



Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

BELIZE Summary Report | October 2020



370
Respondents



55
Female

45 %
Male



37
Average age

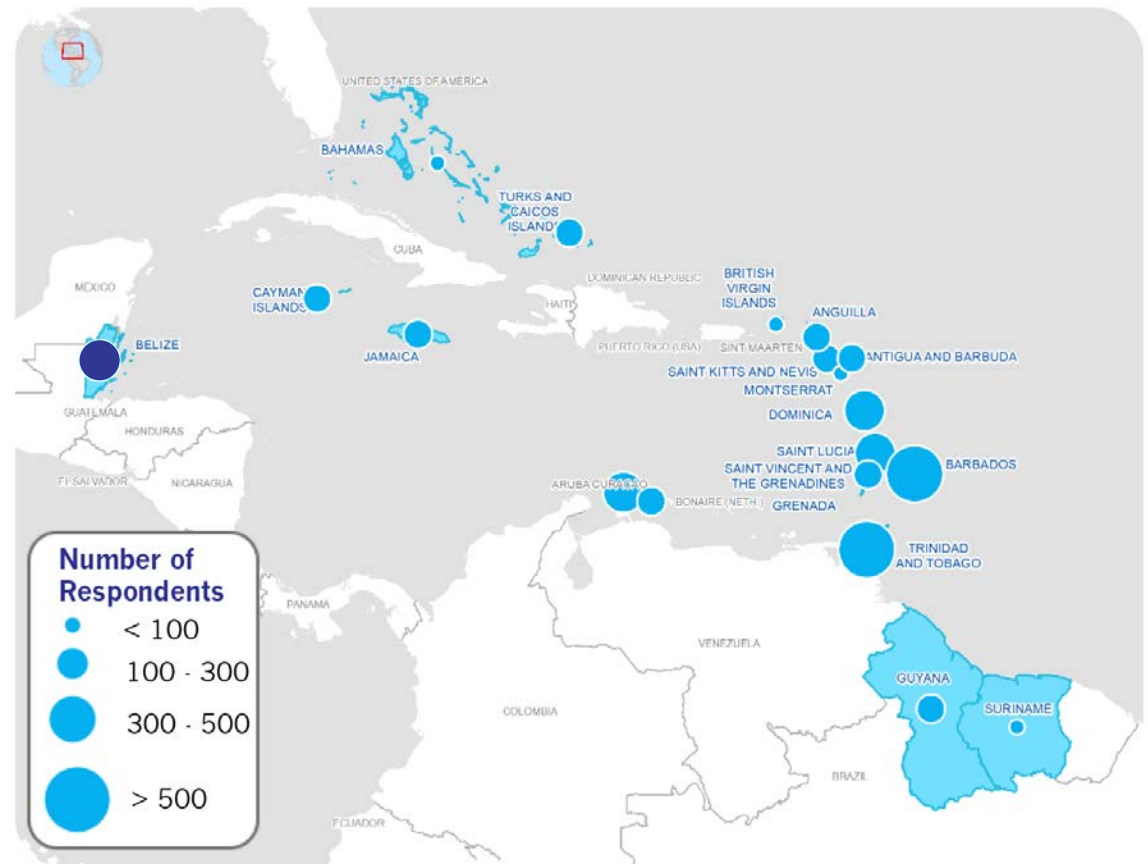


4
Average household size

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.

Two rounds of the survey have been carried out, implemented by the World Food Programme on behalf of the CARICOM Secretariat. This summary analyses data collected in the second round, carried out over the last two weeks of June 2020, which received 5,707 responses from 23 countries and territories in the Caribbean. It builds on findings from the first survey implemented in April 2020, which received 4,537 responses from 19 countries and territories.

The survey was conducted using online methods and the survey link was shared via social media, e-mail, and text messages. In Belize, half of the population is not using the internet, and it is assumed that the poorest and most vulnerable households are underrepresented in the survey results.



Round 1
April 2020



4,537
Responses

Round 2
June 2020



5,707
Responses



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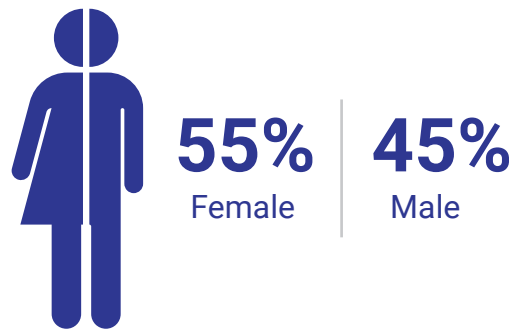
4
Average
household size

- Disruptions to livelihoods appear to have decreased since April, but still affect three out of five respondents in June. Movement restrictions remain the most frequently cited reason, followed by the cost of livelihood inputs, which has become a greater concern.
- The crisis appears to be taking an increasing toll on households' economic wellbeing. Three out of four respondents reported job loss or a decline in salaries in their households, and one out of ten respondents reported having to resort to secondary or alternative activities to maintain income.
- COVID-19 and measures to contain it have impacted market access, with 38% of respondents reporting access difficulties. The main reason was a lack of cash to spend, followed by concerns over leaving the house due to health risks, movement restrictions and transport limitations.
- While the availability of essential goods in stores appears to have improved, the availability of fresh food items and essential medicine remains worryingly low, with 59% and 41% of respondents reporting uninterrupted availability. Four out of five respondents observed an increase in food prices, which is a higher share compared to April.
- The vast majority of respondents have changed their shopping behaviour and a clear shift in adaptation strategies can be observed. Compared to April, more respondents buy cheaper or less preferred goods or smaller quantities than usual, while fewer respondents make bulk purchases.
- Food security appears to have deteriorated. Household food stocks have declined compared to April, with 18% reporting that they had no food stocks. Still one third of respondents reported skipping meals or eating less than usual, and another third resorted to eating less preferred foods.
- Nearly all respondents predict that their livelihoods will be impacted in the future while one third of respondents expect a severe impact. An increased share of respondents expressed very negative sentiment concerning the pandemic and the disruption it caused.
- Respondents are most concerned about job loss (58%) and illness (57%), and about two out of five respondents are worried about being unable to meet food and other basic needs.
- Low income households appear to have experienced much more serious impacts on their market access, food security, livelihood and income, and have a more pessimistic outlook on the future.
- Impacts on female and male respondents are largely consistent, but male respondents are more likely to report livelihood disruptions (65%) compared to their female counterparts (55%).

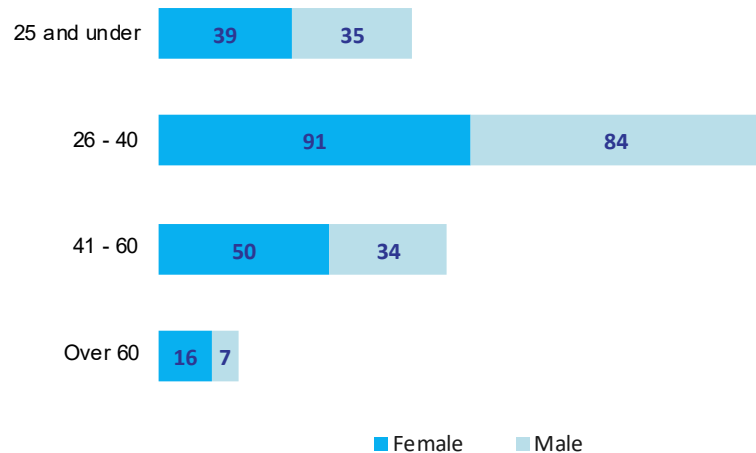
DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

Age and gender breakdown shows that the majority of respondents are in the 26-40 age category. Age-disaggregated analysis is not provided due to insufficient numbers of respondents.

