Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

SAINT LUCIA Summary Report | May 2021

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

February 2021

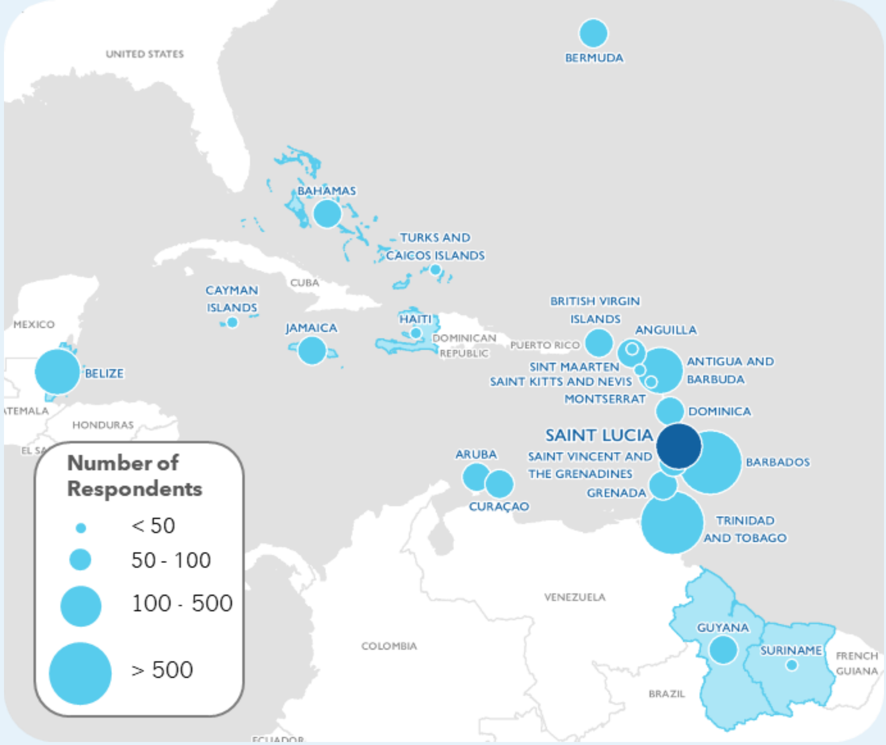
165 Respondents | **83** Female | **17%** Male | **43** Average age | **4** Average household size

June 2020

301 Respondents | **78** Female | **22%** Male | **40** Average age | **4** Average household size

April 2020

244 Respondents | **72** Female | **28%** Male | **42** Average age | **4** Average household size



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

SAINT LUCIA Summary | May 2021

- The impacts of COVID-19 continue to evolve ten months on following the initial declaration of the pandemic. Saint Lucia has endured multiple lockdowns and changes in travel protocols ever since and the government introduced several interventions in support of affected people. One out of eight respondents reported receiving government assistance, mainly in the form of income support and cash transfers.
- Livelihoods continue to be disrupted, affecting two out of three households, mainly due to concerns about the outbreak and movement restrictions, but also due to the price and inaccessibility of livelihood inputs and reduced market demand. Three out of four respondents still report loss of jobs or income.
- The availability of key products in markets has improved, but for every third respondent medicines remain only partially available. One out of five respondents still experience difficulties in accessing markets primarily due to the lack of financial means and increasing food prices. This influenced shopping behaviour, with a growing tendency towards cheaper foods and smaller quantities.
- Food insecurity remains a concern, with a third of respondents still cutting down food consumption in the week leading up to the survey. A quarter of respondents are mainly worried about not being able to meet their food or other essential needs and try to do so by selling productive assets. Every second respondent reduced expenditure on health and education.
- A third of respondents in Saint Lucia expresses a very negative sentiment about the pandemic and expects their livelihoods to be severely affected in the future.
- In the Caribbean, some signs of recovery are emerging, primarily among economically better off households, business owners and people relying on salaried work, while the poorest respondents continue to struggle and seem to rely more on external support, suggesting widening inequalities.

		Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	63% ▼	61%	80%
	Reduction/loss of income	72% ▲	79%	53%
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	52% ▼	61%	55%
MARKETS	Lack of market access	21% ▼	28%	76%
	Change in shopping behaviour	90% ▲	93%	88%
	Increase in food prices	88% ▲	92%	46%
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	33% ▲	39%	23%
	Lack of food stock	17% ▲	18%	2%

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COVID-19 | Situation and response

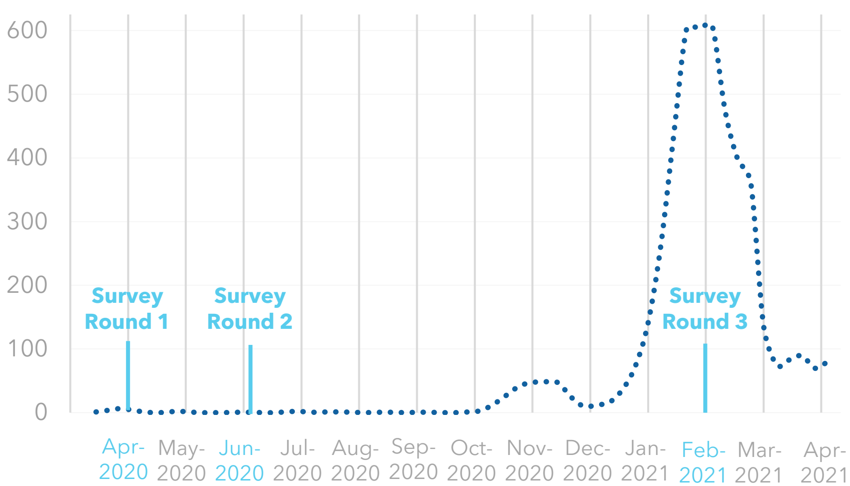
COVID-19 cases and government responses

Following the first registered case of COVID-19 in the Caribbean in early March 2020 and the official declaration of the pandemic, most governments in the region closed their borders to commercial travel, while establishing curfews and business and school closures. In Saint Lucia, a 24-hour lockdown was in place when the first Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey was launched in late March 2020.

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

New COVID-19 cases in Saint Lucia

Average 14-day notification rate per 100 000 population



Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2021

In January 2021, cases in the Caribbean increased to their highest levels since the beginning of the pandemic. When the survey was implemented in January/February 2021, some governments had again put in place restrictions on movement, commercial activity and in-person school attendance. Saint Lucia was again placed under a state of emergency at the beginning of February 2021, accompanied by a curfew.

Social protection measures

Faced with the widespread economic repercussions of the pandemic, all governments in the English- and Dutch speaking Caribbean have turned to social protection to support people, through existing programmes or ones introduced in the wake of COVID-19.

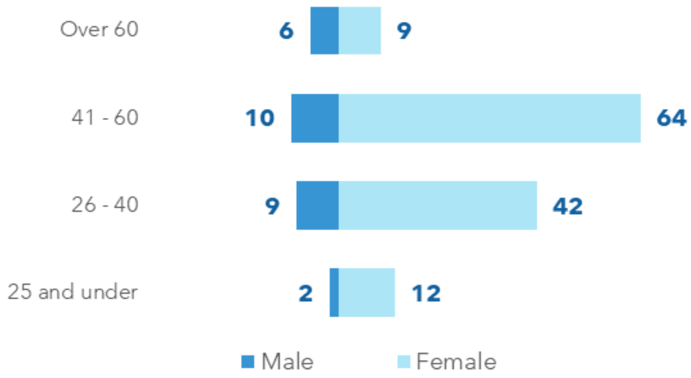
In Saint Lucia, the government established the Economic Relief Programme (ERP) to provide temporary income support to persons who became unemployed as a result of COVID-19 and who had paid contributions to the National Insurance Corporation (NIC). In addition to the ERP, the government launched an Income Support Programme for persons who were not previously registered as contributors to the NIC.

The government also expanded the Public Assistance Programme to an additional 1,000 households and provided monthly top-ups to people living with HIV already registered under the programme as well as to those households receiving the Child Disability Grant and Foster Care Grant.

