Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

Belize Summary Report | May 2020

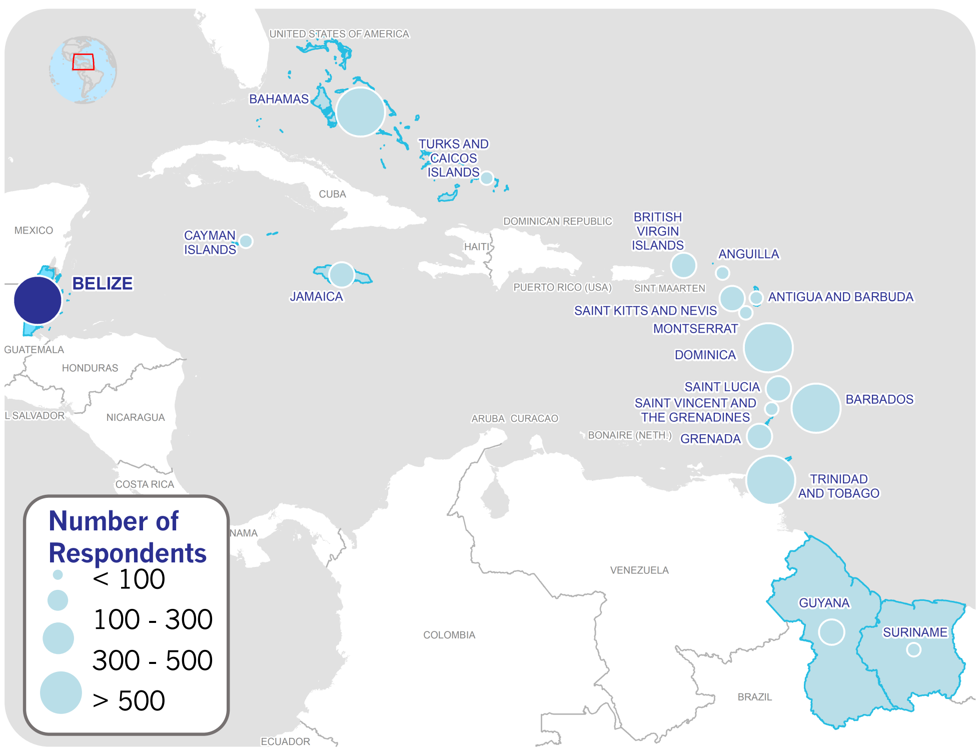
643 Respondents

65 | 35% Female | Male

35 Average age

5 Average Household size

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, it received 4,537 responses from 19 countries and territories in the Caribbean. The survey was open from 1-12 April 2020 and was shared via social media, email and media.



Belize summary findings

- Over one-third of respondents reported not being able to access the market at some point between 25 March and 12 April, primarily due to concerns about the outbreak and market/stores being closed.
- Key items such as food and medicines are less available than usual, but very few people indicated that they were unavailable. An increase in food prices was reported by 69% of respondents.
- Respondents have changed how they shop, mainly by buying larger quantities. Most have at least a week's worth of food stock at home.
- Over half of respondents shifted their eating behavior. A quarter are skipping meals or reducing their food intake which is slightly higher when compared with the region. Respondents under 25 appear more affected.
- The vast majority of respondents (81%) have faced disruptions to their livelihoods, primarily owing to movement restrictions and also transport limitations. Many commented on interruptions in tourism as a cause. Incomes are decreasing, with 68% reporting job loss or reduced salaries.
- Looking ahead, most predict that their livelihoods will be moderately or severely impacted. Those engaged in informal daily and casual labour are anticipating the most severe impacts to their livelihoods.
- Trends did not vary substantially between women and men. Respondents under 25 appear to be experiencing greater impacts on household income and food consumption.

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.

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Funded by European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid
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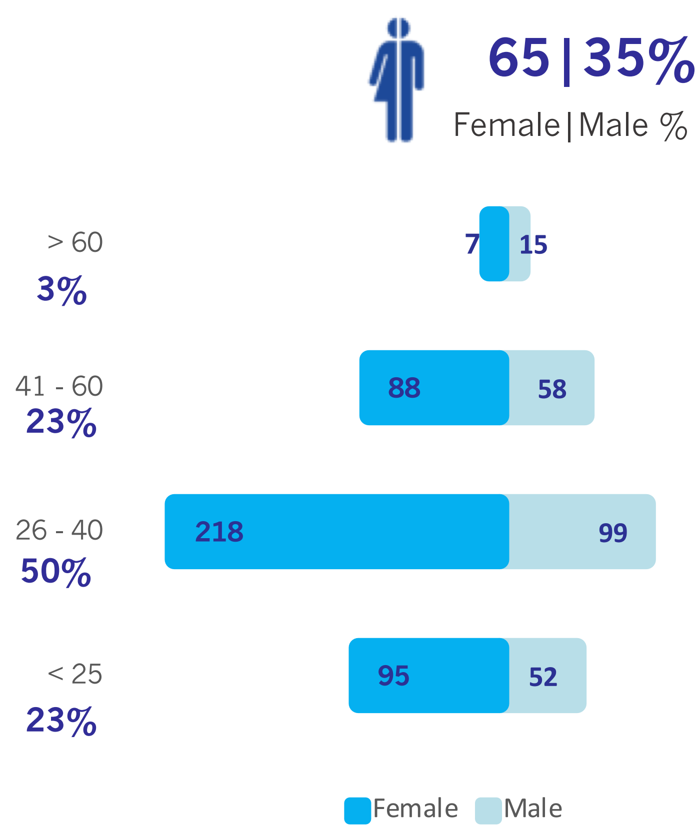
DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

Age and sex breakdown of respondents

Age breakdown analysis will only be provided for the age groups of <25, 26 – 40 and 41 – 60 due to sufficient responses in these categories.

Age and sex of respondents

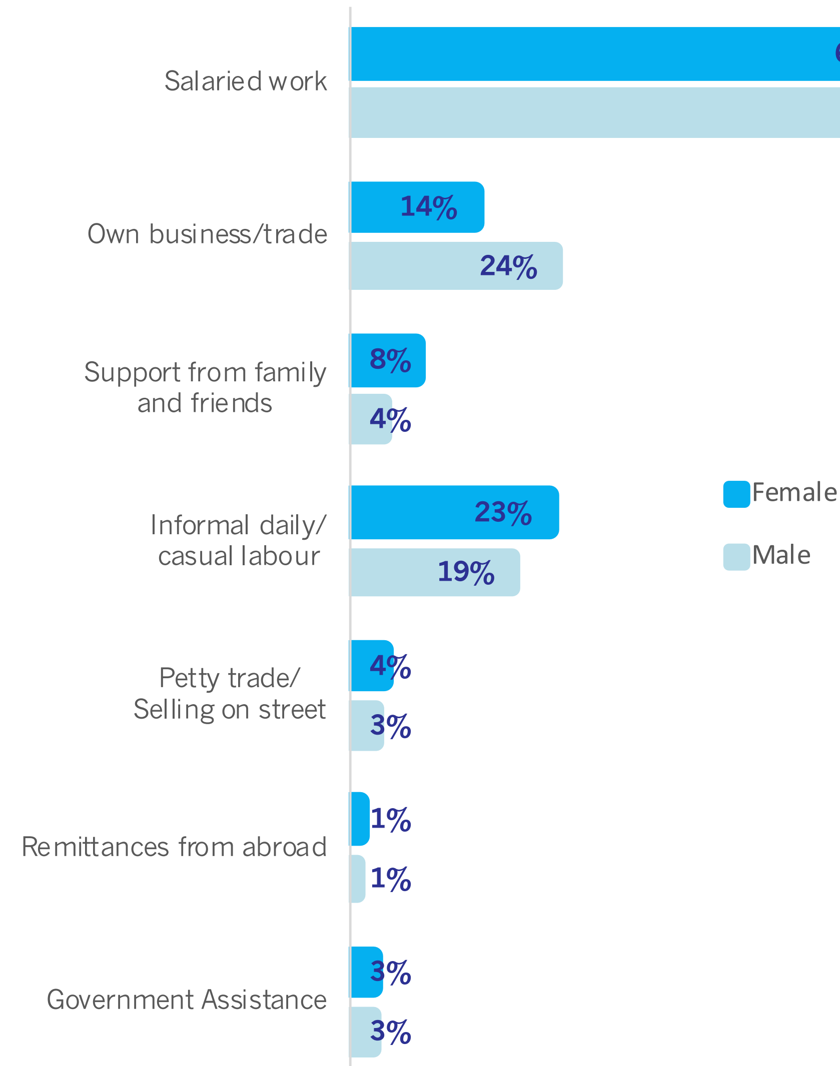


Main household income sources

Respondents were asked to indicate the main income source/s for their household. Disaggregated analysis will only be provided for salaried workers, those with their own business/trade and engaging in informal daily/casual labour due to sufficient responses in these categories.

Main Income Source | By sex

Multiple choices could be selected.



IMPACT ON MARKETS

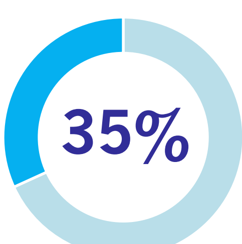
COVID-19 has impacted people's access to markets. During the survey period and two weeks prior to the survey, 35% of total respondents faced a time when they were not able to access markets, which is consistent with the regional average (37%). Concerns about leaving the house due to the outbreak and market/stores being closed were the primary reasons for disrupted market access.

Food and other key items were less available than usual. Only 35% of respondents indicated that staple foods were "always available" and 30% that medicines were, though very few reported that staple foods, fresh foods, medicines and hygiene items were unavailable at stores. In addition, 69% of respondents reported an increase in food prices.

The vast majority of respondents (91%) are shifting the way they shop, mainly by buying larger quantities than usual. While trends were consistent between men and women, there were variations between age groups. A higher proportion of those under 41 years were resorting to purchasing cheaper or less preferred brands compared to those aged 41-60.

Access to markets

Respondents indicated if there was a time they were not able to access the market during the time of the survey.



Reported a time when they could not access markets in the past 7 days

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.

"Significantly reduced availability and access to fresh fruits, vegetables and fresh fish....i believe local supply is available but the problem is how to make them easily available to consumer with the significant restrictions now in place at the local produce markets."