Sex of respondents



Age and sex of respondents

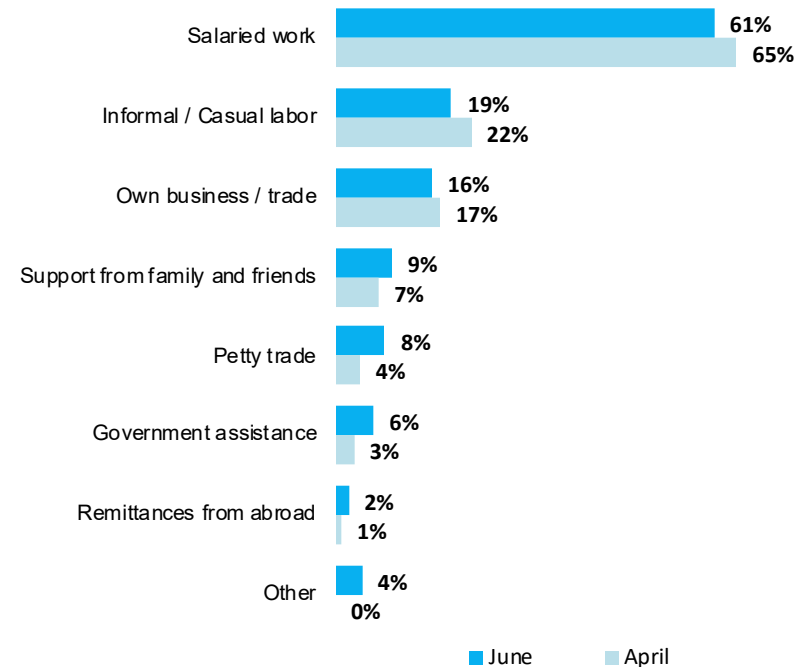


Main household income sources

Respondents were asked to indicate the main income source/s for their household and multiple choices could be selected. In June, the main income source remained salaried work among 61% of respondents but was slightly lower compared to April. The second and third most cited income sources were informal/casual labor at 19% and business/trade at 16%. The proportion of respondents that had income from family and friends, petty trade, government assistance or remittances slightly increased compared to April.

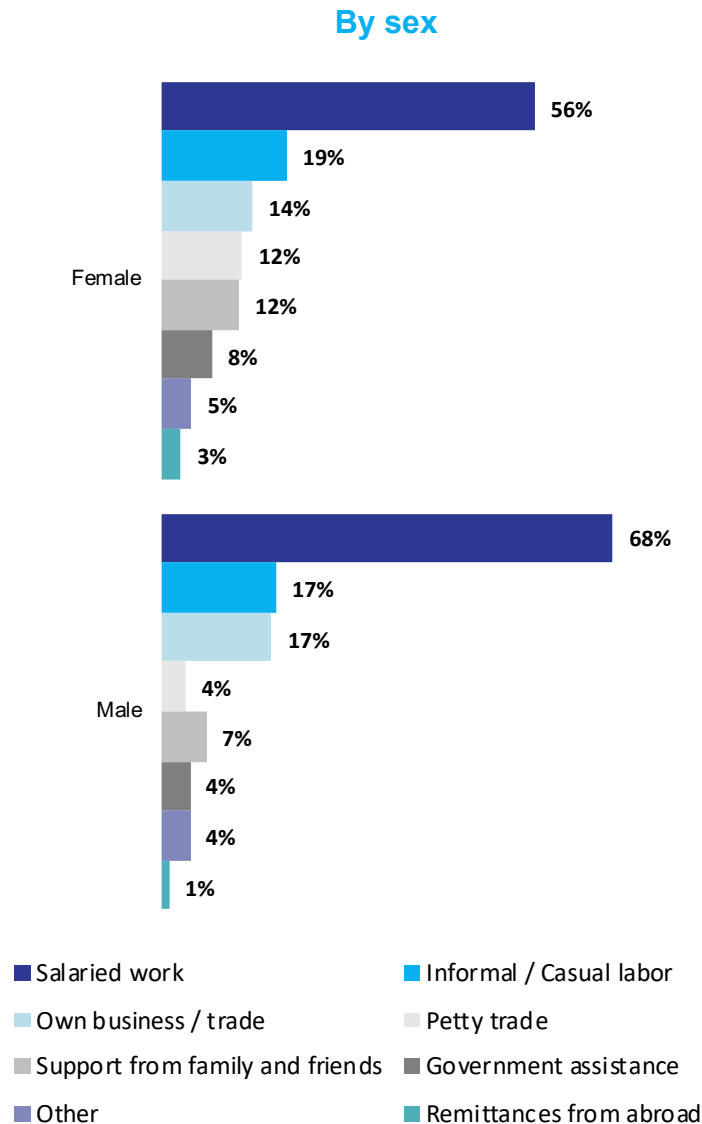
Female respondents were less likely to have income from salaried work at 56% compared to 68% for male respondents.

By survey

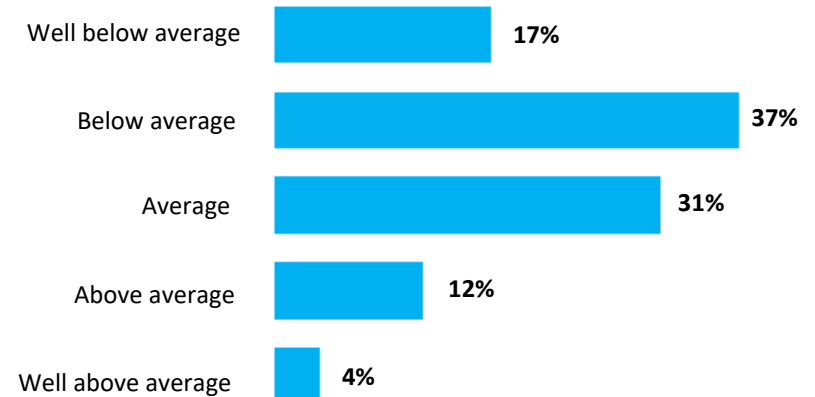


DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

Main household income sources



How do you feel your household's income compares with the rest of the country?



An analysis of findings for 'average' income and 'below' or 'well below' income households is provided on page 14 and 15.

"The effects have been across the board in every aspect of our lives, reduced income, cost cutting measures in the home, can't meet utilities, not in a position to prepare for new school year etc..." - female, Age 34

"I lost my job because I worked in the hotel industry. To make ends meet I do gardening planting vegetables to feed my daughter" -female, Age 19

"I live with my sister and her 5 children. She is a vegetable vender however she had to stop for the fear of contracting the virus and passing it in to her children. Especially the 4 months old one. She is a single mother and has no source of income. She has been feeding her kids out of the little savings she had." -female, Age 24

"Well income is not coming in after the job closed and fear to run out of my savings" -male, Age 24



IMPACT ON MARKET ACCESS

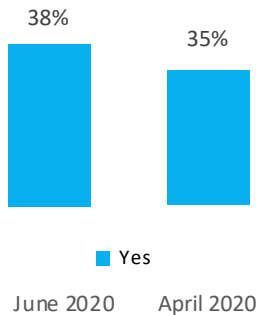
COVID-19 and measures to contain it have impacted market access. Nearly two out of five respondents reported that they could not access stores and markets at some point during the week prior to the survey in June.

Lack of financial means was the main reason for limited market access, cited by one out of three respondents. This was followed by concerns over leaving the house, movement restrictions, transportation limitations and closure of markets, but these reasons were less prevalent in June compared to April.

The availability of goods seems to have improved since April but remains comparatively low for key items. Only two out of five respondents reported full availability of essential medicines, and three out of five reported the same for fresh foods. Of all respondents in June, 81% observed an increase in food prices, compared to 68% in April.

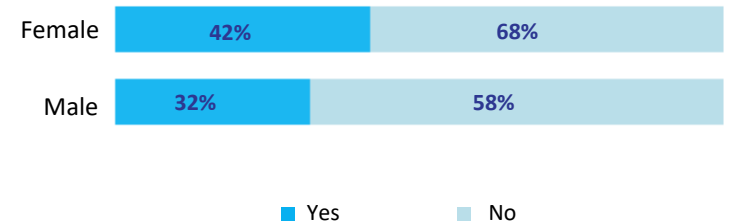
In the past 7 days, was there a time when your household could not access the markets?

