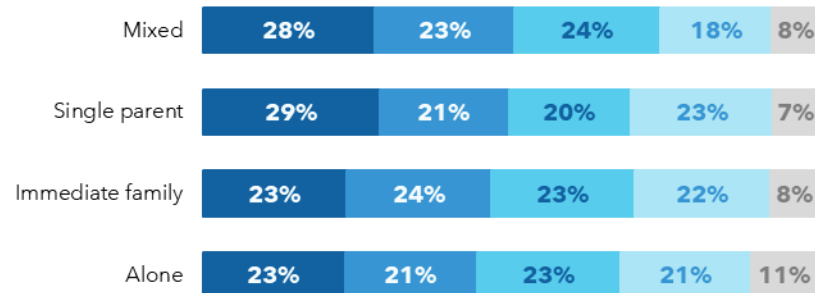
By age group



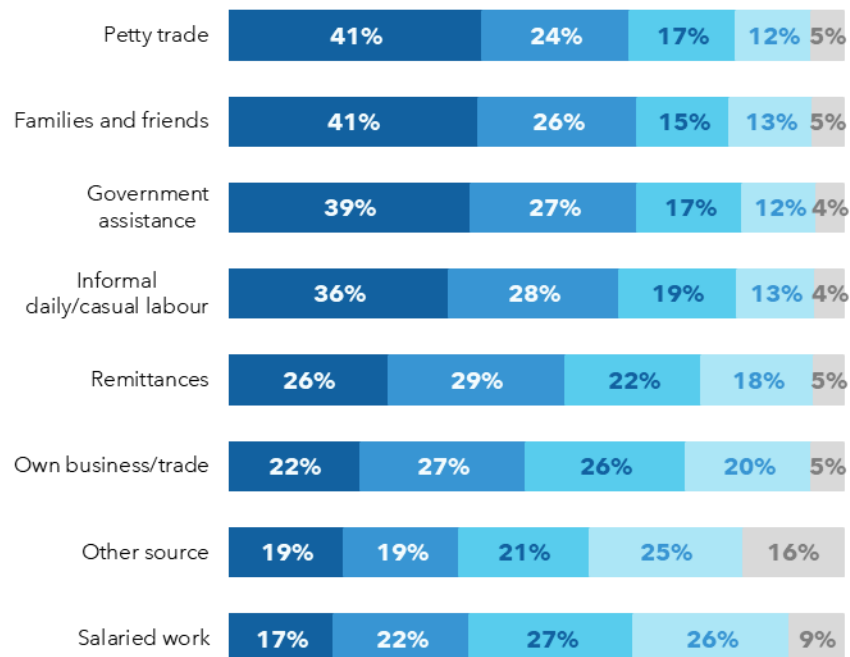
By urban/rural location



By household composition



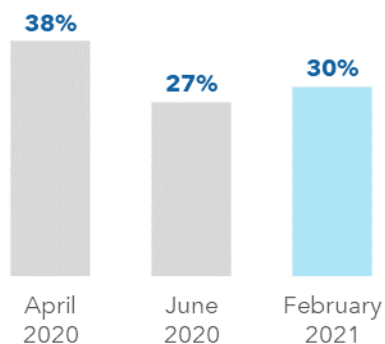
By income sources



MARKETS | Access

- One out of three respondents still experiences difficulties in accessing markets due to COVID-19.

Respondents unable to access markets in the 7 days prior to the survey

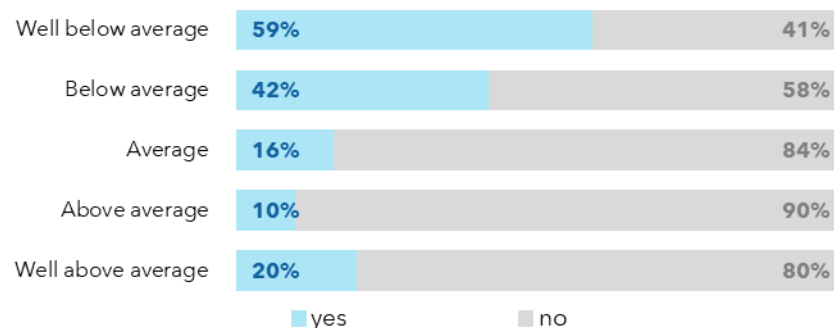


COVID-19 and measures to contain the virus are still impacting market access, with 30% of respondents reporting that they could not access stores and markets at some point in the seven days prior to the February survey. This is slightly lower than in April 2020 (38%) but remains above the levels reported during the June 2020 survey (27%).

Clear differences were found by age group, household composition, income levels and income sources. More than 40% of respondents under 40 years old reported a time when they couldn't access markets compared to 10-24% for other respondents.

Respondents reporting well below average income levels experienced the greatest difficulties in accessing markets (59%), compared to 10-20% for respondents with average to well above average income. Mixed households also reported difficulties in accessing markets (48%) more frequently than others.

**In the past 7 days, was there a time when your household could not access the markets?
By perceived income level**



Those with less stable income sources (petty trade, informal daily/casual labour, support from family and friends, and government assistance) more frequently indicated that they experienced a time when they were unable to access markets compared to respondents with salaried income or income from their own business.

Significant differences across the region were reported, with more than half of respondents from Trinidad and Tobago experiencing difficulties (55%) compared to other countries in the region (10-39%). The high values in Trinidad and Tobago are associated with Spanish speakers (assumed to be migrants from Venezuela) who primarily cited lack of money as the primary hindrance.

MARKETS | Access

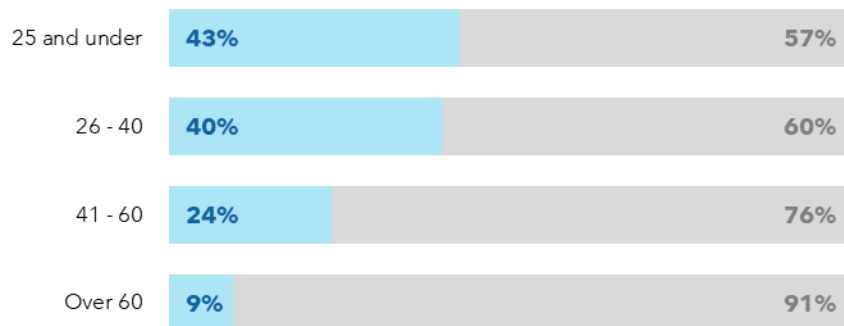
In the past 7 days, was there a time when your household could not access the markets?

■ yes ■ no

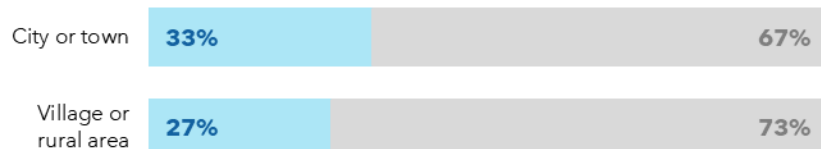
By sex



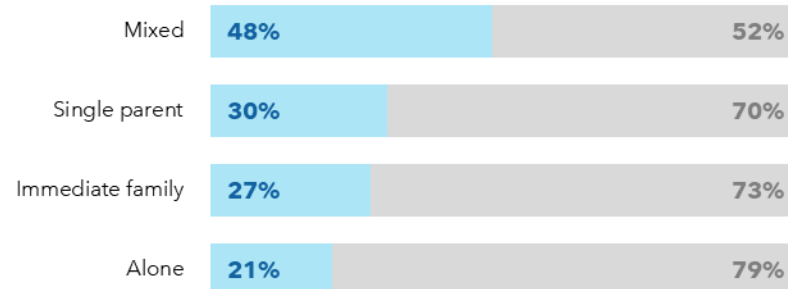
By age group



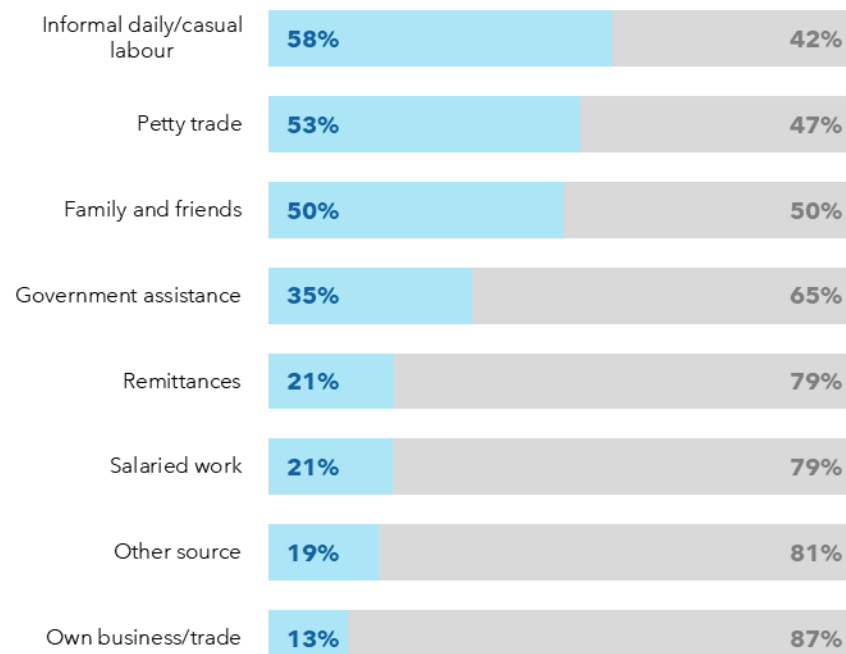
By urban/rural location



By household composition



By main income source

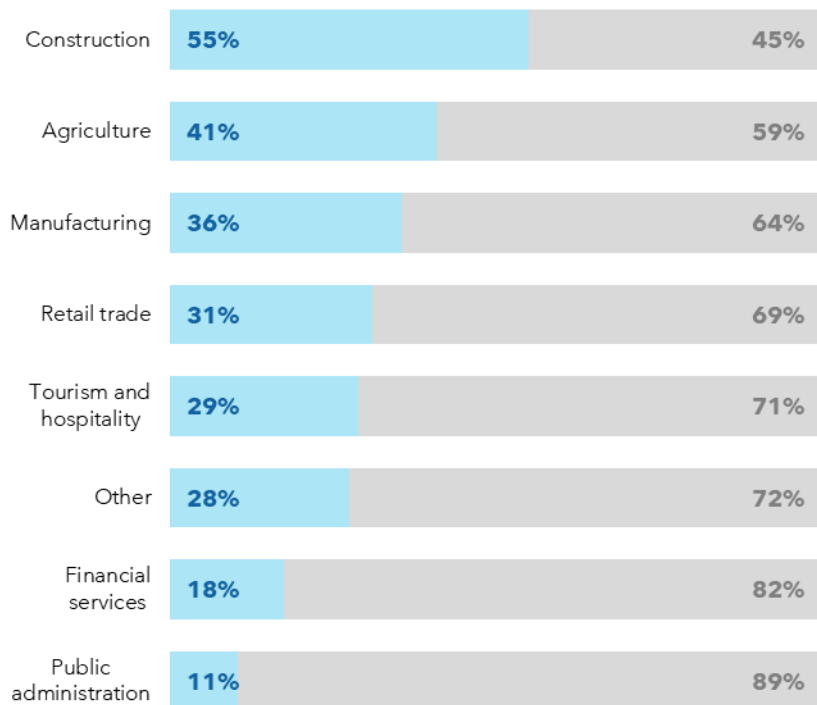


MARKETS | Access

In the past 7 days, was there a time when your household could not access the markets?

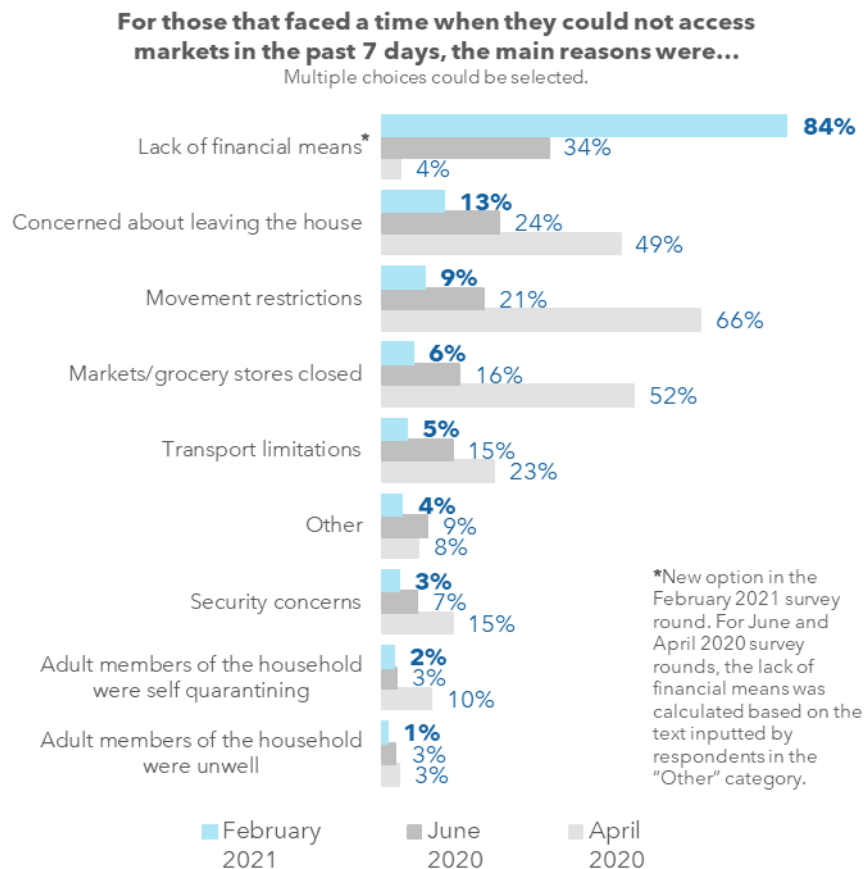
■ yes ■ no

By income sector



MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

- Lack of financial means is the main limiting factor to market access.



At the outbreak of the pandemic, measures to contain COVID-19 and concerns about leaving the house were the predominant factors influencing market access, as well as store closures. Over time, these concerns have become less significant.

Lack of financial means is overwhelmingly reported as the main reason for limited market access, cited by 84% of those who faced a time when they could not access markets in the week prior to the survey (all percentages noted in this section are of those reporting issues accessing markets). This is a significant increase since April and June 2020 when respectively 4% and 34% of the respondents cited lack of money as the main limitation to market access.

There are notable differences across age groups and income levels. Respondents under 40 more frequently cited lack of financial means as a key challenge (84-89%) compared to those over 40 (70-77%). Respondents who described their income level as being below average or well below average also reported lack of financial means more frequently (88-93%) than wealthier respondents (59-67%). Correspondingly, those with less stable income sources (petty trade, informal daily/casual labour, support from family and friends, and government assistance) more frequently indicated financial constraints in limiting access to markets compared to respondents with salaried income or income from their own business.

The differences between men and women were not significant except for concerns about leaving the house. More women (14%) cited this as a limitation for market access compared to men (9%).

