Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

Regional Summary Report | April 2020

CARICOM CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY A Community for All

CDEMA Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency Resilient States · Safer Lives

WFP World Food Programme

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

Regional Summary Report | April 2020

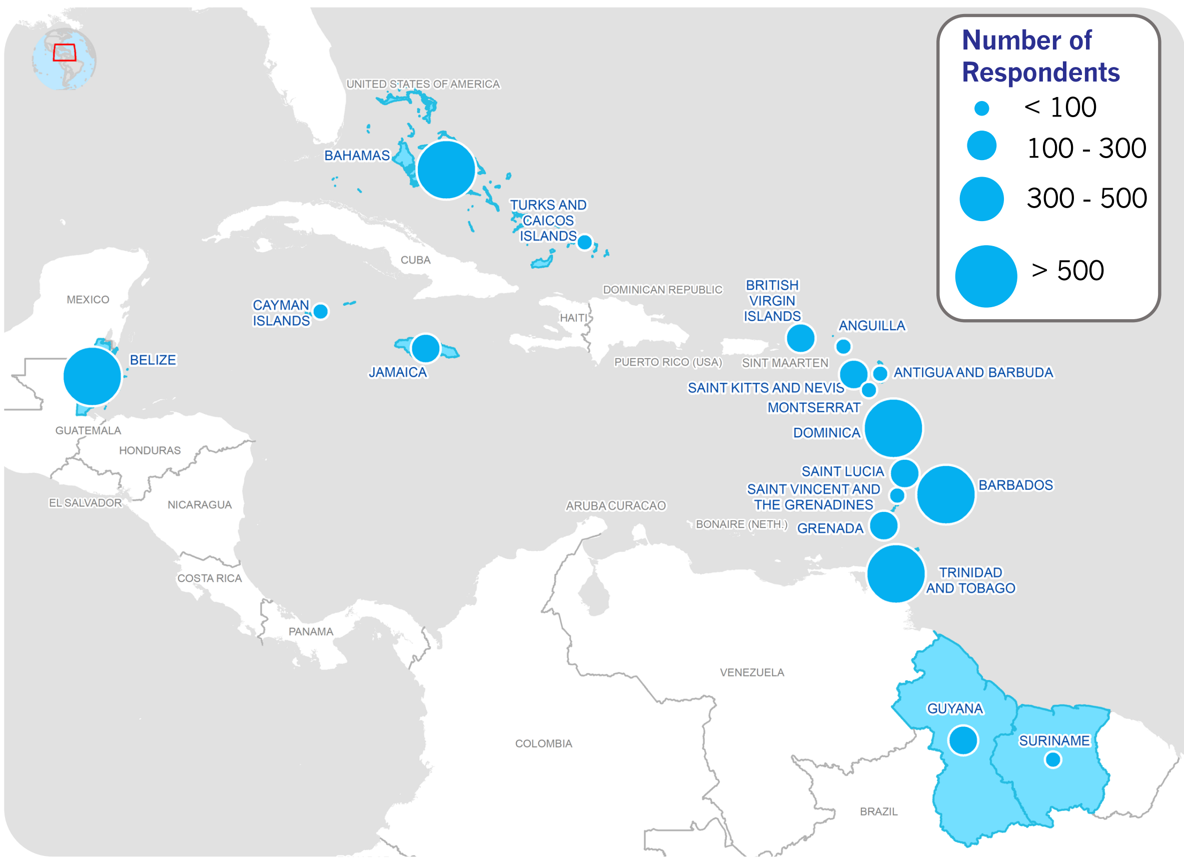
The COVID-19 pandemic is having far-reaching impacts on how people earn a living and meet critical needs. The Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey was launched by CARICOM to rapidly gather data on impacts to livelihoods, food security and access to markets. Prepared by the World Food Programme with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the survey link was shared via social media, email and media. This summary analyses data collected from 1-12 April 2020.

4,537 Respondents

19 Countries & Territories

69|29% Female|Male

42 Average age



CARICOM CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY *A Community for All* | CDEMA Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency *Resilient States · Safer Lives* | WFP World Food Programme | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

At a glance

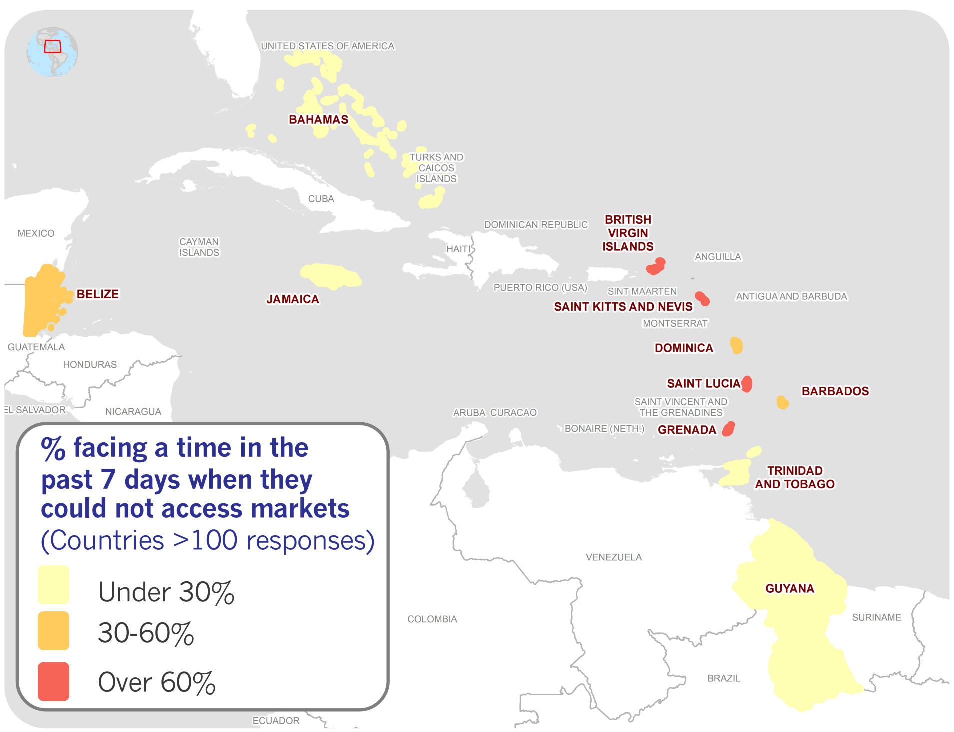
- COVID-19 has caused widespread disruption to livelihoods, driven primarily by movement restrictions and concerns about leaving the house.
- Half of respondents have faced a change in income, owing mainly to job loss or reduced revenue/salary. People owning businesses or engaged in casual labour or petty trade appear most impacted.
- Most respondents were able to access markets in the previous seven days but with substantial variations across the region. Those unable to do so cited movement restrictions, store closures and concerns about leaving the house.
- Availability of food, hygiene items and medicines appears to be less than normal, but very few respondents indicated that items were unavailable.
- People are changing how they shop, with most respondents purchasing larger quantities.
- Most respondents are not having difficulty eating enough, but some are eating less preferred foods.
- At the regional level, trends were broadly consistent between male and female respondents, though further country-level analysis may reveal greater gender differences.
- While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data is not representative, and the use of a web-based questionnaire limits inputs from those without connectivity.

IMPACT ON MARKETS

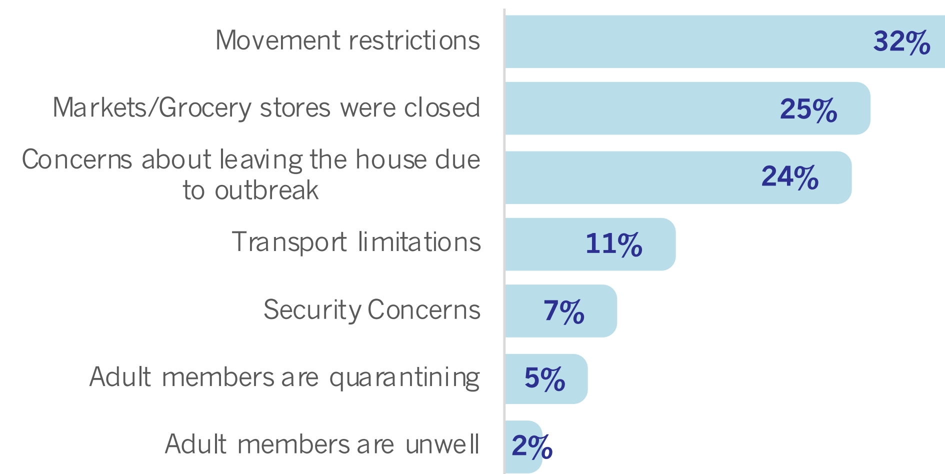
Access to markets in the past 7 days

Most people reported being able to consistently access stores and markets. However, 37% of respondents experienced a time in the previous seven days when they could not access grocery stores or markets. This finding was similar for male and female respondents, but it varied considerably across the region.

In some countries, (Jamaica, Guyana, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago) fewer than 30% of respondents faced a time in the previous week without access to markets. In others, the majority had a time when they could not (Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia). The differences were likely driven by the varying restrictions put in place by governments during the survey period.



Main reasons household could not access the markets/stores



The main factors limiting market access were a combination of movement restrictions, closure of markets/stores and concerns about leaving the house. The reasons did not vary substantially between men and women. Respondents aged 18-25 expressed different reasons, which appear linked to a greater reliance on others and on transport for going to markets. Their primary constraints to accessing markets were transport limitations and adult members of the household being self-quarantined.

