Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA Summary Report | June 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 Antigua and Barbuda via social media, traditional media outlets, and emails.

February 2021

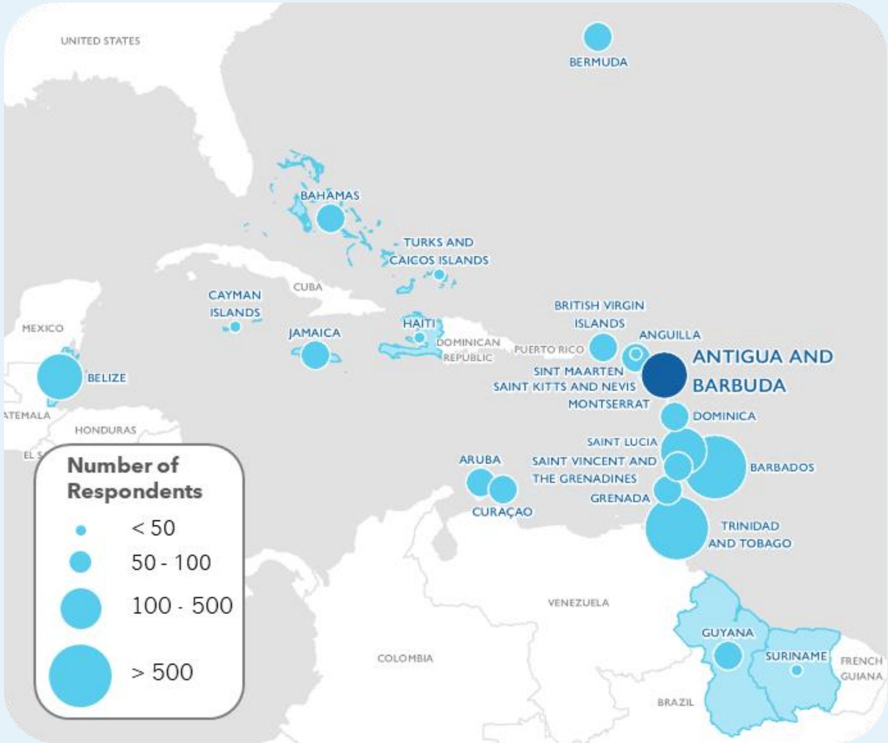
111 Respondents | **71** Female | **29%** Male | **45** Average age | **4** Average household size

June 2020

166 Respondents | **77** Female | **23%** Male | **41** Average age | **4** Average household size

April 2020*

* Comparison with April 2020 survey round is not included because of the low number of responses from Antigua and Barbuda.



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

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA Summary | June 2021

- The impacts of COVID-19 continue to evolve ten months after the initial declaration of the pandemic. Countries in the Caribbean have endured multiple lockdowns and changes in travel protocols during this time and introduced various programmes to assist households that are most heavily impacted. In Antigua and Barbuda, respondents reported receiving assistance mainly in the form of food basket/hamper and vouchers.
- Livelihoods continue to be disrupted, affecting every second household, mainly due to concerns about the outbreak and movement restrictions, and increasingly due to the price and inaccessibility of livelihood inputs. Every third respondent expects a very severe impact on their livelihood in the future.
- Impacts on incomes continue to be widespread, with two thirds of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries since the COVID-19 outbreak.
- One out of four respondents still experiences difficulties in accessing markets primarily due to the lack of financial means and increasing food prices. This influenced shopping behaviour, with most people reducing time spent for shopping and turning to cheaper foods.
- Food insecurity is a growing concern, with four out of ten respondents cutting down food consumption in the week leading up to the survey. One out of three respondents are mainly worried about not being able to meet their food needs, which translates in a large share meeting their food needs only at the expense of productive assets and investments in education and health.
- In the wider region, 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. For Antigua and Barbuda, such trends are difficult to ascertain due to limitations in the availability of data.