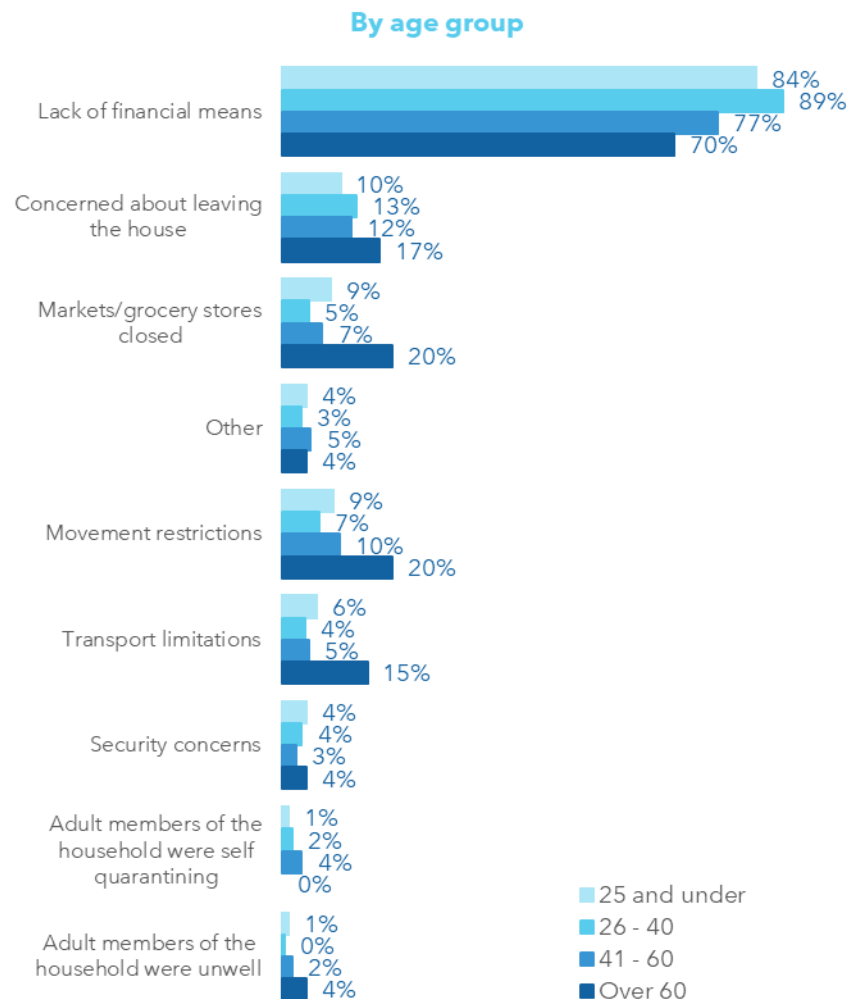
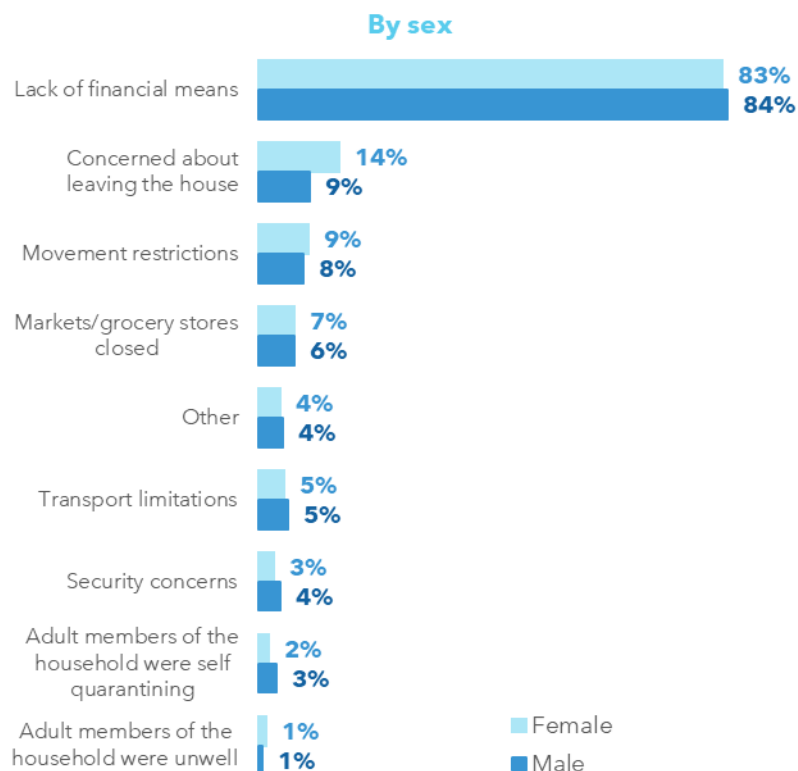
"I am unable to go to the main city to shop for food because of crowded, unmasked public transport. There are many items of food not available in the immediate area. There is no delivery service. Nobody is checking up on me." – Male, 74 years

"It has affected the power I had to buy what I want I only buy that are if essential need but fruits and vegetables are very expensive so I mainly buy can or frozen." – Female, 37 years

MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

For those that faced a time when they could not access markets in the past 7 days, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected.

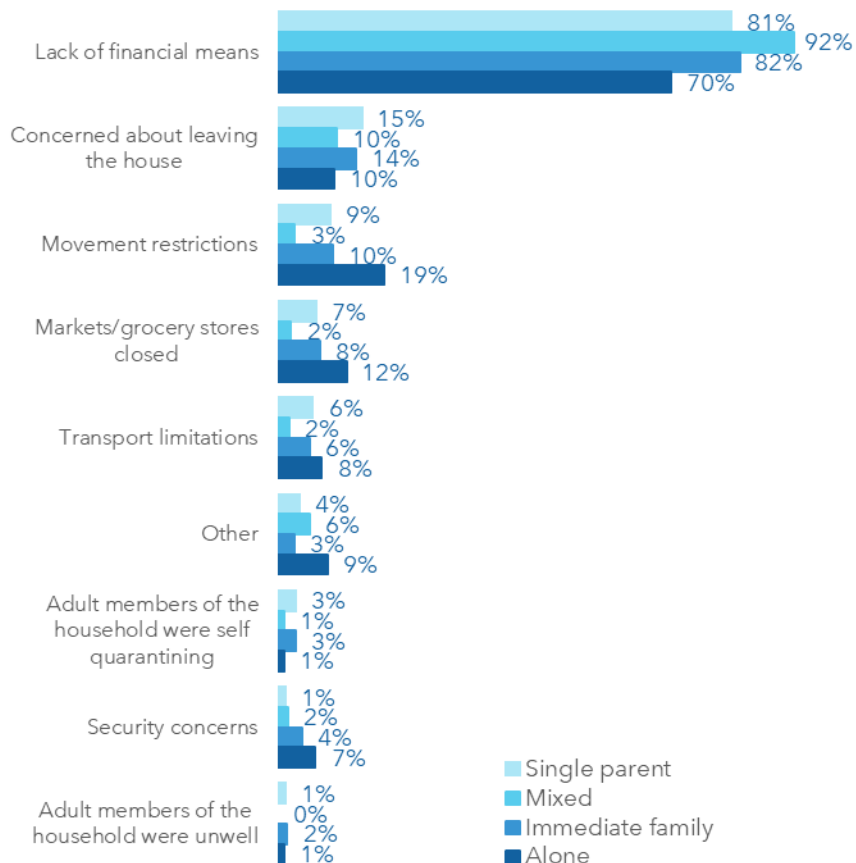


MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

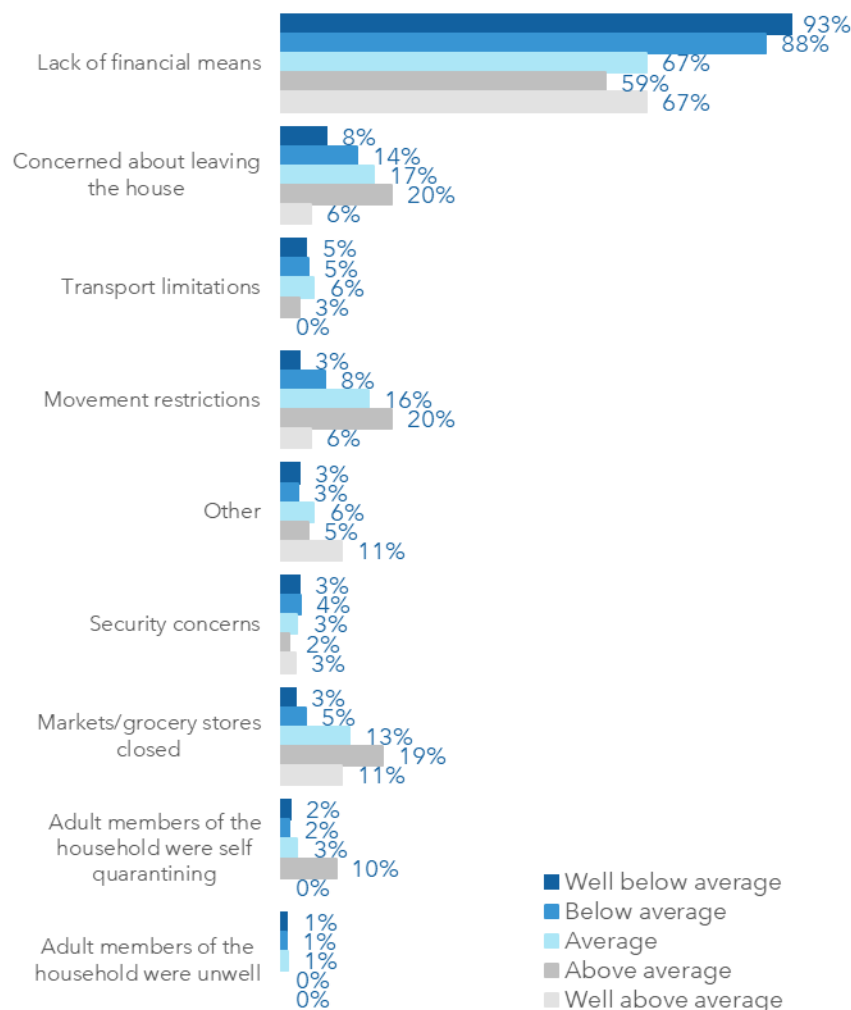
For those that faced a time when they could not access markets in the past 7 days, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected.

By household composition



By perceived income level

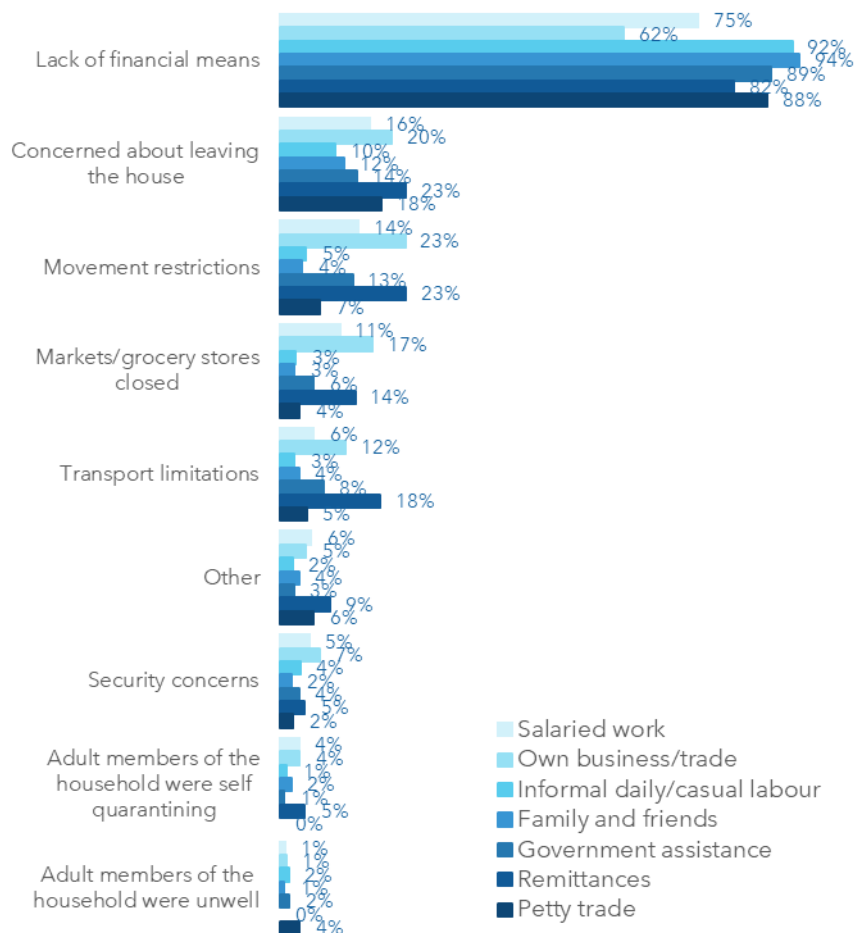


MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

For those that faced a time when they could not access markets in the past 7 days, the main reasons were...

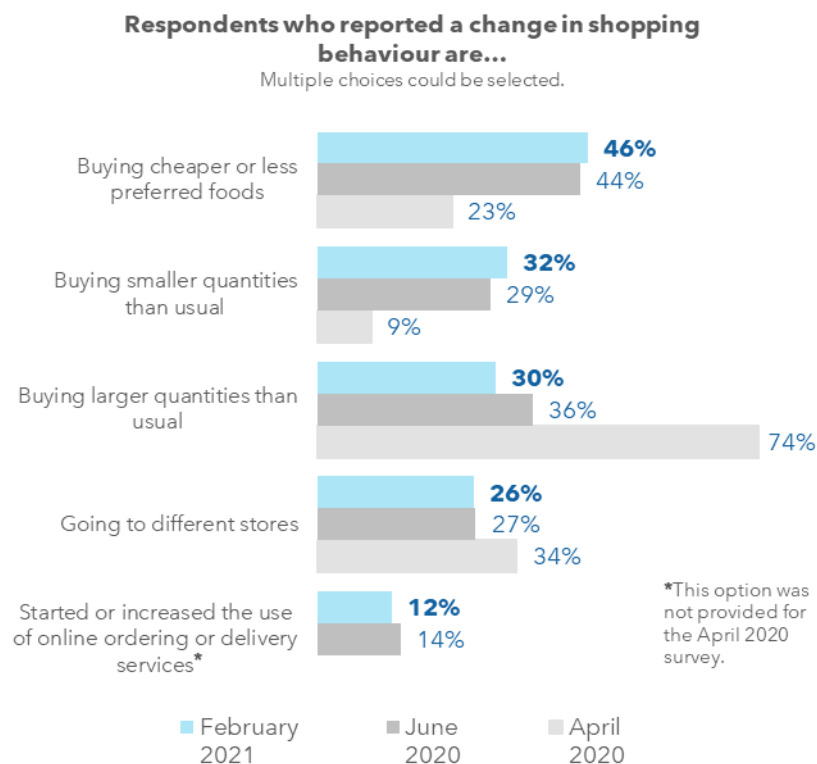
Multiple choices could be selected.

By main income source



MARKETS | Shopping behaviour

- Respondents are buying cheaper or less preferred foods more frequently than at the beginning of the pandemic in April 2020.



"I was the breadwinner of the family and I got laid off because of COVID-19. Everyday I worry about where our next meal is going to come from and how am going to pay the bill. (...) We adapt by eating less and buying cheap food products." – Female, 25 years

The pandemic has changed how people shop, but these changes have evolved over time. In April 2020, 74% of respondents who had changed how they shop reported buying larger quantities of food than usual – possibly to deal with curfews and to reduce the need to shop frequently. In February 2021, this dropped to 30%. At the same time, more reported buying smaller quantities than usual (one-third in February 2021 compared to 9% in April 2020).

In February 2021, the most common change in shopping behaviour was buying cheaper or less preferred foods (46% of respondents who had changed how they shop). This change is closely linked to household composition, age groups and income levels. More than half of those under 40 (56-59%) resorted to buying cheaper food items compared to respondents over 40 (26-29%). Mixed households more often reported buying cheaper or less preferred foods and buying smaller quantities than other household compositions. Respondents who changed how they shop and indicated their income levels to be well below or below average more frequently described having to buy cheaper food (55-62%) and smaller quantities (37-43%) compared to other respondents who bought cheaper food (27-38%) and smaller quantities (19-27%) less frequently.

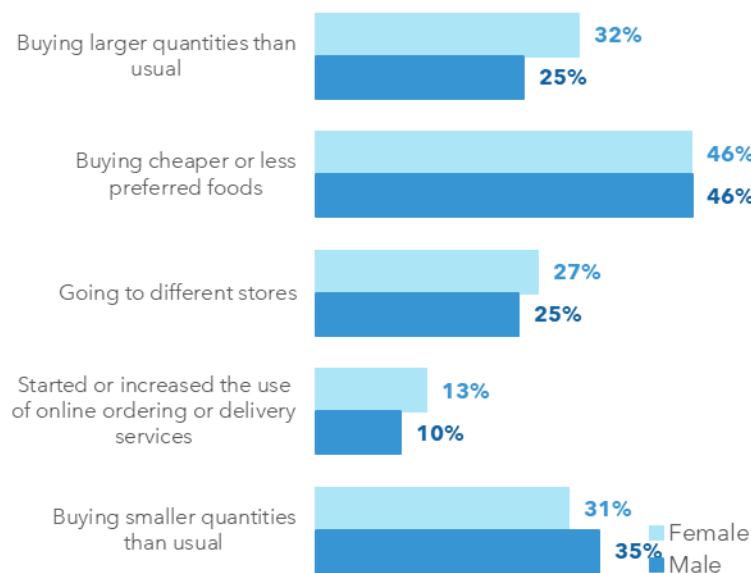
Respondents with above average or well above average income levels continue to buy larger quantities than usual and more frequently report using online ordering/delivery services than respondents with lower income levels.