"Although our country is not currently on lock down or curfew, I am scared to go outside."

"I am currently under curfew no income comin in at the moment...don't want to drive car don't want to waste gas....shop when I have to....."

"Inability to go to stores due to being in at-risk category has led to purchasing from distributors and having supplies delivered."

IMPACT ON MARKETS

Availability of items in stores

	Staple Food	Fresh food	Hygiene	Medicines
Always Available	63%	52%	61%	37%
Partially/ sometimes available	30%	38%	31%	41%
Not available	2%	2%	3%	4%
Don't know	5%	8%	5%	18%

The availability of food and other items is less than usual, but very few respondents indicated that key items were unavailable. Staple food, fresh food and hygiene items were generally always or sometimes available in stores, with 2-4% of respondents stating that they were unavailable. Fresh food appears marginally less available than staples. Noticeably fewer respondents indicated that medicines were always available, with one-fifth not knowing either way.

"Less available food products and some fruits and vegetables available in the supermarket are old and rotting"

"Lack of medicine. No supply at local pharmacy and their supplier"

"I had to go to the supermarket more than once a week because I could not find anything at one place..."

Food prices

The majority of respondents (59%) perceived an increase in prices. The survey did not inquire on the extent of price increases or items affected.

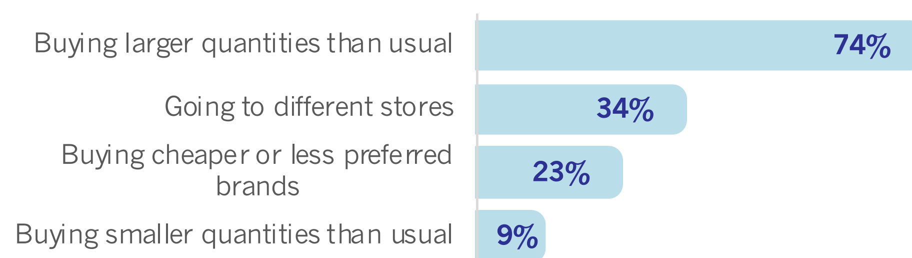
59% Observed an increase in food prices

40% Observed no changes in food prices

Shopping behaviour

People are altering how they shop, with 84% of respondents making changes compared to normal times. Of these, by far the most common shift is buying larger quantities than usual. About a third are going to different stores, and 23% are buying cheaper or less preferred brands. Some are making smaller purchases than usual. Shopping trends varied little between men and women. However, respondents over 60 are not purchasing in bulk as much compared to other age groups.

How have you changed your shopping behaviour?
(Specific changes made by respondents who have shifted shopping behaviours)

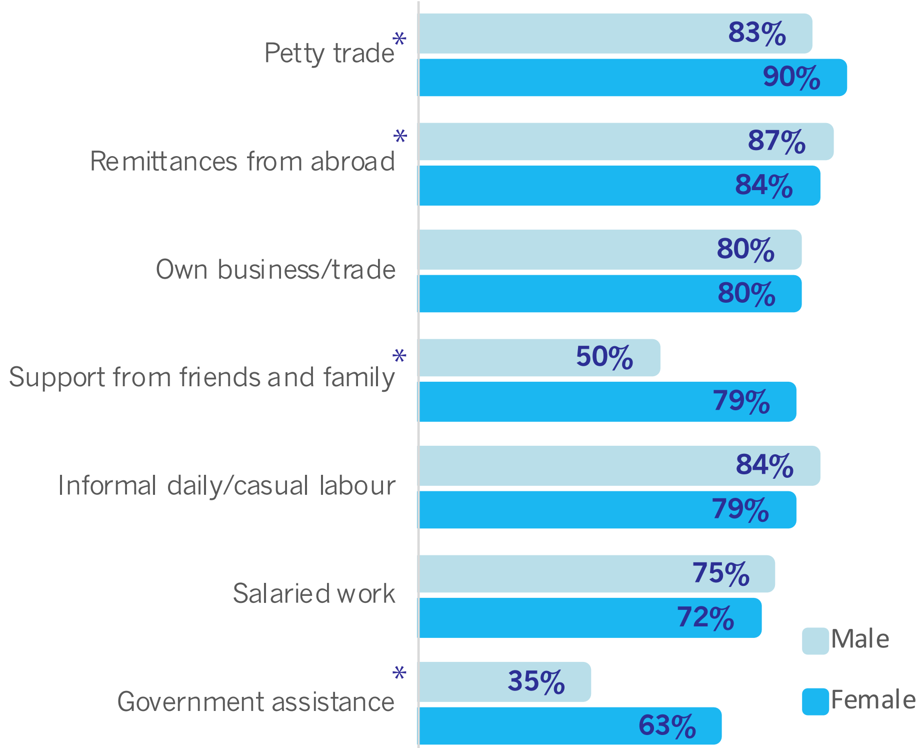


IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Disruptions to livelihoods

Livelihoods are being widely disrupted by the pandemic, with 73% of respondents indicating that their ability to carry out their livelihoods was affected in the last two weeks. While impacts were reported regardless of people's main sources of income, these appear most prevalent among those engaged in petty trade. Households receiving remittances and support from families and friends are also broadly affected, which could indicate that the people lending support are in worse positions to do so. Recipients of government assistance were slightly less impacted. Women in these income categories appear to be particularly affected.

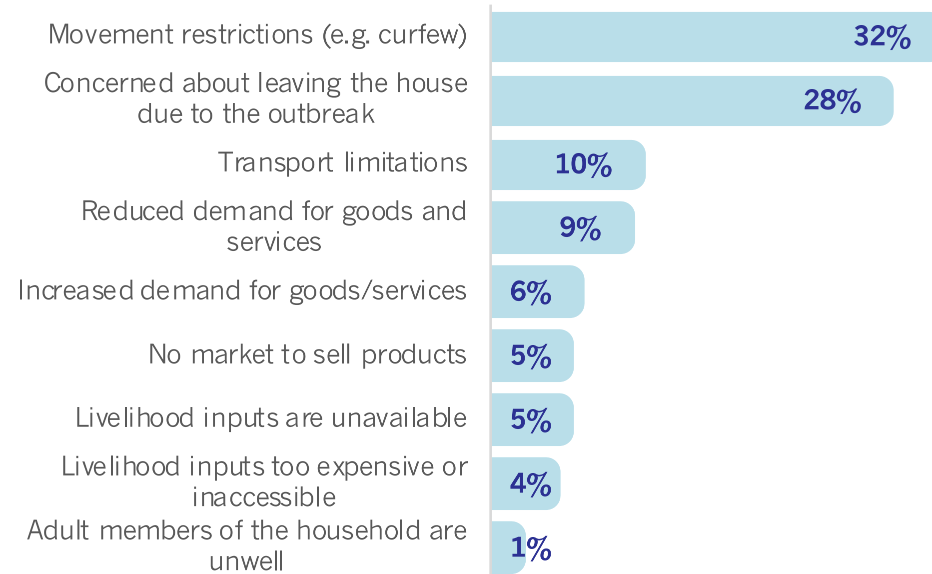
Was your livelihood affected in the last 2 weeks?



*Low response numbers in these category may affect results.

Reasons for disruptions

What were the main reasons for disruptions to your livelihood activities?



Movement restrictions were the primary driver for disruptions to livelihood activities. These findings are consistent with the strategies to curb the spread of the coronavirus introduced by several Caribbean countries in late March and early April, including travel restrictions, curfews and restricting non-essential business operations. Concerns about leaving the house was also a key reason. While reasons for livelihood disruptions are relatively consistent regardless of people's primary sources of income, a drop in the demand for goods and services was more commonly reported by business owners.

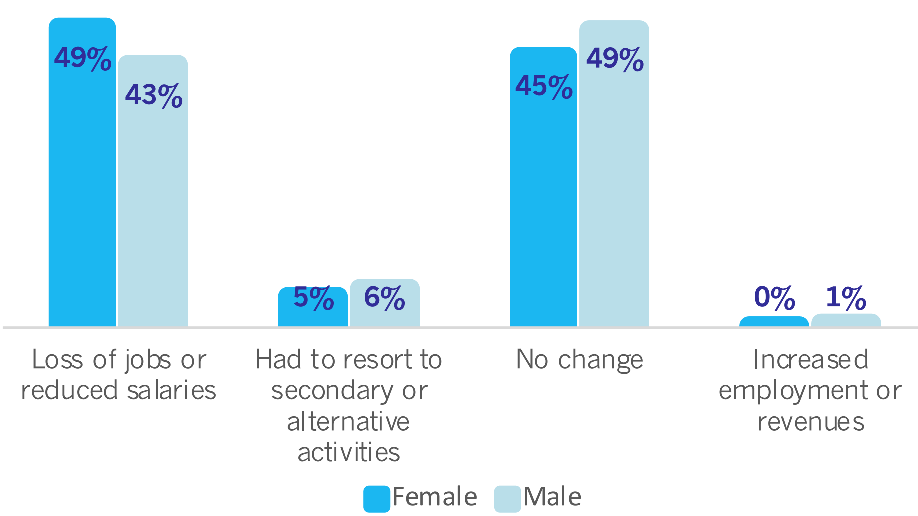
IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Income changes