To address growing food insecurity, the government with the Saint Lucia Hotel Tourism Association launched the National Meals Programme. In the initial phase, the programme provided thousands of meals for daily distribution and consumption. In its second phase, the programme shifted to distributing weekly food boxes containing local produce directly sourced from local producers to vulnerable households.

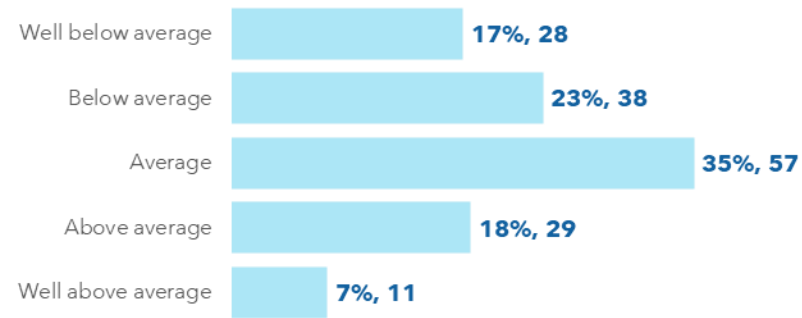
RESPONDENTS | Demographics

Age and sex

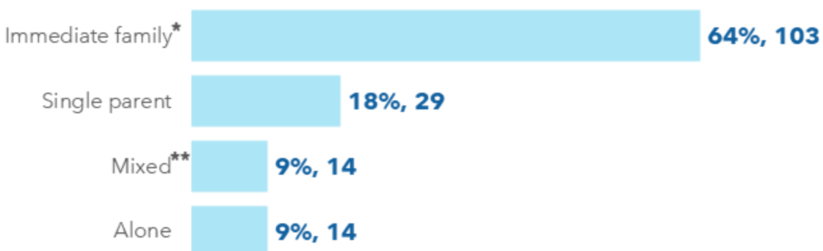


Perceived income levels

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



Household composition

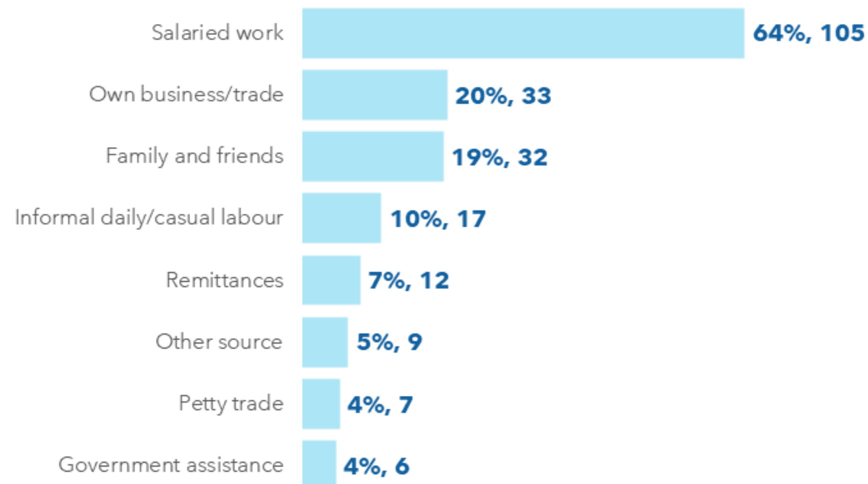


*Immediate family includes partner, children and grandparents.
**Mixed households are composed of immediate family members, other relatives as well as non-family members.

Urban/rural location

Main income sources

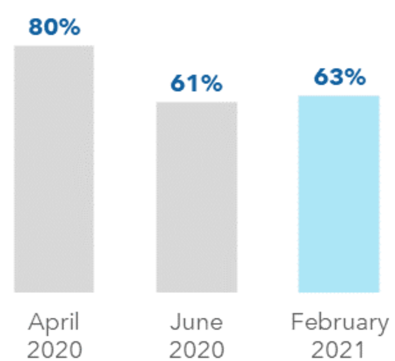
Respondents were asked to indicate the main income source(s) for their household. Multiple choices could be selected.



LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

► Impacts to livelihoods remain widespread, with two thirds of respondents reporting disruptions.

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

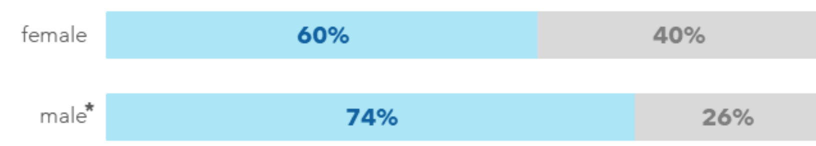


"As a seamstress my work is disrupted since. People are not too keen on clothing, due to the lack of any where to go" – Female, 62 years

"Cannot engage in my night coastal fishing (subsistence)" – Male, 63 years

"Entrepreneurs like myself lost my business and have only one source of income and my loan as key bulk of my pay and I don't qualify for assistance" – Male, 38 years

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



*Low response numbers in these categories may affect results.

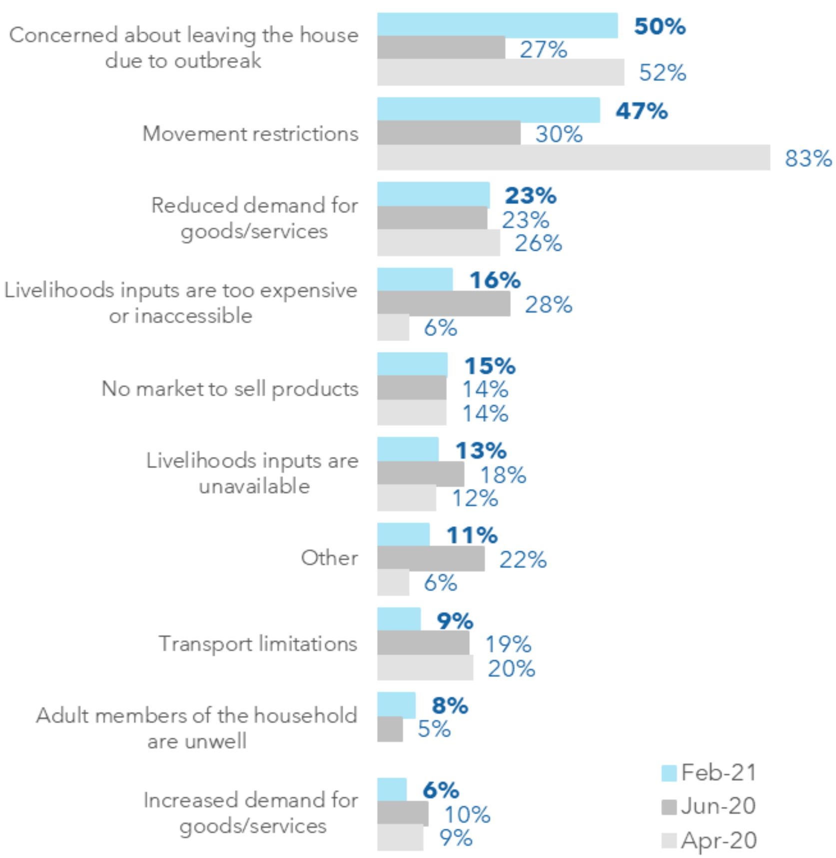
The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt livelihoods. For nearly two thirds of respondents the ability to pursue their livelihood was affected in the two weeks preceding the survey. This proportion has decreased from April 2020 (80%) but shows no significant change when compared to survey results from June 2020. Livelihood disruptions seem to be more widespread among men compared to women and are still more pronounced in Saint Lucia compared to the overall region (51%).

Other respondent characteristics (such as age, source and perceived level of income or household composition) could not be considered in the livelihood analysis due to a low number of respondents. At the regional level, the most marked differences are found related to people's sources and level of income. Respondents who describe their income as well below average and those with informal sources of income (petty trade, family and friends, casual labour) were the most frequent to report livelihood disruptions.

LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

▶ Concerns about the outbreak and movement restrictions are still the main drivers behind disruptions to livelihoods.

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



Concerns about leaving the house due to the outbreak and movement restrictions are again the main reason behind disruptions to livelihoods, though movement restrictions are less of a driver compared to the early stages of the pandemic and the introduction of initial measures to contain it. Reported by every second respondent, these are more widespread reasons for livelihood disruptions compared to the regional average (34-38%).