MARKETS | Shopping behaviour

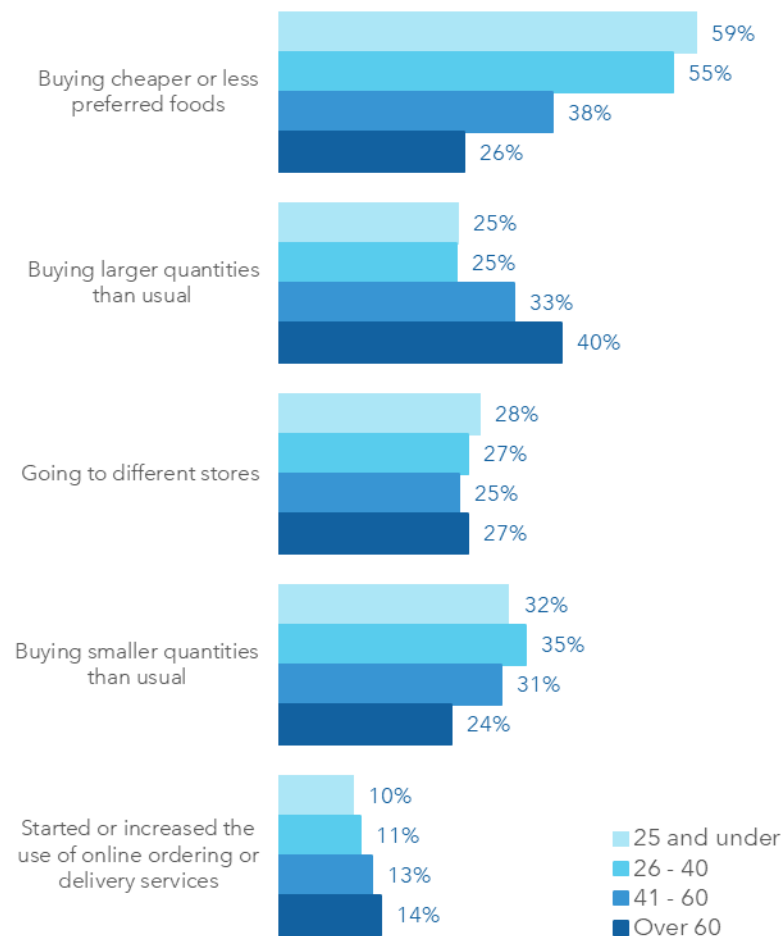
Respondents who reported a change in shopping behaviour are...

Multiple choices could be selected.

By sex



By age group

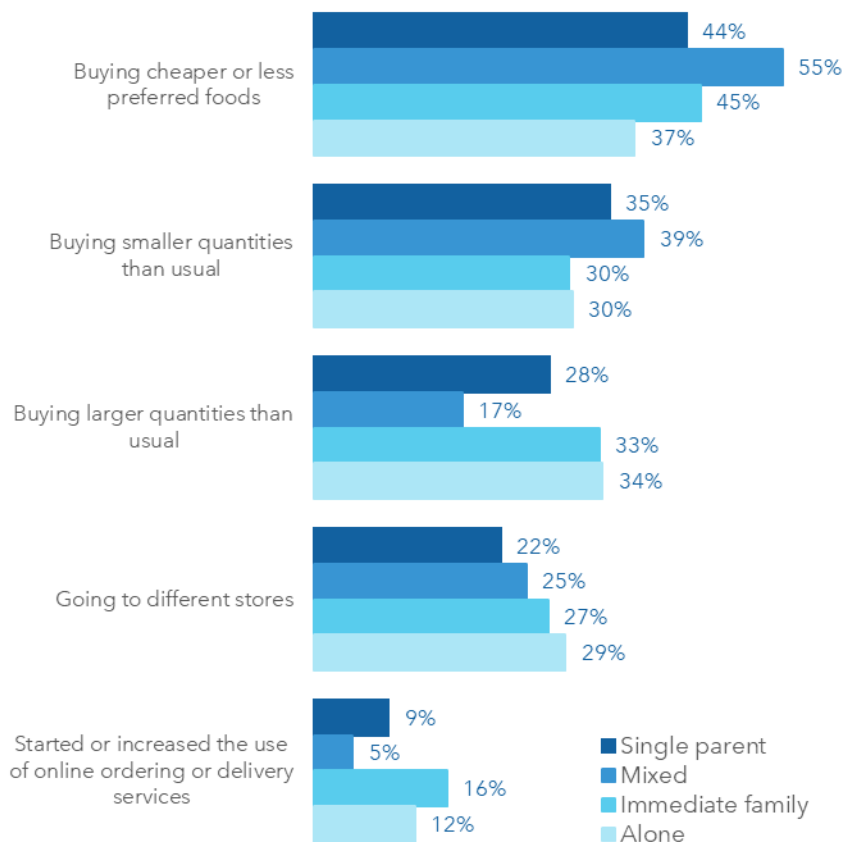


MARKETS | Shopping behaviour

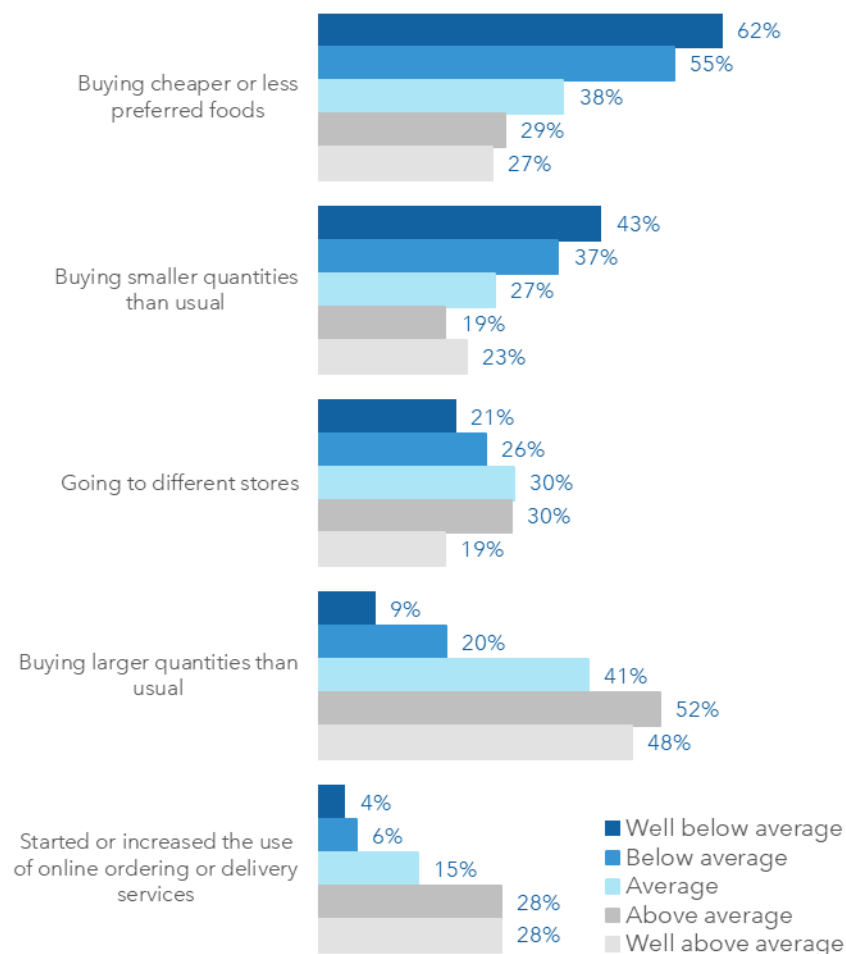
Respondents who reported a change in shopping behaviour are...

Multiple choices could be selected.

By household composition



By perceived income level

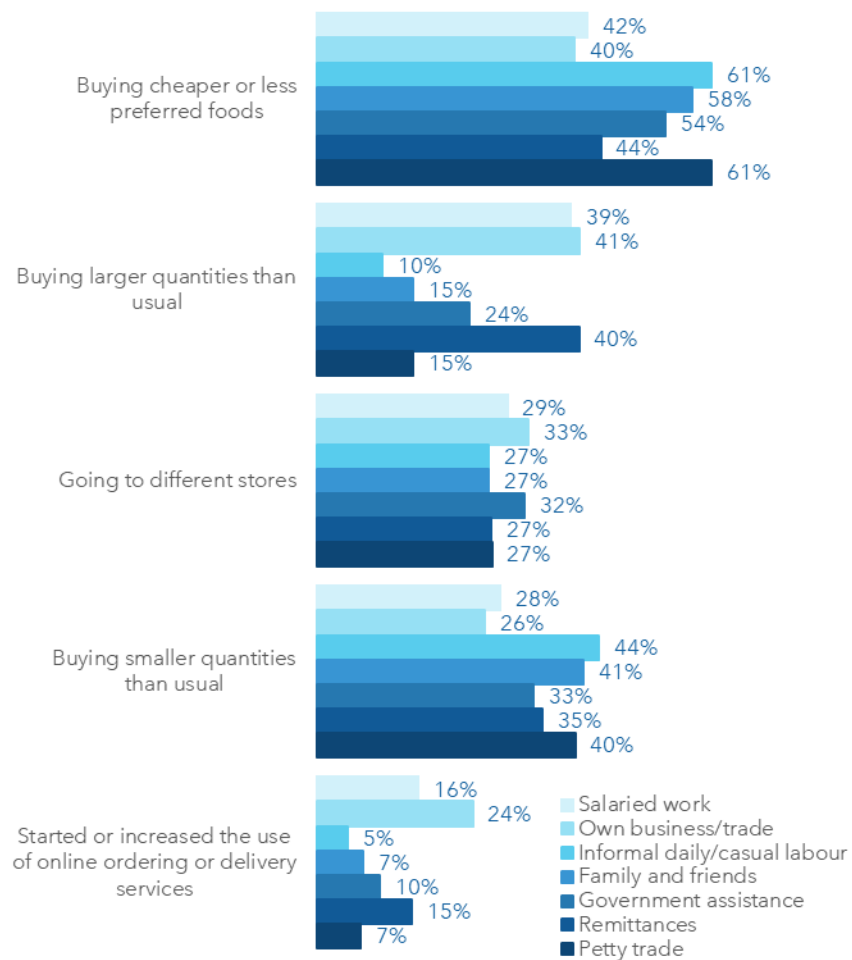


MARKETS | Shopping behaviour

Respondents who reported a change in shopping behaviour are...

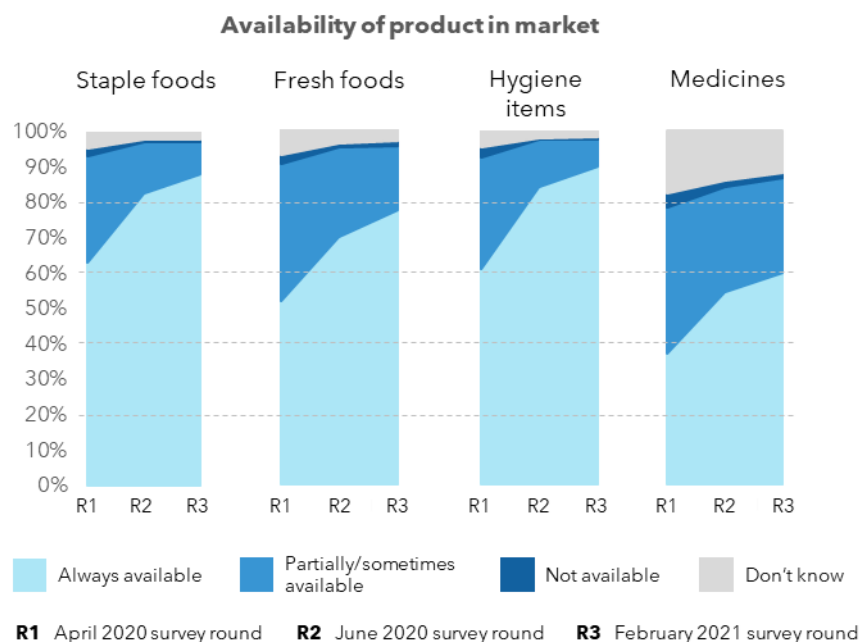
Multiple choices could be selected.

By main income source



MARKETS | Availability

- Availability of key products – such as staple foods and hygiene items – has steadily increased since the pandemic began, but fresh foods and medicines are still not always fully available.



The availability of key products has improved consistently since the beginning of the pandemic. While in April 2020 nearly half of respondents indicated that food, hygiene items and medicines were not always available, that number has decreased in February 2021 – but some items are still not always available in stores and markets.

The reported availability of staple foods and hygiene items has increased substantially between April and June 2020. Their availability continues to increase, with 88% and 90% of respondents in February 2021 indicating that staple foods and hygiene items respectively are always available in their markets. However, 9% of respondents continue to report partial availability of staple foods and 8% report partial availability of hygiene items.

As in previous surveys, fresh foods are marginally less available than staple foods, but their availability appears to be increasing with 77% of respondents reporting that fresh foods are always available. However, 18% of respondents continue to indicate that fresh foods are only sometimes available.

Although availability of medicines appears to be improving with 60% of respondents reporting that medicines are always available in February 2021, 27% of respondents still indicate that medicines are not always available.

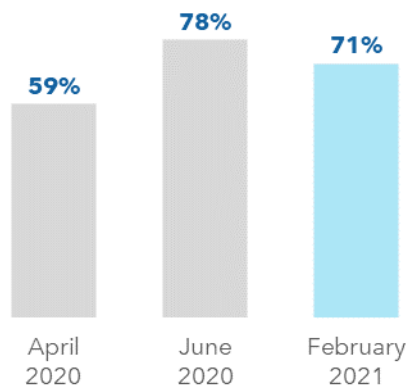
For all items, only 1% of respondents or less described items as being unavailable.

"I usually buy local vegetables and ground provisions from the street vendors, but they have disappeared off the streets. And fresh fish from the markets, not sure how long they will be able to operate" – Female, 52 years

MARKETS | Food prices

- Over seven out of ten respondents identified an increase in food prices.

Respondents who reported an increase in food prices over the 2 weeks prior to the survey

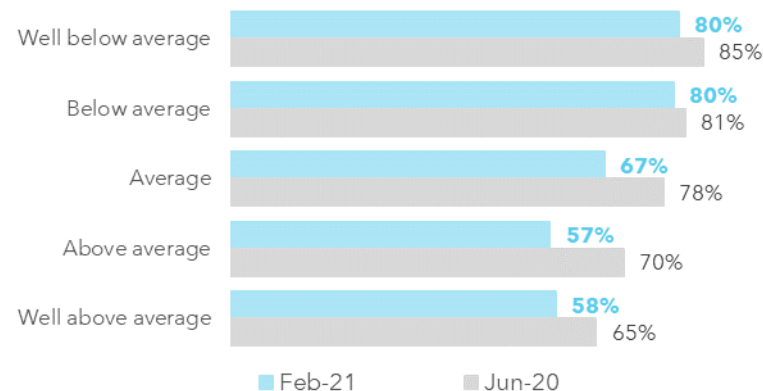


Food prices appear to be increasing, with 71% of respondents indicating an increase in the two weeks prior to the survey. While less than the June 2020 (78%), it is still higher than the 59% of respondents reporting increased food prices in April 2020.

The percentage of respondents who identified an increase in food prices varies in the region: from 56% in Barbados and 61% in Antigua and Barbuda, to 84% in Trinidad and Tobago, and 88% in both Saint Lucia and Belize.

There are no stark differences between those reporting food price increases who live in urban areas (73%) or rural areas (69%).

Respondents who reported an increase in food prices over the 2 weeks prior to the survey
By perceived income level and survey round



Respondents with lower income levels also reported increases in food prices more frequently than others. More than 80% of respondents reporting well below and below average income indicated an increase in food prices, compared to 57-67% of respondents with higher income levels. This could potentially be explained by having fewer shopping options or that they pay closer attention to prices.