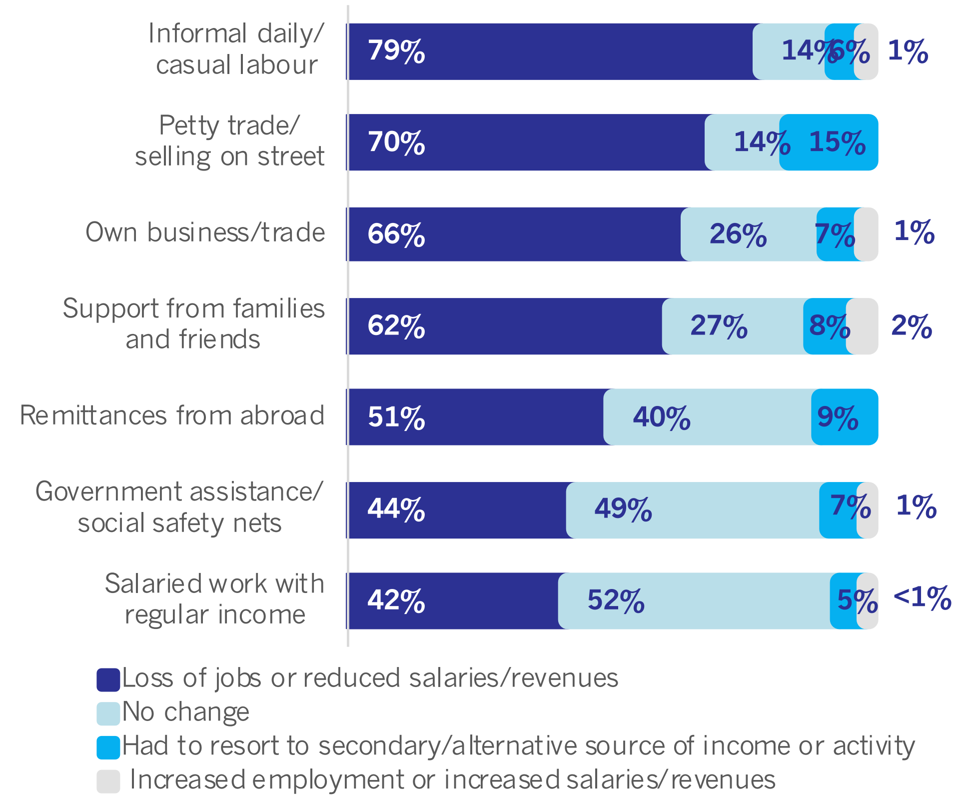
The pandemic is already resulting in lost income. Nearly half of respondents reported that they experienced job loss or reduced income/revenue in the previous two weeks. This trend is most visible among those engaged in daily/casual labour (reported by 79%), petty trade (70%) and business owners (66%). Job loss or reduced income were less prevalent among those with salaried work (42%) and government assistance (44%). The latter may indicate that safety nets are serving to buffer negative income impacts. Income changes also varied across the region (see Annex 4).

Income impacts are more common among younger people (aged 18-25), with 61% facing job loss or reduced income. People aged 60 and older were less affected by job loss or a reduction in salaries/revenues. Slightly more female respondents reported job loss/reduced income than male.

Has your household income changed over the past 2 weeks?



Income changes by sources of income



"Our Hardware store business is starting to see declines in sales. We are unsure if we will be able to afford our staff in the coming weeks."

"My company will go bankrupt if tourists don't return within 6 months. I am trying to keep my employees ...but the most essential staff will be laid off."

"Since I am in the farming business the demand for our crops has increased substantially."

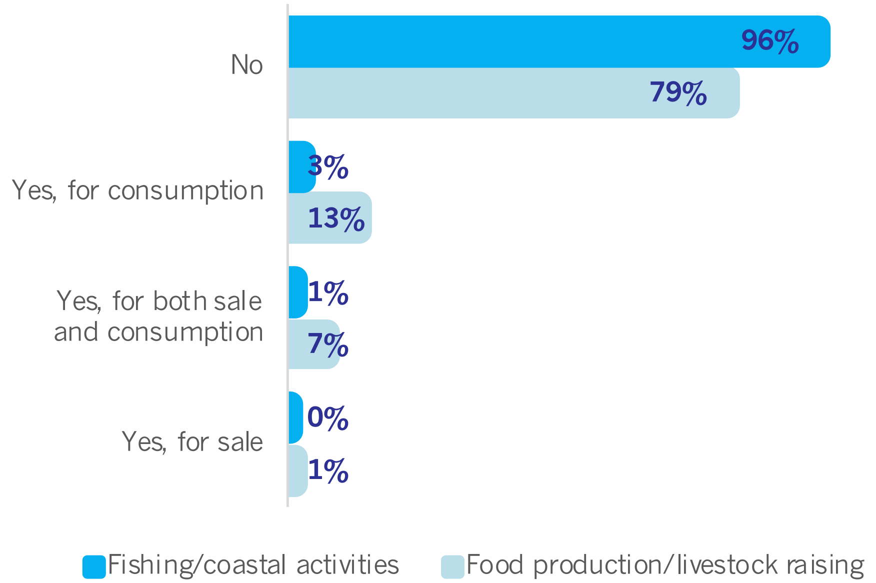
IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Households engaging in farming & fishing

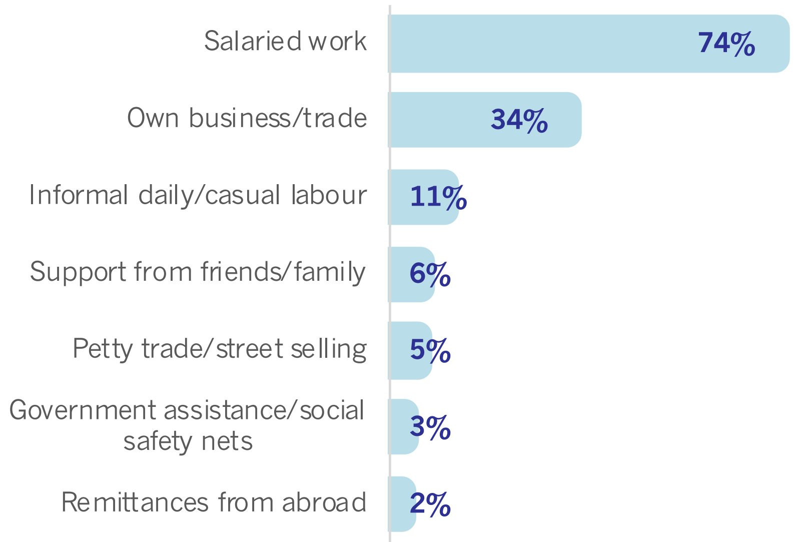
One-fifth of respondents produce food or raise livestock, and 4% are engaged in fisheries/coastal activities. In both cases these activities are primarily for their own consumption. Most of these respondents earn income from salaries, and one-third have their own business or trade. Households engaged in food production, livestock or fishing or coastal activities reported similar income impacts as other respondents.

Given the limited respondents engaged in farming (for sale) and fishing/coastal activities, more assessment and analysis on their constraints will be important to gauge how farmers and fisherfolk are being impacted.

Households producing food, raising livestock or engaged in fisheries/coastal activities



Main income sources of households engaged in farming & fisheries



"We have food planted that we shall eat and share with our community and family. We have suspended selling at our farm gate because of the COVID-19 threat."

"Assistance is required for implementing animal housing to increase production and yields. This is particularly true for small farmers."

"The restriction of movement has severely impacted us because we live near the beach and aren't allowed to fish to feed our household."

"I am a fisherman and this COVID-19 has my fishing disrupted because I can't stay out as long as usual and can't leave at my usual time because of the curfew."

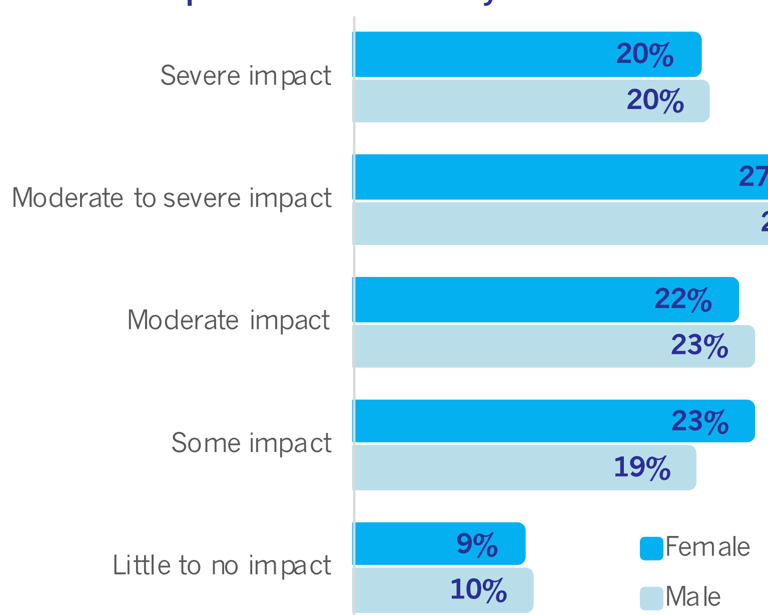
IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