IMPACT ON MARKETS

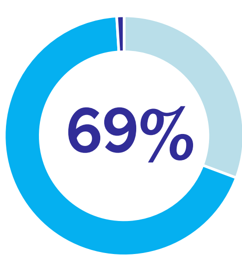
Availability of items in stores

Respondents reported on the availability of key items in stores.

	Staple Food	Fresh food	Hygiene	Medicines
Always Available	35%	48%	52%	30%
Partially/ sometimes available	58%	47%	40%	48%
Not available	2%	2%	5%	5%
Don't know	5%	2%	2%	16%

Food prices

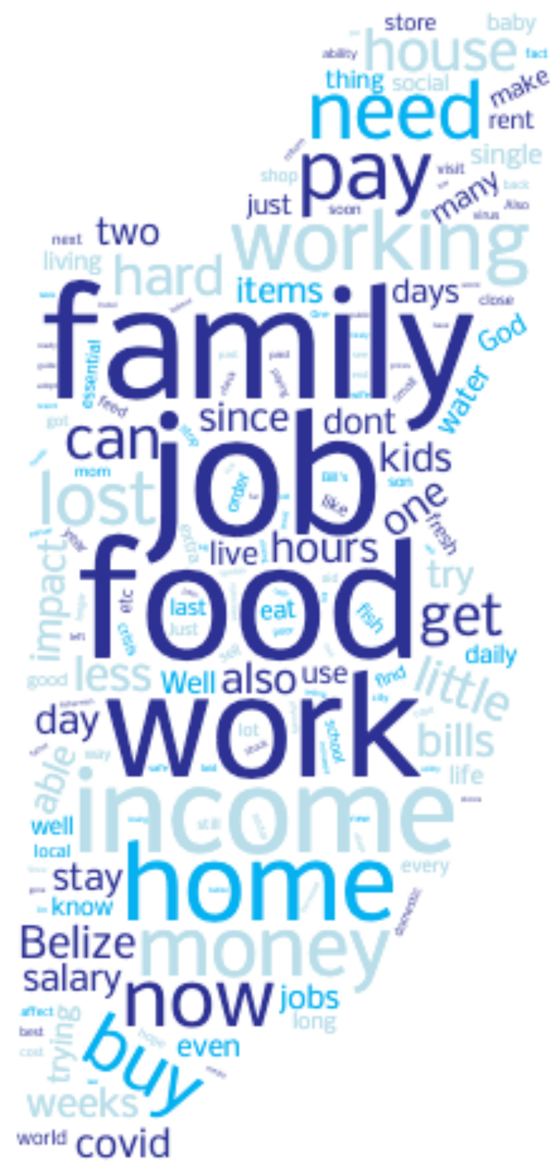
Respondents reported on any observed changes in food prices.



Observed an increase in food prices.
32% reported no change and
<1% reported a decrease

"Currently laid off from work and all family members taking extreme measures of rationing our food to last as long as possible....However everyone is raising the prices of groceries and vegetables."

"Well we live in rural area in which no access to medication. We have to travel a long distance to buy groceries due to limited transportation, due to COVID-19."

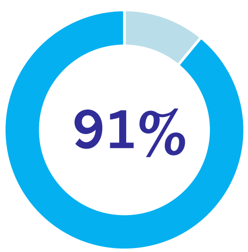


Key themes on how people in Belize are being impacted, and are adapting to disruptions from COVID-19

IMPACT ON MARKETS

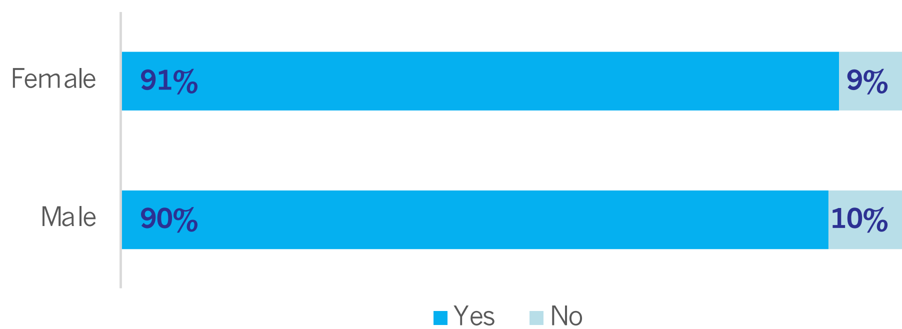
Shopping behaviour

Respondents were asked if they have had to, and if so, how they have altered their shopping behavior.



Changed their shopping behaviour

Have you changed your shopping behaviour compared to usual? | By sex

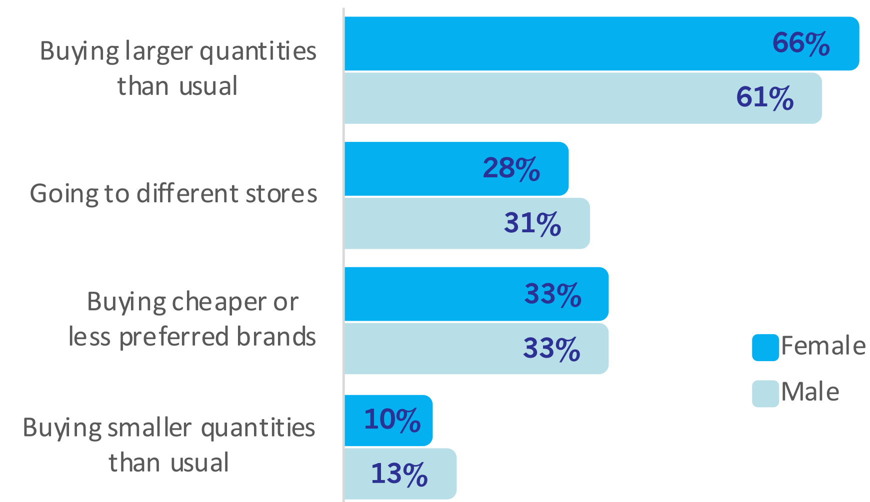


"..I increased the quantity of my shopping, buying long lasting cheap foods to allow me to buy more. The past two weeks I have avoided the supermarkets. I don't have fresh foods now or many canned veggies, impacting my nutrient intake..."

"...This period of uncertainty and the fact that our movements are limited. However, we do understand the need to stay but. With the recent State of Emergency, shopping that was done in the city is not possible..."

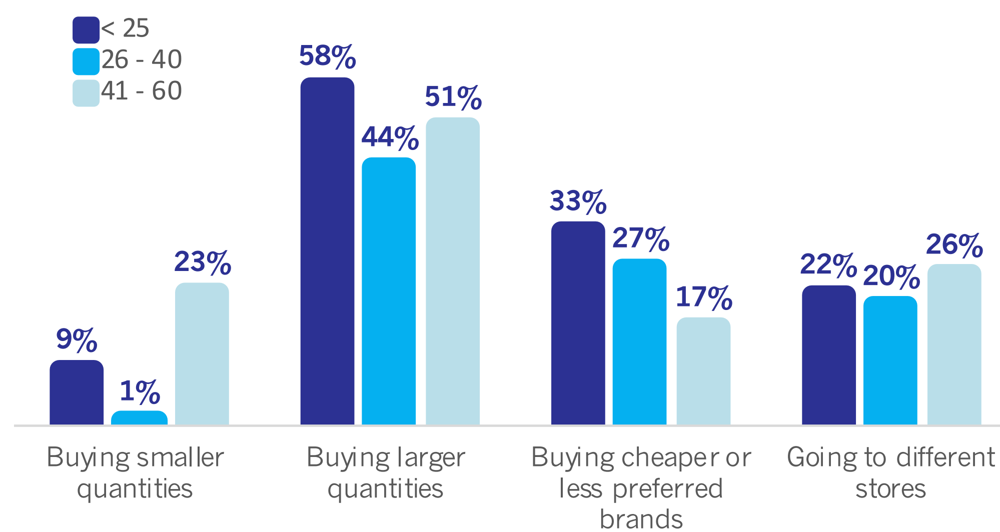
How respondents are changing their shopping behaviour | By sex

Multiple choices could be selected.



How respondents are changing their shopping behaviour | By age

Multiple choices could be selected.



IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

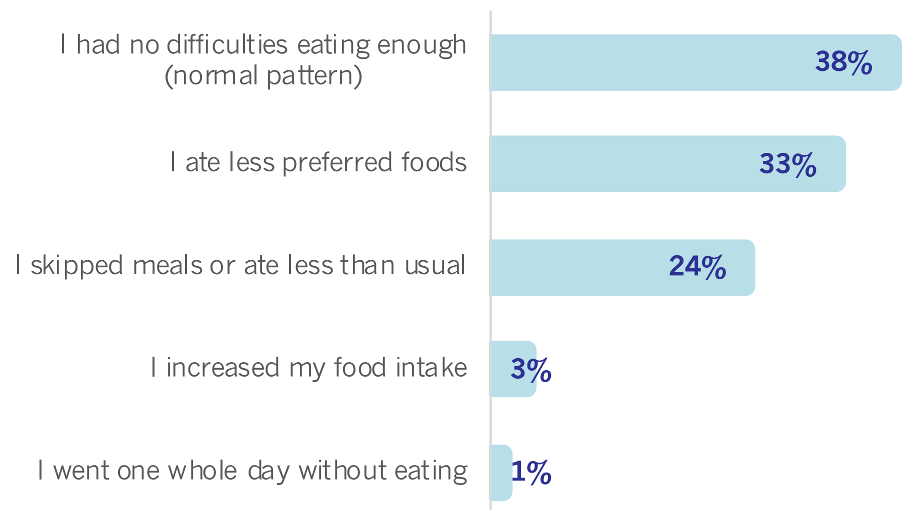
Food consumption is being impacted, with nearly half of the respondents reporting that they skipped meals or ate less than usual, and over a third of respondents eating less preferred foods. While findings are consistent between men and women, there are some variations between age groups. More than two-thirds of respondents under 25 were not able to maintain normal eating patterns owing to eating less preferred foods, skipping meals/eating less and (for a small number) going a full day without eating.

About three-quarters of respondents have at least a week of food stocks. While this was broadly consistent between men and women, a higher percentage of respondents under 25 reported less than a week's worth of food in the household.