"The price of everything went sky high making it difficult to purchase meat and fish. I use the food I grow but meat not too much I can get." – Female, 60 years

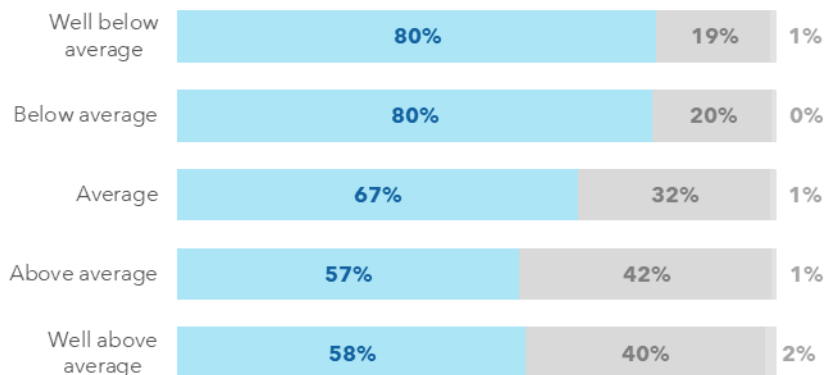
"Increased prices in stores has affected my household. I have to skip meals to ensure my 3 children can eat or we eat less to ensure everyone can eat." – Female, 37 years

MARKETS | Food prices

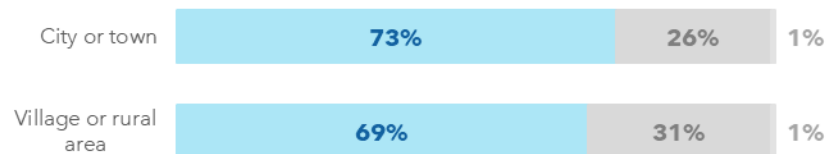
Respondents who reported an increase in food prices over the 2 weeks prior to the survey

- Food prices have increased
- No changes
- Food prices have decreased

By perceived income level



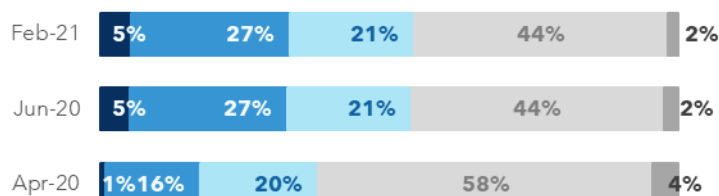
By urban/rural location



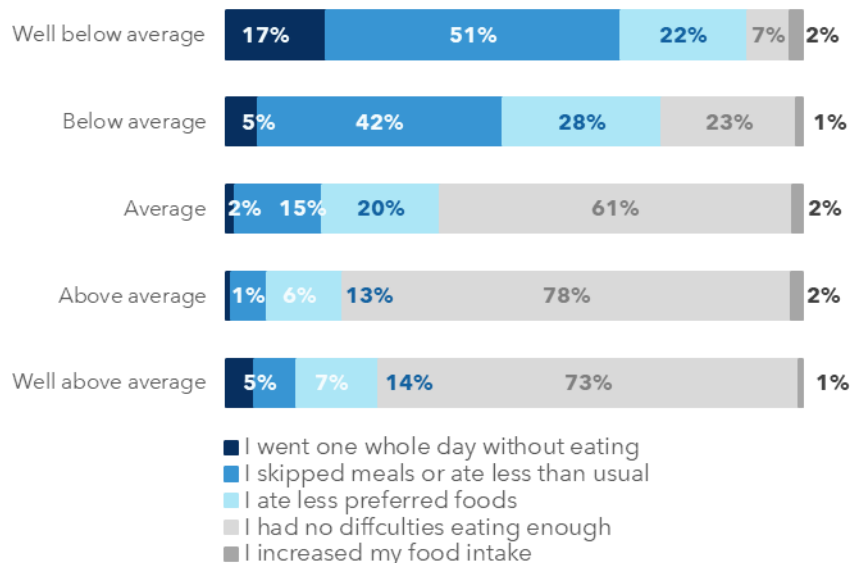
FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

- Food security remains a major concern with impacts on food consumption, particularly among lower income households.

Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?



By perceived income level



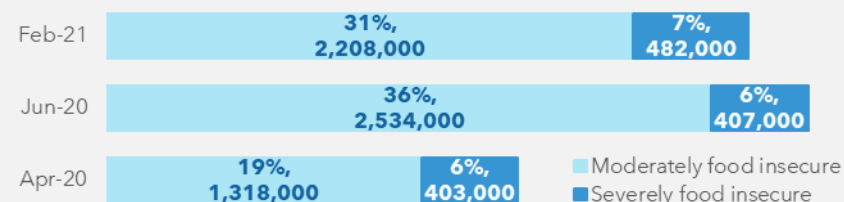
COVID-19 has impacted people's diets, with 27% of respondents skipping meals or eating less than usual in the week leading up to the survey, and 5% going an entire day without eating. Another 21% of respondents reported eating less preferred foods. These findings are in line with the June 2020 survey, but the overall situation appears worse when compared to April 2020.

The differences across income groups continue to be striking. Of respondents with a household income perceived as well below average, half skipped meals or ate less than usual in the week prior to the survey and 17% did not eat for an entire day. By contrast 76% of households reporting above or well above average income reported no difficulties eating enough.

In line with previous rounds, households with informal sources of income (petty trade, casual labour) or relying on external support from government, family or friends appear to be most impacted with 55-61% skipping meals, eating less than usual or not eating for an entire day. While those with salaried income or their own business are less widely affected, at least 17% of these respondents reported skipping meals or eating less than usual.

Estimated number of food insecure in the Caribbean

Based on survey results and population data, it is estimated that 2.7 million out of 7.1 million people are food insecure across the English-speaking Caribbean compared to 2.9 in June 2020 and 1.7 in April 2020. However, severe food insecurity has increased from 403,000 in April 2020 to 482,000 in February 2021.



FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

While differences in the impacts on food consumption appear to be most striking across income levels and income sources, these impacts also vary across economic sectors, age groups and household types. Respondents whose main income sector is construction and agriculture appear to be the most affected, with 40-44% of these respondents skipping meals or eating less than usual, compared to the survey average of 27%. This is closely followed by respondents engaged in retail trade (35%), tourism/hospitality (33%) and manufacturing (30%). Another 8-10% from of respondents from the construction and agriculture sector reported going an entire day without eating. Respondents working in tourism, construction and retail trade were also among the most frequent to report job or income losses, which suggests that reduced food consumption may be a consequence of reduced incomes. Respondents whose household has faced job or income loss were more than four times more likely to report skipping meals or eating less than usual than those whose income remained unchanged.

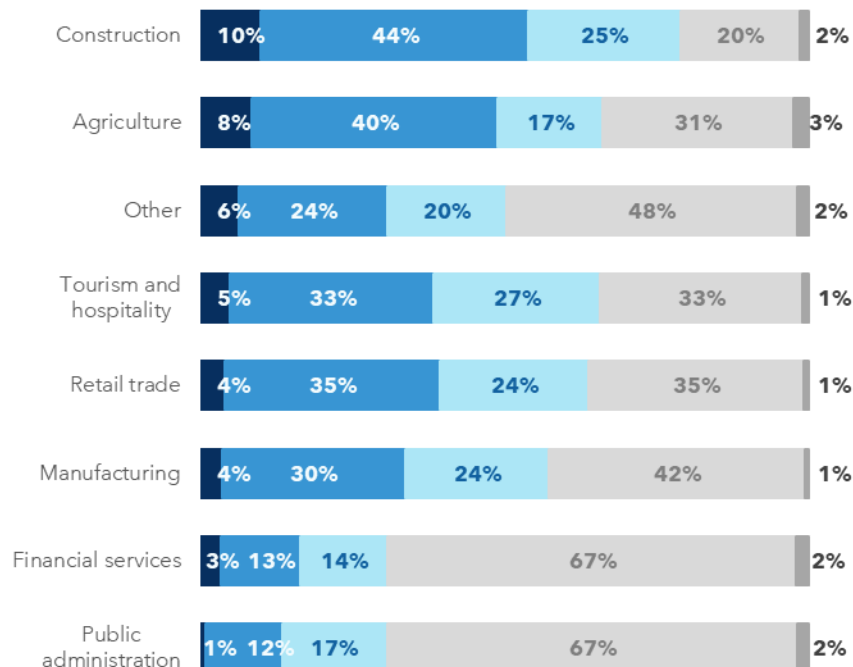
Younger respondents were more likely to reduce their food consumption, in line with previous survey rounds. Of respondents aged 25 and younger, 41% skipped meals or ate less than usual, compared to 10% of those over 60 years of age.

While differences across household types appear less pronounced, respondents from mixed households appear to be more widely affected than others, with 41% skipping meals or eating less than usual. This is followed by single parent households (27%) and households composed of immediate family members (26%). Respondents who live alone were less likely to reduce their food intake, but still 18% reported skipping meals or eating less than usual. There are no significant differences between female and male respondents in food consumption trends in the week prior to the survey.

Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?

- I went one whole day without eating
- I skipped meals or ate less than usual
- I ate less preferred foods
- I had no difficulties eating enough
- I increased my food intake

By income sector

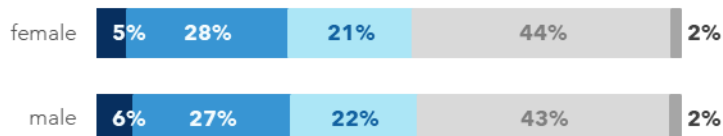


FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

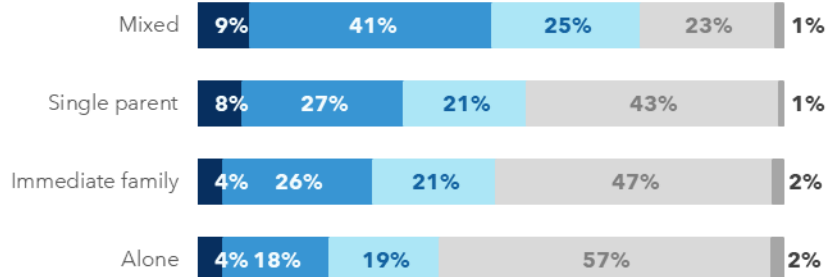
Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?

- I went one whole day without eating
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- I increased my food intake

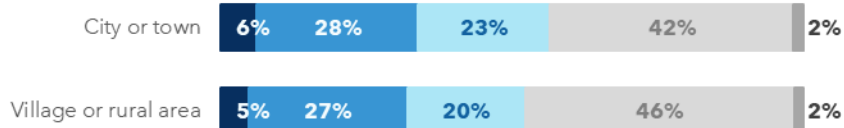
By sex



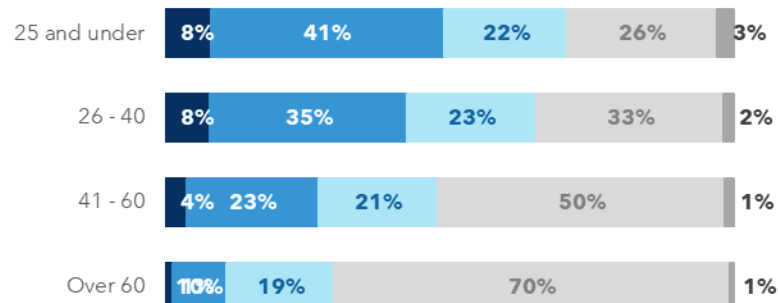
By household composition



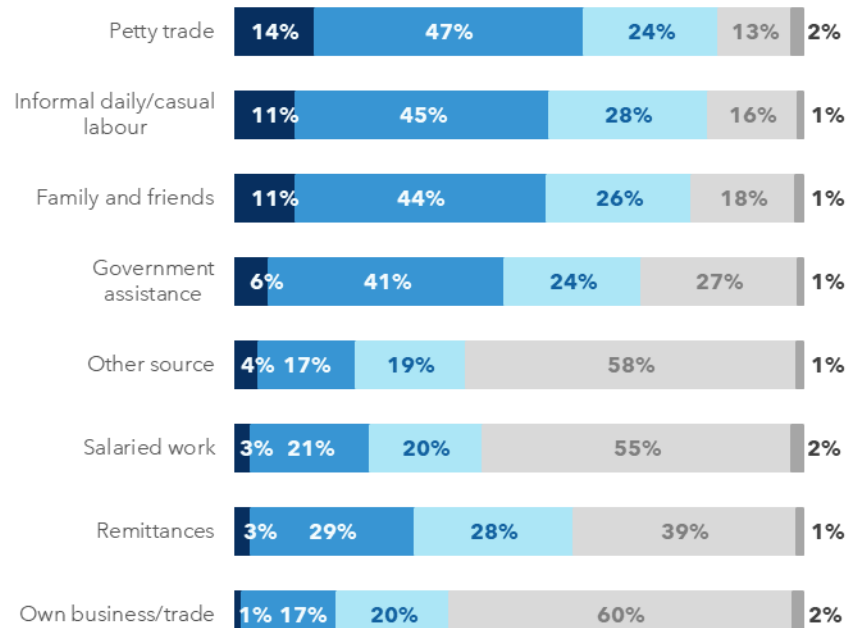
By urban/rural location



By age group



By income sources

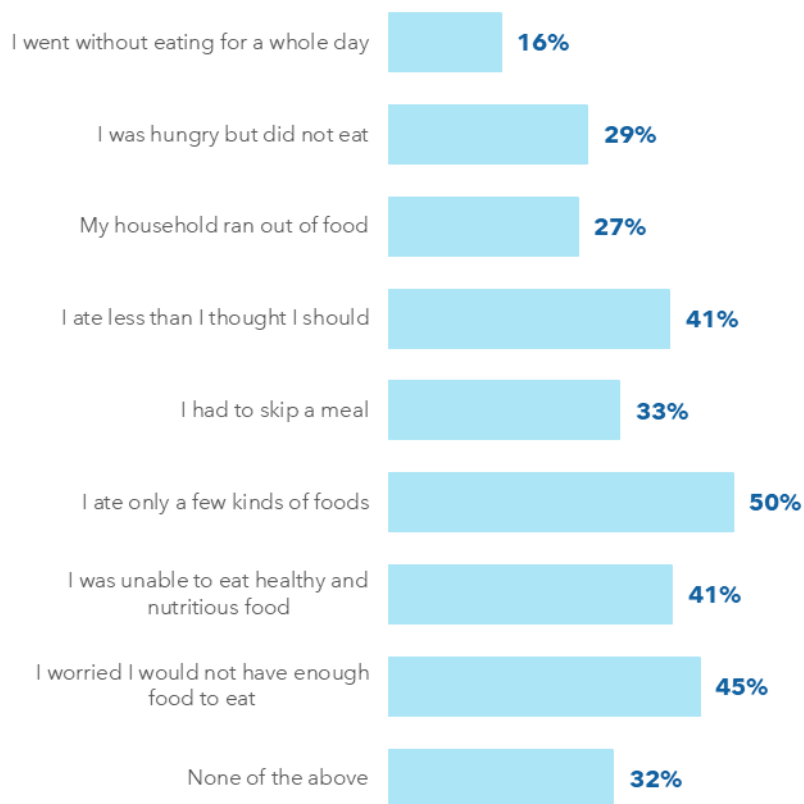


FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

- Many respondents are struggling to meet their food and nutritional needs on a monthly basis.

Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?

Respondents were asked to select "yes" or "no" for each statement. Numbers shown are the percentage of respondents selecting "yes" for each of the statements.



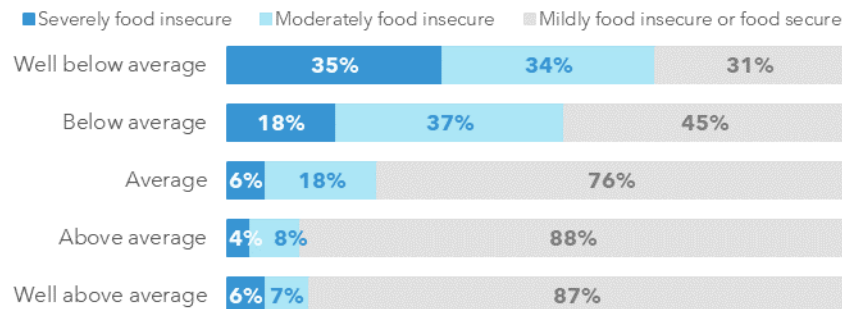
The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was used to provide a picture of food insecurity experienced by respondents during the 30 days preceding the survey. The FIES, which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, is a metric of severity of food insecurity at the household or individual level that relies on people's direct yes/no responses to eight brief questions regarding their access to adequate food during a specified recall period.

When asked about the 30 days leading up to the survey, 16% of respondents reported experiencing a time when they went a whole day without eating. Similarly, 29% of respondents experienced a time when they were hungry but did not eat. Worries about not having enough to eat were reported by 45% of respondents. Only one third of respondents did not experience any of the situations listed. Nutrition and the variety of foods consumed are also concerning, with 41% of respondents reporting a time when they were unable to eat a healthy and nutritious diet, and 50% reporting a time when they ate only a few kinds of food.

Using the FIES methodology and survey data, it is estimated that 24% of respondents are moderately food insecure and 14% are severely food insecure (see [page 66](#)).

Prevalence rates of food insecurity by perceived household income

Based on FIES methodology.