		Feb-21	Jun-20
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	56%	63%
	Reduction/loss of income	64%	78%
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	52%	64%
MARKETS	Lack of market access	24%	30%
	Change in shopping behaviour	85%	85%
	Increase in food prices	61%	72%
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	39%	38%
	Lack of food stock	18%	16%

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COVID-19 | Situation and response

COVID-19 cases and government responses

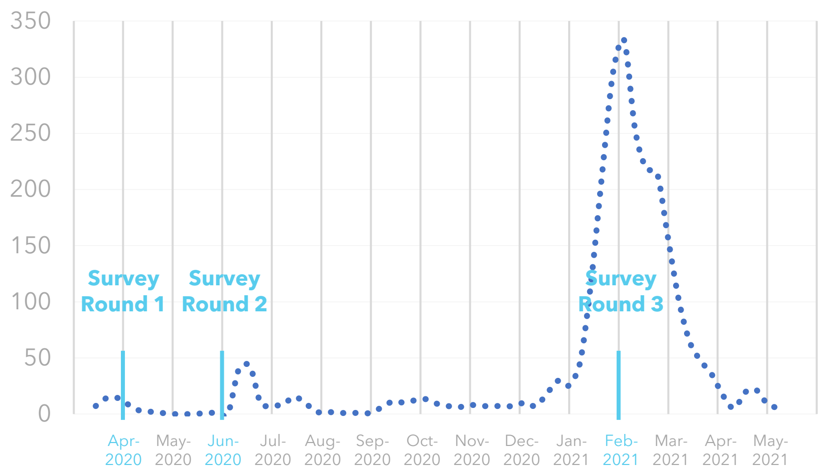
Following the first registered case of COVID-19 in Antigua and Barbuda and the declaration of a state of emergency in March 2020, the government closed its borders to international travel and implemented a mandatory nightly curfew. Additional restrictions included the closure of all non-essential businesses and services.

The first Caribbean COVID-19 survey was launched in early April 2020, when Antigua and Barbuda was under a 24-hour curfew. By the time of the second survey at the end of June 2020, all businesses with approved security protocols had been allowed to resume operations and the country had reopened to international visitors on 4 June.

The current survey was conducted in February 2021 amid an unprecedented rise in cases in the country, leading to an extended night curfew and tightened restrictions.

New COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda

Average 14-day notification rate per 100 000 population



Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2021

Social protection measures

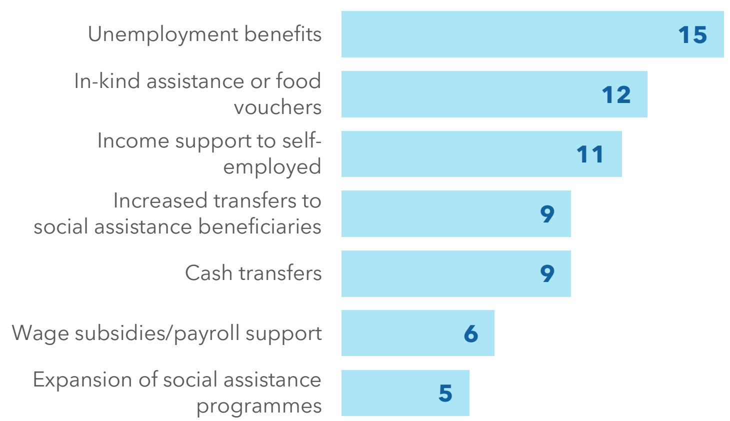
Faced with the widespread economic repercussions of the pandemic, all governments in the English- and Dutch speaking Caribbean have turned to social protection to support people, through existing programmes or ones introduced in the wake of COVID-19. Target groups have been primarily people and businesses who have lost jobs and income as a result of movement restrictions, declining tourism and disruptions to commercial activities.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the government distributed relief packages of food and medication during the 24-hour curfew to elderly living alone, persons with disabilities, and unemployed adults with children.