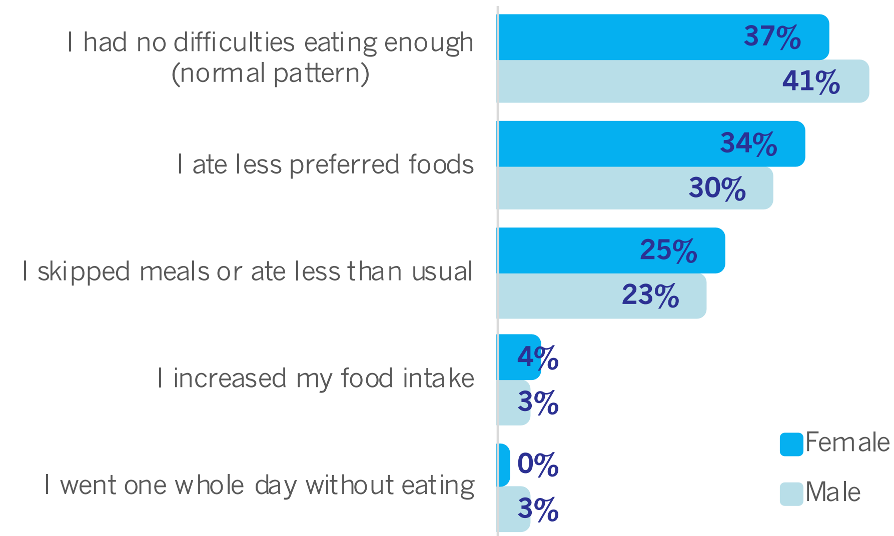
Food consumption

Respondents were asked to reflect on their food situation.

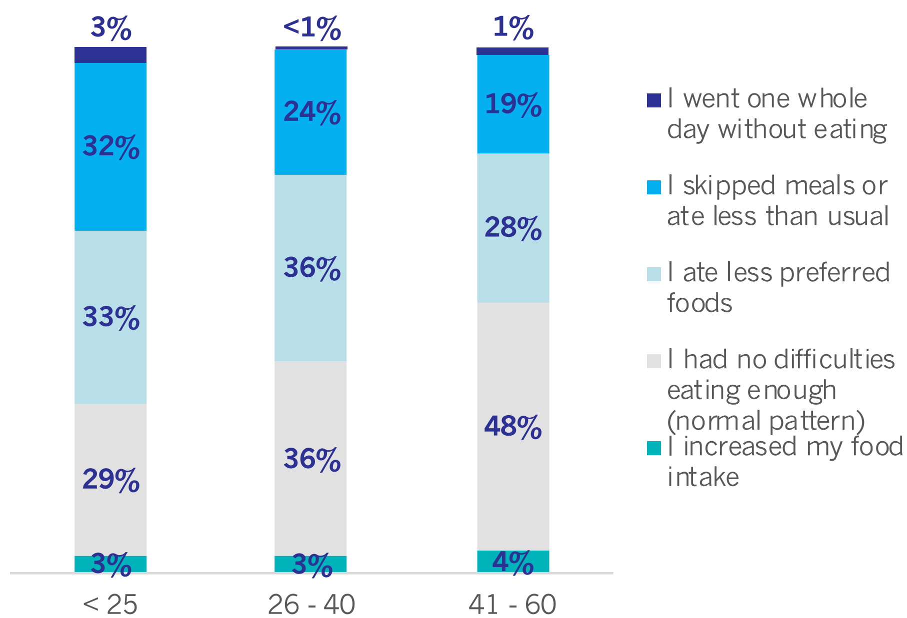
Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?



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



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

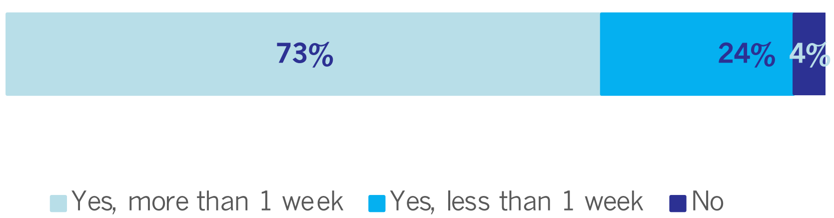


IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

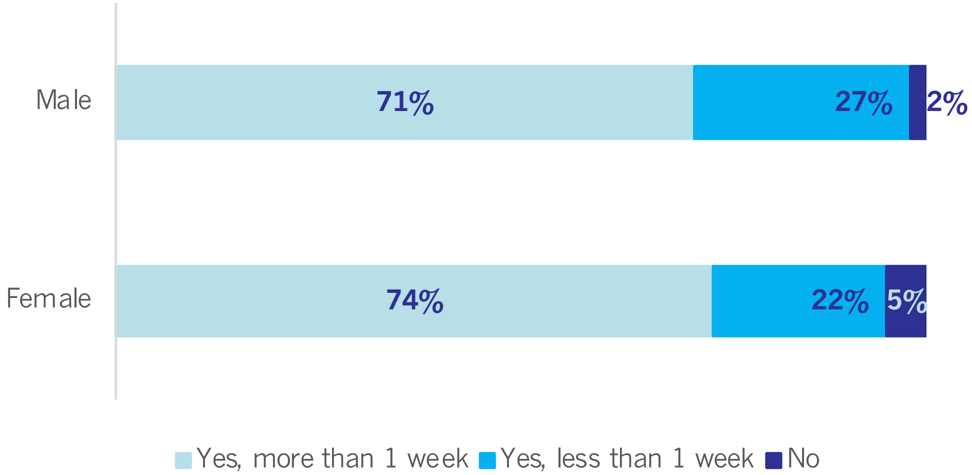
Food stocks

Respondents were asked to indicate the amount of available food stock for their household.

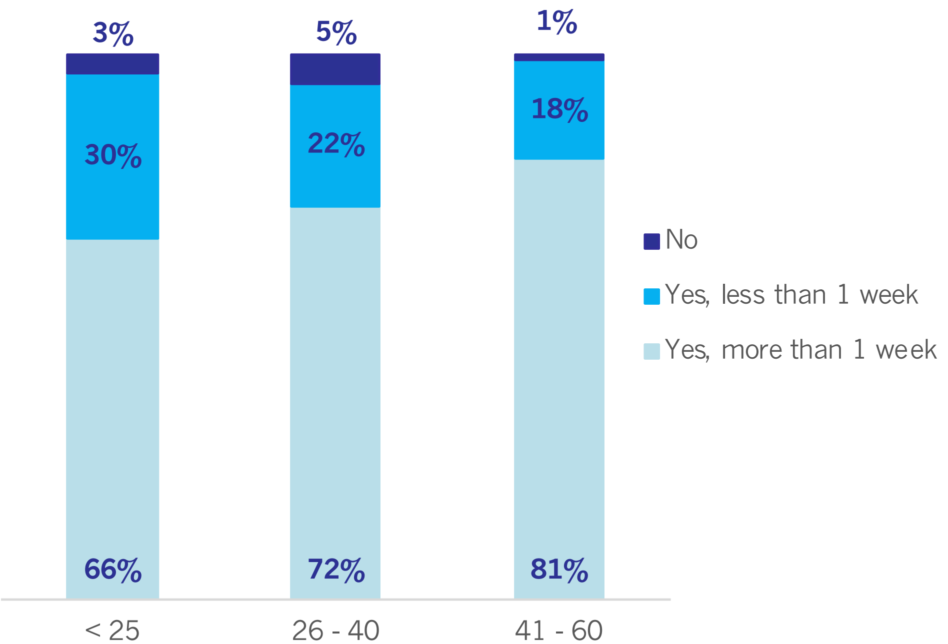
Does your household have any food stock?



Does your household have any food stock? | By sex



Does your household have any food stock? | By age



"We stock food for only a month so that we can eat without a problem. Adapting by not eating certain things we were used to. We bought basic food only."

"We have lost our income and we cannot leave our home to even go try to purchase food."

"i lost my job and have a little food to live on."

IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

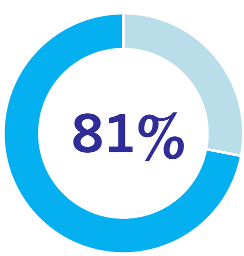
Livelihoods are being widely disrupted by the pandemic, with 81% of respondents indicating that their ability to carry out their livelihoods was affected in the last two weeks. Movement restrictions were the primary reason among both men and women. On a positive note, 16% of those whose livelihoods were affected had increased demand for their goods/services.

Casual labourers appear to be among the hardest hit, with 43% anticipating severe impacts to their livelihoods in the future. Along with business owners, they reported reduced demand for goods and services, livelihoods inputs being inaccessible and concerns about the outbreak.

Overall, 68% of respondents reported job loss or reduced income. This was most prevalent among people aged 40 and under, casual labourers (87%) and business owners (77%). Slightly more women than men reported household income loss.

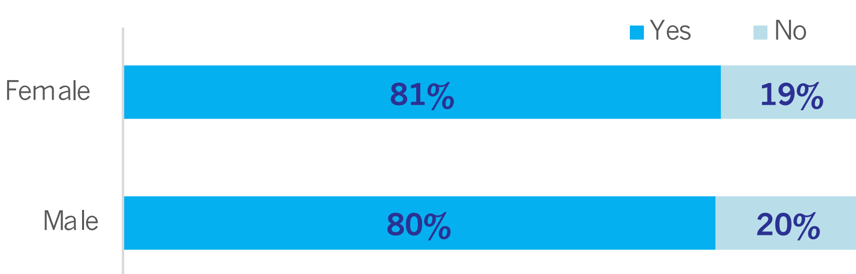
Disruptions to livelihoods

Respondents reported on any disruptions to their livelihoods.