Reduced demand for goods/services continues to affect almost one out of four respondents facing livelihood disruptions, and is followed by expensive livelihood inputs (16%) and lack of markets to sell products (15%) as main reasons for livelihood disruptions.

"I have been affected by covid 19. Travel restrictions are very difficult because I move regionally to shop and to sell items ." - Female, 35 years

I am doing my BA in graphic design and cover almost had me dropping out . But the school gave me a few months without pay." - Female, 32 years

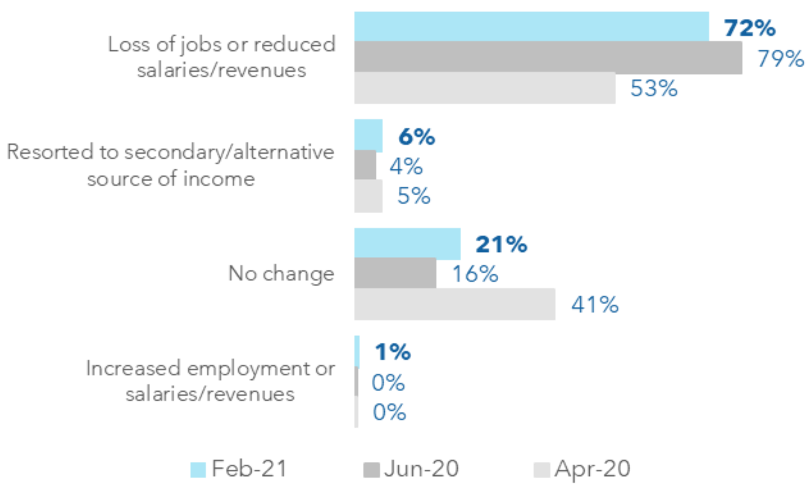
"Massive disruption in the transportation system make it very difficult to go the work and lockdowns don't help in that regard." - Male, 22 years

"My income has been affected, the government has shutdown the business sector I work in" - Female, 18 years

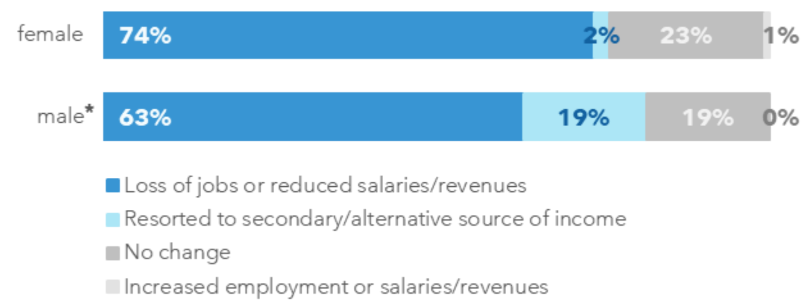
LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income

▶ Nearly three quarter of respondents have faced job loss or income reductions in their households.

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



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



*Low response numbers in these categories may affect results.

"We are down to 1 income. Bills have fallen behind and have arrears, and we have not been able to pay our mortgage. I have developed anxiety" – Female, 46 years

"I am unable to find a job to take care of me and my household" – Female, 28 years

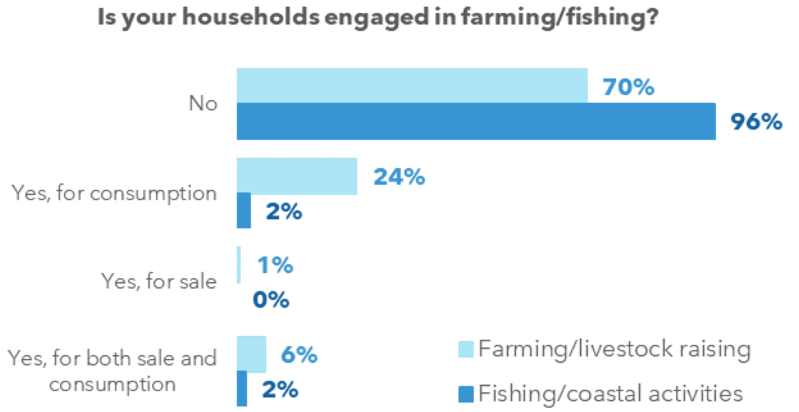
"Unable to pay debts and bills. Had to give up apartment for a smaller, cheaper and less secure neighbourhood." – Female, 59 years

Impacts to income continue to be widespread, with 72% of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries since the COVID-19 outbreak, slightly lower compared to June 2020 (79%). The figure remains higher compared to April 2020 (53%) and suggests the continuation of economic impacts with many people facing decreased income. Loss of jobs or reduced income seems to be more widespread among women compared to men, with men being much more likely to resort to alternative sources of income.

In the broader region, income and job losses are similarly widespread (63%) and most frequent among low-income households, those with informal income sources as well as among younger respondents,

LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

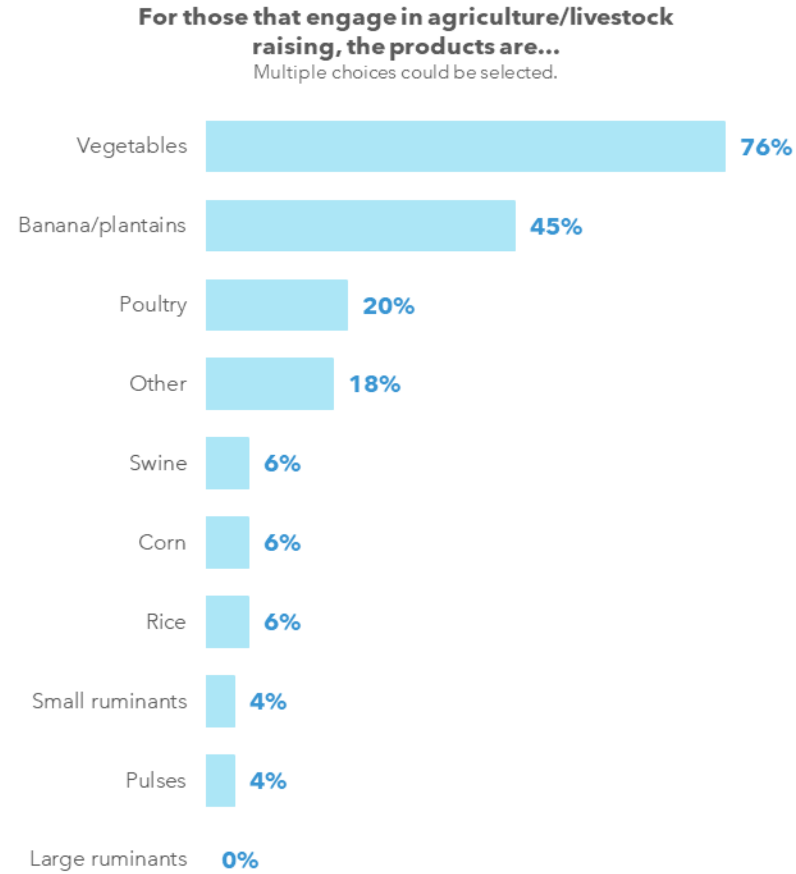
► In the Caribbean, respondents engaged in fishing activities seem among the hardest hit, but more country level assessments are needed.



Nearly one in three respondents reported engaging in farming, gardening or livestock raising and 4% in fisheries/coastal activities. In both cases these activities are primarily for their own consumption, with vegetable production being by far the main farming activity (76%).

The pandemic led to an overall increase in gardening and household production activities, with 39% of respondents indicating that they have increased the amount of time spent on these activities. However, this figure is somewhat lower compared to the survey in June 2020 (52%).