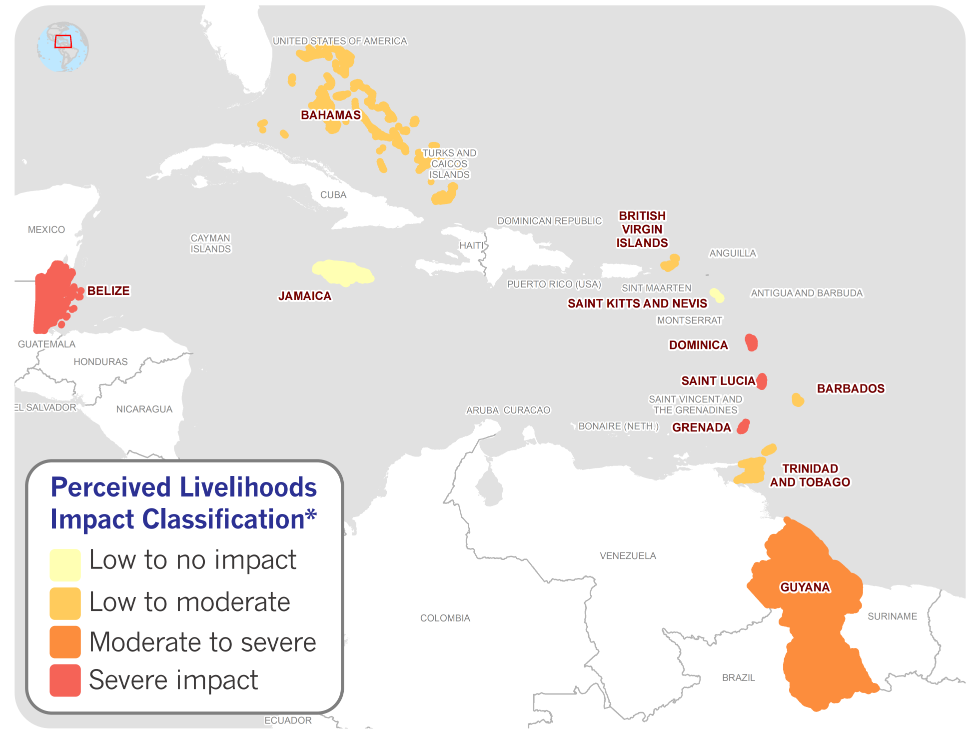
Future livelihood impacts

As people look ahead, the question is not whether their livelihoods will be impacted but how severe this impact will be. Only 10% anticipate little to no impact. Nearly half expect that livelihood impacts will be "moderate to severe" or "severe". The predicted severity of livelihood impacts was consistent across male and female respondents, but it varied across countries and territories.

Respondents engaged in daily/casual labour and petty trade have the most pessimistic outlook, with one-third predicting severe impacts to livelihoods (compared to 15% of salaried workers). Among households that rely on daily/casual labour, petty trade, remittances, support from others or their own business/trade, most expect "moderate to severe" or "severe" impacts to their livelihoods.

Perceptions on how severely livelihoods will be impacted





*The Perceived Livelihoods Impact Classification score is calculated at country level based on the weighted average of perceived future impact by respondents on their livelihoods due to disruptions by COVID-19 (Q11). The map visualizes countries or territories with over 100 responses.

"Well I owned a school pick up and drop off service, but right now it's on hold because of the virus."

"I am not able to sell cattle and poultry. Border is close for export."

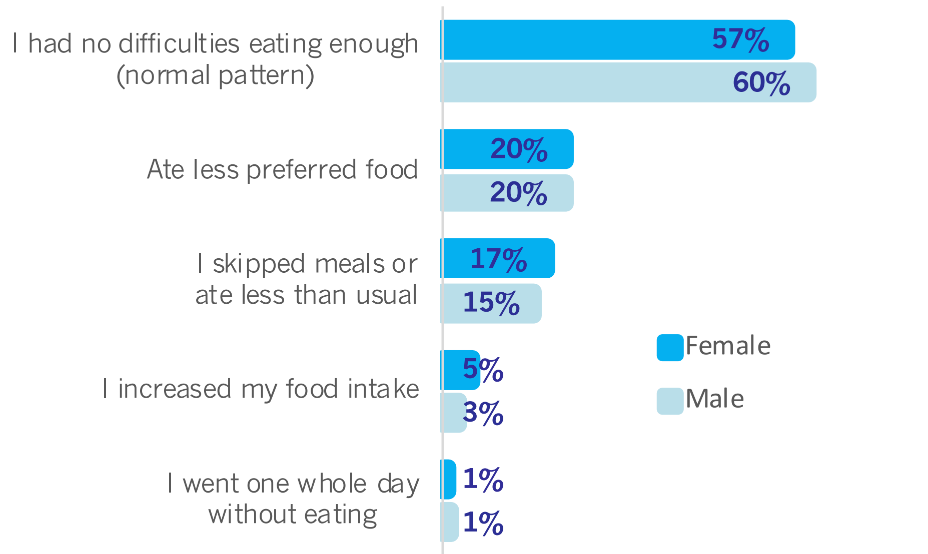
"Total decimated in the tourism sector and unable to maintain bills such as water and electric and mortgage."

"No market available for farmers to sell crops."

IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

Food consumption

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



Most respondents have maintained normal eating patterns, with no difficulty consuming enough food during the previous 7 days. However, a fifth of respondents ate less preferred foods, and 17% skipped meals or ate less than usual.

While findings are consistent between men and women, they differ according to age groups and people's main income sources. Fewer than 15% of people earning salaries or owning a business skipped a meal or ate less, while this was reported by more than 30% of people engaged in petty trade or receiving remittances or support from friends and family.

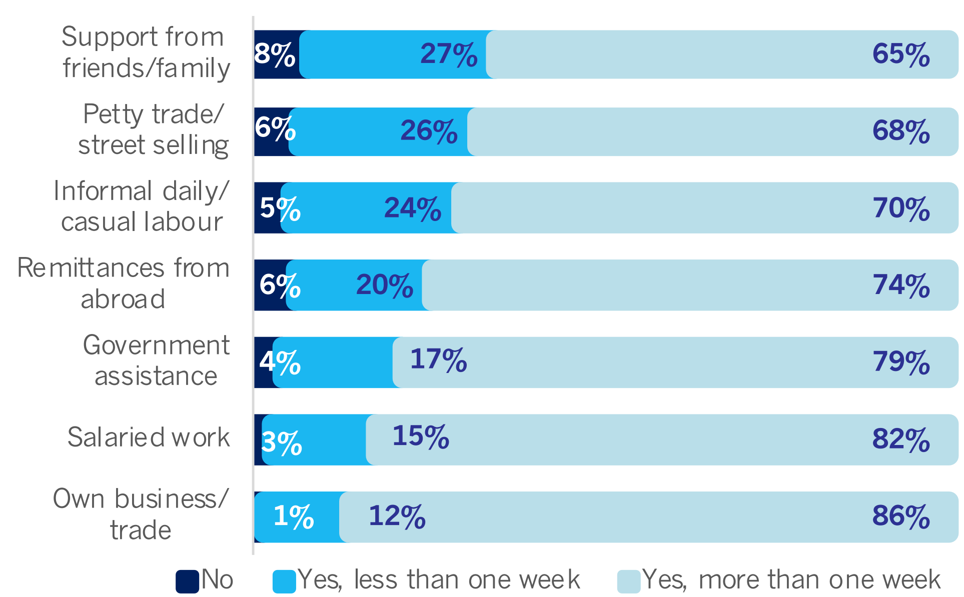
Younger adults appear to be particularly affected. Of respondents aged 18-25, only 42% indicated that they had no difficulty eating enough food in the last week, with 27% skipping meals or eating less than usual. By contrast, 70% of respondents over 60 reported no difficulties.

Food stocks

The amount of food that people have at home varies. Half of respondents have stocks of around three weeks or more, and 16% have less than a week. About 3% reported having no food stocks. There was little variation in the amount of stocks men and women reported.

Business owners and those with salaried work account for the largest percentage of households with more than one month of food supplies. Households with one week or less worth of stock are disproportionately those receiving support from families and friends, petty traders and casual labourers.

Food stocks by households' main sources of income

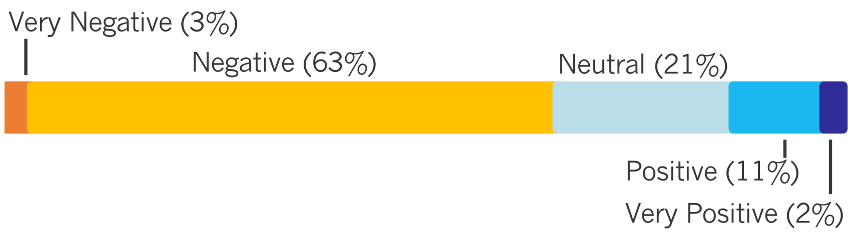


HOW PEOPLE ARE COPING AND ADAPTING

Respondents were provided space to give fuller and more nuanced insights on how they are coping and adapting to the disruptions caused by COVID-19. Out of the total 4,537 respondents, 1,900 (41%) responded to the open-ended question resulting in a total count of over 59,000 words.

An analysis of the responses by WFP Caribbean, in collaboration with Google's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Unit, was able to swiftly categorise and interpret the degree of positive and negative emotions within the responses using machine learning algorithms.

Distribution of sentiments across open-ended survey responses



Respondents communicated an underlying sense of anxiety and fear, coupled with uncertainty about interruptions to their livelihoods and reduced income. Themes also included being separated from, or spending more time with family, stressful shopping experiences, adapting to working from home and managing childcare with children out of school.

Respondents also articulated adapting their normal behaviours through social distancing, staying home, farming and adjusting their routines to maintain health and normal eating habits. The lower age groups expressed disruptions to their education and health routines.