See page 20 for more information related to COVID-19 assistance in Antigua and Barbuda.

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

By number of countries that adopted the measure

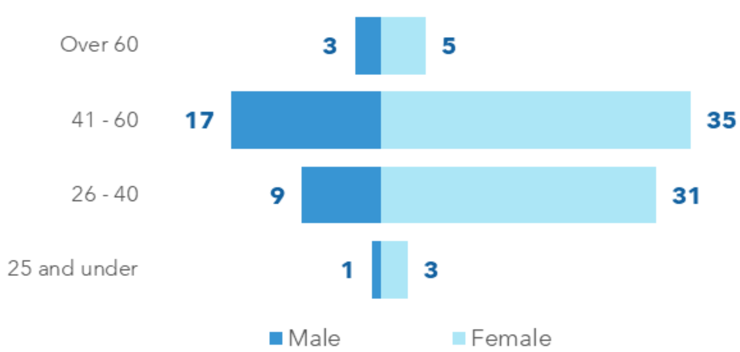


*Includes all survey countries and territories except for Haiti

Source: Authors' own compilation

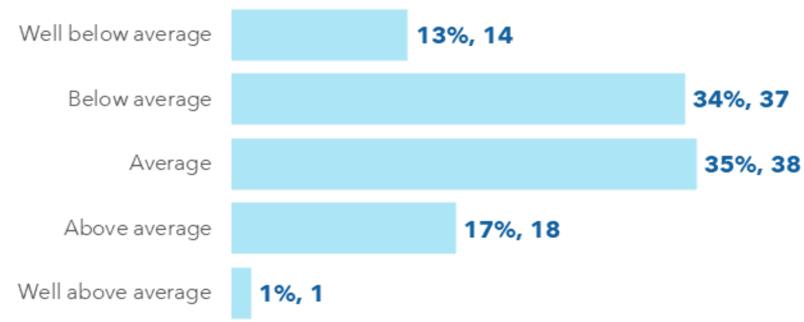
RESPONDENTS | Demographics

Age and sex

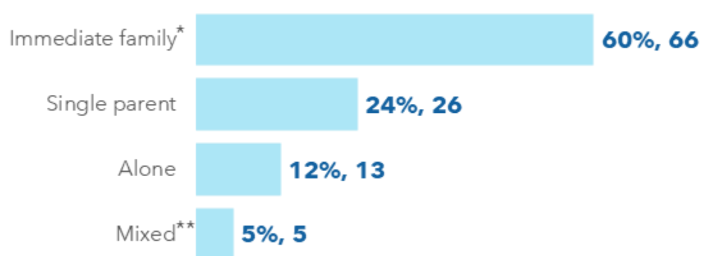


Perceived income levels

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



Household composition

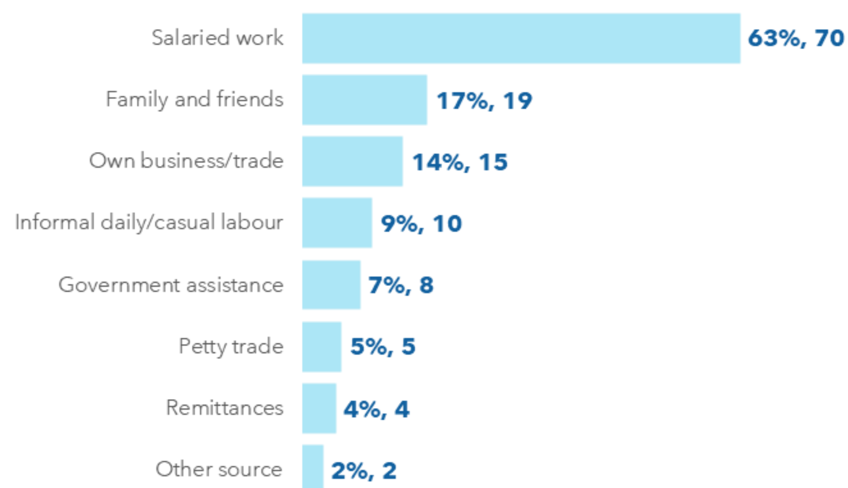


* Immediate family includes partner, children and grandparents.
** Mixed households are composed of immediate family members, other relatives as well as non-family members.