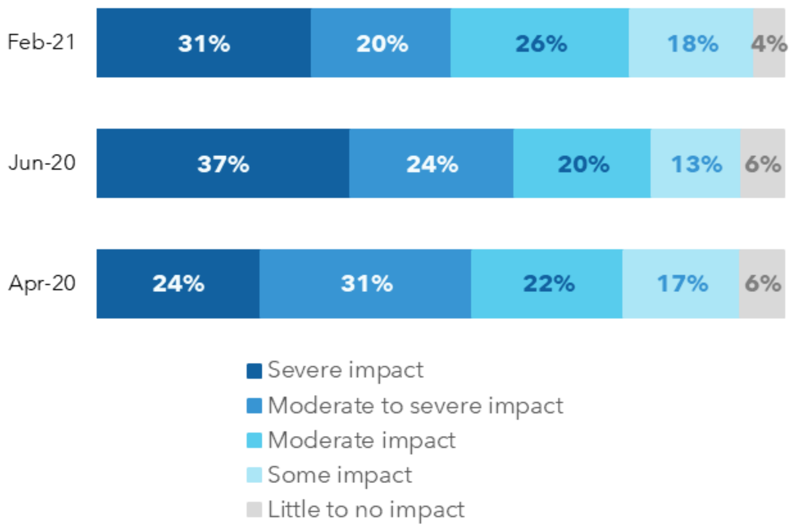
More information on how governments in Latin America and the Caribbean have supported small-scale fisheries facing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring the continuity of livelihoods is available through additional resources.



LIVELIHOODS | Future livelihood impacts

▶ Eight out of ten respondents expect at least a moderate impact on their livelihoods.

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



Respondents continue to expect that the COVID-19 pandemic will impact their livelihoods in the future, and mostly in ways that are severe. Looking ahead, 51% anticipate “moderate to severe” or “severe” impacts to their livelihoods, which is slightly lower than the first two survey rounds. Only 4% expect little or no impact.

Findings in Saint Lucia are similar to the overall region where 25% of respondents expect a severe impact, 23% a moderate impact and only 8% no impact.

“I'm frightened that since I've been unemployed for years now and I don't have any financial security especially as a single parent, what will I do if things gets worst.” – Female, 54 years

“Lost my job so am just home and i have my loans to pay . I am just here watching what is going on.” – Female, 41 years

"Anxious about meeting my commitments. " - Female, 50 years

"I am trying to stay positive for my family bcuz I am the bread winner so when I worry they worry as well"- Sex and age unknown

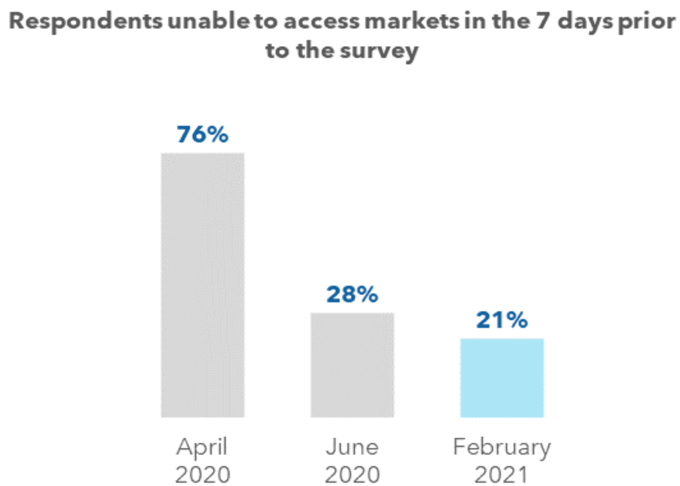
"Where do I begin?! Everything got flipped. I finally found happiness and wasn't depressed then boom. Lost my job, have to struggle to provide food. My depression is back in full. Stress, anxiety, everything negative. " -Male, 32 years

"While I have been able to provide for my family I do fear that should this situation continue I may not have a job or have a reduce salary. This will greatly affect my family as I am on the only breadwinner. " - Female, 38 years

"I run an NGO. Thinking about sustainability and survival. How to get funding. " - Female, 63 years

MARKETS | Access

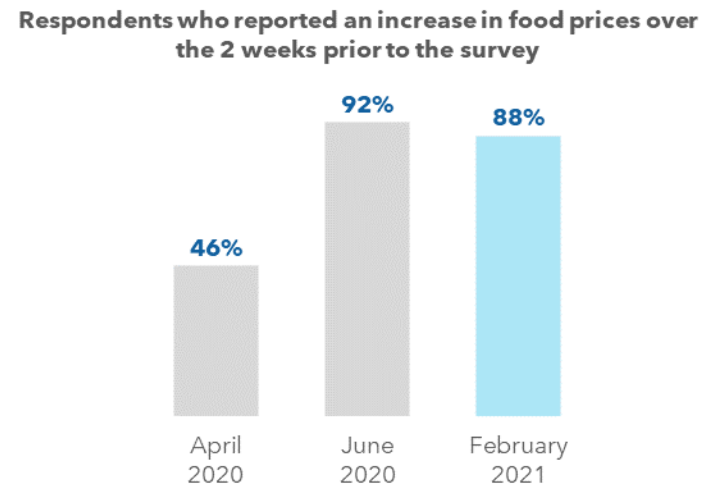
▶ One in five households are still experiencing difficulties in accessing markets.



COVID-19 and measures to contain the virus are still impacting market access, with 21% of respondents reporting that they could not access stores and markets at some point in the seven days prior to the February survey. This is much lower than in April 2020 (76%) and slightly lower when compared to the levels reported during the June 2020 survey (28%). In comparison with other countries in the Caribbean, the limited market access in Saint Lucia is below the regional average of 30%.

Food prices

▶ Nine out of ten respondents continue to report increases in food prices.



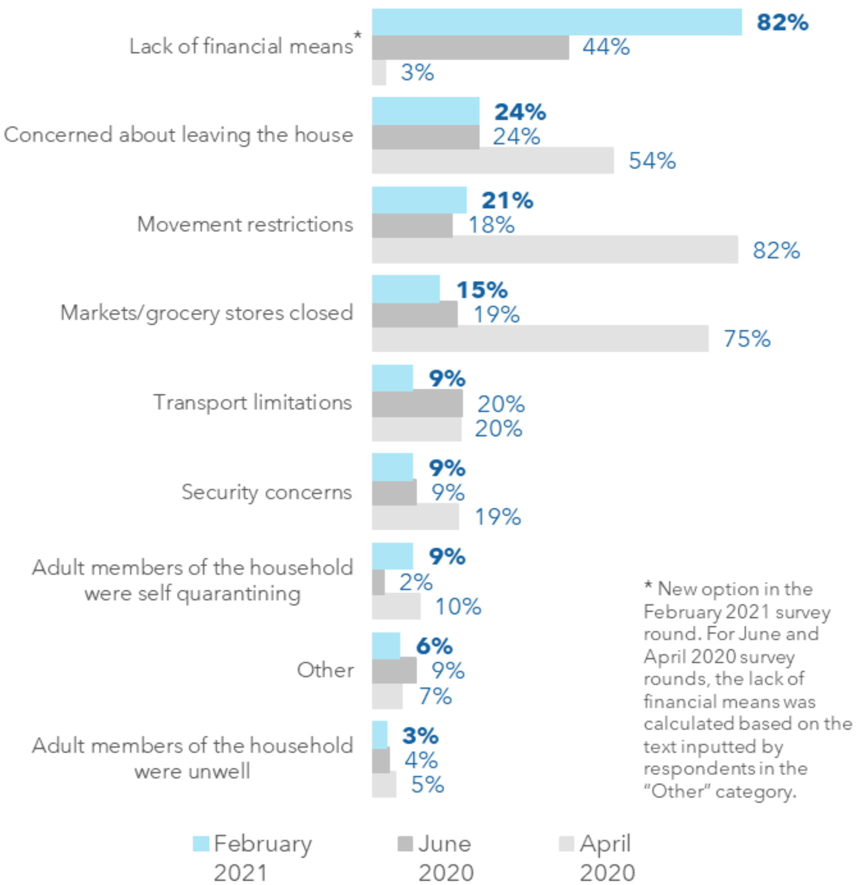
Food prices continue to increase, with a large majority of the respondents (88%) indicating an increase in the cost of food over the two weeks prior to the survey. This compares favourably with the June 2020 survey when 92% of respondents observed an increase in food prices, but is still much higher than in April 2020 when 46% indicated the increase.