Some sample responses:

Very negative (3%)

"I'm scared to move around"
"Food is expensive And no work coming in per day so it's very depressing"
"I am just depressed about the long lines."
"The world is fighting a monster. Psychologically it plays with emotions, the fright of this pandemic."

Negative (63%)

"We are affected in not having any fresh food"
"Had a small restaurant which has closed temporarily due to low demand and fear of further spread."
"Potential risk of bankruptcy."
"People are panic buying…"

Neutral (21%)

"Looking to commence sustainable/backyard farming as a means to supplement grocery purchase."
"Follow public health guidance regarding curfews, social distancing etc."

Positive (11%)

"I'm a homebody so enjoying the laid back time."
"Am grateful for the warmth of the sun and that we open our windows to let fresh air in."
"I am trying my very best to cope."

Very Positive (2%)

"I have adapted to the change and will continue to adjust as need be the best way I can."
"Great. Have time to do things that my busy lifestyle did not permit."

CONCLUSION

How people make a living and access markets is being impacted by COVID-19 across the Caribbean. These disruptions are driven primarily by restrictions put in place to curb the spread of the virus. Experiences across the globe show that measures may continue for weeks or even months.

Widespread disruption to livelihoods is already translating into lost income, particularly for people engaged in casual labour or petty trade, business owners and people who receive support from others. With some people reducing their consumption or skipping meals, impacts to food availability and consumption need to be addressed before they worsen.

It is essential to mitigate the disruptions to livelihoods and cushion the financial blow. The region should galvanise local production to meet future demands and ensure trade and supply chains remain open as outlined in the CARICOM COVID-19 Agri-Food Response and Mitigation Framework Document. At the same time, financial assistance and other resources to vulnerable populations should be expanded along the lines of plans and actions already underway in many countries to mitigate the economic impacts at the household level.

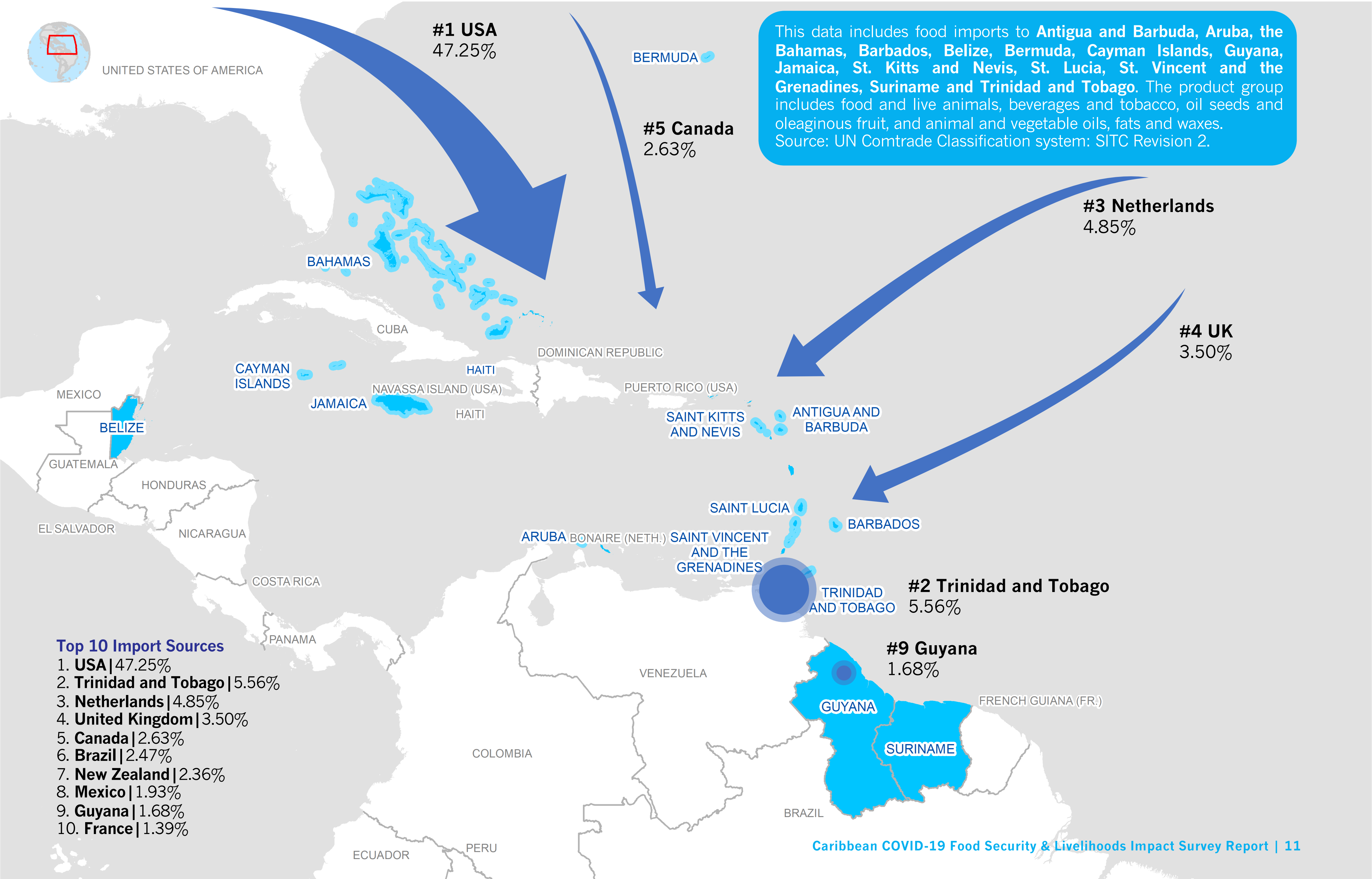
While at the regional level there were few differences between responses from men and women, more women may be experiencing income impacts. There are underlying gender issues throughout the Caribbean that need to be considered. Further country-level analysis may reveal greater differences in how men and women are being impacted.

This survey contributes to a better picture of impacts to livelihoods, food security and access to markets. It highlights how people are anxious about making ends meet and staying healthy amid unprecedented constraints. More in-depth assessment and analysis on the wide-ranging economic and social impacts of COVID-19 will be critical to further inform responses to the unfolding crisis.

Common themes on how respondents are adapting and coping

ANNEX 1. FOOD IMPORTS FOR THE REGION

Over 80% of food in the Caribbean is imported (FAO). Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana are the only 2 countries from the region making the top 10 list of import sources. The 31st CARICOM Intersessional meeting held in February 2020 declared a push to reduce the region's USD$5 billion import bill over the next 5 years.



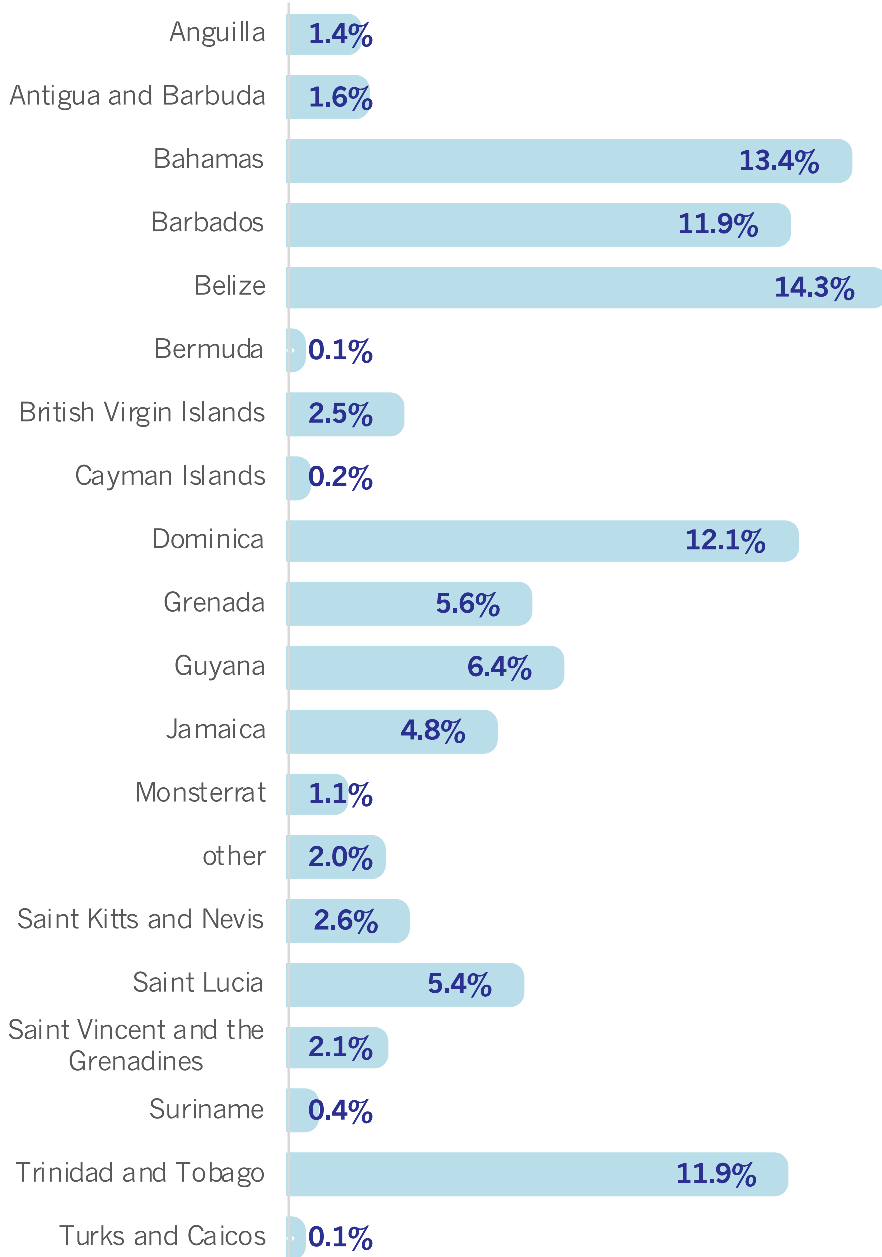
This data includes food imports to **Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago**. The product group includes food and live animals, beverages and tobacco, oil seeds and oleaginous fruit, and animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes.
Source: UN Comtrade Classification system: SITC Revision 2.