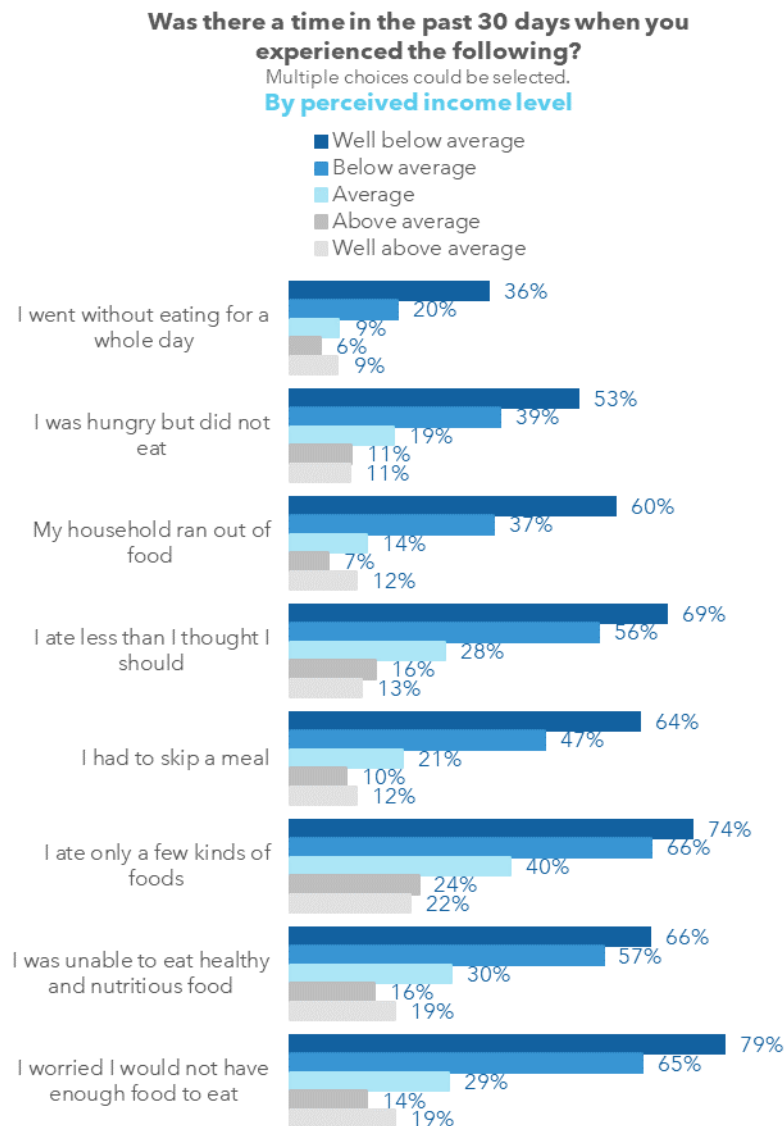
FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

Food insecurity does not appear to be uniformly experienced across all respondents. When looking at responses to the different items of the food insecurity experience scale (FIES), differences across income groups are the most striking. Of those respondents who describe their household income as well below average, 53% experienced a time when they were hungry but did not eat in previous 30 days, which is well above the survey average of 29%. Likewise, 69% of these respondents faced a time when they ate less than they thought they should compared to 41% of all respondents.

There were also differences across age groups. Of respondents in the age group 25 and younger, 29% went a day without eating over the 30 days preceding the survey, compared to 7% for respondents over 60 years. Younger respondents were also more likely than average to report a time when they were hungry but did not eat. Nearly half of respondents aged 25 and younger experienced a time when they did not eat despite being hungry compared to 29% of all survey respondents.

While differences across household types appear less pronounced, respondents from mixed households with extended family members tend to be the most affected across the majority of FIES items when compared to differently composed households. Of these respondents, 55% experienced a time during the month preceding the survey when they ate less than they thought they should.

Responses to FIES items do not differ significantly between female and male respondents. However, among respondents classifying their income as well below average, slightly more men reported reducing food consumption compared to women.

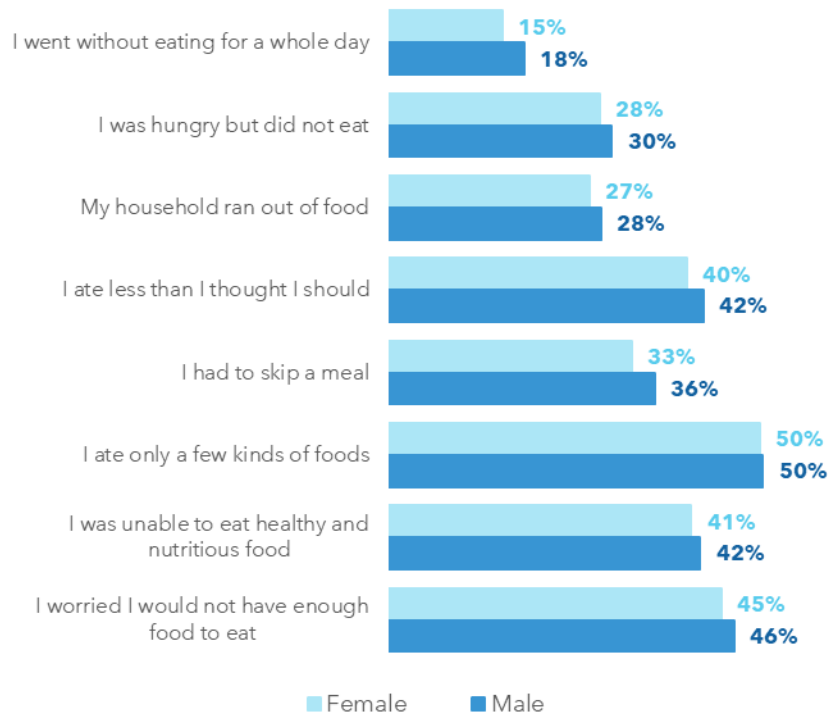


FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

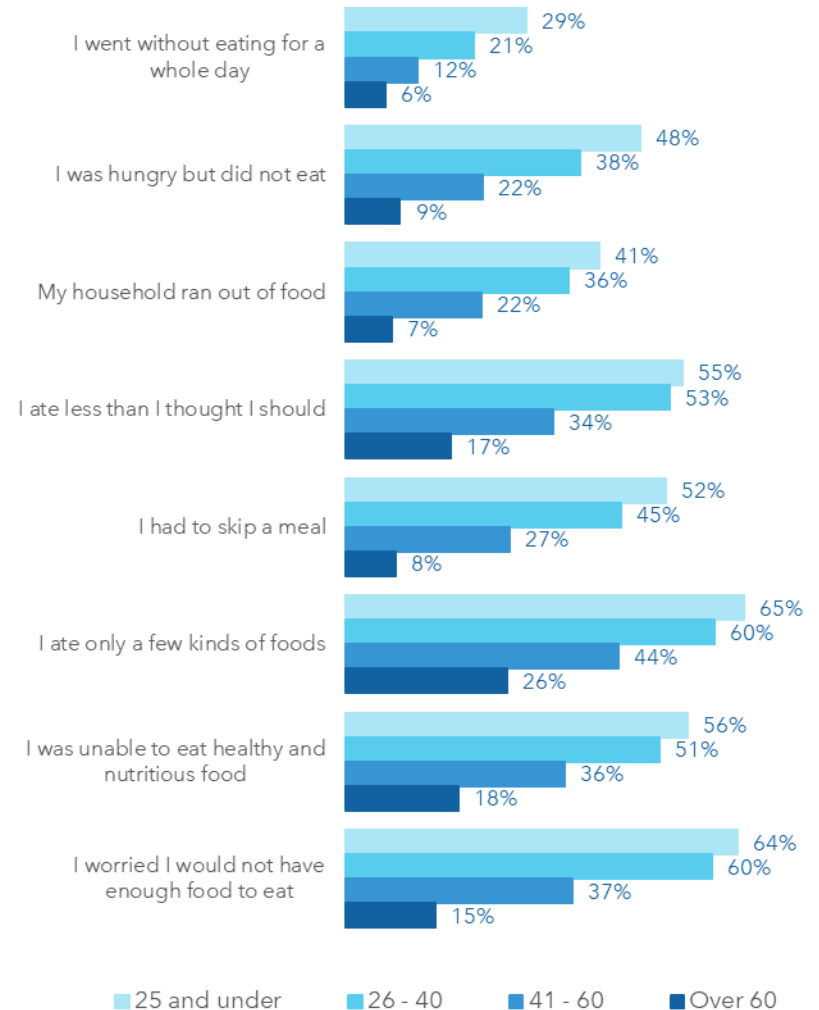
Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?

Multiple choices could be selected.

By sex



By age group

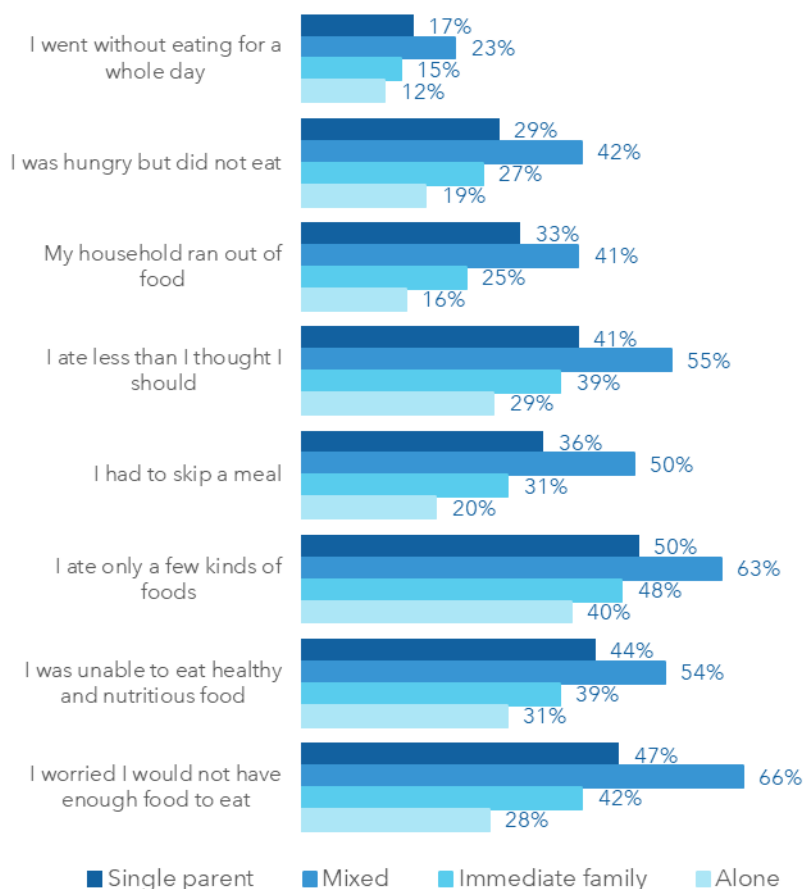


FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?

Multiple choices could be selected.

By household composition



"Fear for food security if the situation continues after the next month" - Male, 56 years

"I have no food for my kids to eat for two weeks now" - Female, 31 years

"I have been unable to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to have my required daily diabetic and hypertensive diet." - Male, 67 years

"I have had to eat a cookie a day and a week without eating for one or two days" - Male, 31 years

"I have learnt to eat when necessary and for survival. Food has become a source of survival not a luxury" - Female, 35 years

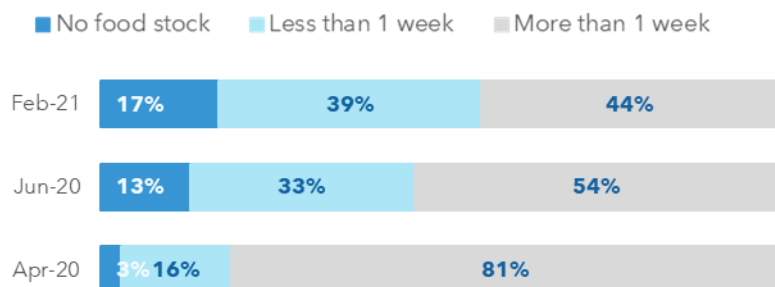
"Taking life one day at a time trying to make sure my children eats at least once a day" - Female, 40 years

"Poor eating habits" - Male

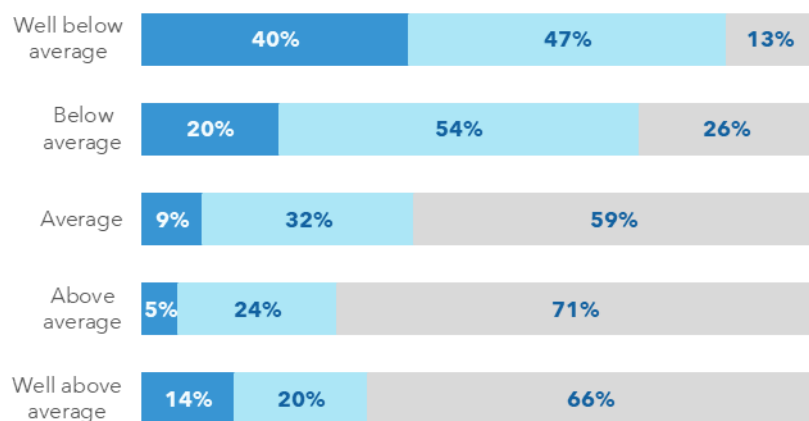
FOOD SECURITY | Food stocks

- Most households have some food supplies, but increasingly they report smaller amounts of stocks or none at all.

Does your household have any food stock?



By perceived income level



At the time of the survey, 44% reported having more than a week's worth of food supplies in their household, which is a decrease from 81% in April and 54% in June 2020. The significantly higher share in April 2020 is likely due to respondents stocking up on food supplies in the face of movement restrictions and shop closures that were implemented during that period.

Differences in food stocks seem to reflect disparities in household income, with low-income households appearing to have less food stock than higher income households. Of respondents with a perceived income of well below average, 40% had no food stocks at all at the time of the survey, and only 13% had more than a week's worth, compared to 59% for households with a perceived average income.

Households whose main income comes from salaried labour or their own business/trade tend to have larger food stocks than households that rely mainly on informal sources of income or on government assistance. The latter groups are also the most frequent to not have any food stocks in their house.

The amount of food stocks also vary according to respondents' age. Respondents in the age groups between 41-60 years and over 60 years tend to report larger household food stocks than those from younger age groups. Of respondents aged 25 and younger, 24% had no food stocks, compared to 11% of those over 60 years of age.

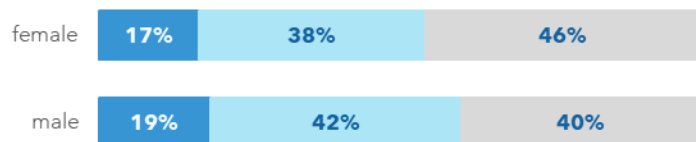
Of all respondents who reported skipping meals or eating less than usual over the seven days preceding the survey, 28% had no food stocks at all, compared to 6% for those who had no difficulty eating enough. Among those who reported going a whole day without eating, 61% had no food stock. This is likely explained by the fact these negative trends are concentrated among lower-income households.

FOOD SECURITY | Food stocks

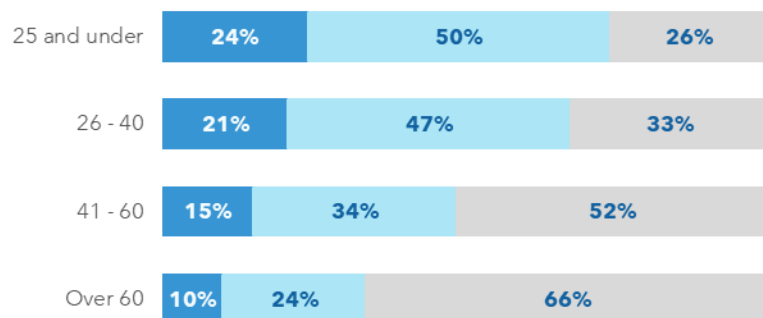
Does your household have any food stock?

■ No food stock ■ Less than 1 week ■ More than 1 week

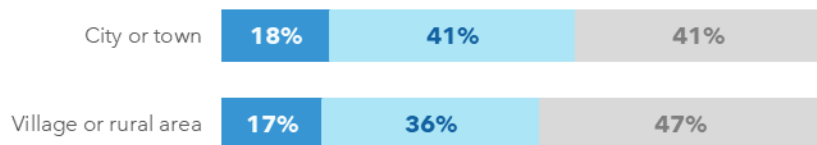
By sex



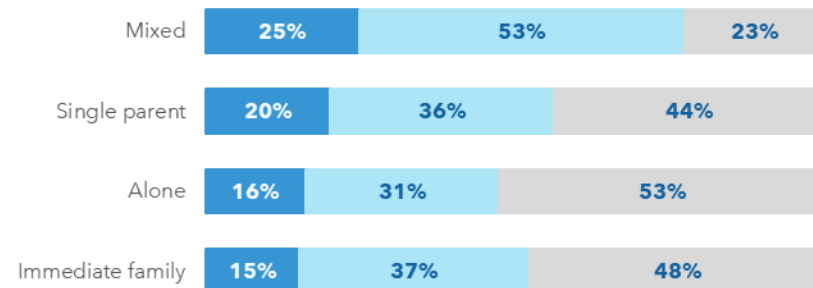
By age group



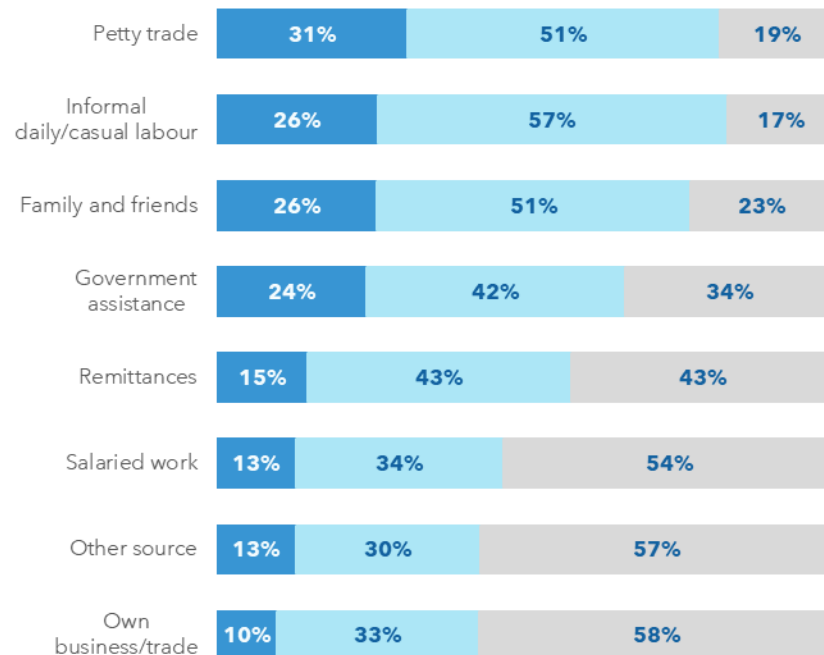
By urban/rural location



By household composition



By income sources



FOOD SECURITY | Coping strategies

- People are finding ways to meet food needs, but many are doing so at the expense of investing in health, education or long-term income generation.