The percentage of respondents who identified an increase in food prices in Saint Lucia is substantially higher than in the Caribbean region where on average 71% of respondents reported an increase in the cost of food.

MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

▶ Lack of financial means is currently the main limiting factor to market access in Saint Lucia.

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.



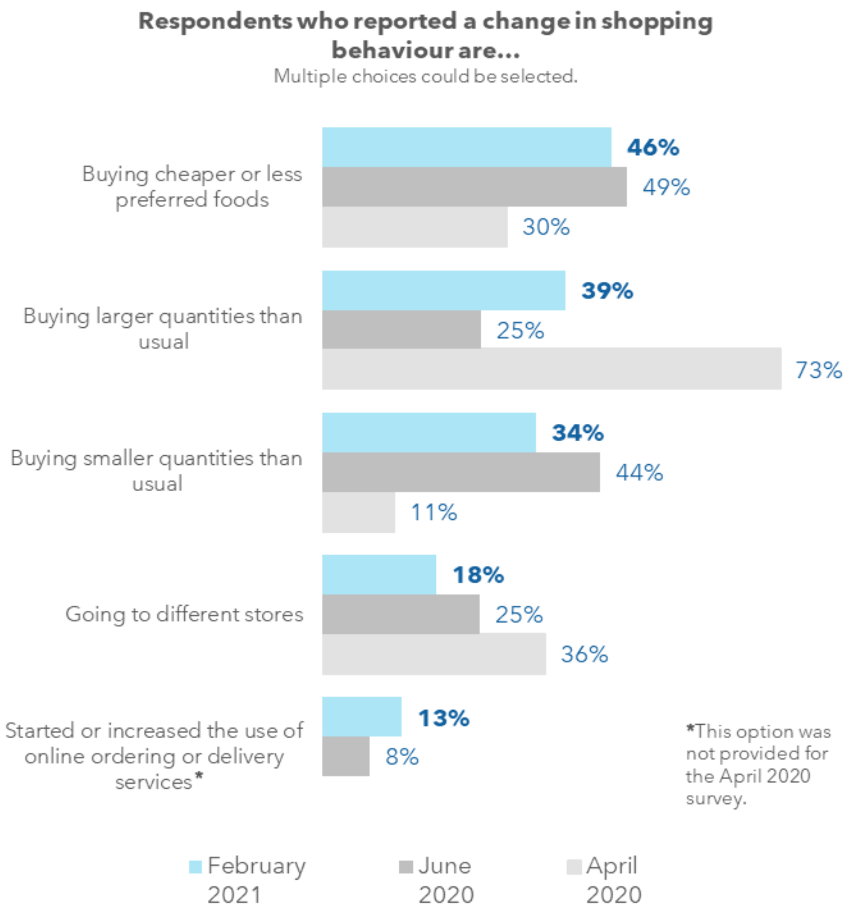
* New option in the February 2021 survey round. For June and April 2020 survey rounds, the lack of financial means was calculated based on the text inputted by respondents in the "Other" category.

In April 2020, movement restrictions, store closures and concerns about leaving the house were the main factors influencing market access. Over time, these concerns have become less widespread.

Lack of financial means is overwhelmingly reported as the main reason for limited market access. Similarly to the average in the Caribbean, it has been cited by 82% of those who faced a time when they could not access markets in the week prior to the survey. This is a significant increase since April and June 2020 when respectively 3% and 44% of the respondents cited lack of money as the main issue in market access.

MARKETS | Shopping behaviour

► Respondents continue to buy larger quantities of food, but most are switching to cheaper foods and increasingly to smaller quantities than at the beginning of the pandemic.



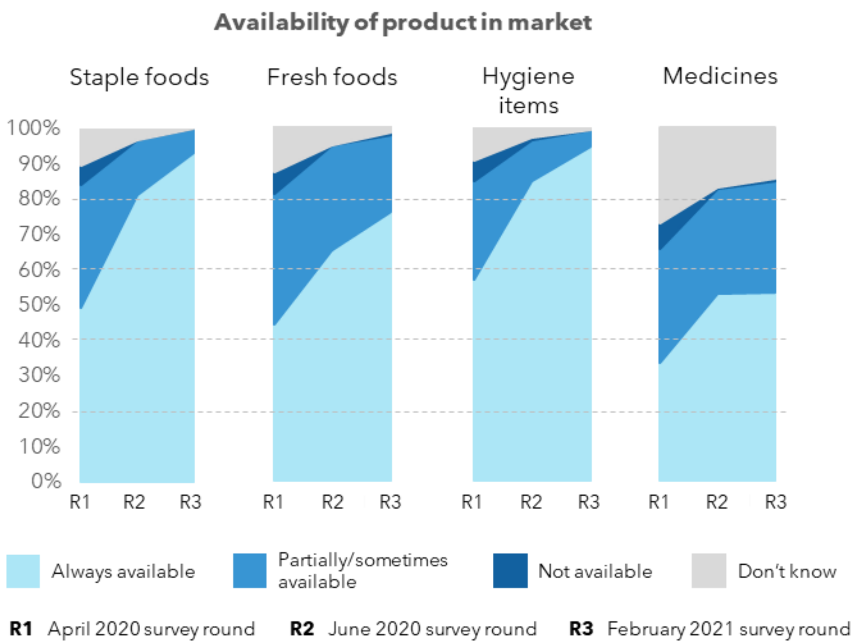
The pandemic has changed how people shop, but these changes have evolved over time. The vast majority of respondents (90%) have changed their shopping behaviour compared to before the pandemic, which is similar to levels in June and April 2020 (93% and 88% respectively), and slightly higher than in the Caribbean region as a whole (84%).

How people are changing their shopping appears to be following the June 2020 pattern, with 46% buying cheaper or less preferred foods, 39% buying larger quantities, and 34% buying smaller quantities compared to before the pandemic. This is in contrast with April 2020, when by far the most cited change was buying larger quantities (73%) – possibly to deal with curfews and to reduce the need to shop frequently. In addition, over half of the respondents in Saint Lucia are spending less time shopping than before the pandemic (61%).

Changes in shopping behaviour in Saint Lucia are very similar to those in the Caribbean region, where the most common changes in shopping behavior are buying cheaper foods (46%), smaller quantities (32%), and larger quantities (30%).

MARKETS | Availability

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



The availability of key products has improved consistently since the beginning of the pandemic. While in April 2020 33-43% of respondents indicated that food, hygiene items and medicines were only sometimes available or unavailable, that number has decreased in February 2021 – but some items are still not always available in stores and markets. When compared to the Caribbean region, the availability of staple foods and hygiene items is slightly better in Saint Lucia, however the availability of fresh foods and especially medicines is slightly worse than in the region.

The reported availability of staple foods and hygiene items has increased substantially between April and June 2020. Their availability continues to increase, with 93% and 95% of respondents in February 2021 indicating that staple foods and hygiene items respectively are always available in their markets. However, 7% of respondents continue to report partial availability of staple foods and 5% report partial availability of hygiene items. None of respondents highlighted that the two items are not available in markets.

As in previous surveys, fresh foods are marginally less available than staple foods, but their availability appears to be increasing with 76% of respondents reporting that fresh foods are always available. However, 22% of respondents continue to indicate that fresh foods are only sometimes available and less than 1% of respondents reported that fresh foods were unavailable.

Although availability of medicines appears to be improving with 53% of respondents reporting that medicines are always available in February 2021, 32% of respondents still indicate that medicines are not always available and less than 1% report that medicines are fully unavailable.

FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

► Food insecurity remains a major concern, with widespread impacts on household food consumption.

Negative impacts on food consumption are widespread. While the proportion of people who reduced consumption has slightly decreased compared to June 2020, it is still higher than in April 2020, shortly after the global pandemic was declared.

Of all respondents, 28% reported skipping meals or eating less than usual in the week leading up to this survey, and 5% went a whole day without eating. Another 24% reported eating less preferred foods.