Top 10 Import Sources

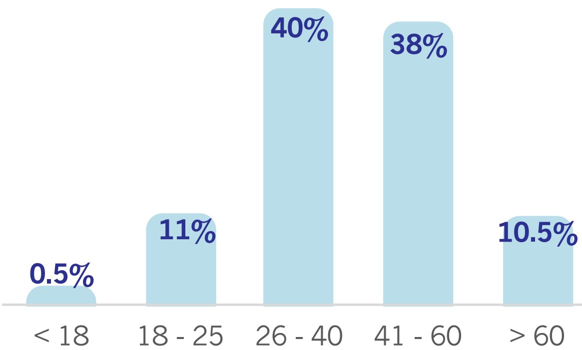
1. **USA** | 47.25%
2. **Trinidad and Tobago** | 5.56%
3. **Netherlands** | 4.85%
4. **United Kingdom** | 3.50%
5. **Canada** | 2.63%
6. **Brazil** | 2.47%
7. **New Zealand** | 2.36%
8. **Mexico** | 1.93%
9. **Guyana** | 1.68%
10. **France** | 1.39%

ANNEX 2. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

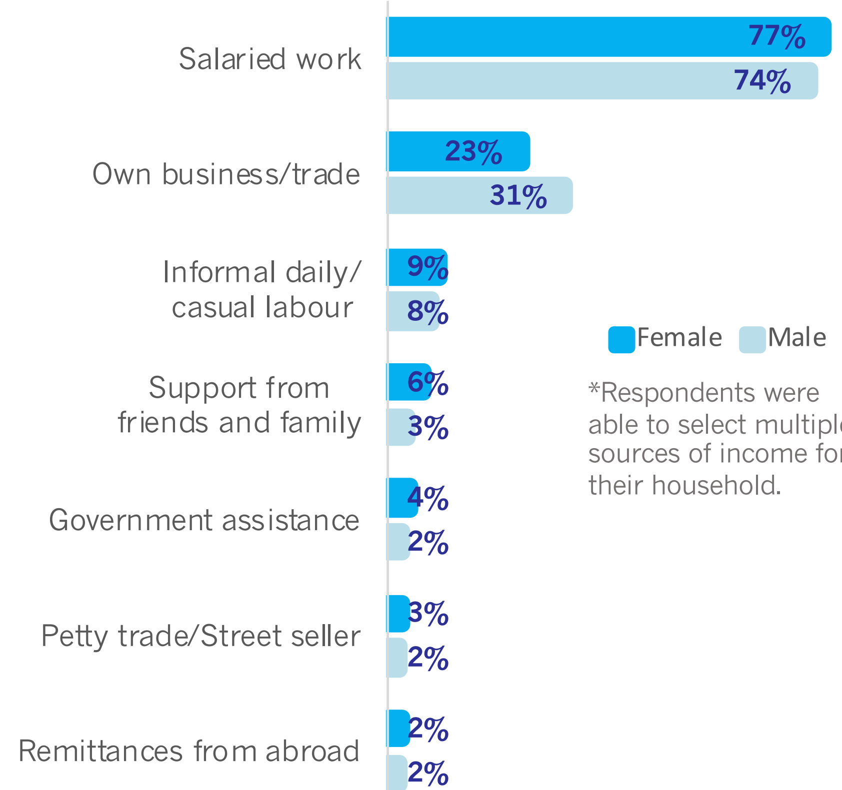
Percentage of respondents by country/territory