By survey



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

By sex

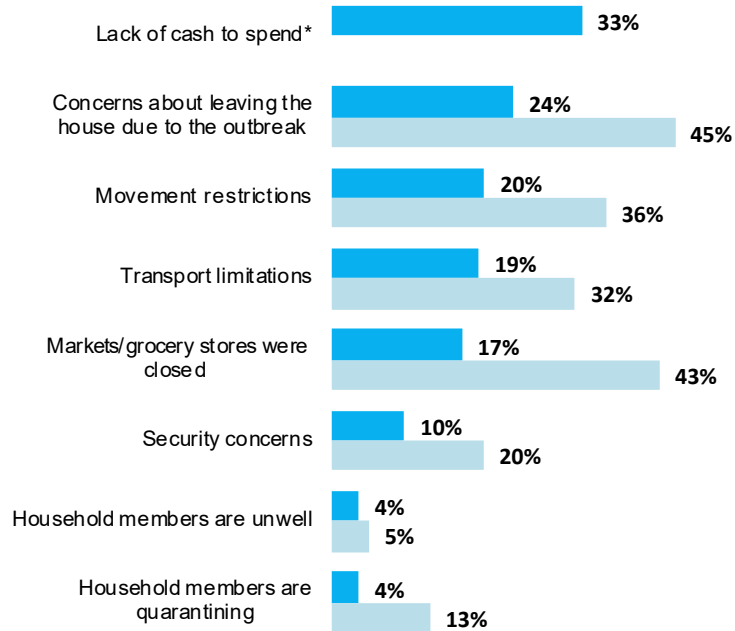


IMPACT ON MARKET ACCESS

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

Multiple choices could be selected

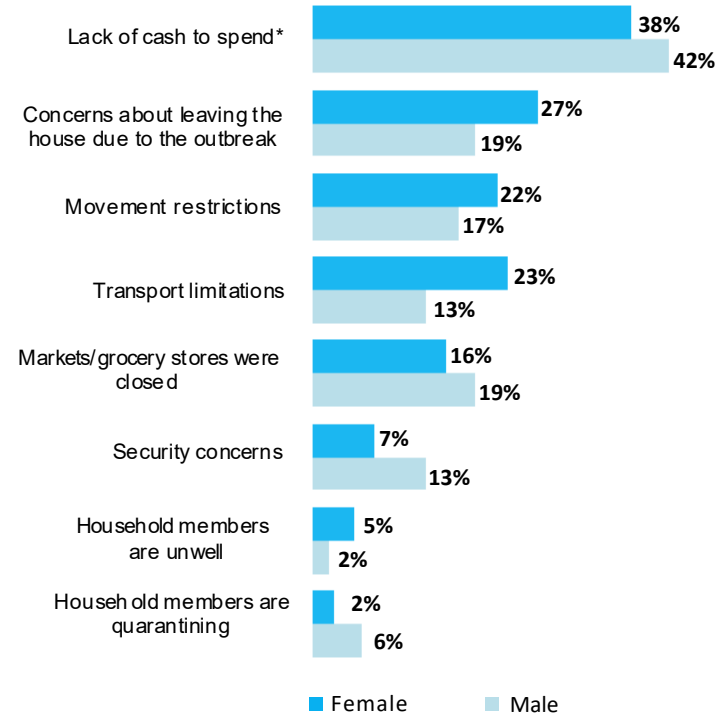
By survey



*This option was not provided for the April 2020 survey.

■ June 2020 ■ April 2020

By sex



■ Female ■ Male

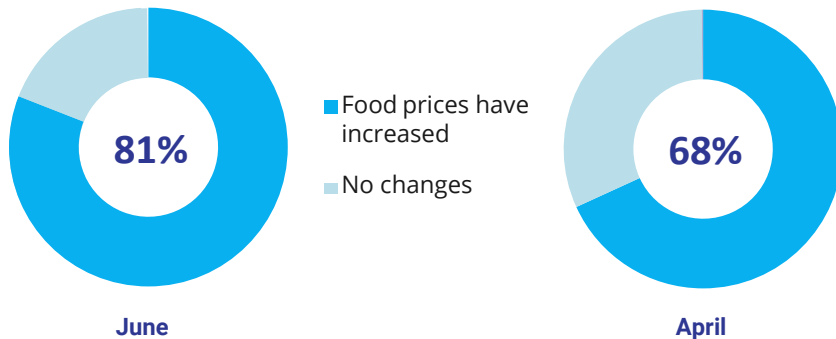
IMPACT ON MARKET ACCESS

Availability of items in stores

How Available?	Fresh food items		Basic food items		Hygiene items		Essential medicines	
	June 2020	April 2020	June 2020	April 2020	June 2020	April 2020	June 2020	April 2020
Always Available	↑ 58%	48%	↑ 73%	35%	↑ 78%	52%	↑ 40%	30%
Partially/sometimes available	↓ 38%	47%	↓ 25%	58%	↓ 19%	40%	↓ 44%	48%
Not available	↓ 0%	2%	↓ 0%	2%	↓ 1%	5%	↓ 4%	5%
Don't know	↑ 4%	2%	↓ 2%	5%	↓ 1%	2%	↓ 12%	16%

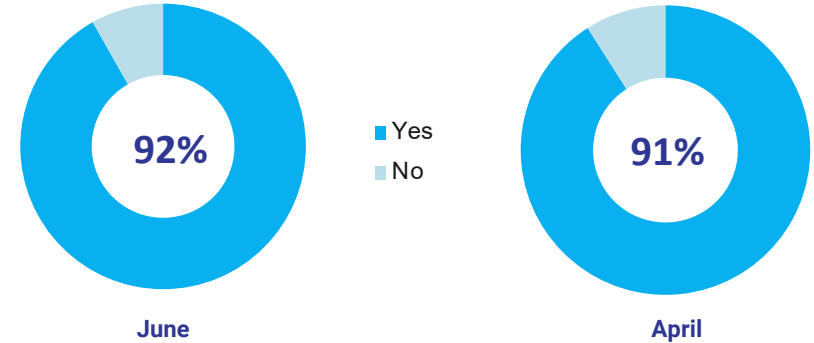
Food prices

Respondents reported on any observed changes in food prices.



Shopping behaviour

Shopping routines have changed for 92% of respondents, and a significant change in adaptation strategies has been observed. The proportion of households who reported buying larger quantities than usual has nearly halved from two thirds in April to one third in June. Half of the respondents resorted to buying cheaper or less preferred brands, and nearly a third resorted to buying smaller quantities than usual. Female respondents were more likely to buy cheaper or less preferred brands compared to their male counterparts and were also less likely to practice bulk purchasing.



"Significantly reduced my expenses. I have put off all activities that are not related to food/light/water" - Male, Age 30

"Fear of not getting health care services due to covid since only public hospital are allowed to treat covid or flu related illness. Seems my insurance coverage will be of no use if I or my family are infected"- Male, Age 36

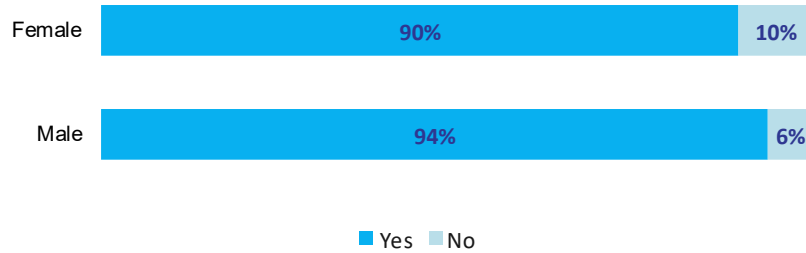
"Loss of job and income also we have been pinching our money to cover food and essential need that went up since covid19" - Female, Age 23



IMPACT ON SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR

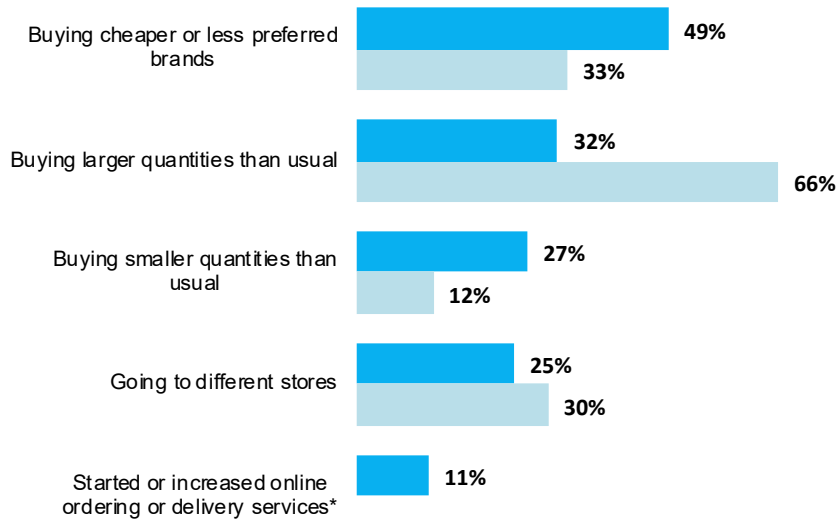
Have you changed your shopping behaviour compared to usual?

By sex



How respondents changed their shopping behavior

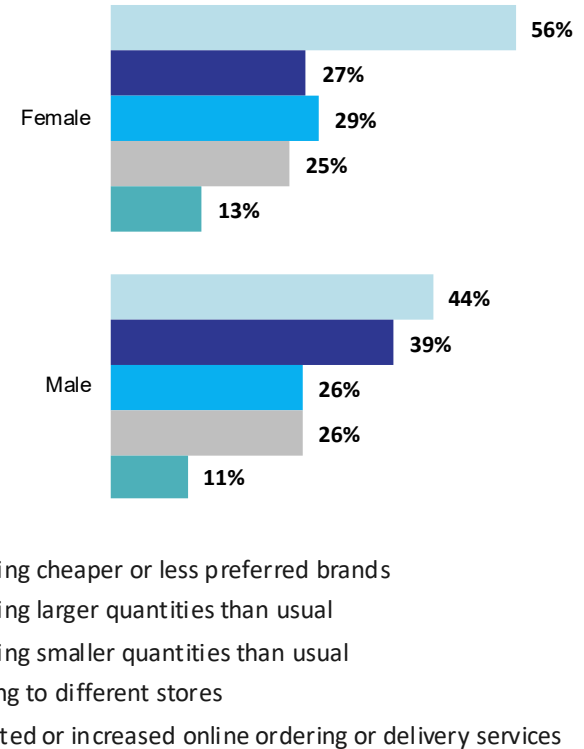
By survey



*This option was not provided for the April 2020 survey.