During the third survey round, respondents were asked if in the 30 days prior to the survey they reduced other expenditures, spent savings or sold productive assets to meet their food needs. Two-thirds resorted to spending savings, and almost half reduced essential non-food expenditures, such as on education and health. Every third respondent sold productive assets to meet food or other needs, potentially undermining long-term income generation.

Households with below or well below average income are more frequently resorting to these measures, which could lead to an even greater gap between economically better and worse off households. Respondents aged 40 or younger were more likely to undertake these changes compared to others. Men were more likely to sell productive assets (38%) compared to women (29%), which may suggest greater ownership or control over these resources.

"With business being closed and products are not selling, no income is coming in. We have to use savings to buy essential items" - Female, 43 years

"Significantly less income and have had to sacrifice paying insurances and other bills to make sure I have food and gas" - Male, 38 years

"I have sold my car, my TV, and my serger, there's nothing left to sell at the moment." - Female, 65 years

Households' coping strategies in the 30 days prior to the survey

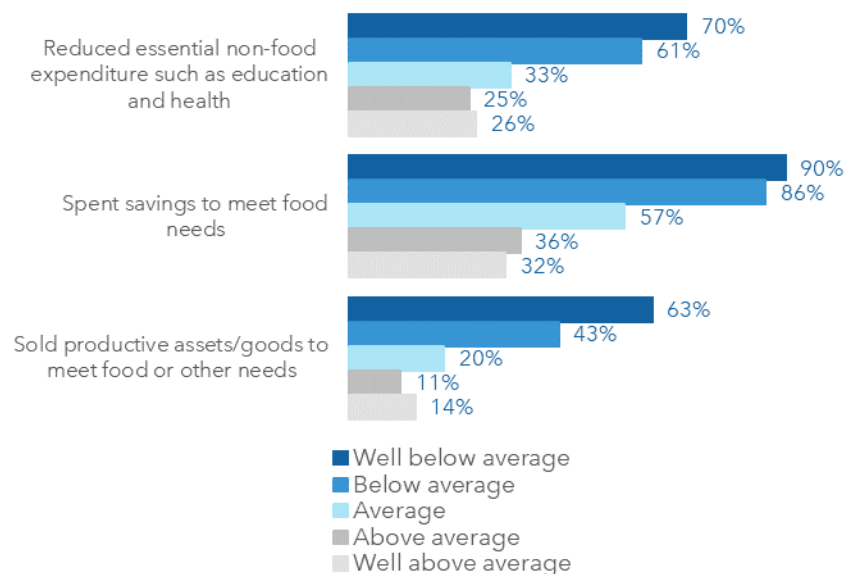
Multiple choices could be selected.



Households' coping strategies in the 30 days prior to the survey

Multiple choices could be selected.

By perceived income level

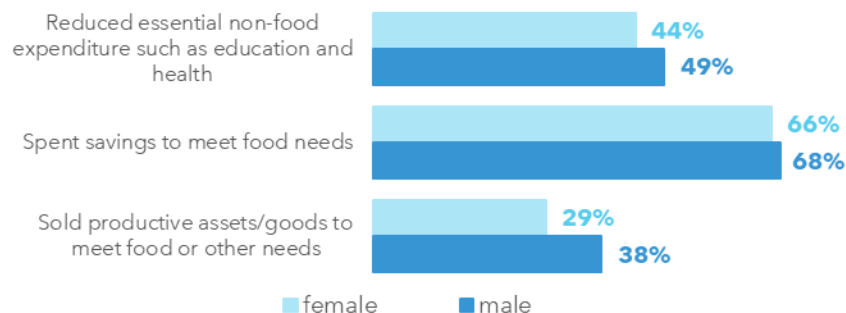


FOOD SECURITY | Coping strategies

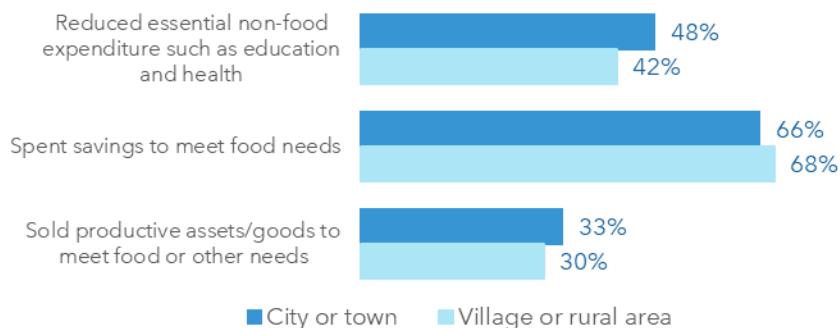
Households' coping strategies in the 30 days prior to the survey

Multiple choices could be selected.

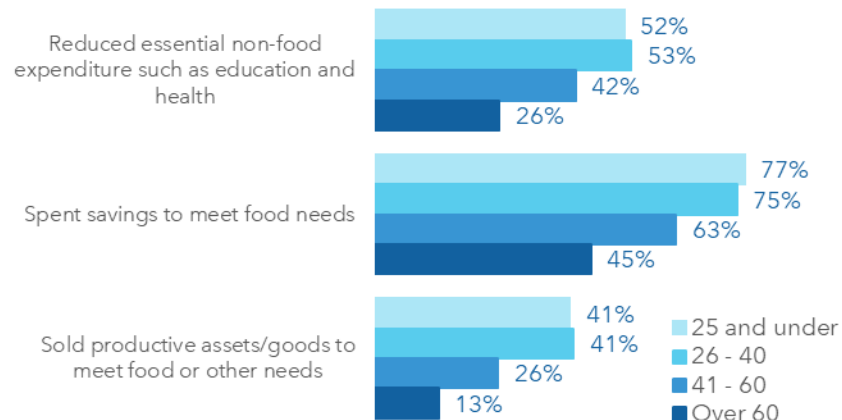
By sex



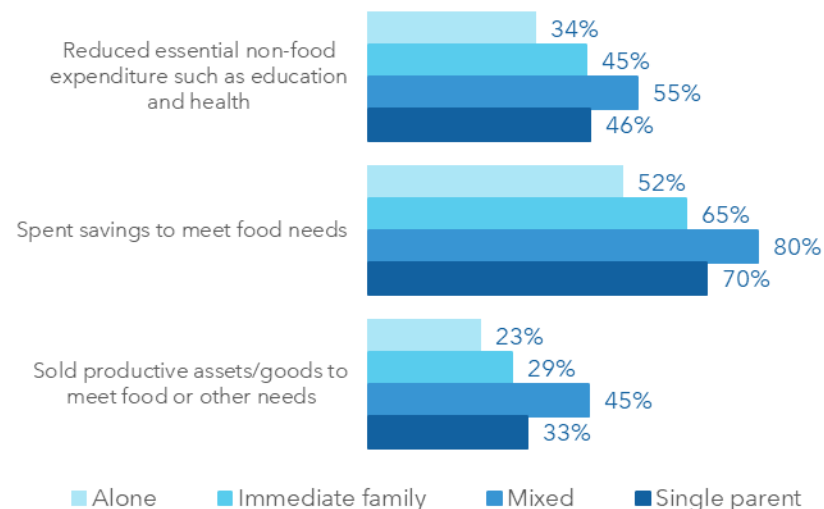
By urban/rural location



By age group



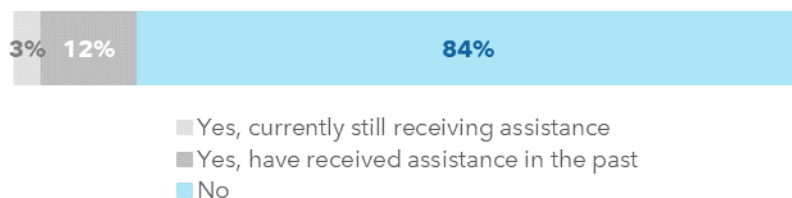
By household composition



WIDER IMPACTS | COVID-19 assistance

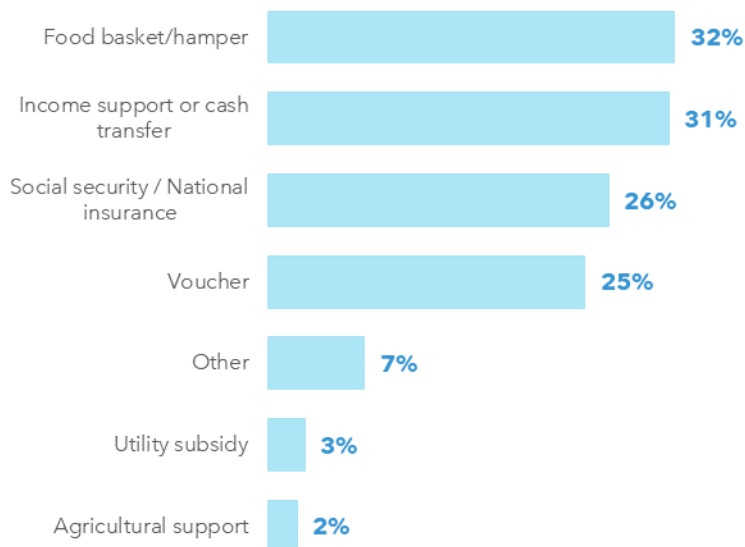
- Food hampers and social security benefits were the most commonly received forms of government assistance.

Have you received any assistance from the government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?



Respondents who received assistance from the government, have received the following...

Multiple choices could be selected.



The COVID-19 pandemic galvanised governments in the Caribbean to expand and put in place new programmes to support people facing its economic repercussions. The most commonly adopted measures have been unemployment insurance, food hampers/care packages and income support (see [page 6](#) for more information on government social protection responses).

These trends are reflected in the survey results. Out of all respondents, 15% reported receiving some form of government assistance in response to COVID-19, though only 3% were still receiving assistance when the survey was implemented. The most common forms of support reported are food baskets/hampers (32% of those receiving assistance), income support or cash transfers (31%), social security (26%) and vouchers (25%).

Respondents describing their income as well below average (23%) and below average (19%) were more likely to receive assistance when compared to those perceiving above and well above average income (both 8%). Those who were already relying on government assistance (54%), support from families and friends (21%), and petty trade (19%) as income sources were also more likely to be recipients of COVID-19 assistance. By comparison, 13% of respondents with household income from salaries reported receiving government support. No major differences related to sex, age groups and household composition were observed.

WIDER IMPACTS | COVID-19 assistance

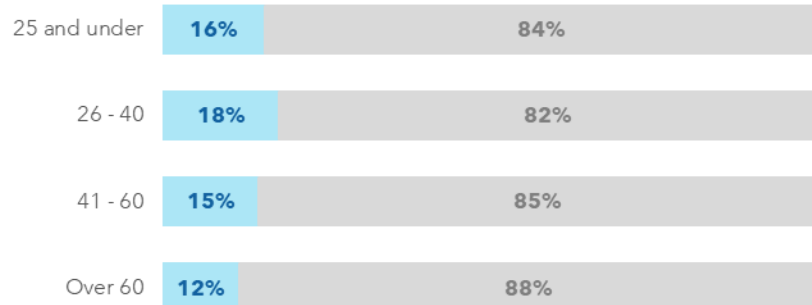
Have you received any assistance from the government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

■ Yes ■ No

By sex



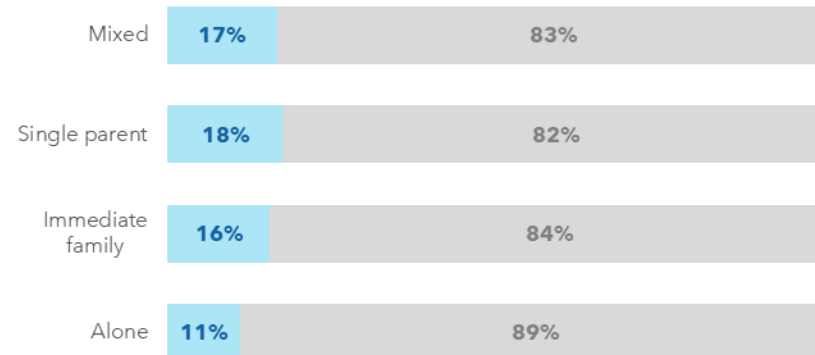
By age group



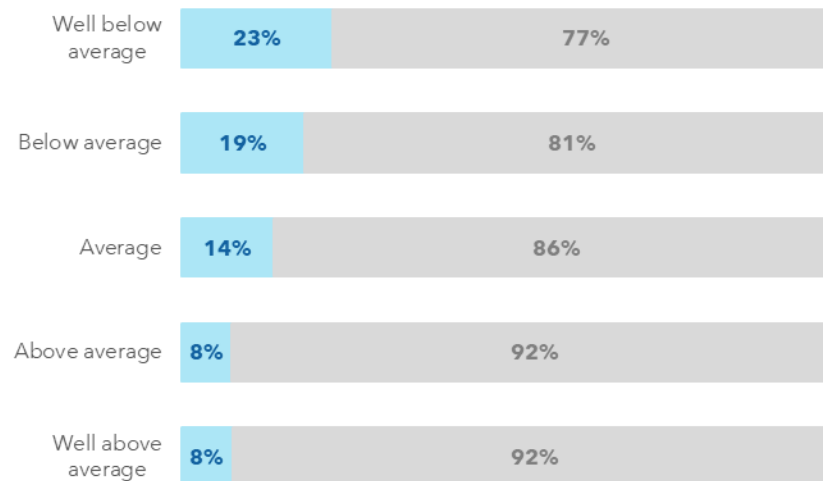
By urban/rural location



By household composition



By perceived income level

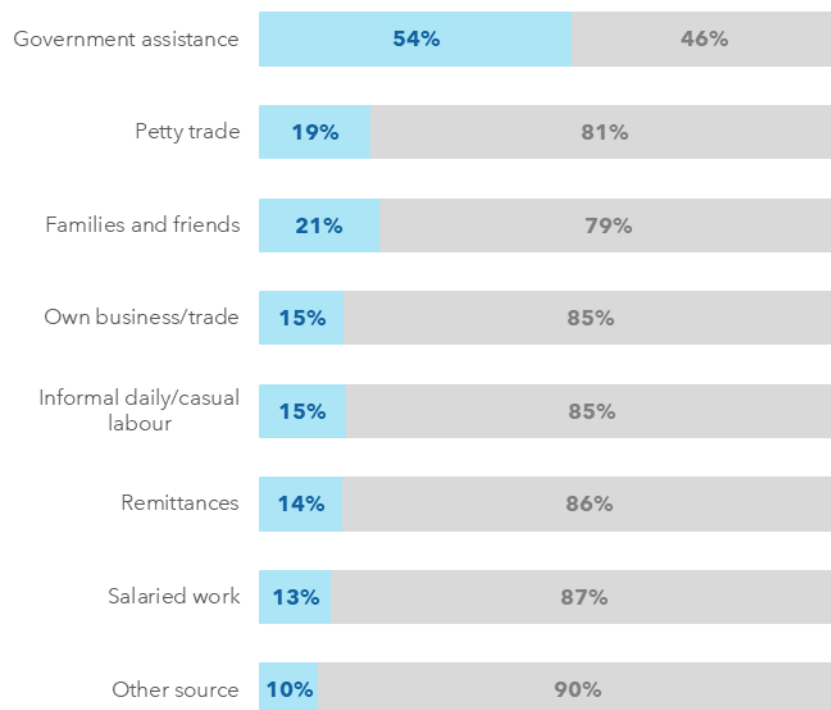


WIDER IMPACTS | COVID-19 assistance

Have you received any assistance from the government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

■ Yes ■ No

By main income source



"Frustration on receiving government assistance to fill the financial gap on food supplies or cash." – Female, 47 years

"No work, and no assistance from government" – Female, 26 years

"I am not working, and the unemployment benefits are slightly above half what I use to make, I still have to pay my full rent and my bills so every other month I can't buy food because I have to pay my rent." – Female, 34 years

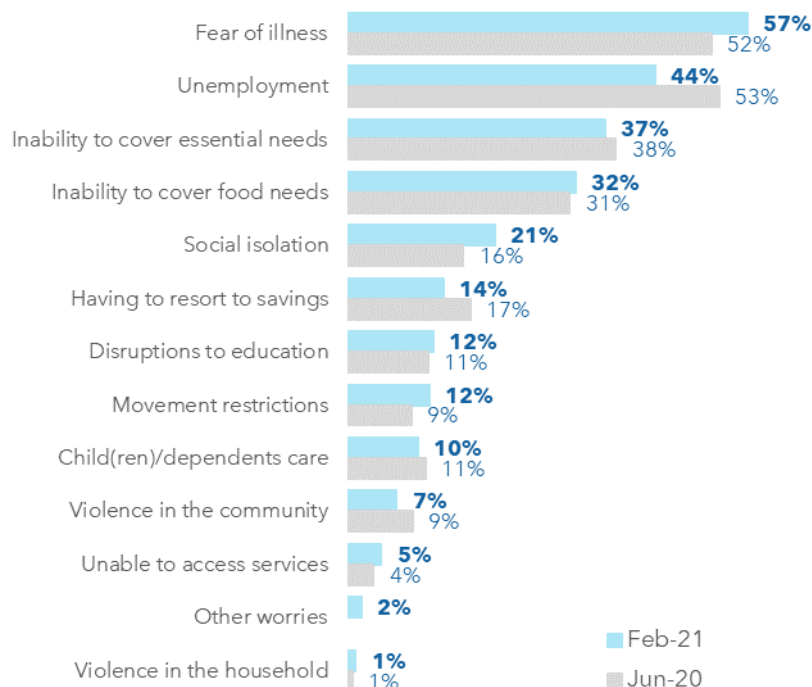
"Lack of work to be able to pay rent, buy food, provide extra lessons for kids at school. No unemployment available from Government at this time because it came to an end. No stimulus given to help households that are struggling." – Female, 48 years

WIDER IMPACTS | Main worries

- Fear of illness and unemployment were the leading worries expressed by respondents.