Age breakdown



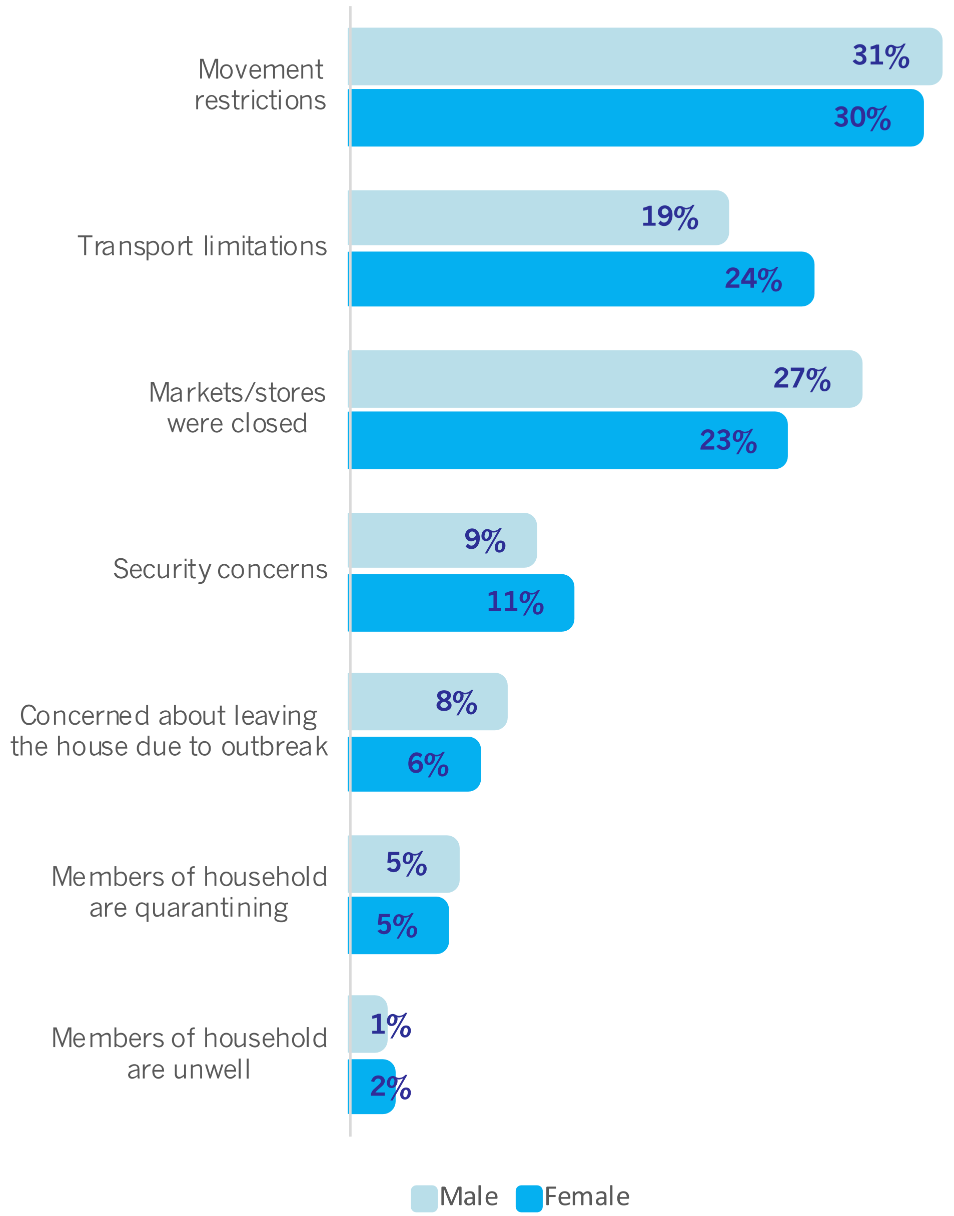
Main household income sources



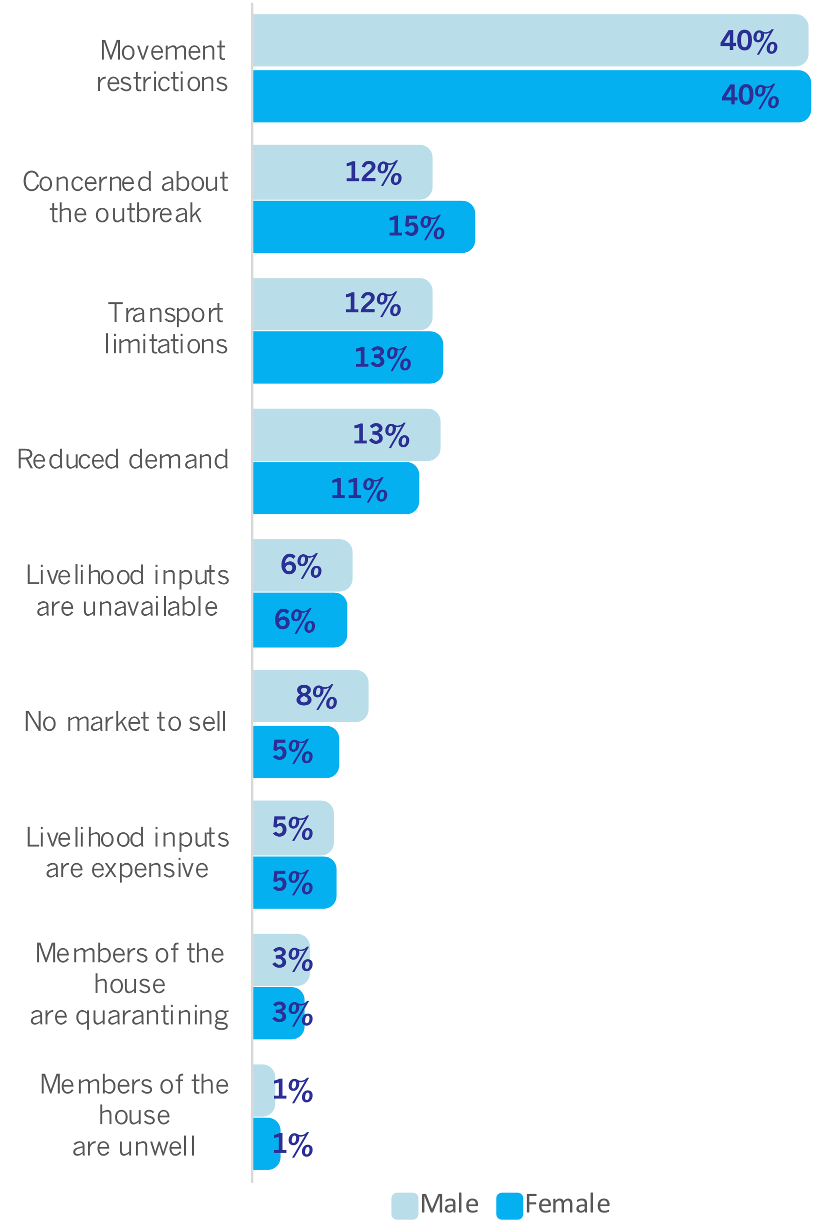
*Respondents were able to select multiple sources of income for their household.

ANNEX 3. DETAILED FIGURES BY SEX

Reasons for not being able to access markets

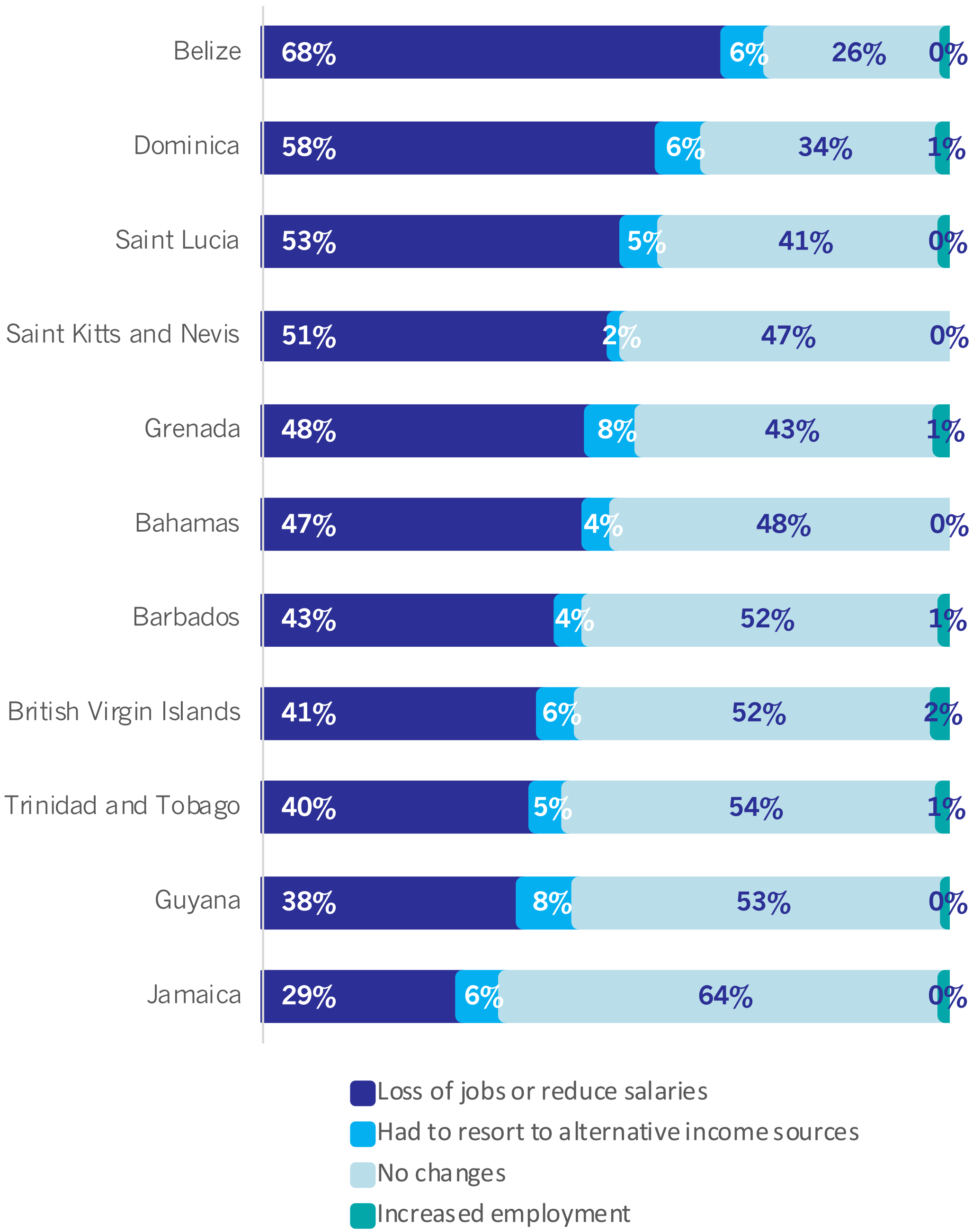


Reasons for disruptions of livelihoods

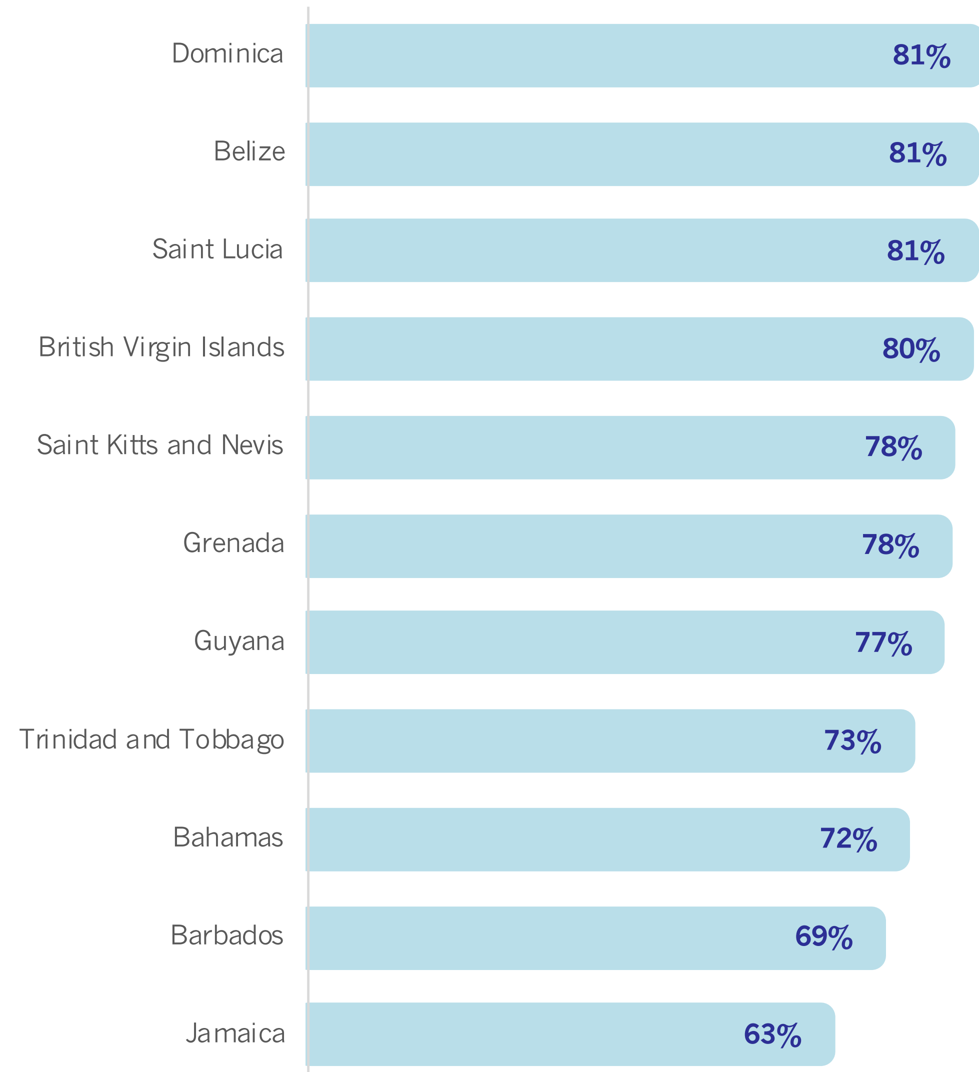


ANNEX 4. DETAILED FIGURES BY COUNTRIES OR TERRITORIES (WITH > 100 RESPONSES)

Income changes



% reporting disruptions to livelihoods



ANNEX 5. METHODOLOGY

The survey was launched via a webform, which was accessible on mobile/smartphone and PC/desktop. The data collection period was inclusive of 1-12 April 2020.