■ June 2020 ■ April 2020

By sex



- Buying cheaper or less preferred brands
- Buying larger quantities than usual
- Buying smaller quantities than usual
- Going to different stores
- Started or increased online ordering or delivery services

IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

COVID-19 and measures to stop its spread have impacted household food stocks and consumption, and the situation appears to have deteriorated further. In June, only 45% of respondents had over one week of food supply stored, down from 73% in April. Worryingly, nearly one out of five respondents had no food stored at all. At the same time, only two out of five respondents had no difficulty consuming enough food. Similar to April, one out of three respondents skipped meals or ate less than usual, and one out of three ate less preferred foods.

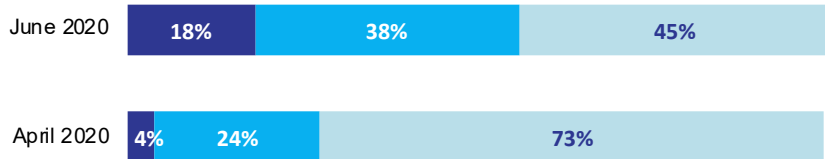
Food Stocks

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

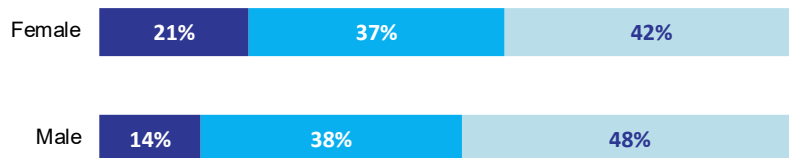
Does your household have any food stock?

By sex

■ No ■ Yes. Less than 1 week ■ Yes. More than 1 week



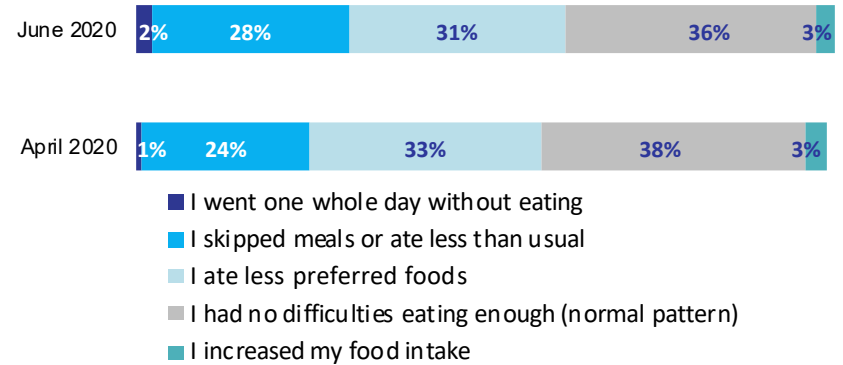
By sex



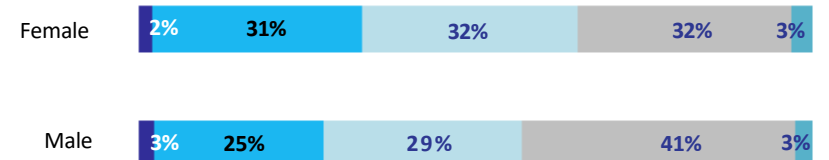
Food consumption

Respondents were asked to reflect on their food situation.

By survey



By sex



"Was severely affected cause I work in the tourism industry. My last income was on the 29th Feb 2020. Since then its pretty rough on me cause I haven't gotten any stimulus package assistance from the government." - Male, Age 52

"I lost my job and had to beg for food so I can survive for the day with my family. Covid has affected me with food and financially" - Female, Age 20



IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Livelihoods disruptions are still widespread and have a toll on the economic wellbeing of households. In June, 61% of respondents reported that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected over the two weeks prior to the survey, compared to 81% in April. Male respondents more likely to report disruptions.

These disruptions appear to be increasingly translating into income loss for households. Three out of four respondents reported job loss or reduction in salaries in June, while the share of respondents that reported no income changes fell from 26% in April to 14% in June.

Reasons for livelihood disruptions are also changing. Movement restrictions are the most common reason, but were cited by a smaller proportion than in April. The cost of livelihoods became a greater concern, cited by nearly one third of respondents that experienced livelihood disruptions. Transport limitations and concerns about leaving the house were cited by about one out of four respondents, with no significant changes from April. Male respondents were substantially more likely to report movement restrictions as a source of interruption to their livelihoods than their female counterparts.

"No job to buy daily necessities to pay water, light and child's education. I didn't get relief funds from our government to help me in this quarantine" - Male, Age 33

"My family and i have no money no jobs we have limited food on our table sometimes we even starve" - Male, Age 18

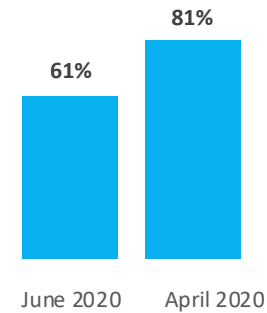


Disruptions to livelihoods

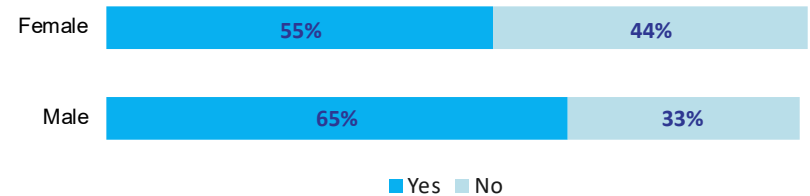
Respondents reported on any disruptions to their livelihoods.

% of respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected

By survey

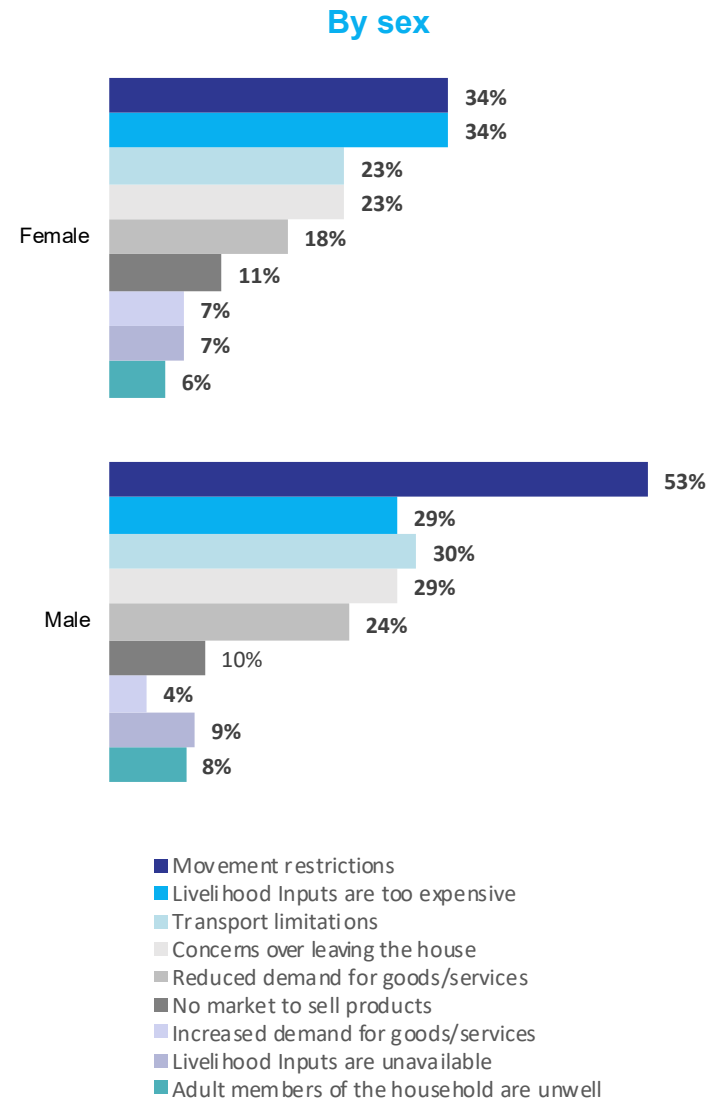
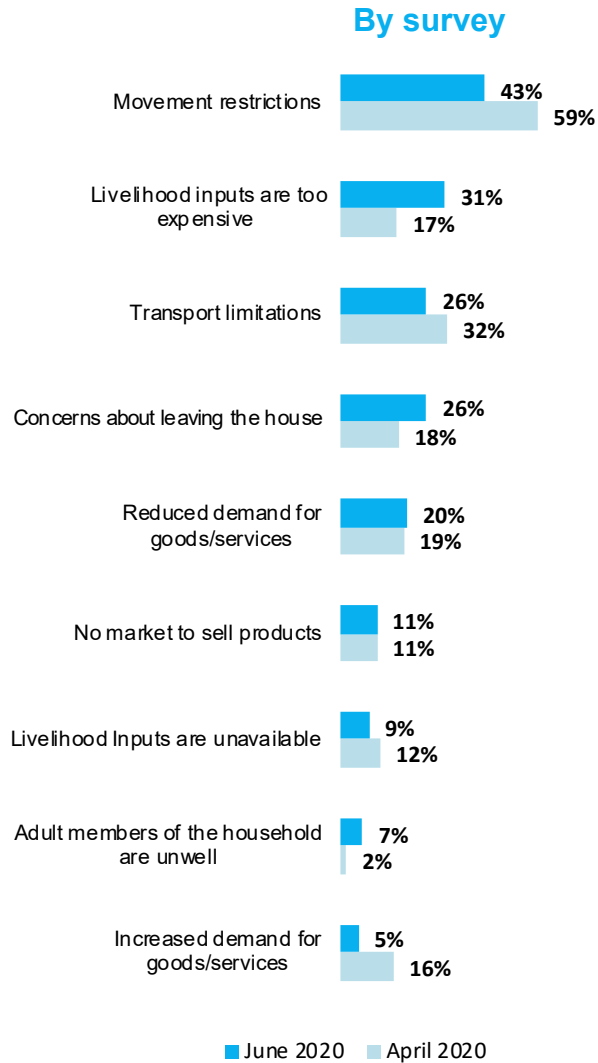