Urban/rural location

Main income sources

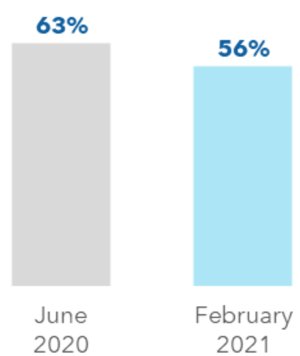
Respondents were asked to indicate the main income source(s) for their household. Multiple choices could be selected.



LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

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

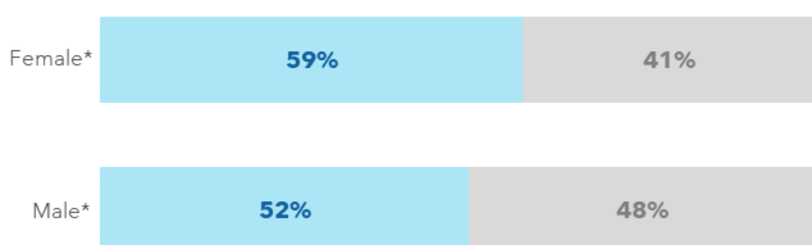
Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 2 weeks prior to the survey



The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt livelihoods. For over half of respondents, the ability to pursue their livelihood was still affected in the two weeks preceding the survey. This is down from 63% in June 2020 and is comparable to the average in the region (51%).

While women seem to be more commonly affected by livelihood disruptions compared to men, this finding should be treated with caution due to the low number of respondents. Other respondent characteristics (such as age, source and perceived level of income or household composition) could not be considered in the livelihood analysis for the same reason.

By sex



* Low response numbers in these categories may affect results.

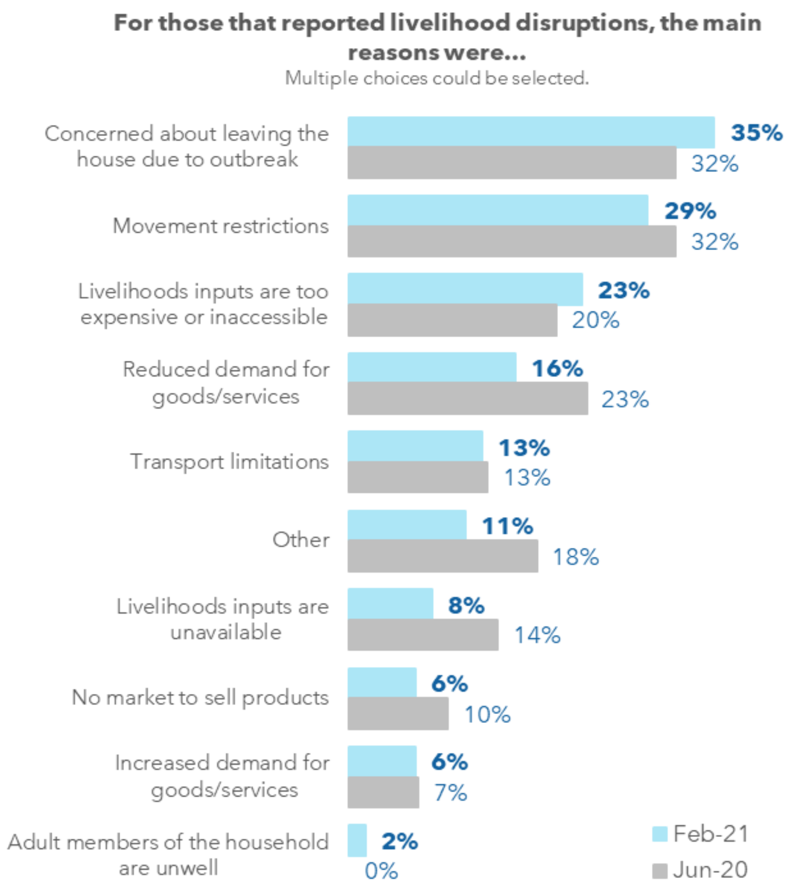
"My salary was cut in half I had to send my child back home." - Female, 43 years