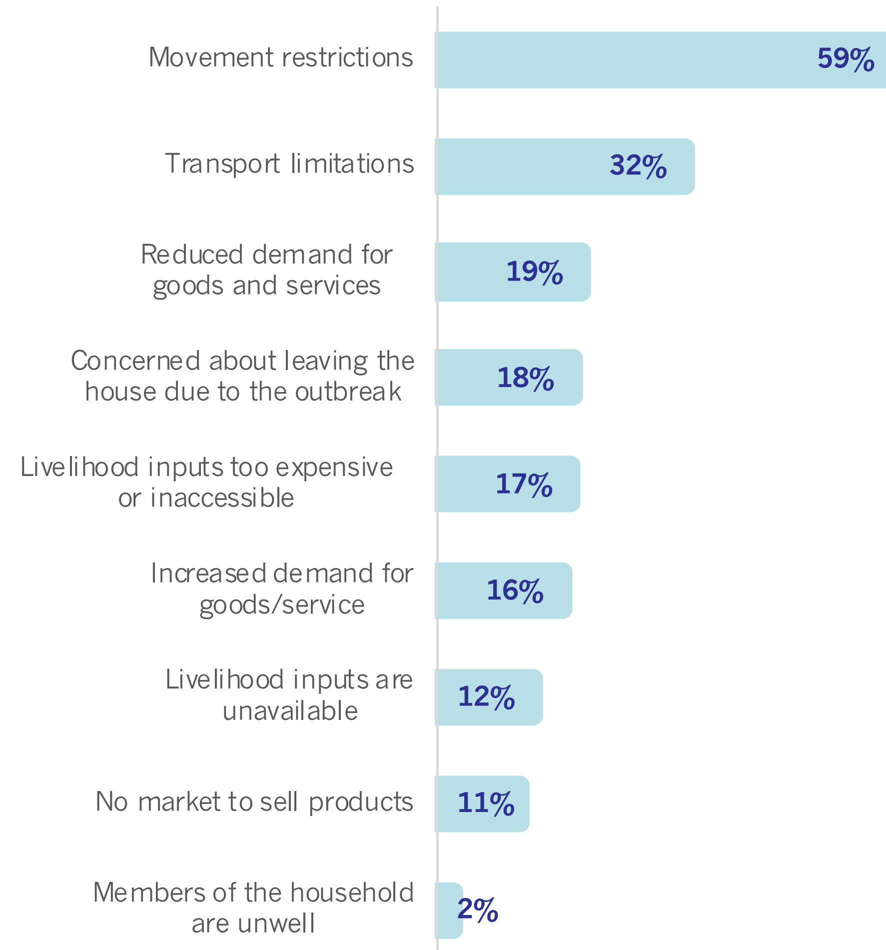
reported livelihood disruptions in the past two weeks

Was your ability to carry out livelihoods activities affected in the past two weeks? | By sex



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

Multiple choices could be selected.



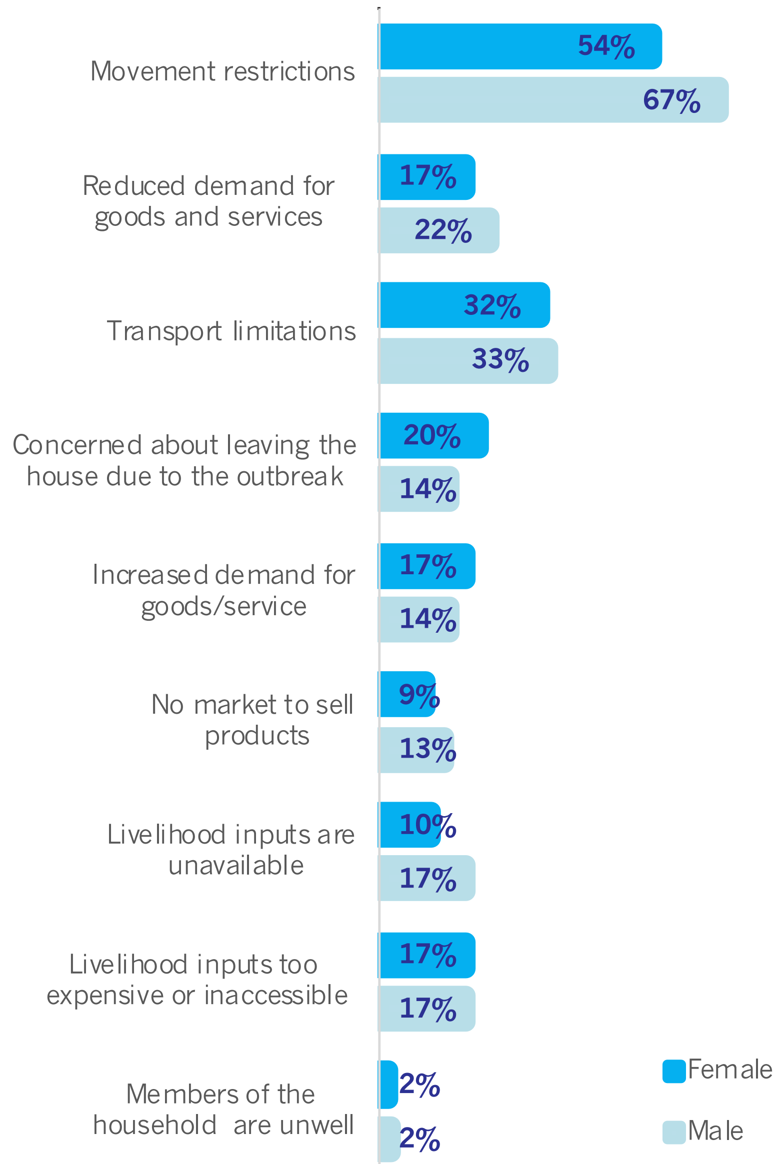
"I'm not able to sell my pastries as often due to many not being able to buy because many of us are out of employment..."

"I am a taxi driver and have lost my job due to the restrictions by the government. I will be unable to provide for my family in the coming weeks....."

IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

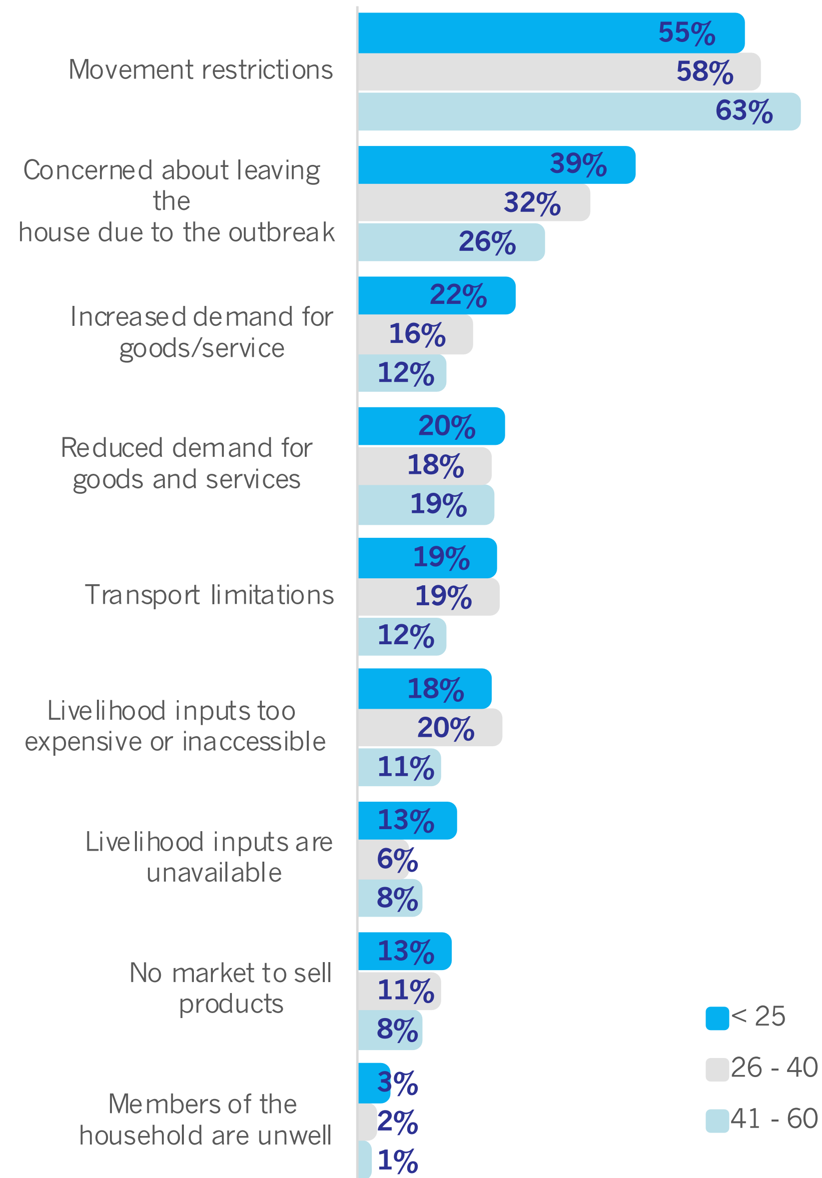
For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were… | By sex

Multiple choices could be selected.



For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were… | By age

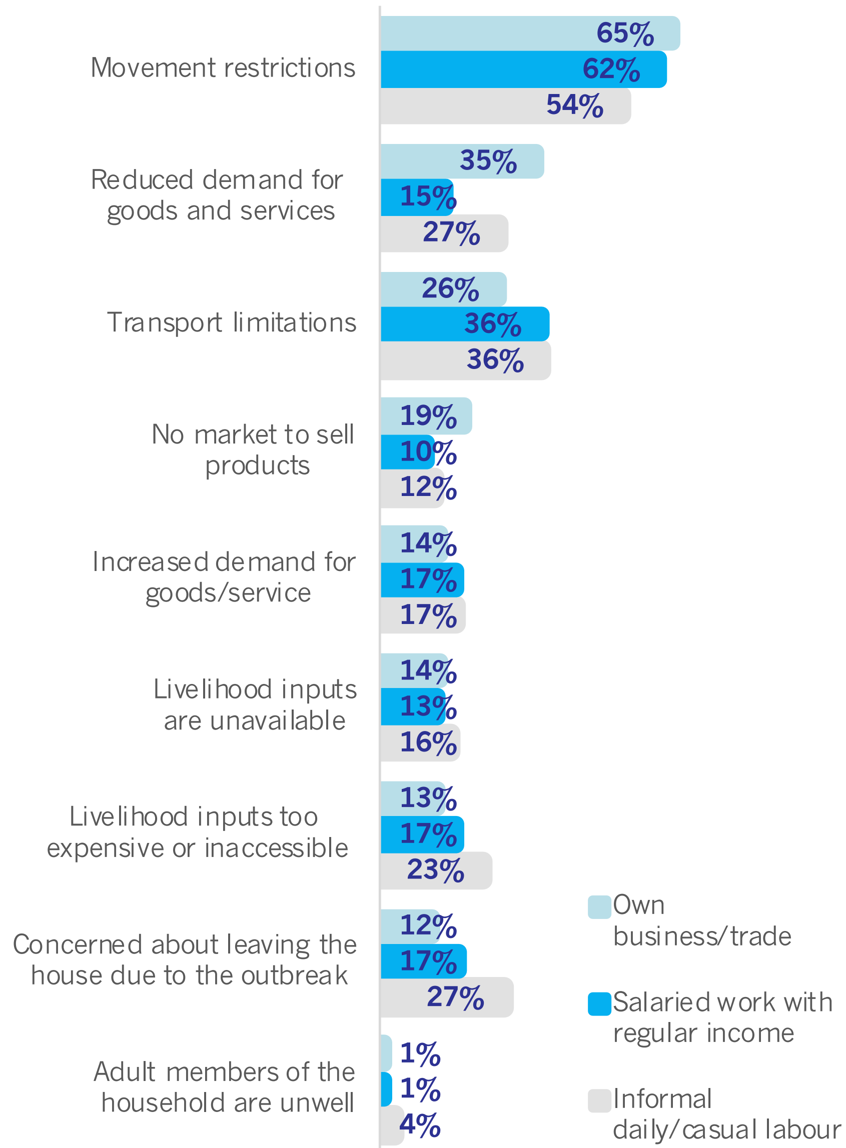
Multiple choices could be selected.



IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were... | By income sources

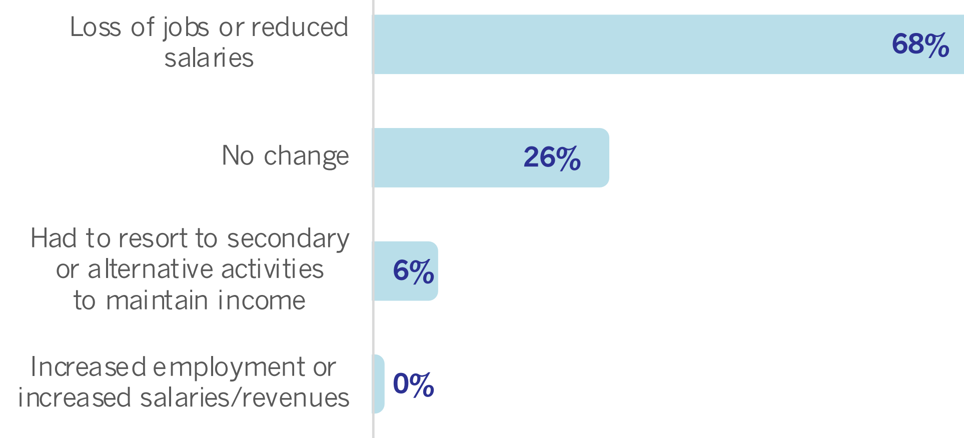
Multiple choices could be selected.



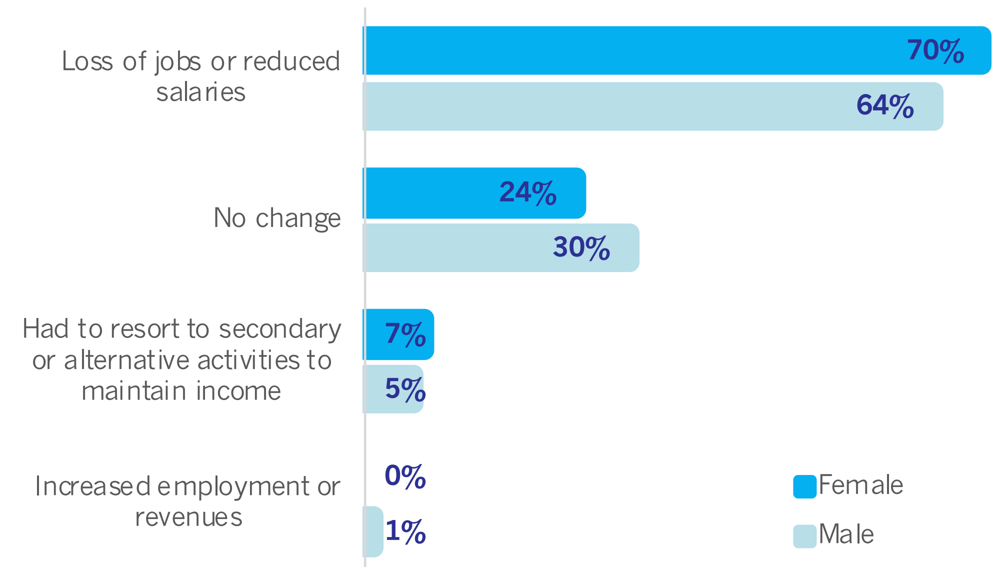
Income changes

Respondents communicated changes to their income in the past two weeks.

Has your household income changed over the past 2 weeks?

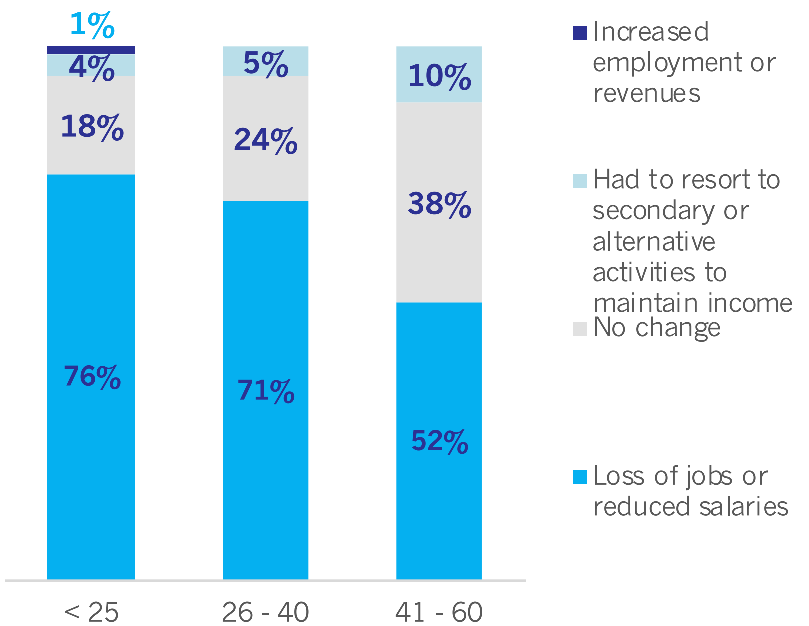


Has your household income changed over the past 2 weeks? | By sex

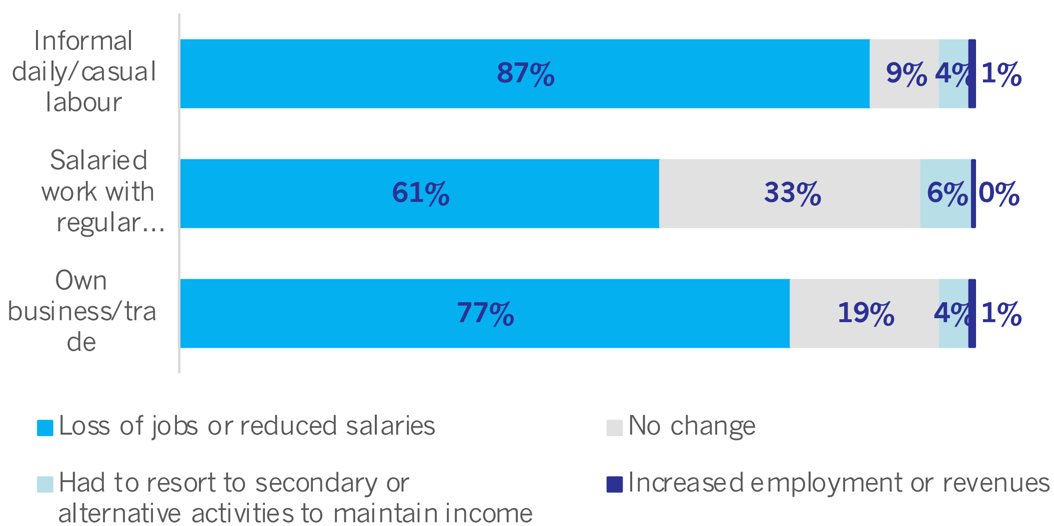


IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Has your household income changed over the past 2 weeks? | By age



Has your household income changed over the past 2 weeks? | By income source

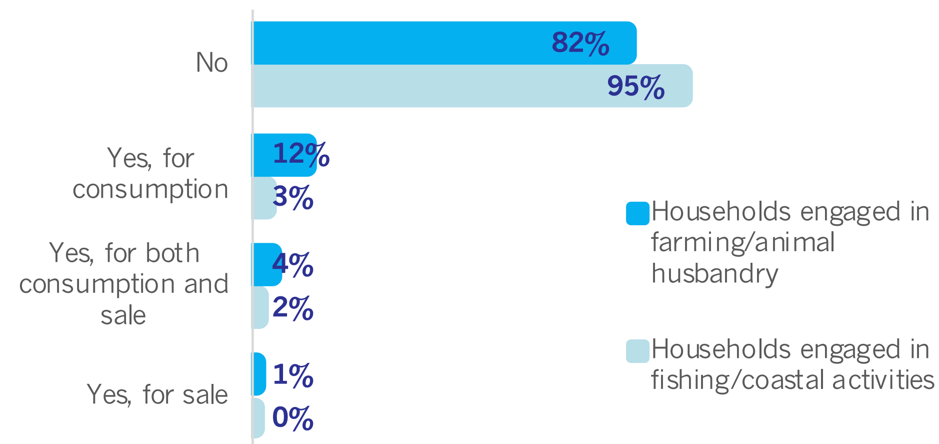


Households engaged in farming/fishing

Agriculture is one of the main pillars of the economy in Belize. According to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and Immigration, the sector represents 13% of GDP, 80% of exports, and employs 18% of the local population. 11% of survey respondents are engaged in farming or fishing.

Given the limited number of respondents engaged in farming (particularly 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 by COVID-19.

Households engaged in fisheries and farming



"We currently have no income in our household and the restriction of movement have severely impacted us because we live near the beach and aren't allowed to fish to feed our household..."