By sex



IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were...
Multiple choices could be selected

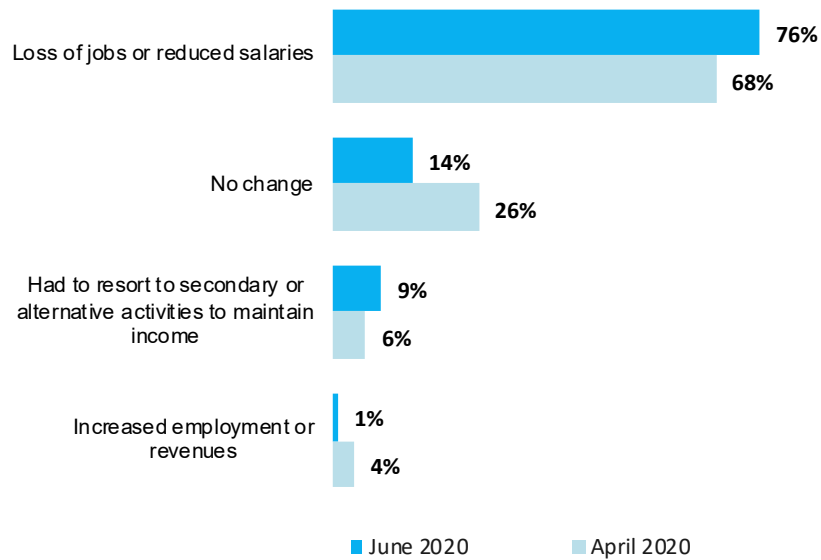


IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

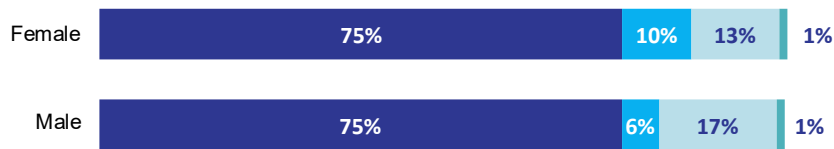
Income changes

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

By survey



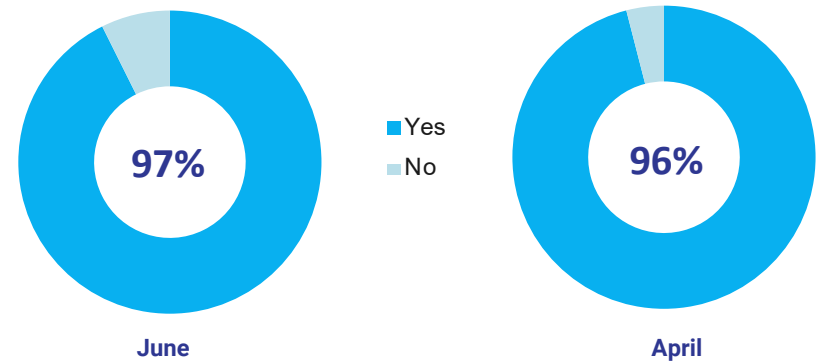
By sex



- Loss of jobs or reduced salaries
- Had to resort to secondary or alternative activities to maintain income
- No change
- Increase employment or revenues

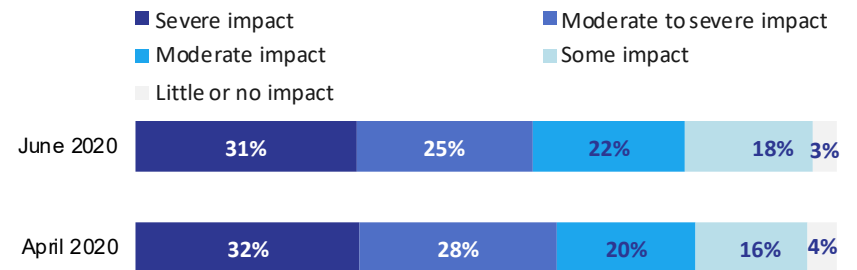
Future livelihood impacts

Respondents were asked to look ahead and predict the level of impact to their livelihoods as a result of disruptions from COVID-19. Nearly all respondents believed that their livelihoods would be impacted to some degree. As in April, one third of respondents expect severe impacts.

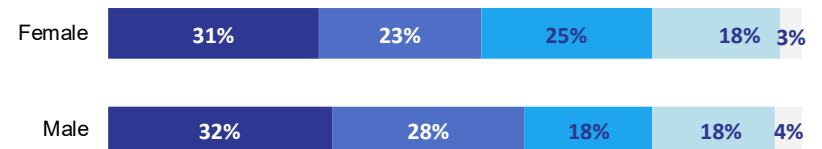


How do you expect your livelihood will be impacted as a result of disruptions from COVID-19?

By survey



By sex



IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Households engaged in farming/fishing

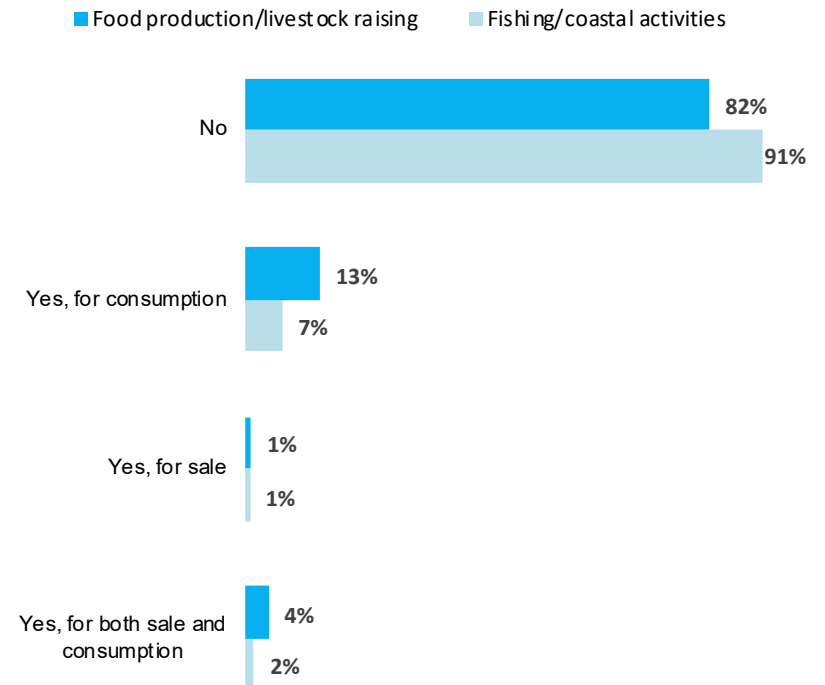
Agriculture (including fishing) is a key economic sector in Belize, accounting for nearly 10% of GDP and 16% of employment. In this survey, 18% of respondents reported being involved in farming and 10% in fishing activities, both predominantly for own consumption.