"Lost income for six and a half months. Had to move. Could not afford the rent." - Male, 65 years

"Loss of income, sometimes unable to take care of my kids, sometimes my youngest gets frustrated about the pandemic ." - Female, 44 years

LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

▶ Concerns about the outbreak as well as movement restrictions are still the main drivers behind disruptions to livelihoods. The price and access of livelihood inputs is a growing factor.



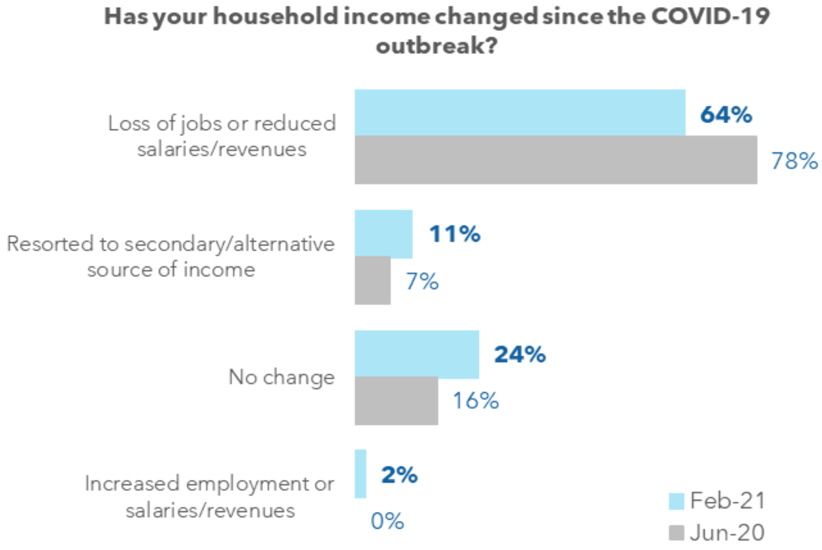
Concerns about leaving the house, reported by about a third of respondents who faced disruptions to livelihoods, remain the main reason behind the disruptions. Nearly the same percentage of people cited movement restrictions as one of the main reasons, which has slightly reduced in importance from the previous survey round.

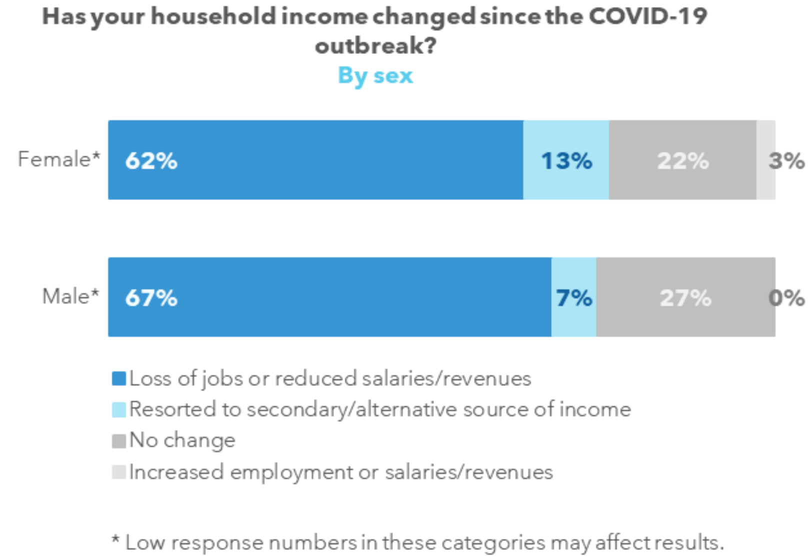
Limited access to livelihood inputs is also among the key reasons for livelihood disruptions, cited by a quarter of respondents. Reduced demand for goods/services continues to affect almost one out of five respondents facing livelihood disruptions.