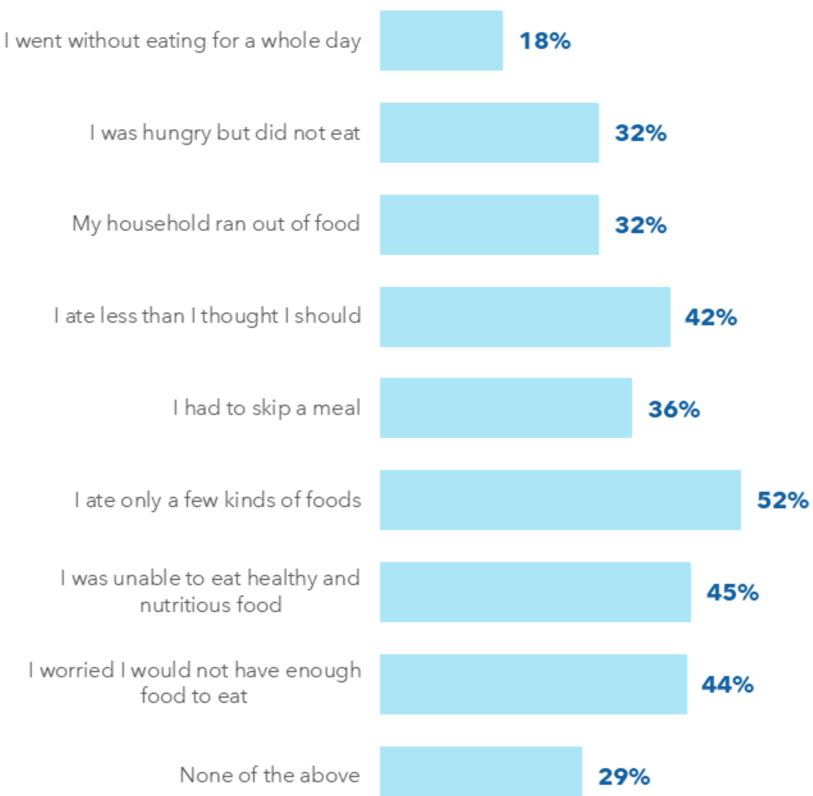
Overall food consumption trends in Saint Lucia are broadly in line with those in the Caribbean where differences in the impact on food consumption appear to primarily reflect disparities in household income. At the regional level, respondents with perceived household incomes well below average were the most frequent to skip meals or eat less than usual when compared to respondents with higher incomes.

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

▶ A significant proportion of respondents are struggling to meet their food and nutritional needs on a monthly basis.

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

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



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

Worryingly, 18% of all respondents experienced a time when they went a whole day without eating, and 32% of respondents experienced a time when they were hungry but did not eat or when they ran out of food.

Similarly, 42% of respondents said they had experienced a time when they ate less than they thought they should, and 44% when they were worried they would not have enough to eat.

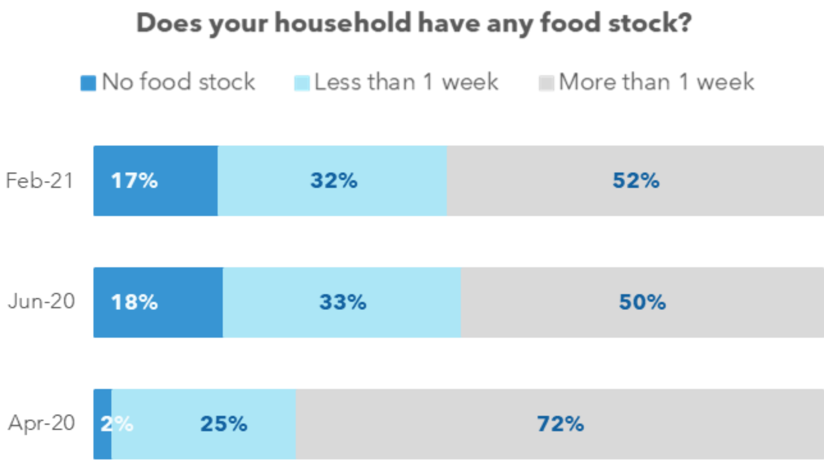
Nutrition and variety of foods consumed are also concerning, with 52% experiencing a time when they ate only a few kinds of foods and 45% when they were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food.

Using the FIES methodology, it is estimated that 16% of respondents in Saint Lucia are severely food insecure and 24% moderately food insecure.

More information on the FIES methodology can be found on page 26.

FOOD SECURITY | Food stocks

▶ Food supplies are available in most households, but a significant proportion of respondents have no food supplies in their homes.



"I can't feed my family and pay my bills" – Female, 43 years

"Well it has affected me by not having food and other things that I need for me and my families" – Female, 44 years

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

"No food no job rent and bills to pay have a baby really stressed" – Female, 30 years

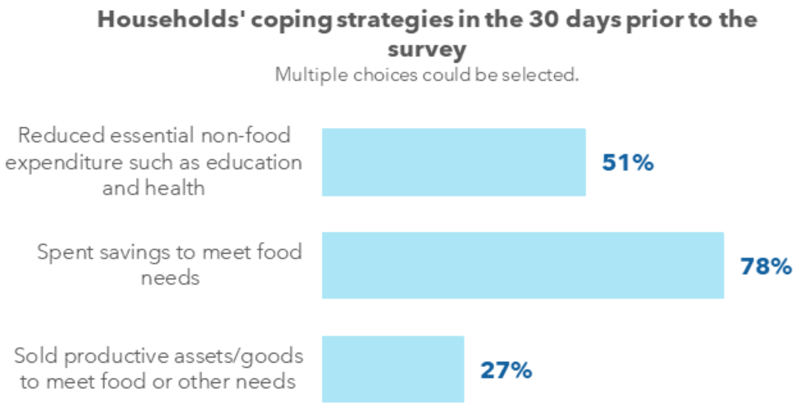
While the majority of households (84%) have food supplies at home, 17% of respondents do not have any food stocks at all. This is consistent with the findings from June 2020, but is a significant increase from April 2020, when 2% of respondents had no food supplies in their household.

Of all respondents, 52% reported having more than a week's worth of food supplies in their household, which is a significant decrease from 72% in April 2020. The higher share in April 2020 may be due to respondents stocking up on food supplies in the face of movement restrictions and shop closures that were implemented during that period.

Overall findings for the Caribbean region are similar, with availability and size of household food stocks having decreased compared to April 2020. At the regional level, differences in food stocks seem to primarily reflect disparities in household income, with low-income households appearing to have less food stock than higher income households.

FOOD SECURITY | Coping strategies

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

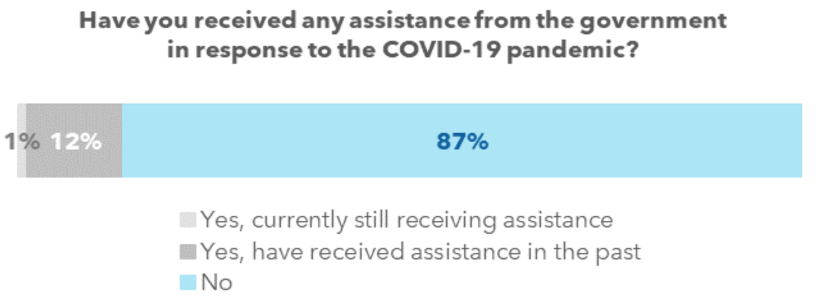


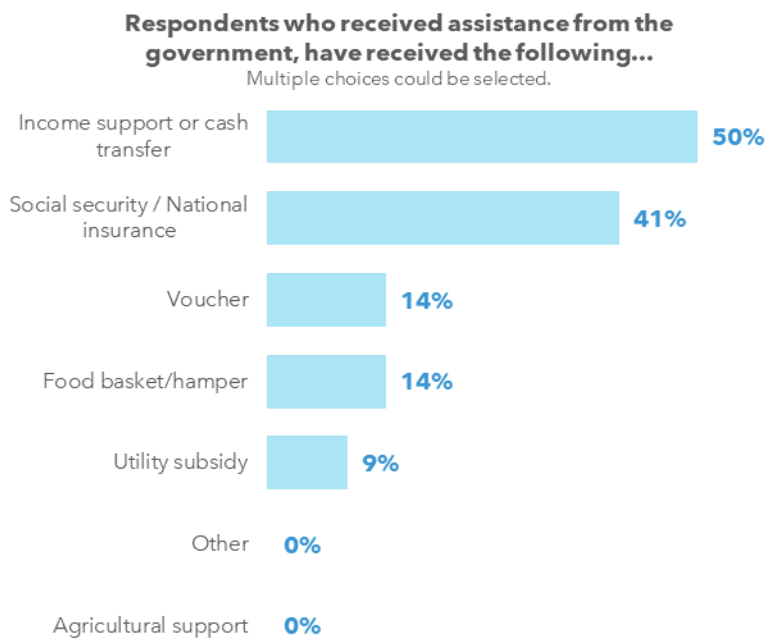
During the third survey round, respondent were asked if in the 30 days prior to the survey they reduced other expenditures, spent savings or sold productive assets to meet their food needs. Of all respondents, 78% resorted to spending savings, and half of respondents reduced essential non-food expenditures, such as on education and health. Furthermore, 27% of respondents sold productive assets to meet food or other needs, potentially undermining long-term income generation.