At the regional level, metrics of wellbeing for farming households do not differ much from the average respondents but households engaged in fishing seem to have been more adversely affected by disruptions related to COVID-19 as they report above average values for loss of jobs/reduced salary, difficulties in eating enough food, worrying about food needs and expecting their livelihood to be severely affected.

A disaggregated analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on households engaged in farming or fishing in Belize cannot be conducted given the insufficient number of responses received from these subgroups. CARICOM and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are conducting a more in-depth assessment and analysis of the impacts of COVID-19 on agricultural livelihoods, production and food systems.

More information about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Caribbean small-scale fisheries and what solutions and adaptation methods are being used to ensure the continuity of livelihoods has been shared through other [resources](#) and a [regional webinar](#).

Households engaging in farming/fishing



INSIGHTS BY INCOME

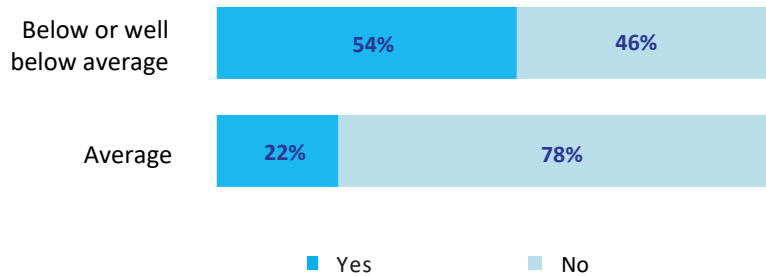
Respondents were asked to how they feel their household's income compares with the rest of the country. The results of the disaggregated analysis suggest that low-income households have experienced much more serious impacts on their market access, food security, livelihood and income.

Households with a perceived income below or well below average were significantly more likely to experience market access constraints, with 54% reporting difficulties in accessing markets, compared to 22% of households with a perceived average income.

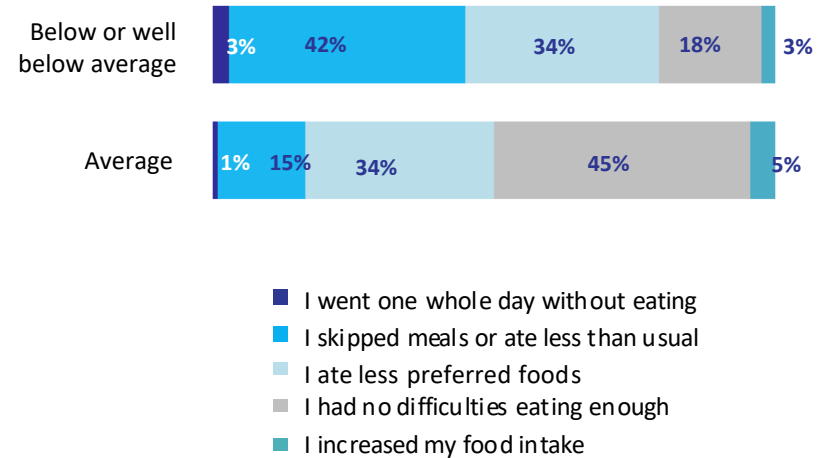
Impacts on food security are much more significant for lower-income households. Respondents with a perceived income below or well below average were almost three times more likely to skip meals or eat less than usual, compared to those with an 'average' income, and twice as likely to have no food stocks. Lower income households were also more often affected by livelihood disruptions (71% compared to 54%) and loss of jobs or lower salaries (54% compared to 22%) than average income households.

Lower income respondents also have a more pessimistic outlook on the future, with 44% expecting their livelihood to be severely impacted, compared to 17% of average income households.

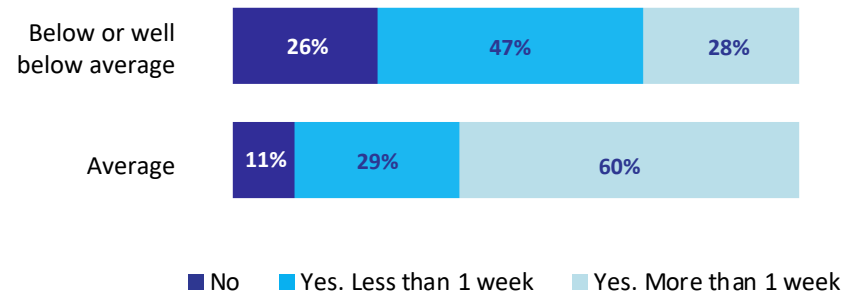
In the past 7 days, was there a time when your household could not access the markets? By perceived income



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

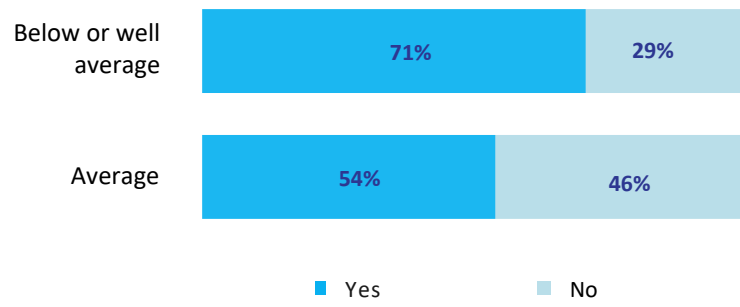


Does your household have any food stock? By perceived income

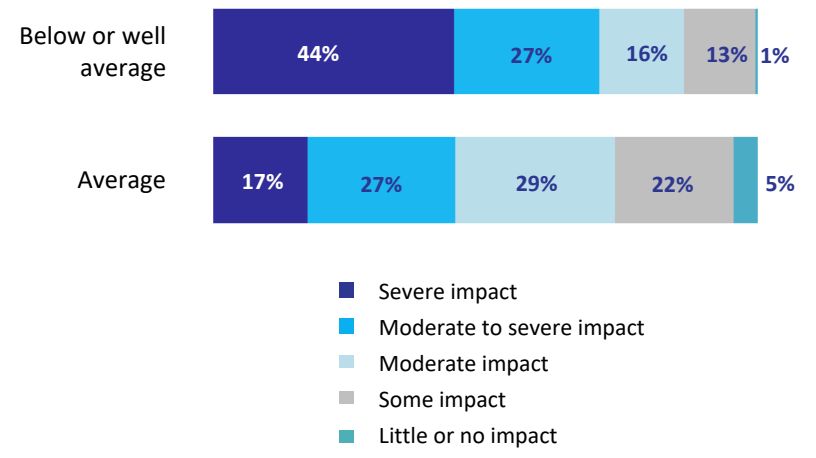


INSIGHTS BY INCOME

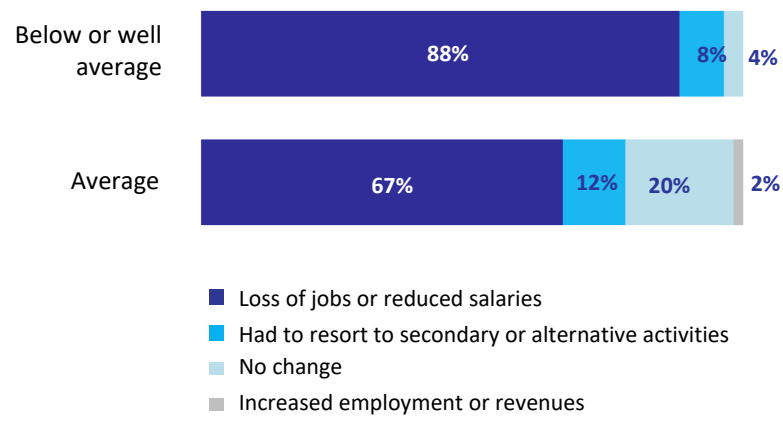
Was your ability to carry out livelihood activities affected in the last 2 weeks? By perceived income