Main worries expressed by respondents

Multiple choices could be selected.



Illness (57%) overtook unemployment (44%) as the main worry when compared to June 2020. There were no major differences between men and women, but there were differences across age groups. Most respondents in the age groups over 40 (61% of 41-60 and 71% of those 60 and over) expressed fear of illness as their main worry, while unemployment was most worrying for those under 40 (50% of 25 and under and 47% of 26-40 years).

Main worries expressed by respondents

Multiple choices could be selected.

By perceived income level

Main worries

	Well below average	Below average	Average	Above average	Well above average
Fear of illness	34%	48%	67%	75%	70%
Unemployment	52%	49%	42%	37%	24%
Inability to cover essential needs	58%	51%	27%	16%	13%
Inability to cover food needs	63%	47%	18%	9%	13%
Social isolation	8%	15%	26%	32%	34%
Having to resort to savings	7%	12%	17%	16%	10%
Movement restrictions	3%	5%	15%	22%	25%
Disruptions to education	5%	9%	17%	15%	13%
Child(ren)/dependents care	11%	9%	10%	11%	10%
Unable to access services	9%	5%	3%	3%	4%
Violence in the community	4%	4%	8%	12%	12%
Violence in the household	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other worries	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%

Around one-third of respondents worried about the inability to cover food and other essential needs, which is consistent with the findings from June 2020. Inability to cover food needs was a greater concern among respondents who perceived their income to be well below average (63%) and below average (47%). Over half of these respondents were also worried about meeting other essential needs. Concerns about meeting food needs were also more frequently cited by respondents living in mixed households with extended family when compared to other household types. Illness was the main concern of those who perceived their income as average (67%), above average (75%) and well above average (70%).

WIDER IMPACTS | Main worries

Main worries expressed by respondents

Multiple choices could be selected.

By sex

Main worries	Female	Male
Fear of illness	58%	54%
Unemployment	42%	47%
Inability to cover essential needs	37%	35%
Inability to cover food needs	32%	33%
Social isolation	22%	19%
Having to resort to savings	14%	13%
Movement restrictions	11%	14%
Disruptions to education	13%	9%
Child(ren)/dependents care	11%	8%
Unable to access services	5%	5%
Violence in the community	6%	9%
Violence in the household	1%	0%
Other worries	2%	1%

By age group

Main worries	25 and under	26 - 40	41 - 60	Over 60
Fear of illness	47%	50%	61%	72%
Unemployment	50%	46%	46%	25%
Inability to cover essential needs	50%	47%	31%	14%
Inability to cover food needs	48%	45%	24%	8%
Social isolation	20%	19%	20%	29%
Having to resort to savings	11%	10%	15%	21%
Movement restrictions	9%	8%	12%	23%
Disruptions to education	9%	12%	14%	8%
Child(ren)/dependents care	7%	12%	10%	7%
Unable to access services	7%	6%	4%	2%
Violence in the community	4%	4%	7%	14%
Violence in the household	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other worries	1%	1%	2%	4%

By household composition

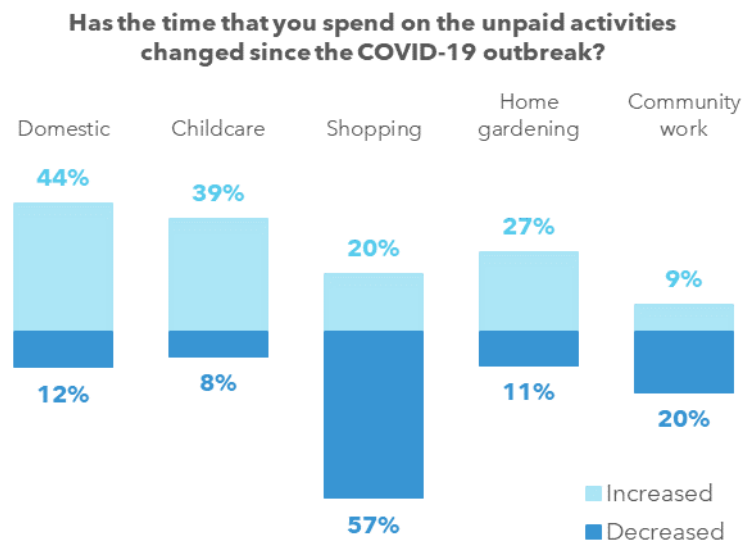
Main worries	Alone	Immediate family	Mixed	Single parent
Fear of illness	62%	59%	48%	55%
Unemployment	39%	45%	46%	39%
Inability to cover essential needs	27%	35%	50%	39%
Inability to cover food needs	18%	30%	48%	37%
Social isolation	27%	22%	13%	19%
Having to resort to savings	18%	14%	9%	12%
Movement restrictions	20%	12%	6%	10%
Disruptions to education	6%	13%	8%	16%
Child(ren)/dependents care	4%	11%	7%	14%
Unable to access services	5%	4%	9%	3%
Violence in the community	10%	7%	5%	5%
Violence in the household	0%	1%	2%	1%
Other worries	3%	2%	1%	1%

By urban/rural location

Main worries	City or town	Village or rural area
Fear of illness	54%	60%
Unemployment	43%	45%
Inability to cover essential needs	40%	33%
Inability to cover food needs	36%	29%
Social isolation	21%	21%
Having to resort to savings	13%	14%
Movement restrictions	12%	12%
Disruptions to education	11%	13%
Child(ren)/dependents care	9%	11%
Unable to access services	6%	4%
Violence in the community	7%	6%
Violence in the household	1%	1%
Other worries	2%	2%

WIDER IMPACTS | Unpaid care and work

- Most households increased time for domestic work and childcare, while time spent on shopping decreased.



The unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing the amount of unpaid work at home, placing an additional burden on some household members. Time devoted to domestic work has increased for 44% of respondents, and 39% reported an increase in the time spent on childcare. These trends are broadly in line with June 2020.

The increase in housework appears to affect all income groups and household types similarly, but those living alone less frequently reported an increase (30%) when compared to all respondents (44%). Minor differences were found in terms of increased domestic work reported by men (40%) and women (46%).

Increased time spent on childcare was more frequently reported by households that describe their income as below average (46%) or well below average (41%) when compared to those with an average (36%), above average (31%) or well above average (34%) perceived income.

The amount of time spent on childcare increased particularly for single parents (47%) and households composed of immediate family members (42%), while mixed households with extended family were slightly less frequent to report an increase (35%).

Minor differences were found in terms of increased time spent on childcare between female (40%) and male respondents (36%). This difference appears less than in June 2020 when 46% of female respondents reported an increase, compared to 35% of male respondents. It also does not take into account that women may already be shouldering disproportionate unpaid care work.

The pandemic led to an overall increase in gardening and household production activities, with 27% of respondents indicating that they have increased the amount of time spent on these activities. However, this figure is somewhat lower compared to the survey in June 2020 (39%). A quarter of respondents describing their income as well below average also reported a decrease in time devoted to home gardening compared to the average of 11%. Time spent on community work increased for 9% of respondents, while decreasing for 20%.

Time spent shopping continues to be reduced, reported by 57% of respondents. This was more frequently reported by households describing their income as below (64%) or well below average (72%), compared to less than half of households describing their income as average, above or well above average. This may be due to the reasons for limited market access, such as lack of money.

WIDER IMPACTS | Unpaid care and work

Has the time that you spend on the unpaid activities changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?

Unpaid care/work	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	44%	39%	20%	27%	9%
No change	41%	30%	22%	40%	42%
Decreased	12%	8%	57%	11%	20%
Not applicable	4%	23%	2%	22%	29%

By sex

Female	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	46%	40%	21%	28%	8%
No change	39%	29%	19%	39%	40%
Decreased	12%	8%	59%	10%	21%
Not applicable	3%	23%	1%	23%	31%

Male	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	40%	36%	17%	26%	12%
No change	44%	32%	28%	42%	45%
Decreased	12%	9%	53%	13%	20%
Not applicable	4%	23%	2%	19%	23%

By household composition

Alone	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	30%	6%	15%	22%	9%
No change	55%	46%	32%	44%	47%
Decreased	10%	4%	51%	5%	15%
Not applicable	4%	45%	2%	29%	29%

Immediate family	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	47%	42%	21%	30%	10%
No change	40%	29%	23%	40%	43%
Decreased	10%	7%	55%	10%	19%
Not applicable	3%	22%	1%	20%	28%

Mixed	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	42%	35%	16%	17%	7%
No change	35%	25%	14%	30%	32%
Decreased	18%	13%	67%	22%	24%
Not applicable	5%	26%	3%	30%	37%

Single parent	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	43%	47%	21%	27%	8%
No change	40%	29%	19%	43%	43%
Decreased	15%	12%	58%	11%	26%
Not applicable	2%	12%	1%	19%	23%

"I have expanded my backyard gardening because of possible food shortages in the future. Also, the need to provide home schooling and online education support for my kids has been extremely challenging." - Male, 53 years

"Family does not respect working from home. Adults expect you to care for minors because they themselves need a break." - Female, 46 years

"Expanded my kitchen garden - the range and number of vegetables. No longer purchase meals instead I now prepare every meal at home. Greater care in sanitising vegetables before use." - Female, 51 years

WIDER IMPACTS | Unpaid care and work

Has the time that you spend on the unpaid activities changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?

By perceived income level

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Well below average					
Increased	44%	41%	10%	19%	9%
No change	29%	22%	8%	27%	28%
Decreased	22%	17%	80%	24%	28%
Not applicable	5%	20%	3%	30%	35%

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Below average					
Increased	45%	46%	18%	23%	8%
No change	36%	24%	14%	39%	37%
Decreased	15%	11%	66%	15%	23%
Not applicable	4%	19%	2%	23%	31%

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Average					
Increased	42%	36%	24%	29%	8%
No change	47%	33%	28%	44%	47%
Decreased	8%	5%	47%	7%	18%
Not applicable	4%	25%	1%	20%	27%

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Above average					
Increased	43%	31%	22%	34%	11%
No change	48%	37%	36%	43%	49%
Decreased	6%	2%	41%	4%	16%
Not applicable	3%	30%	1%	19%	24%

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Well above average					
Increased	53%	34%	24%	35%	15%
No change	37%	36%	29%	43%	50%
Decreased	9%	5%	46%	6%	12%
Not applicable	1%	25%	1%	16%	23%

"I spend more time at home; I have not attended church; Had very little face to face interaction with persons outside my household; Spent more time with family; The sense of uncertainty is uncomfortable." - Female, 51 years

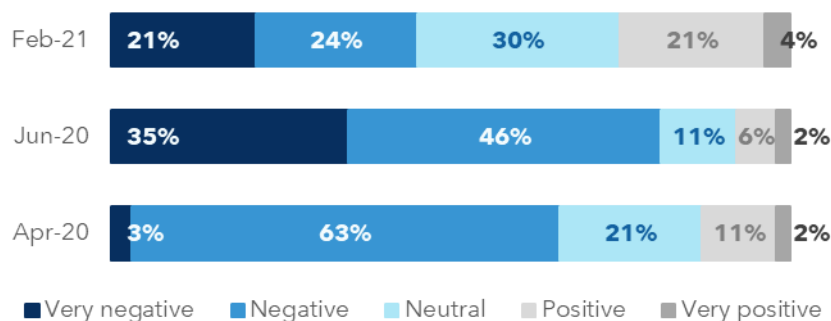
"I have a 5 months old baby and I have been suffering from acute sleep deprivation since my pregnancy plus depression. Being a full-time single mom and having to work from home has been quite challenging." - Female, 37 years

"My work from home has been affected since I have children to take care of especially a toddler who is very active and needs constant supervision." - Female, 40 years

WIDER IMPACTS | Coping and adapting

- Feelings of anxiety and stress are widespread but contrasted with positive experiences, reflecting the varying impacts and lived realities of COVID-19.

Distribution of sentiments across open-ended survey responses



Respondents were given the space to provide more nuanced insights on how they are adjusting to the impacts of the pandemic ten months following its declaration. Out of the 4,189 respondents, 1,738 respondents responded to the open-ended question, of which 1,226 responses were in English, 496 in Spanish and 16 in French/others.

Work, income and family are the most common themes. Concerns about illness and changing protocols are a source of anxiety among respondents as their livelihoods continue to be impacted. Some people describe the mental toll the pandemic is taking as they face uncertainty about the future, loneliness, fatigue and stress about their finances. However, sentiment analysis revealed that the comments were less negative compared to April and June 2020. This may be because people are finding resilience amid these obstacles, and some describe positive steps and adapting. Many are starting to normalize video calling technology to facilitate remote working, home schooling, and staying in touch with friends and family.

Some sample responses:

Very negative (21%)

"I have lost my job and am unable to get employment. I am not coping well because I hardly can purchase my basic needs."

"My main concern is with regard to closure of the borders which would restrict my ability to travel to the USA to undergo medical treatment for a pre-existing condition."

"I have developed anxiety due to loss of income and I still have to honor my commitments such as mortgage and bills."

Negative (24%)

"Depressed due to inability to have human touch with loved ones because locked out from country of origin; communicate by video."

"The grocery stores has increased the price so I can not buy much with my income."

"Because I have to stay home and not being able to go to the park and exercise my health is not the same. I'm diabetic and 1-hour daily walk in the park used to help."

Neutral (30%)

"I have not experienced any major disruptions from COVID-19 as I am able to work from home and carry out all my required responsibilities."

"I just go with the flow. Do what the authorities advise."

Positive (21%)

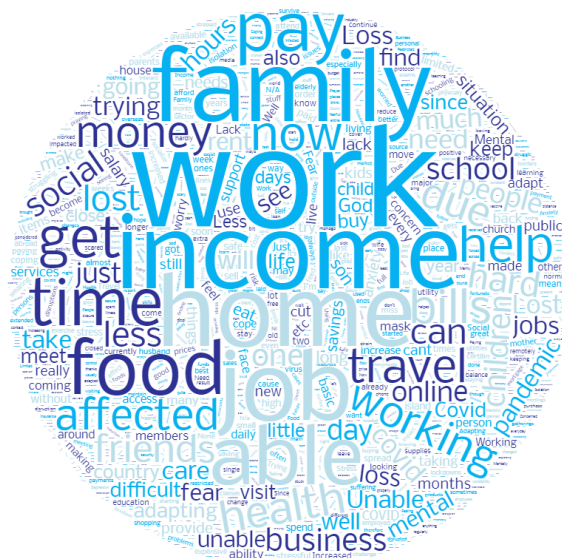
"Increased workload. Being diligent about exercising and taking mindfulness breaks. Reading, self-care."