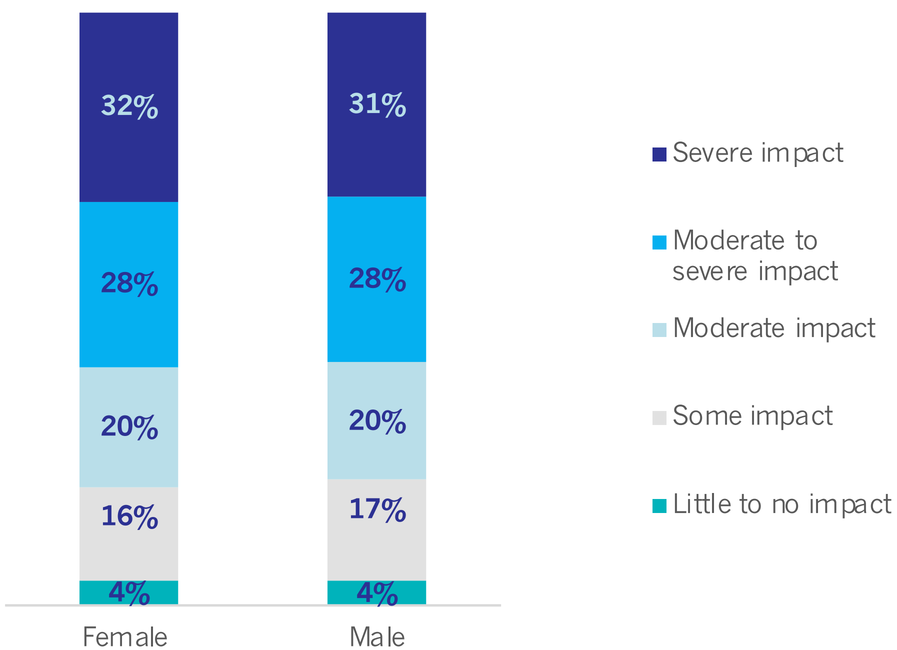
"About two days ago we went fishing but without jobs people are not buying fish and the little we sell we try to buy gasoline to go back out"

IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Future livelihood impacts

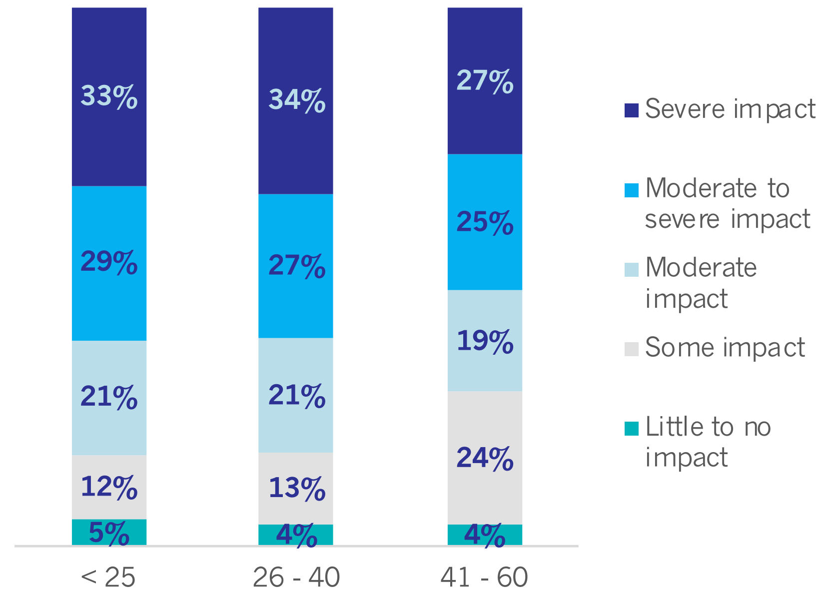
Respondents were asked to look ahead and predict the level of impact to their livelihoods as a result of disruptions from COVID-19.

Looking ahead, how do you expect your livelihood will be impacted as a result of disruptions from COVID-19? | By sex

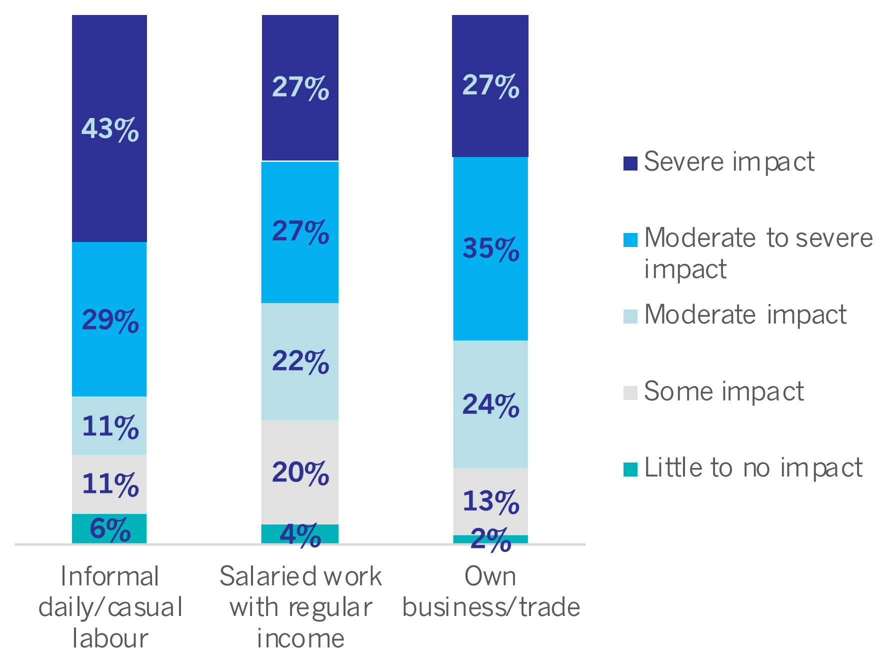


"Just worried how I will feed my mom and my son and pay bills because I lost my job and will not have an income, I worked at the tourism industry and don't know when it will open again"

Looking ahead, how do you expect your livelihood will be impacted as a result of disruptions from COVID-19? | By age



Looking ahead, how do you expect your livelihood will be impacted as result of disruptions from COVID-19? | By income sources

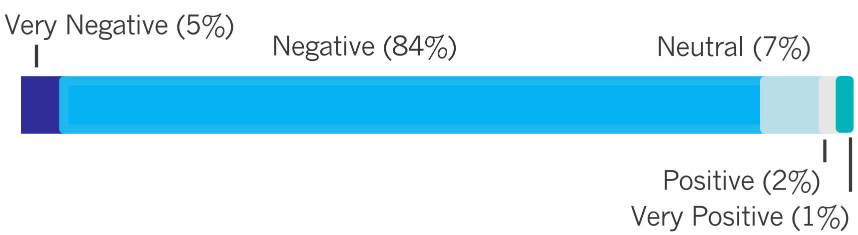


HOW PEOPLE ARE COPING AND ADAPTING

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 643 respondents, (47%) responded to the open-ended question resulting in a total count of 9,665 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.

Distribution of sentiments across open-ended survey responses



Based on the responses, 84% were classified as being negative with 7% classified as neutral. The high percentage of negative responses appears to be due to the large number of respondents whose livelihoods have been disrupted, including many who are dependent on tourism. Respondents who are experiencing job loss or reduced income expressed anxiety due to financial uncertainty, including related to feeding their families and payment of expenses such as rent, mortgage and utility bills. Respondents also indicated that households with multiple incomes have been reduced to single-income households or no income at all, with many using their savings in order to meet basic needs for themselves and their families.

Very negative (5%)

"I'm currently behind on my bank loans I'm also behind on my rent and other essential bills that i have. In total I'm currently around 8000 dollars in debt and climbing and i don't see any end in sight and I'm the sole provider for my household."

Negative (84%)

"The biggest impact is the lack of tourism in my hometown as we are the #1 inland destination in Belize. The local economy is being impacted as most businesses (restaurants, tour shops, etc) are closed."

"Villagers can't go to the river which is vital to some. Some people can't afford water so they use the river to wash and bathe. Also local fishermen and hunters are having a hard time due to the stay at home order that allows only essential personnel. "

Neutral (7%)

"Adjust daily routines to accommodate the night time curfew and curtailed business/commercial activity….. Greater reliance on e-commerce and e-governance facilities"

Positive (2%)

"Being isolated and trying to abide by all regulations put before us by the government of Belize...prevention is better than cure"

"As I have a salary income I consider myself lucky. Even though my working hours went down."

Very Positive (1%)

"increase in home activities like cleaning, doing some arts with my son, eating more fruits if available. also trying to do more exercise at home."

CONCLUSION

This report contributes to a better picture of how COVID-19 is impacting livelihoods, food security and access to markets in Belize. While the trends are largely consistent with what was observed at the regional level, some impacts appear more widespread or severe in Belize, most notably on livelihoods. Of the 11 countries/territories with sufficient responses for individual analysis, Belize has the highest percentage of respondents reporting loss of jobs or reduced salaries and the most severe outlook on future livelihood impacts. Belize is also among the three countries with the highest percentage of respondents reporting disruptions to livelihoods.

Impacts on food security appear to be particularly pronounced in Belize, with a higher percentage of respondents reducing their food intake or skipping meals when compared with the region. Accordingly, impacts to food consumption and availability need to be addressed before they worsen. As noted in the regional survey report, local production should be galvanized to meet future demands and trade and supply chains must remain open, as outlined in the CARICOM COVID-19 Agri-Food Response and Mitigation Framework Document. Financial assistance and other resources to vulnerable populations are critical in order to mitigate the economic impacts facing households.

The findings suggest that casual labourers are experiencing especially severe constraints to their livelihoods, and impacts to household income and food consumption may be particularly felt by people aged 25 and under. While there were not significant differences in how women and men reported being impacted, slightly more women may be experiencing negative income impacts. More in-depth assessment and analysis on the wide-ranging economic and social impacts of COVID-19 will be critical to further inform responses in Belize.

More responses from the survey

“I’m no longer working so i can no longer help my husband financially.”

“As most of the household lost their employment and only myself continued to be employed, we are stretching my income to feed ourselves and consume what we grow in the small farm that we have”

“Unable to move freely to the supermarket due to the fear of getting COVID19. I am trying to adapt to the State of Emergency set in place; there is a curfew which restricts a lot of things..”