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



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

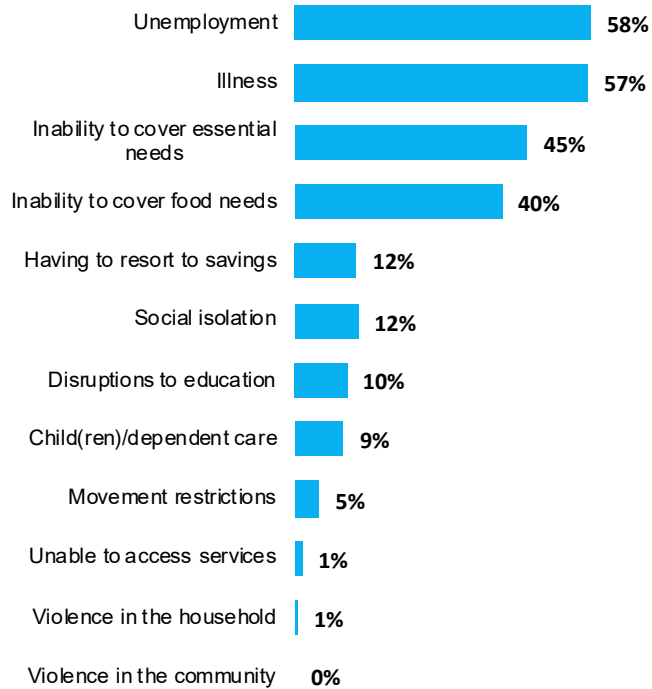


IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

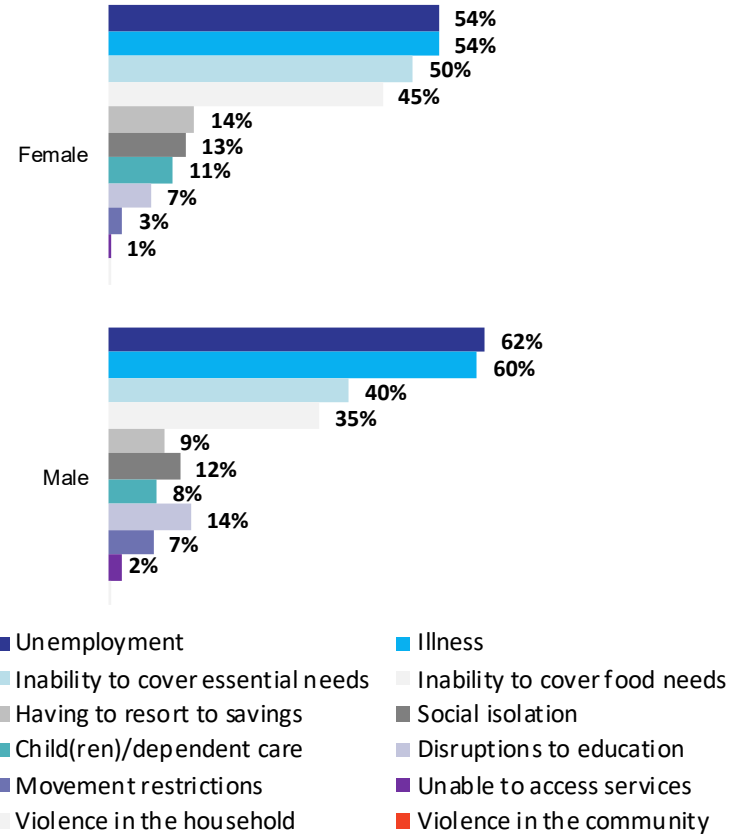
Worries

Nearly three out of five respondents are mainly worried about unemployment and illness. In addition, respondents are worried about their inability to cover food (40%) or other essential needs (45%). Female respondents (45%) were more likely to be worried about their ability to cover food needs.

What are you mainly worried or concerned about at the moment?



By sex



"Helping neighbors to get pay to buy my baby's food" - Male, Age 33

"My government has received much financial assistance but it has not trickled to the needy" - Male, Age 29



Unpaid care and work

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the amount of time people are spending on unpaid activities. Six out of ten respondents reduced time spent for shopping, while time devoted to domestic work, childcare and subsistence activities has mainly increased. While women reported a greater reduction in time devoted to shopping, compared to men, they also seem to experience a greater burden of domestic work.

	Domestic work	Childcare	Shopping	Subsistence production	Community work
Decreased	13%	11%	59%	11%	30%
No change	37%	31%	17%	39%	38%
Increased	46%	43%	22%	33%	13%
Not applicable	4%	16%	3%	17%	19%

Female	Domestic work	Childcare	Shopping	Subsistence production	Community work
Decreased	11%	8%	66%	12%	34%
No change	35%	30%	16%	36%	35%
Increased	51%	46%	17%	32%	9%
Not applicable	3%	16%	1%	19%	22%

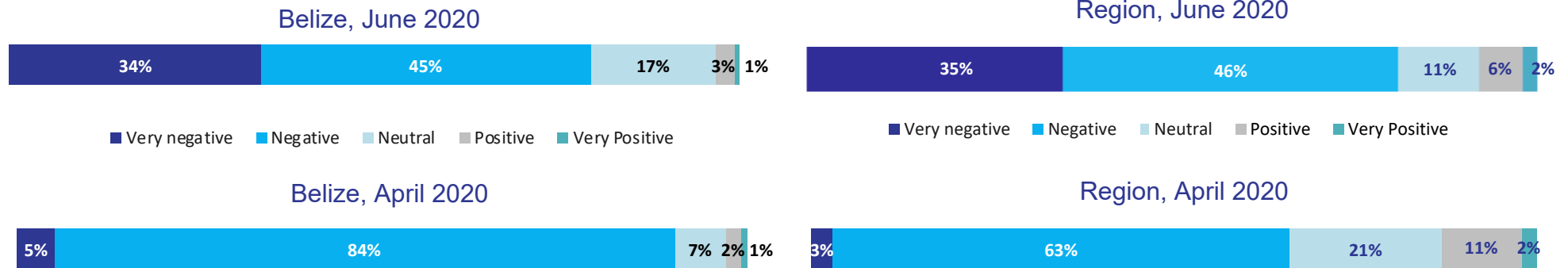
Male	Domestic work	Childcare	Shopping	Subsistence production	Community work
Decreased	16%	13%	51%	10%	26%
No change	40%	33%	18%	42%	41%
Increased	40%	38%	26%	32%	16%
Not applicable	5%	16%	5%	15%	17%



WIDER IMPACTS

How people are coping and adapting

Respondents were provided space to provide more detailed information on how they are coping and adapting to the disruptions caused by COVID-19.



Text analysis was used to analyze respondents' answers to open ended questions, categorizing responses in terms of degrees of positive and negative emotions. Comparing attitudes over time and with findings in the region provides additional insights into how people in Belize are coping with the crisis.

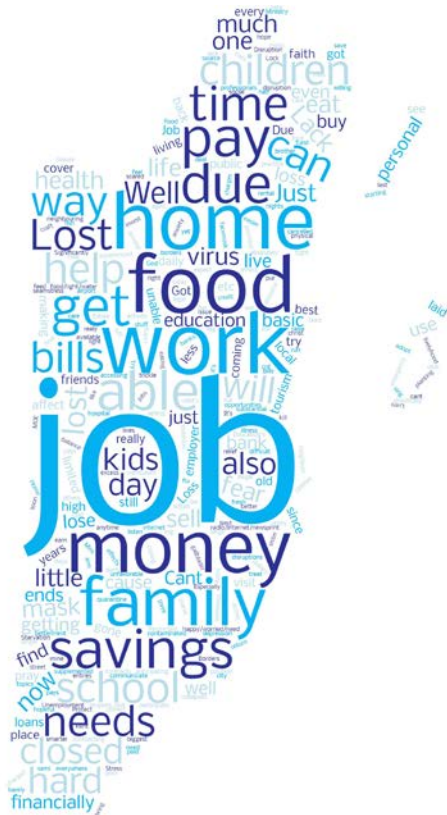
At the regional level, 'very negative' sentiment has increased since April, from 3% to 35%, as a consequence reducing the percentage of comments categorized as 'negative'.

Sentiment in Belize very similar to the region, with overall negative sentiment expressed by 79% of respondents. While overall negative sentiment decreased compared to April, this trend was accompanied by the rise of 'very negative' sentiment, expressed by one out of three respondents, a sevenfold increase since April and a reflection of regional trends.

HOW PEOPLE ARE COPING AND ADAPTING

Key themes

The word clouds represent key themes on how people in Belize are being impacted and are adapting to disruptions from COVID-19. The word “Job” is most prominent in the responses recorded in June, followed by “Work”, “food”, “home”, “family” and “money”. An increasing concern regarding employment can be observed.



June 2020



April 2020

CONCLUSION

Since March 2020, strict measures were put in place to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. The closure of borders, air- and seaports have brought a halt to international tourism while internal movement restrictions and business closures have caused further economic disruptions.

Compared to responses provided in April, the June survey findings suggest that the crisis is having an increasing toll on the economic wellbeing of households, with loss of employment and reduced incomes affecting three out of four respondents.