These trends are in line with the overall region where households with perceived incomes below or well below average are more frequently resorting to these compromises in order to meet food needs.

WIDER IMPACTS | COVID-19 assistance

► Income support or cash transfers, and social security were the most common forms of government assistance among recipients.





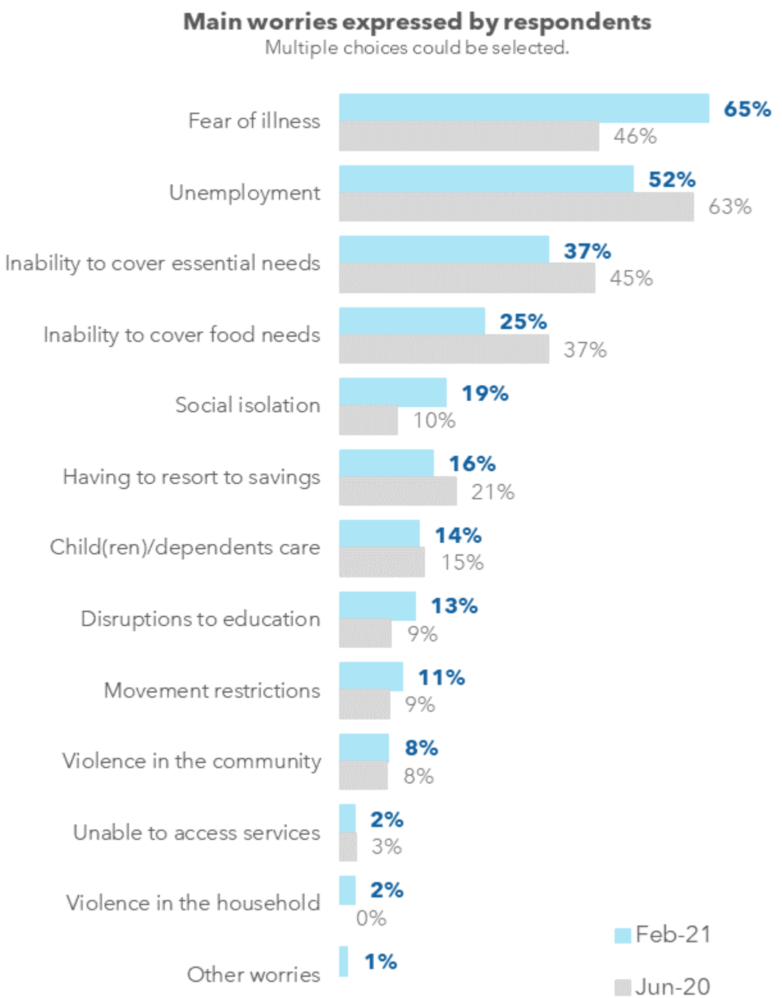
Out of the 13% of respondents who reported to have received government assistance. Only 1% reported to still currently be receiving assistance.

The 13% of respondents who reported to have received/are currently receiving assistance claim to be supported mainly through income support or cash transfers (50%) and social security/national insurance (41%).

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

WIDER IMPACTS | Main worries

▶ Fear of illness and unemployment continue to be the main worries among respondents.



The fear of illness has replaced unemployment as the main worry for most respondents when compared with June 2020. Two thirds of respondents were mainly worried about illness and just over half of respondents expressed worries about unemployment.

Trends in Saint Lucia are similar to the Caribbean where fear of illness (57%) overtook unemployment (44%) as the main worry when compared to June 2020, followed by worries about the inability to meet essential needs (37%) and food needs (32%).

In the Caribbean, the inability to cover food needs was also a greater concern among respondents who perceived their income to be well below average (63%) and below average (47%). Over half of these respondents were also worried about meeting other essential needs.

"Increased working hours due to constant changes within the education sector. I am currently a teacher." – Female, 28 years

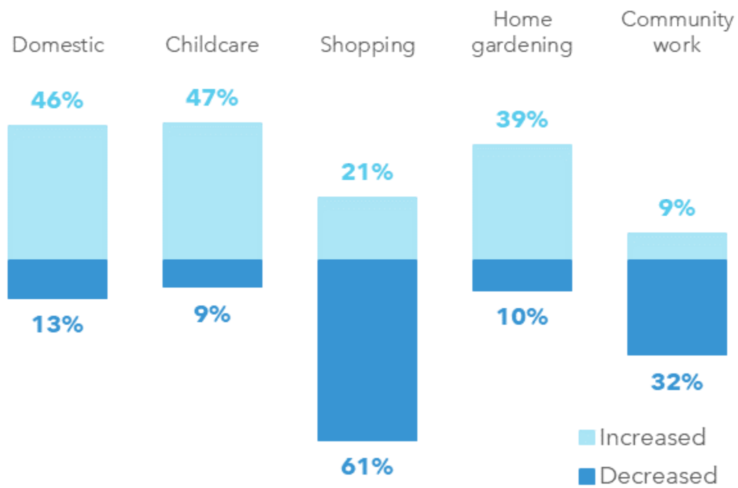
"Life has not been as it used to due to the inability to visit family members and restrictive movements" – Female, 52 years

"Main concern is child care and safety of my young children as a full time working mom and having to be wife and assist with school work and with limited" – Female, 40 years

WIDER IMPACTS | Unpaid care and work

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

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



The unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing the amount of unpaid work at home, placing an additional burden on some household members. Nearly half of households reported to have increased time devoted to domestic work and childcare. Home gardening also saw a surge in 39% of households. The majority of households (61%) reported to have curbed shopping activities.

Trends in the Caribbean are similar, with 44% of respondents reporting an increase in time spent on housework and 39% reporting an increase in time spent on childcare. The amount of time spent on childcare increased particularly for households that describe their income as below average or well below average as well as for single parents and households composed of immediate family members.

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

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community work
Increased	46%	47%	21%	39%	9%
No change	39%	23%	17%	35%	36%
Decreased	13%	9%	61%	10%	32%
Not applicable	3%	21%	0%	16%	22%

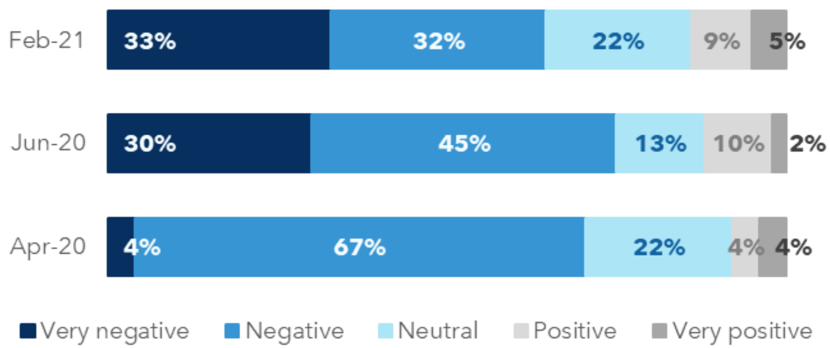
“Inability to travel regionally and internationally to work. Spending the time to take care of household stuff and gardening.” – Female, 64 years

"I read a lot to take my mind off the present covid situation " - Female, 45 years

WIDER IMPACTS | Coping and adapting

▶ Feelings of anxiety and stress remain widespread but contrast with some positive experiences, due to the varying impacts and lived realities of COVID-19.