All observations are similar to the regional averages. In the Caribbean, concerns about leaving the house or movement restrictions are much more likely to be cited as disruptive factors by respondents with a perceived income as average or above average, while for below-average income households the high price and limited access of livelihood inputs is the main reason behind disrupted livelihoods.

LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income

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



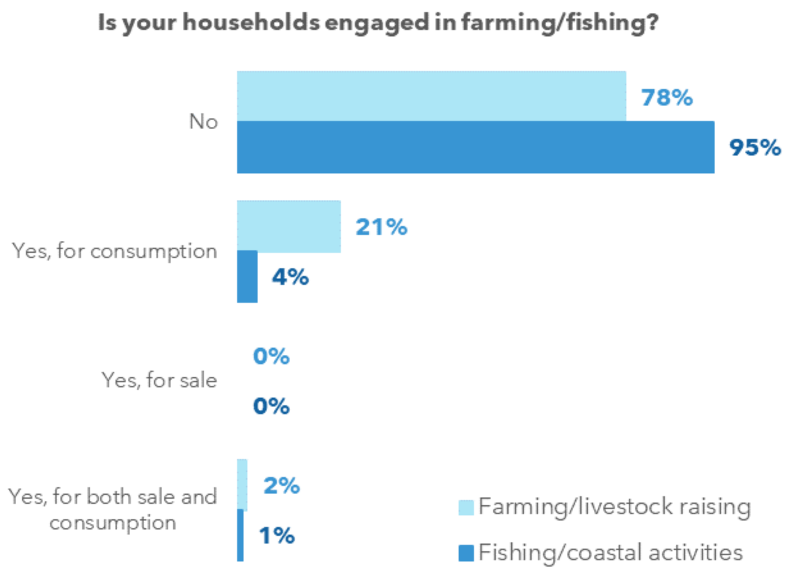


Impacts on incomes continue to be widespread, with 64% of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries since the COVID-19 outbreak. While this is lower compared to June 2020 (78%), and in line with regional trends, it suggests the continuation of economic impacts with many people facing the prospect of decreasing incomes.

While income changes between men and women seem to be similar, this finding should be treated with caution due to the low number of respondents. Other respondent characteristics (such as age, source and perceived level of income or household composition) could not be considered in the livelihood analysis for the same reason. However, it is assumed that households with lowest income levels and purchasing power are potentially most affected. At the regional level, job loss or reduced income was reported by the vast majority of respondents describing their household income as well below average (90%) or below average (79%), compared to less than half of those describing their income as above or well above average.

LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

▶ Household gardening has increased among four out of ten households.



Nearly one in four respondents reported engaging in farming, gardening or livestock raising and 5% in fisheries/coastal activities. In both cases these activities are primarily for their own consumption.

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 (54%). For more on changes in unpaid household activities see page 22.

At the regional level, those engaged in farming primarily for sale and fishing appear to be facing more food consumption challenges. Among respondents engaged in fishing, 36% reported to have skipped meals or ate less than usual in the week prior to the survey, compared to 27% of respondents on average. Among fishing-based livelihoods in the region, job or revenue loss was more widespread compared to farming or average households.

LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

FAO and CARICOM assessment

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

In Antigua and Barbuda, the majority (69%) of extension officers reported issues with marketing agriculture productions (crop, livestock, fisheries) and 38% reporting that the farmers and fishers were able to find alternative marketing channels. The most affected agriculture sector members are rainfed farmers. Thirty seven percent of the farmer and fisher respondents indicated lower levels of sales compared with the same period of the previous year and 66% reported unusual difficulties with selling their crop/livestock/fish production. These difficulties include lower demand than usual (21%), constrained access to market (19%), and the usual traders not coming to buy their produce (14%). The majority (69%) of the farmer and fisher respondents also had to give away or destroy a part of their production due to lack of marketing and storage capacity.

The majority (69%) of the extension officers interviewed identified dry spell/drought as the main shock experienced by agriculture households alongside COVID-19. Nearly half of the extension officers indicated difficulties in accessing seeds, with purchase of low quality seeds and reduced planted area as some of the reported coping strategies. Most important shocks affecting livestock include lack of pasture (38%), livestock disease (23%) and economic disruptions (15%). A little over one-thirds of the extension officers reported that some households have been destocking their animals.

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

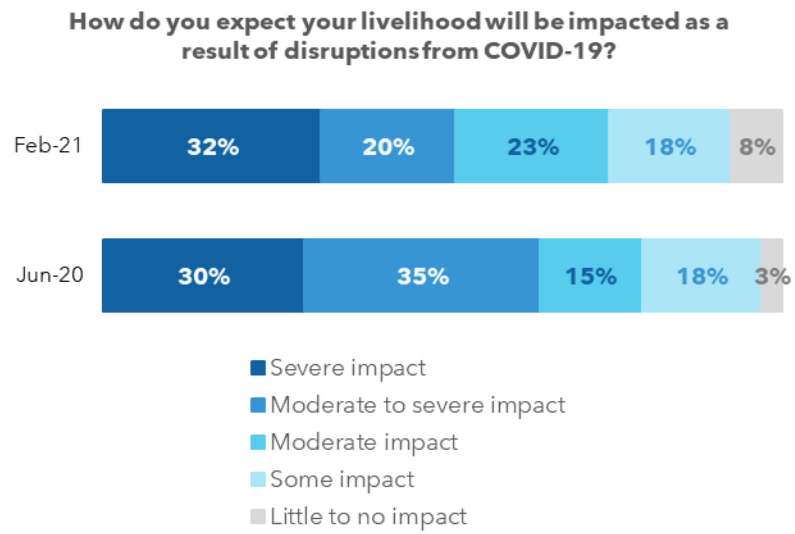
The fisheries sector plays an important role in Antigua and Barbuda, both as a source of food for the local population and as source of employment and income. Even though its official contribution to the GDP is quite low, at almost 1%, the country has one of the highest rates of per capita consumption of fish in the world and fisheries play an important social protection function, especially during times when other sources of income are unavailable.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the most important shocks affecting fisheries include lack of fishing material and difficulty to market fish. Boat repairs were likewise identified as the fisheries inputs/service that has been most difficult to access. A small number of farmer and fisher respondents reported unusual difficulties including concerns and restrictions related to COVID-19 and decreased demands for fish and fish products.

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

▶ Three out of four respondents expect at least a moderate impact on their livelihoods.



Respondents continue to expect that the COVID-19 pandemic will impact their livelihoods in the future. Looking ahead, 52% anticipate “moderate to severe” or “severe” impacts to their livelihoods, slightly lower compared to June 2020, and similar to the regional average. Only 8% expect little or no impact.

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

"Not been able to meet my loans on time."- Male, 31 years

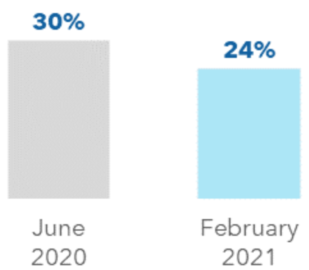
"I was out of my job for over 6 months, now I have started working and it’s only days or week on, week off." - Male, 29 years

"I was first laid off from working then I had to push my business. I worry every time a business place close due to Covid-19 because these are the people I depend on for my business to prosper." - Male, 41 years

MARKETS | Access

▶ One in four households are still experiencing difficulties in accessing markets due to COVID-19.