Very positive (4%)

"My adaptations are fairly simple. By there being more time at home due to lack of work, I apply most of my time to online learning and study."

The analysis of the responses was performed in collaboration with Google's AI unit.

WIDER IMPACTS | Coping and adapting

FEBRUARY
2021

**JUNE
2020**

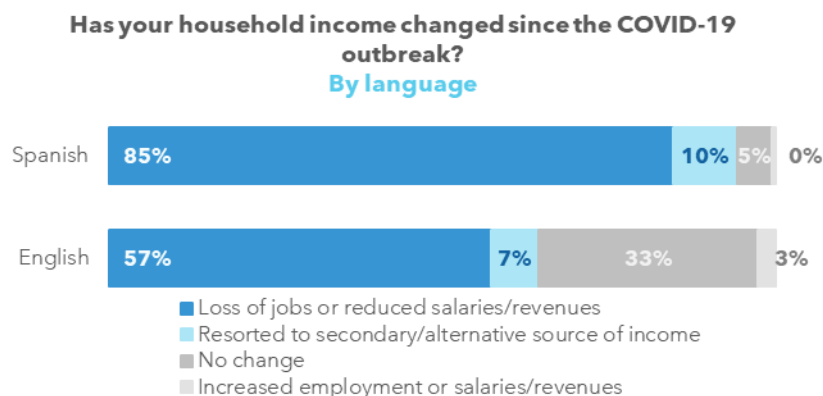


**APRIL
2020**

CHALLENGES FACING MIGRANTS

Spanish-speaking respondents in Trinidad and Tobago

- Spanish speakers from Trinidad and Tobago are the most widely impacted group by socio-economic impacts.



Main worries expressed by respondents

Multiple choices could be selected.

By language

Main worries	Spanish	English
Fear of illness	36%	55%
Unemployment	39%	44%
Inability to cover essential needs	71%	28%
Inability to cover food needs	74%	26%
Social isolation	9%	26%
Having to resort to savings	3%	13%
Movement restrictions	1%	14%
Disruptions to education	2%	12%
Child(ren)/dependents care	3%	13%
Unable to access services	15%	4%
Violence in the community	1%	16%
Violence in the household	1%	1%
Other worries	1%	1%

The survey was available in English, French and Spanish. One in five survey respondents identified as Spanish speaker, and of these 91% are residing in Trinidad and Tobago. It is assumed that Spanish speakers in Trinidad and Tobago are Venezuelans who may be facing uniquely impacts from COVID-19. There are nearly 20,300 Venezuelans registered with UNHCR in the country.

The responses of Spanish speakers residing in Trinidad and Tobago continue to differ significantly from those of English speakers and from the survey averages in the region, which is indicative of the precariousness of their situation. Spanish-speaking respondents mainly rely on informal daily/casual labour for their income (43%) at almost four times the rate of English speakers (12%). Compared to the June 2020 survey, this income source is increasingly widespread, alongside support from family and friends or the government.

Spanish speakers were almost twice as likely to experience disruptions to their livelihoods in the two weeks prior to the survey. Nearly nine out of ten reported loss of jobs or income since the outbreak, compared to half of English-speaking respondents. Two-thirds of Spanish speakers were unable to access markets at some point in the week prior to the survey, compared to fifth of English-speaking respondents, largely due to a lack of financial means.

Only 7% of Spanish-speaking respondents had more than a week's worth of food stocks, compared to 54% of English speakers, and they were also much more likely to compromise food consumption, or to try and meet food needs through the reduction of expenditure on education and health, sale of productive assets or spending savings. The inability to meet food and other essential needs are their main worries – cited by nearly three out of four respondents – which is significantly higher when compared to English speakers.

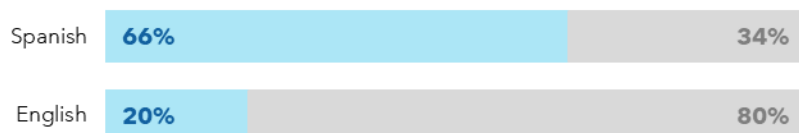
CHALLENGES FACING MIGRANTS

Spanish-speaking respondents in Trinidad and Tobago

In the past 7 days, was there a time when your household could not access the markets?

By language

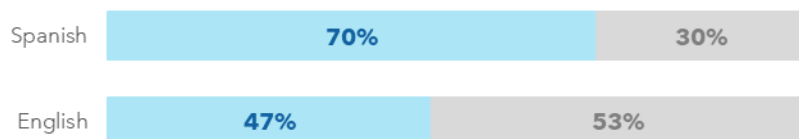
■ yes ■ no



Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 2 weeks prior to the survey

By language

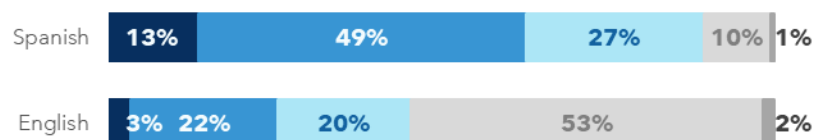
■ yes ■ no



Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?

By language

■ I went one whole day without eating
 ■ I skipped meals or ate less than usual
 ■ I ate less preferred foods
 ■ I had no difficulties eating enough
 ■ I increased my food intake

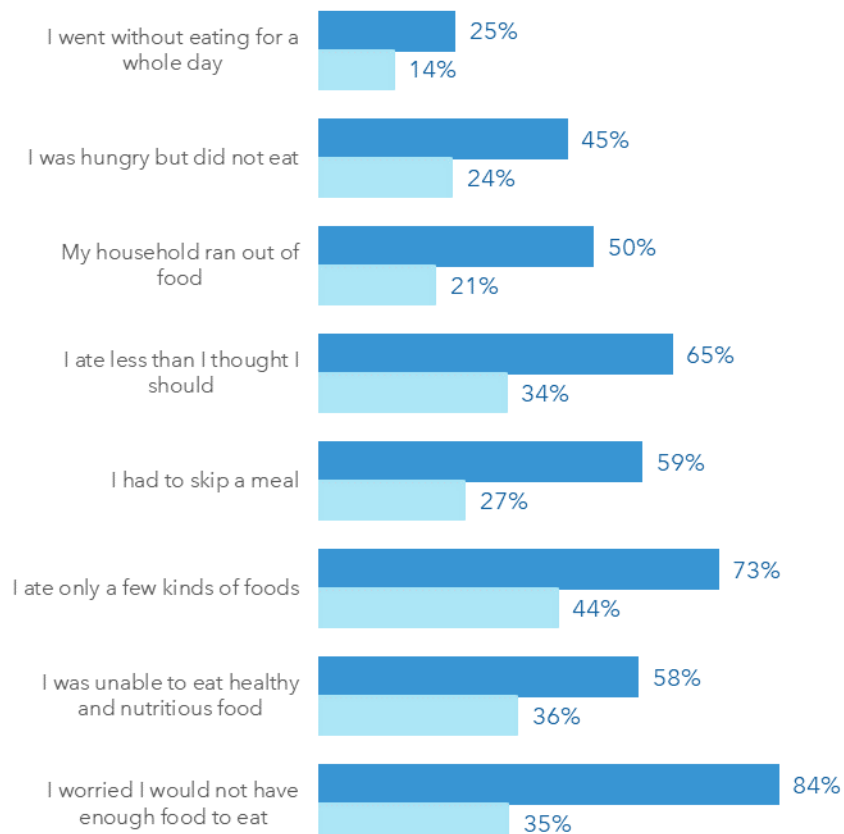


Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?

Multiple choices could be selected.

By language

■ Spanish ■ English



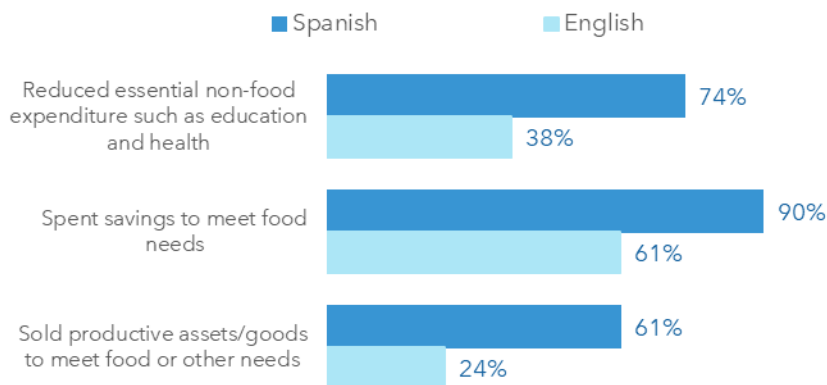
CHALLENGES FACING MIGRANTS

Spanish-speaking respondents in Trinidad and Tobago

Households' coping strategies in the 30 days prior to the survey

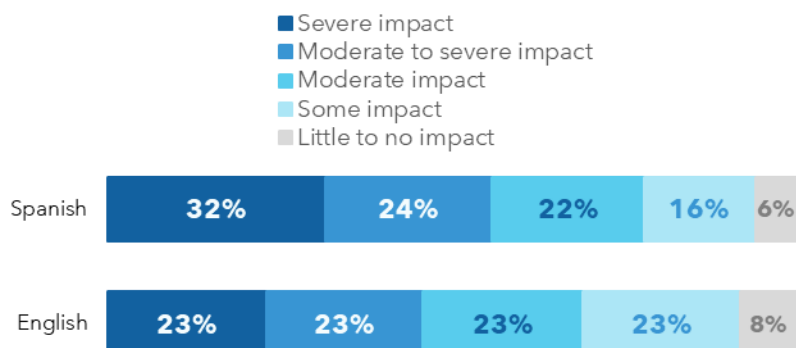
Multiple choices could be selected.

By language



How do you expect your livelihood will be impacted as a result of disruptions from COVID-19?

By language



Has the time that you spend on the unpaid activities changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?

By language

Spanish

Increased
No change
Decreased
Not applicable

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community work
Increased	47%	42%	9%	6%	7%
No change	26%	22%	6%	27%	24%
Decreased	22%	17%	83%	28%	24%
Not applicable	5%	19%	2%	39%	45%

English

Increased
No change
Decreased
Not applicable

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community work
Increased	46%	39%	18%	43%	12%
No change	44%	26%	21%	34%	43%
Decreased	8%	7%	59%	7%	18%
Not applicable	2%	28%	1%	17%	27%

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has had profound impacts on how people in the Caribbean meet their most pressing needs and try to earn a living. Ten months from the onset of the pandemic, the economic reverberations continue to take a toll on livelihoods and food security. Measures to halt the spread of the virus have gone through cycles of easing up and tightening as initial decreases in cases were followed by spikes in infections in late 2020.

The snapshot provided by this third survey shows that some of the impacts on people's lives are shifting. Access to markets has steadily improved and so has the availability of key items in stores. Amid everyday struggles are also signs of resiliency as people adapt to new realities and challenges.

At the same time, the overall picture is deeply troubling. Many people continue to face disruptions to their livelihoods. The impacts to income remain widespread, and unpaid time spent on childcare and domestic work is increasing. People are worried about contracting the virus, unemployment and meeting basic needs. They are making compromises and sacrifices to get by.

Food insecurity remains a major concern. Some are struggling to meet their food needs, and a worrying number of respondents are reducing the amount they eat. The estimated number of moderately food insecure people in the region decreased only slightly from 2.5 million in June 2020 to 2.2 million in February 2021. The estimated number of severely food insecure people increased from 407,000 to 482,000 during this period.

These impacts are hitting lower-income households the hardest and those earning income from casual labour, petty trade or support from others. While some have received support from governments, very few continue to receive it. Spanish-speakers in Trinidad and Tobago are also faring worse, as are younger respondents. While the survey found little difference between responses from women and men, there are concerns that gender disparities present before the pandemic risk being exacerbated, and more specific analysis is needed.

Vaccination efforts are slowly beginning in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Along with their vital role in preventing deaths and illnesses, they are a step on the path to revitalising tourism and commercial activities that are so critical to economies in the Caribbean. At the same time, economies will not bounce back overnight, and it is unlikely that recovery will come at the same pace for all.

Concerted effort and investment are needed. Governments have turned to social protection, agricultural support and other measures to assist people managing the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. They need to reinvigorate and retool these efforts to bridge people towards a recovery that is inclusive and considers the needs of those already living in poverty and facing vulnerability. Governments need to confront the uncertainties unleashed by COVID-19 with renewed energy towards regional food security and integration.

METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The third round of the CARICOM Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods impact survey was launched via a webform, which was accessible on mobile/smartphones and PC/desktops. The data collection period was inclusive of 25 January to 12 February 2021. The survey was circulated via email, social media, SMS, media and other communication channels. The World Food Programme (WFP) performed the data collection, monitoring and analysis. Responses were visualised and monitored live on an interactive dashboard. Data validation methods were designed into the survey form to mitigate against data entry errors and/or unintentional outliers.

The qualitative analysis was performed in collaboration with Joseph Xu from Google's AI unit using Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP, a branch of AI which analyses and interprets human languages, provided: (a) a sentiment analysis to determine the distribution of very negative to very positive responses and (b) auto-categorisation of responses. To moderate the non-representative nature of the data, the analysis team further refined the classifications presented by the algorithm.

WFP expresses warm appreciation to Flow and Digicel for distributing the survey link by SMS in Barbados, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago. Special thanks to the International Telecommunication Union for their support in facilitating the SMS distribution.

While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data are not representative, and the use of a web-based questionnaire limits inputs from those without connectivity. Responses were heavily skewed towards two countries, with 36% of responses coming from Barbados and another 26% from Trinidad and Tobago. While this report refers to the results of previous survey rounds, the varying demographics of respondents limit comparability across survey rounds.

This report was prepared by WFP Caribbean – Amy Chong, Irina Bird Reddiar, Elisaveta Gouretskaia, Darko Petrovic, Sarah Bailey and Regis Chapman.

Survey form



[Dashboard](#) for Smartphones



[Dashboard](#) for PCs/Laptops

CALCULATION OF FOOD INSECURITY ESTIMATES

Two methodologies were used for calculating the food insecurity estimates presented in this report: the rCARI, which is an adapted remote version of the Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) ([page 40](#)) and the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) ([page 43](#)).

The Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) was developed by the World Food Programme as a standardised approach to assessing and reporting the level of food insecurity within a population. Under the CARI approach, each surveyed household is classified into one of four food security categories: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure. This classification is based on the household's current status of food security - using food consumption indicators - and its coping capacity - using indicators measuring economic vulnerability and asset depletion. The CARI combines the indicators into a summary indicator -called the Food Security Index (FSI) - which represents the population's overall food security status. This FSI is a simple average of the summary measures of a household's current food security status and its coping capacity, ranging from 1 (food secure) to 4 (severely food insecure). For this report, current food security status was assessed based on responses to the question "Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?". The coping capacity dimension was calculated based on responses to the questions "Has your household income changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?" and "What are your household's main income sources over the past year?". The percentages of moderately and severely food insecure obtained through this approach were applied to the overall regional population to obtain regional estimates of food insecurity ([page 40](#)).

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is an experience-based metric of food insecurity severity at the household or individual level, which is used for global food security monitoring and aligned with food security targets outlined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It relies on people's direct responses to questions regarding their access to adequate food during a given recall period. The eight questions focus on self-reported food-related behaviours and experiences during 30 days prior to the survey. They reflect increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints. A concept essential to the FIES is that the eight items and respondents are positioned on the same underlying scale of severity of food insecurity. Therefore, the probability of a respondent answering "yes" to a FIES item depends on the distance along the scale between the food severity experienced by the respondent and the severity of the item. A respondent's raw score (an integer number ranging from zero to eight) is the sum of affirmative responses given to the eight FIES questions. It is the basis for estimating the respondent parameter, which provides an interval measure of the severity of food insecurity and makes it possible to produce comparable measures of food insecurity. For this report, prevalence rates of moderate and severe food insecurity were calculated based on survey data using the FIES online App ([page 43](#)).

For more information on the CARI, see WFP's '[Technical Guidance Notes Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security \(CARI\)](#)' (2015).

For more information on the FIES, see FAO's '[The Food Insecurity Experience Scale: Measuring food insecurity through people's experiences](#)'.

UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

WFP Barbados and the Multi-Country Office for the English and Dutch Caribbean

UN House, Marine Gardens

Christ Church

Barbados

Regis Chapman | Head of Office

Tel: +1 246 467 6085

Email: wfp.barbados@wfp.org

Website: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean>

CARICOM

Caribbean Community Secretariat

Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown

PO Box 10827

Guyana

Shaun Baugh | Programme Manager, Agricultural & Agro-Industrial Development

Tel: +592 222 0134

Email: shaun.baugh@caricom.org

Website: <https://www.caricom.org>

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