“Working from home and adapting well.”

“Work has been impacted due to travel restrictions. Health has been impacted as I've had to postpone an operation I was scheduled to have in Cancun due to closure of border between Belize and Mexico”

“My husband is a frontline personnel and he is away. We fear for him getting infected and infecting us in return.”

“Well I am staying indoors more since I don’t want to get sick”

“Lack of job, no money to pay bills”

“Loan payments had to be used for the purchase of goods and supplies.”

“Less chances to purchase fresh produce and procuring more processed foods.”

ANNEX. REGIONAL SUMMARY KEY FINDINGS

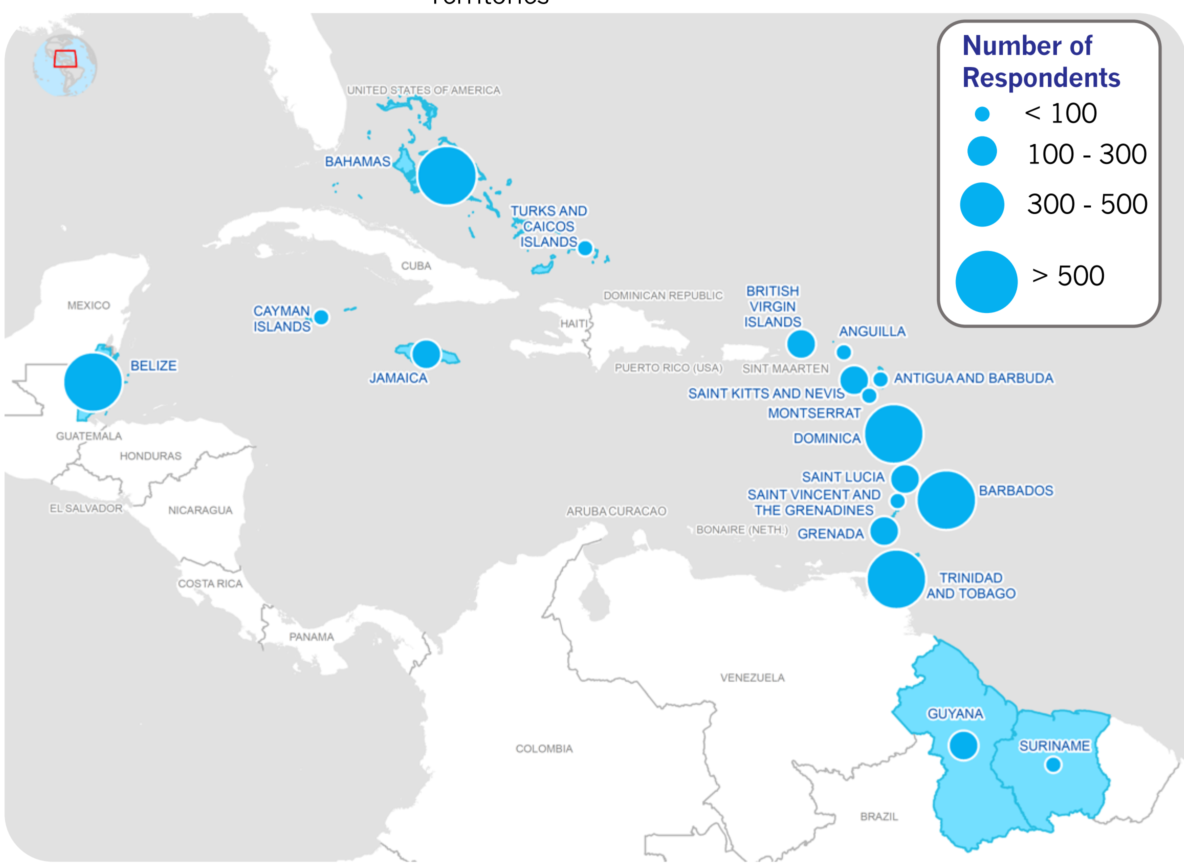
The COVID-19 pandemic is having far-reaching impacts on how people earn a living and meet critical needs. The Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey was launched by CARICOM to rapidly gather data on impacts to livelihoods, food security and access to markets. Prepared by the World 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

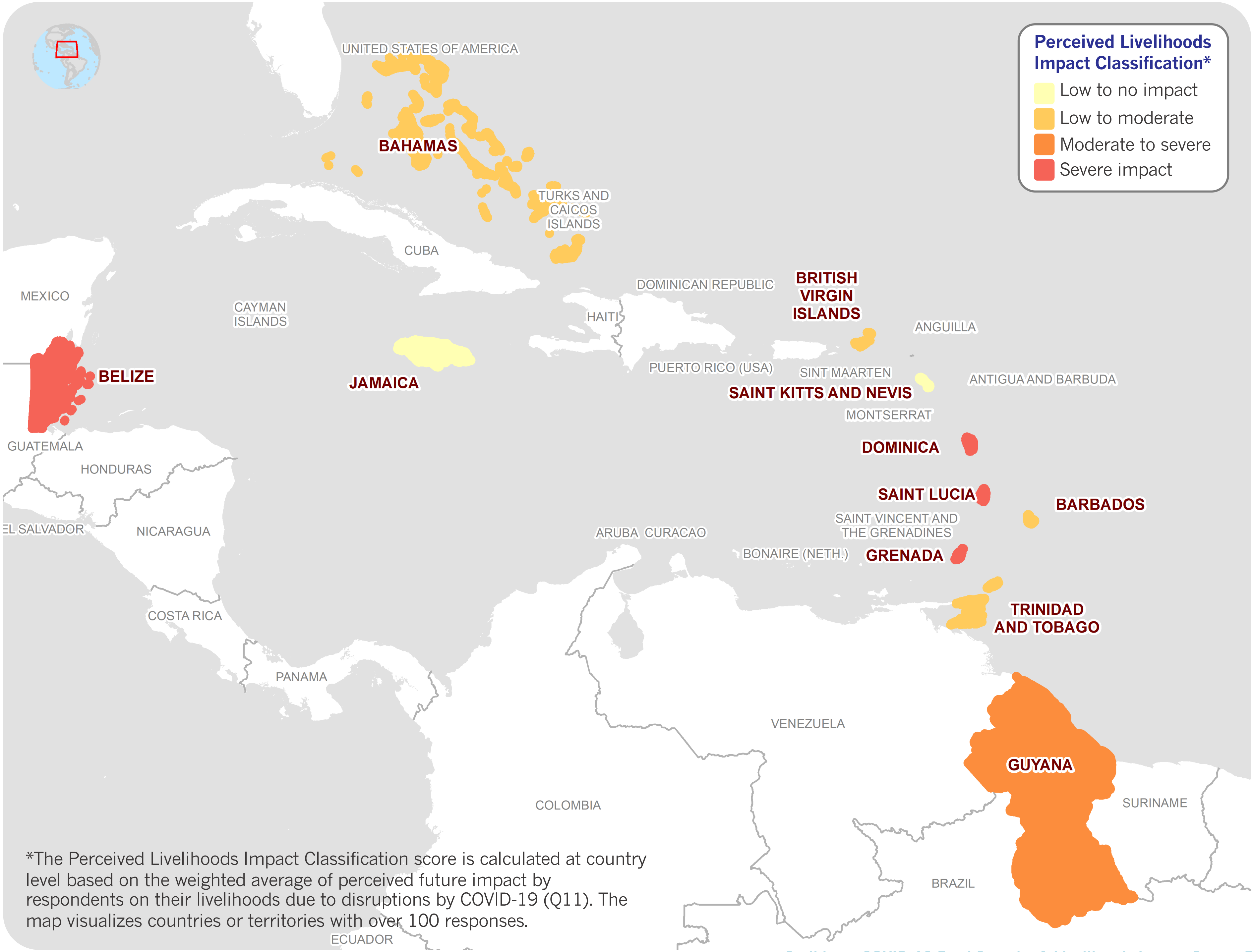


CARICOM CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY A Community for All | CDEMA Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency Resilient States - Safer Lives | WFP World Food Programme | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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.