As a likely result of these economic hardships, household food stocks and consumption have deteriorated, with one out of three respondents skipping meals or eating less than usual. While the availability of essential goods in stores appears to have improved compared to April, the availability of fresh food items and essential medicine remains worryingly low. In addition, households are facing market access problems due to financial constraints, a situation that is likely exacerbated by widely reported increases in food prices. A third of respondents expressed very negative sentiment in relation to the pandemic and the disruption it caused, in line with trends in the region, and the same proportion expects their livelihood to be severely affected in the future.

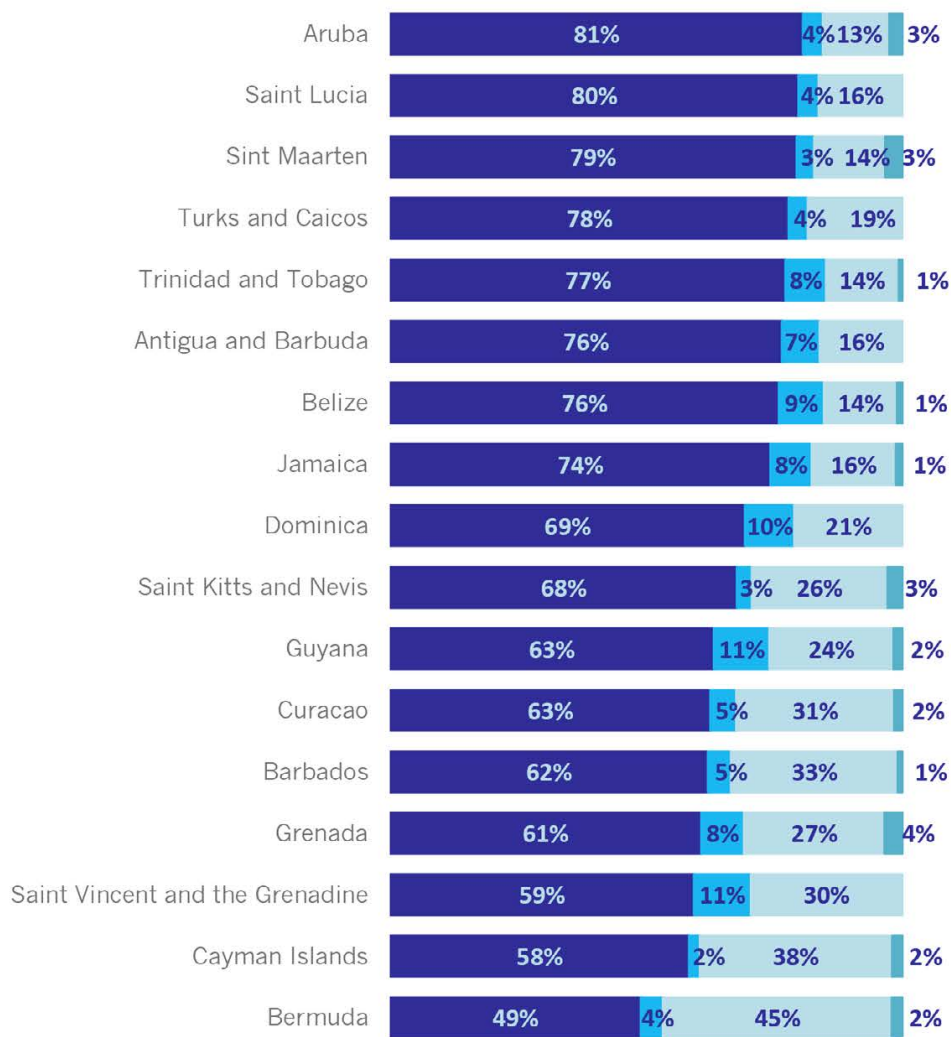
The survey findings suggest that low-income households have been much more severely impacted with regards to income impacts, market access and food security, with nearly nine out of ten experiencing loss of employment or reduced salaries. Such economic disruptions will likely further compound food security issues among the resource-poor if not closely monitored and addressed.

In response to the disruptions caused by COVID-19, the government of Belize has introduced policies and programmes to assist people that have lost their incomes and to support food security. Given the protracted nature of the crisis, the government and its partners must redouble their efforts, prioritizing those who are most vulnerable to the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.



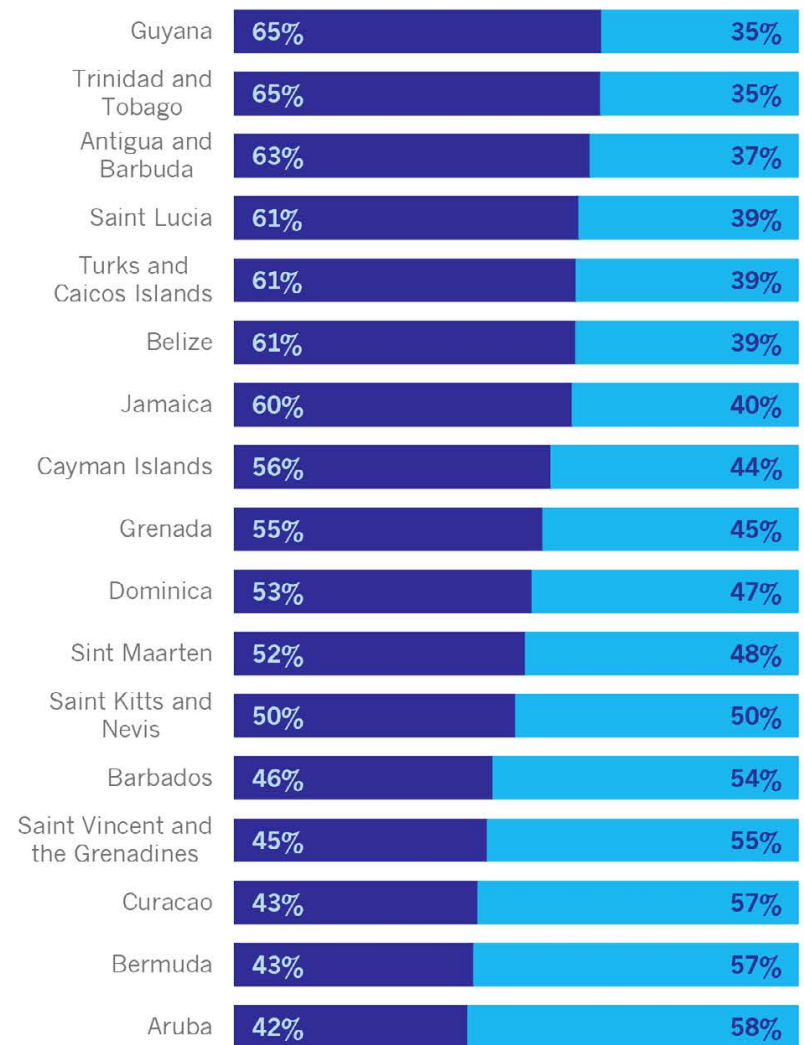
ANNEX. REGIONAL OVERVIEWS

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



- Loss of jobs/reduced salaries
- Hard to resort to secondary income sources
- No change
- Increased employment

Was your ability to carry out livelihoods activities affected in the last 2 weeks?



- yes
- no

METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

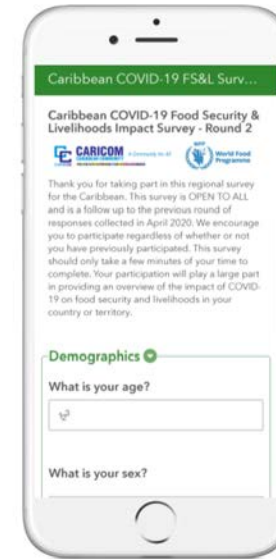
The second round of the CARICOM Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods impact survey was launched via a webform, which was accessible on mobile/smartphone and PC/desktop. The data collection period was inclusive of 14 June to 1 July 2020. The survey was circulated via email, social media, SMS, media and other communication channels.

The World Food Programme (WFP) performed the data collection, monitoring and analysis. Responses were visualised live on an interactive dashboard and 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.

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 responses. To moderate the non-representative nature of the data, the analysis team further refined the classifications presented by the algorithms.

WFP expresses warm appreciation to Flow and Digicel for distributing the survey link by SMS. Special thanks to the International Telecommunication Union for their support in facilitating the SMS distribution. Thanks to UNHCR for their support with the Spanish translation of the survey.

This report was prepared for WFP Caribbean by Kagin's Consulting - Edward J. Taylor, Justin Kagin, Momir Blazek, Julian Fletcher-Taylor, Rebecca Morton, Sebastian Fletcher-Taylor and Heng Zhu.



[Link to survey](#)



[Link to dashboard \(mobile version\)](#)



[Link to dashboard \(desktop version\)](#)

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