The survey was circulated widely via email, social media, media and other communication channels by participating ministries including (but not limited to) Ministries of Agriculture, Social Protection, National Disaster Management Organizations, UN agencies and NGO partners.

Responses were visualised live on an interactive dashboard and continually monitored to ensure their legitimacy based on cross referencing with prior knowledge and secondary data. Data validation methods were designed into the survey form to mitigate against intentional or unintentional outliers.

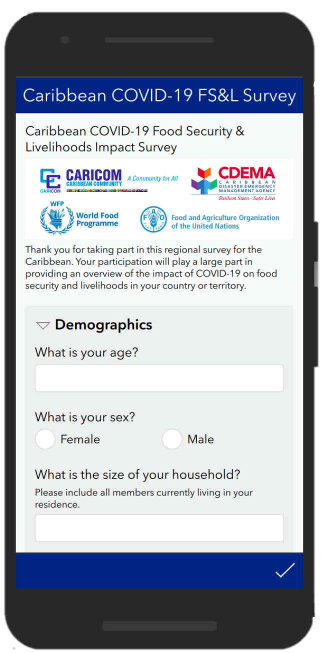
WFP Caribbean performed the data collection, monitoring and analysis. Data was analysed according to age groups and sex.

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 number of positive versus negative responses and (b) auto-categorisation of the responses. To moderate the non-representative nature of the data, the analysis team further refined the classifications presented by the algorithms.

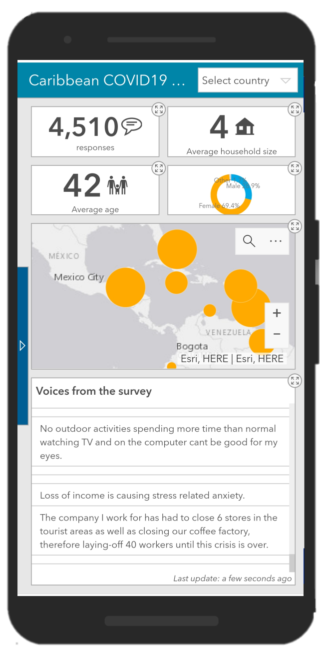
Country-level results are only included for countries or territories with over 100 responses.

This report was prepared by WFP Caribbean: Amy Chong, Sarah Bailey, Francesca Ciardi, Elisaveta Gouretskaia and Nicholas Grainger

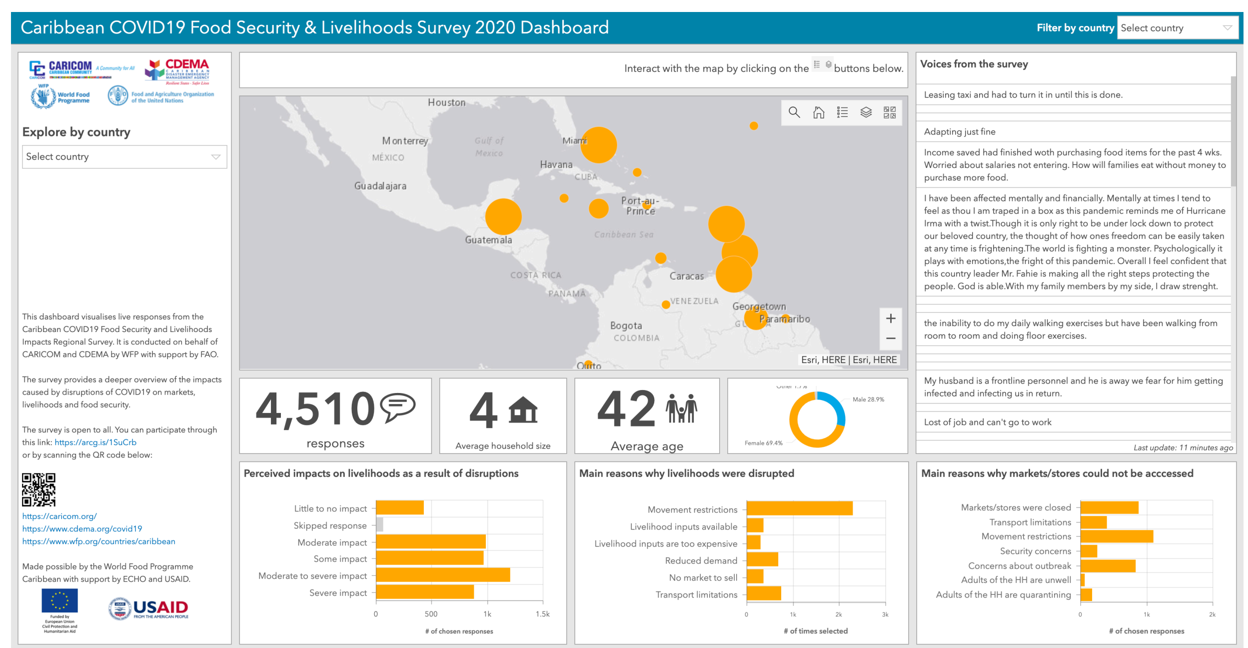
Survey (Closed)
http://arcg.is/1SuCrb



Dashboard for smartphones
https://arcg.is/izn5H



Dashboard for PC/laptop http://arcg.is/Ca8X0



ANNEX 6. QUESTIONNAIRE

Caribbean COVID-19 FS&L Survey

Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

Thank you for taking part in this regional survey for the Caribbean. Your participation will play a large part in providing an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on food security and livelihoods in your country or territory.

Demographics

What is your age?

What is your sex?

- Female
- Male

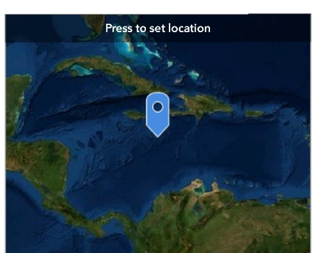
What is the size of your household?

Please include all members currently living in your residence.

Which country do you live in?*

Location

Please click on the target icon on the map if you would like to provide a more accurate location.



Lat: 16.04150 Lon: -75.20324

Markets

1. In the past 7 days, has there been a time when you or your household could not access the markets/grocery stores?

- Yes
- No

What were the main reasons why you or your household could not access the markets/stores?

Please select all that apply.

- Markets/stores were closed
- Transport limitations
- Movement restrictions (eg. curfew)
- Security concerns
- Concerned about leaving the house due to outbreak
- Adult members of the household are unwell
- Members of household are self quarantining
- Other

2. Are fresh food items (eg. eggs, meat, vegetables) currently available in markets/stores?

- Always available
- Partially/ sometimes available
- Not available
- Don't know

3. Are basic food items (eg. bread, rice) currently available in markets/stores?

- Always available
- Partially/ sometimes available
- Not available
- Don't know

4. Are hygiene items (eg. soap, detergent) currently available for purchase in markets/stores?

- Always available
- Partially/ sometimes available
- Not available
- Don't know

5. Are essential medicines available in clinics or pharmacies?

- Always available
- Partially/ sometimes available
- Not available
- Don't know

6. Has there been any changes in the costs of food items over the past 2 weeks?

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

7. Have you changed your shopping behaviour compared to normal times?

- Yes
- No

How have you changed your shopping behaviour?

Please select all that apply.

- Buying larger quantities than usual
- Buying smaller quanitities than usual
- Buying cheaper or less preferred foods than usual
- Going to different stores

Livelihoods

8. Was your ability to carry out livelihoods activities affected in the past two weeks?

- Yes
- No

What were the main reasons for the disruptions to your livelihood activities?

Please select all that apply.

- Reduced demand for goods/services
- No market to sell products
- Transport limitations
- Movement restrictions (eg. curfew)
- Livelihoods inputs are unavailable
- Livelihoods inputs are too expensive or inaccessible
- Concerned about leaving the house due to outbreak
- Adult members of the household are unwell
- Increased demand for goods/services
- Other

9. Has your household income changed over the past 2 weeks?

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

10. What are your household's main income sources over the past year?

You may select up to 2 that apply.

- Salaried work with regular income
- Daily/casual labour
- Own business/trade
- Petty trade/selling on street
- Remittances from abroad
- Support from families and friends
- Government assistance/social safety nets
- Other

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

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

12. Is your household currently engaged in farming/livestock raising?

- Yes. For consumption
- Yes. For sale
- Yes. For both sale and consumption
- No

Please select all that apply.

- Rice
- Corn
- Vegetables
- Pulses
- Banana/Plantains
- Poultry
- Small ruminants (eg. sheep, goat)
- Large ruminants (eg. cattle)
- Swine
- Other

13. Is your household currently engaged in fishing/coastal activities?

- Yes. For consumption
- Yes. For sale
- Yes. For both sale and consumption
- No

Please select all that apply.

- Small scale aquaculture
- Inland fisheries
- Marine/coastal fisheries
- Processing of fish/fisheries products
- Fishing gear production
- Mangrove/beach activities (eg. shellfish harvesting)
- Other

Food Security

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

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

15. Does your household have any food stock?

- Yes. Less than one week
- Yes. Less than 2 weeks
- Yes. Less than 3 weeks
- Yes. Less than 1 month
- Yes. More than 1 month
- No

General

Please provide any additional insights into how you have been affected by the disruptions from COVID19 and how you are adapting.

Do not provide any sensitive information.

1000

Thank you for your participation! Please hit the Submit button.

Individual responses are anonymous. Overall survey results will be publicly available.

Submit

World Food Programme
Office for Emergency Preparedness and Response in the 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

Cover photo credit: CARICOM