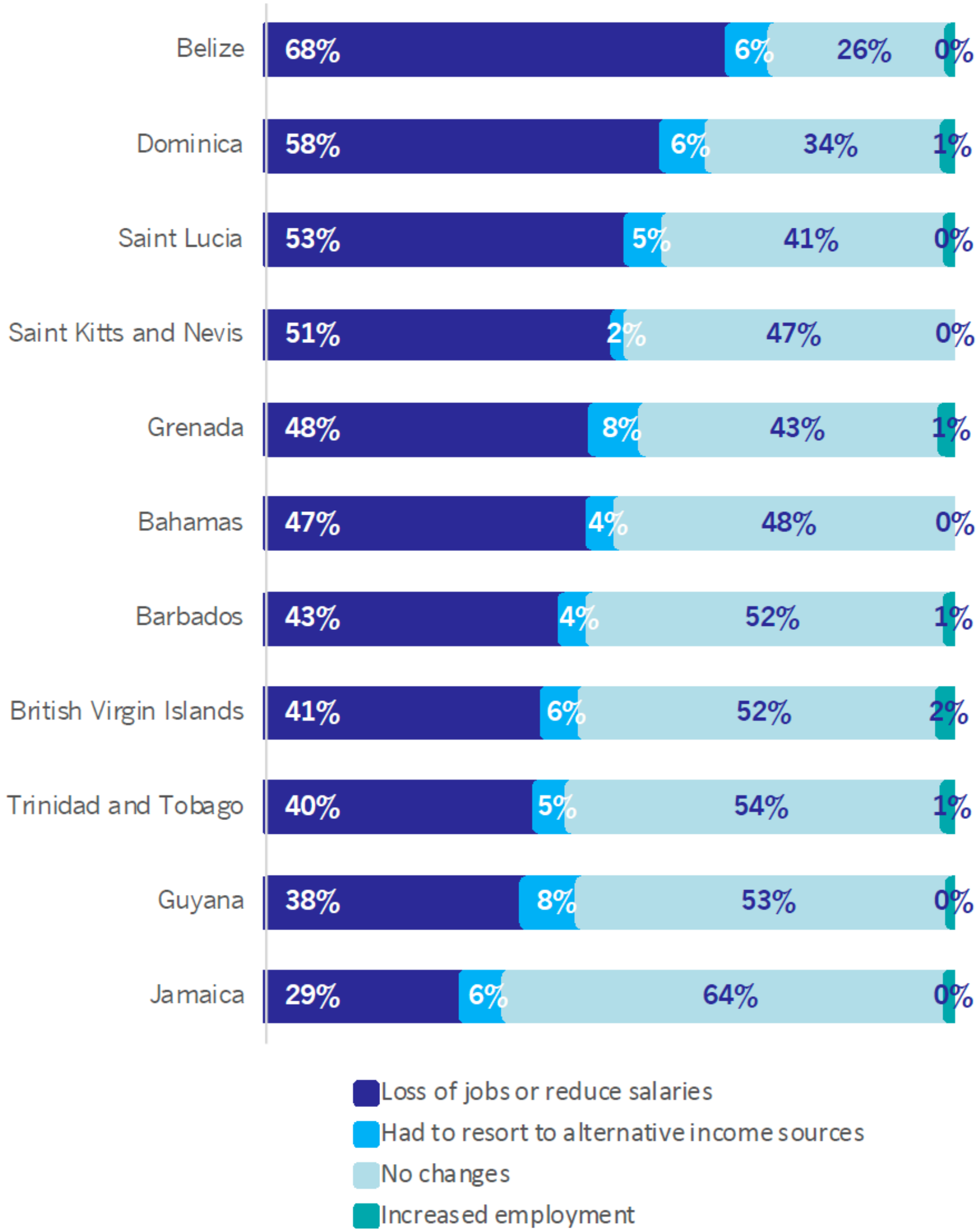
ANNEX. PERCEIVED LIVELIHOODS IMPACT IN THE CARIBBEAN



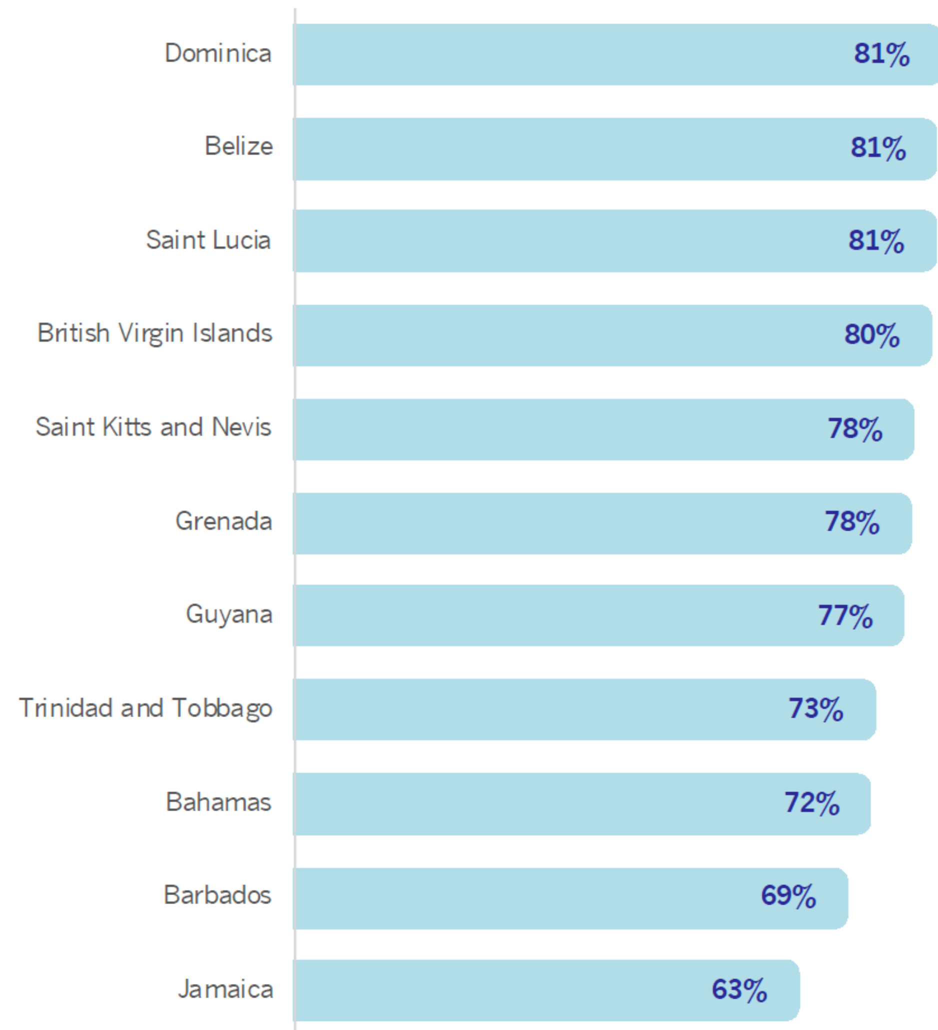
*The Perceived Livelihoods Impact Classification score is calculated at country level based on the weighted average of perceived future impact by respondents on their livelihoods due to disruptions by COVID-19 (Q11). The map visualizes countries or territories with over 100 responses.

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

Income changes



% reporting disruptions to livelihoods



ANNEX. 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.

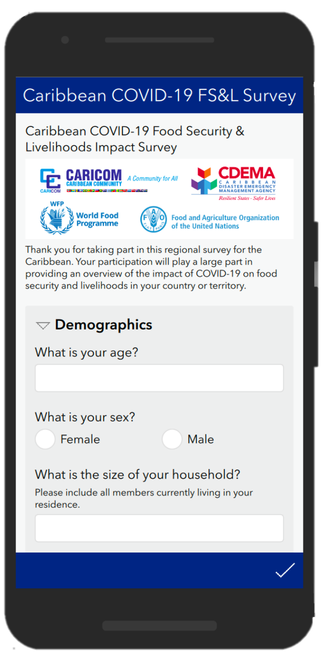
Responses were visualised live on an interactive dashboard and continually monitored to ensure their legitimacy based on cross referencing with prior knowledge and secondary data. Data validation methods were designed into the survey form to mitigate against intentional or unintentional outliers.

WFP Caribbean performed the data collection, monitoring and analysis. Data was analysed according to age groups and sex where there were at least 100 responses.

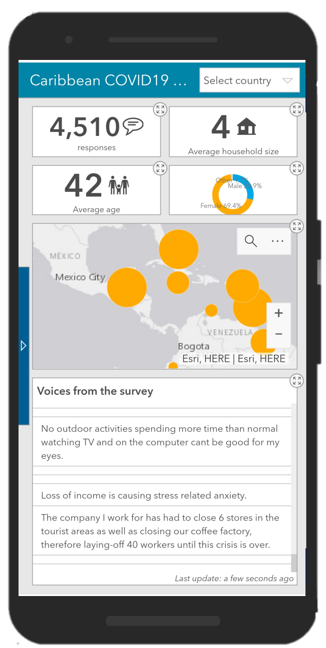
The qualitative analysis was performed in collaboration with Joseph Xu from Google's AI unit using Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP, a branch of AI which analyses and interprets human languages, provided: (a) a sentiment analysis to determine the number of positive versus negative responses and (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.

National level reports are only produced for countries and territories with sufficient responses. Reports are prepared by WFP Caribbean: Amy Chong, Sarah Bailey, Elisaveta Gouretskaia, Nicholas Grainger and Francesca Ciardi.

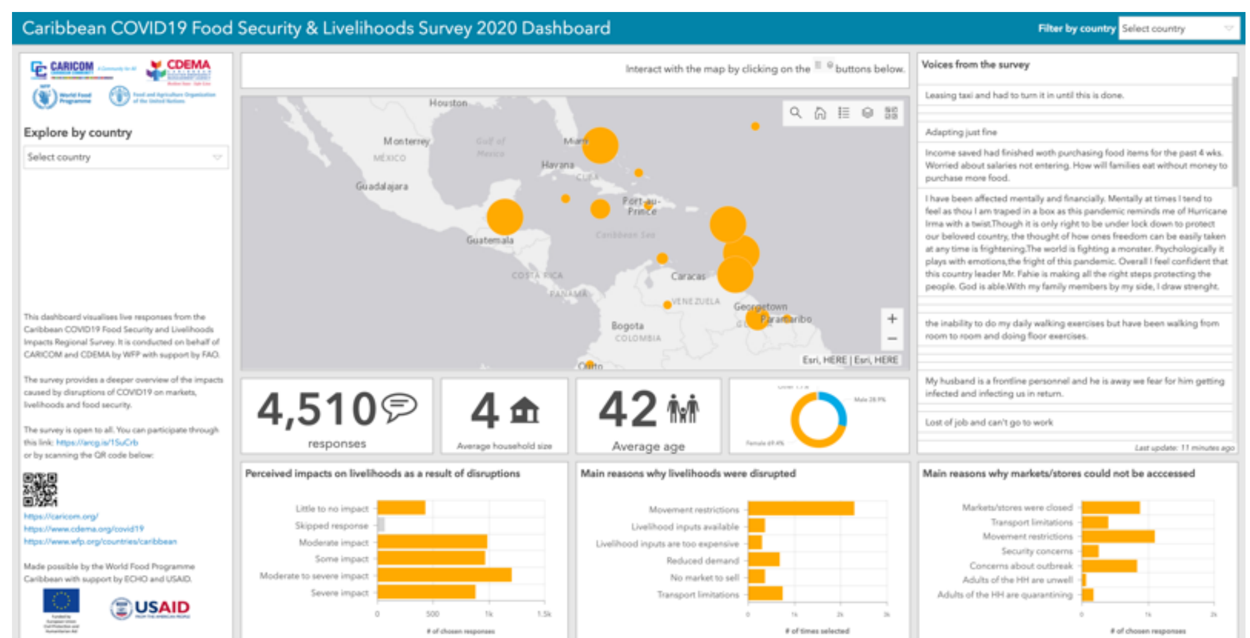
Survey (Closed)
http://arcg.is/1SuCrb



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



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



ANNEX. 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

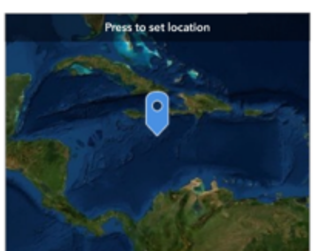
What is the size of your household?

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.

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

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

Submit

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