Distribution of sentiments across open-ended survey responses



Respondents were given the space to provide more nuanced insights on how they are adjusting to the impacts of the pandemic ten months following its declaration. Disruptions to livelihoods and not being able to physically socialise with family members are the most common themes. Those experiencing loss of income are feeling anxious about how to meet bills and payments. Many also expressed concerns to disruptions to their own or their children's education and extra-curricular activities, which is compounding to take a toll on their mental well-being. In addition, respondents from Saint Lucia also reported lack of accessibility to health services, resulting in disruption and inability to treat existing illnesses and non-COVID related health care. Sentiment analysis revealed that there were overall less negative but more polarizing comments compared to April and June 2020. Signs of resilience are being shown by those adapting to the shifting protocols and being able to focus on domestic matters.

Some sample responses:

Very negative (33%)

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

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

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

Negative (32%)

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

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

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

Neutral (22%)

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

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

Positive (9%)

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

Very positive (5%)

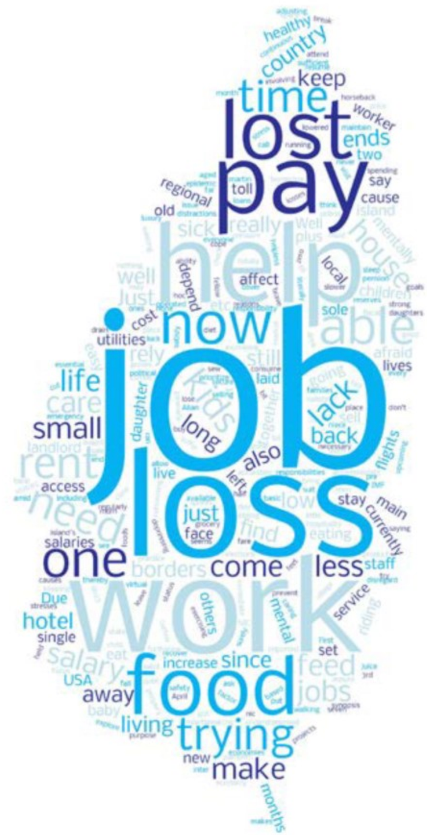
"My adaptations are fairly simple. By there being more time at home due to lack of work, I apply most of my time to online learning and study."

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

WIDER IMPACTS | Coping and adapting

Common themes on how respondents are adapting and coping

FEBRUARY 2021



JUNE 2020

APRIL 2020

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt livelihoods, affecting every third household, primarily due to concerns about the outbreak and movement restrictions, and also due to the price and inaccessibility of livelihood inputs.

Market access slightly improved since April 2020, but one fifth of respondents are still unable to access markets primarily due to the lack of financial means and increasing food prices. People have adjusted their shopping behaviour, with increasing tendencies towards smaller quantities and/or cheaper or less preferred foods. Limited availability of medicines for a third of respondents remains a concern.

The food insecurity situation has not improved much since June 2020. Many people are worrying about the inability to meet their food needs and doing so continues to be a struggle. Often this comes at the expense of long-term income generation, while most people are compromising expenditure on health and education. Worryingly, a third of respondents are reducing the amount they eat.

Containment measures have caused domestic and childcare activities to increase for almost half of respondents, slightly above the average in the Caribbean. While data limitations cannot provide deeper insights in the share of activities between sexes for this round, the gender disparity which was already prevalent before the pandemic cannot be ignored, and further studies should aim to address and mitigate against it.

Survey results indicate that disruptions to livelihoods and incomes remain widespread, despite the government's efforts to mitigate the crisis by introducing policies and programmes to support incomes and food security. Every third respondents in Saint Lucia expresses a very negative sentiment about the pandemic and expects their livelihoods to be severely affected in the future - tendencies which are more widespread compared to the Caribbean region where some recovery seems already palpable.

In the face of these impacts, it is crucial that continued investments are made into social protection, vulnerability analysis and sector specific research to provide ongoing and tailored support to the most vulnerable populations and to mitigate further widening of existing inequalities.

METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

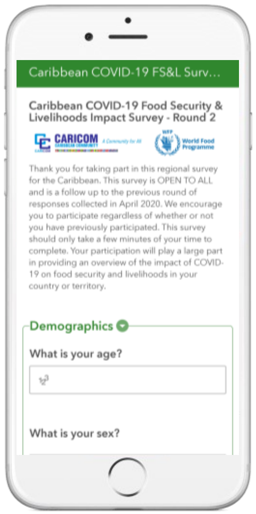
The qualitative analysis was performed in collaboration with Joseph Xu from Google's AI unit using Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP, a branch of AI which analyses and interprets human languages, provided: (a) a sentiment analysis to determine the distribution of very negative to very positive responses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

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

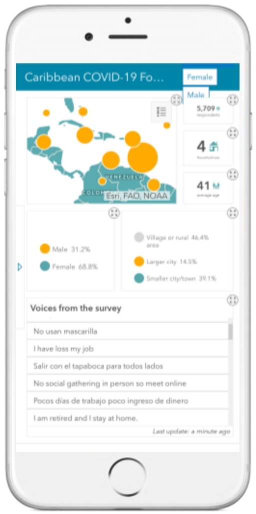
While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data are not representative, and the use of a web-based questionnaire limits inputs from people without internet connectivity. In Saint Lucia, nearly half of the population is not using the internet.

The limited number of respondents in Saint Lucia during the third round of data collection prevents deeper analysis of findings across selected demographies, such as perceived income level, income sources, household composition, gender, age or location of respondents.

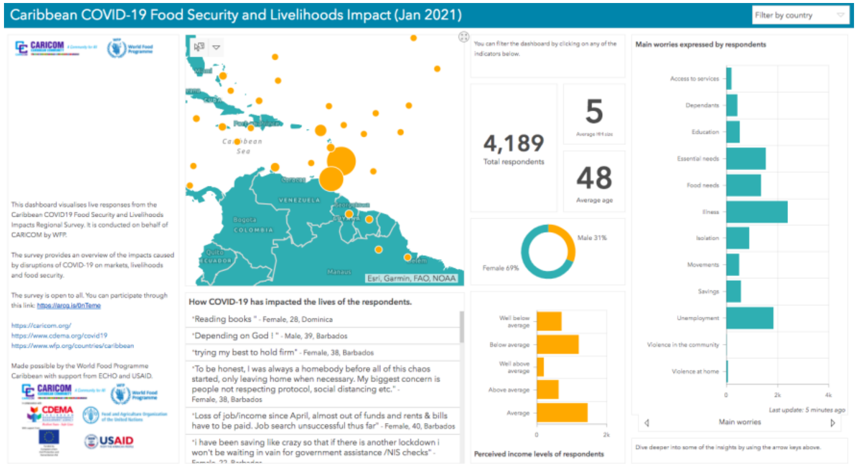
This report was prepared by WFP Caribbean – Amy Chong, Irina Bird Reddiar, Elisaveta Gouretskaia, Darko Petrovic, Sarah Bailey and Regis Chapman.



Survey form



Dashboard for Smartphones



Dashboard for PCs/Laptops

CALCULATION OF FOOD INSECURITY ESTIMATES

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was used for calculating food insecurity estimates presented in this report (see page 16).

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is an experience-based metric of food insecurity severity at the household or individual level, which is used for global food security monitoring and aligned with food security targets outlined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It relies on people's direct responses to questions regarding their access to adequate food during a given recall period. The eight questions focus on self-reported food-related behaviours and experiences during 30 days prior to the survey. They reflect increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints. A concept essential to the FIES is that the eight items and respondents are positioned on the same underlying scale of severity of food insecurity. Therefore, the probability of a respondent answering "yes" to a FIES item depends on the distance along the scale between the food severity experienced by the respondent and the severity of the item. A respondent's raw score (an integer number ranging from zero to eight) is the sum of affirmative responses given to the eight FIES questions. It is the basis for estimating the respondent parameter, which provides an interval measure of the severity of food insecurity and makes it possible to produce comparable measures of food insecurity. For this report, prevalence rates of moderate and severe food insecurity were calculated based on survey data using the FIES online App (page 16).

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

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