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



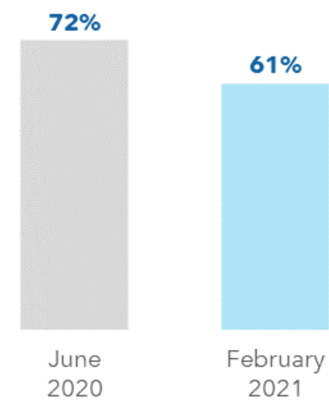
COVID-19 and measures to contain the virus are still impacting market access, with 24% of respondents reporting that they could not access stores and markets at some point in the seven days prior to the February survey. This is slightly lower when compared to the levels reported during the June 2020 survey (30%).

In comparison with other countries in the Caribbean, the limited market access in Antigua and Barbuda is slightly below the regional average of 30%.

Food prices

▶ More than half of respondents (61%) continue to report increases in food prices.

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

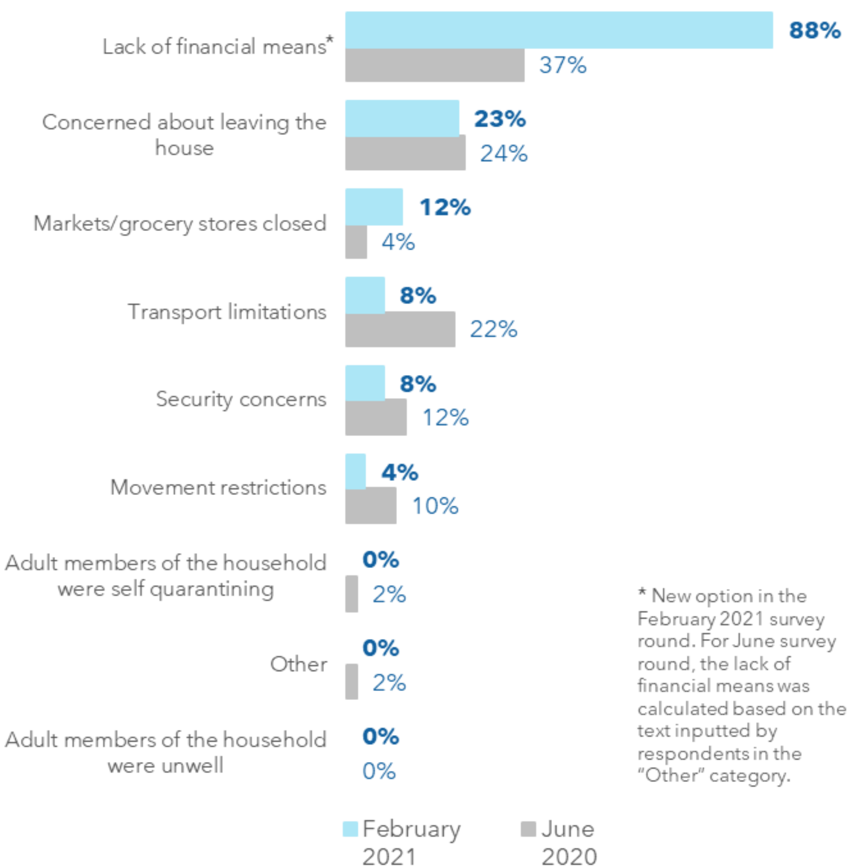


Food prices continue to increase, with a majority of the respondents (61%) indicating an increase in the cost of food over the two weeks prior to the survey. In June 2020, this perception was more widespread, when it was reported by 72% of respondents. It also remains slightly lower compared to the average in the Caribbean region (71%).

MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

▶ Lack of financial means is currently the main limiting factor to market access in Antigua and Barbuda.

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 survey round, the lack of financial means was calculated based on the text inputted by respondents in the "Other" category.

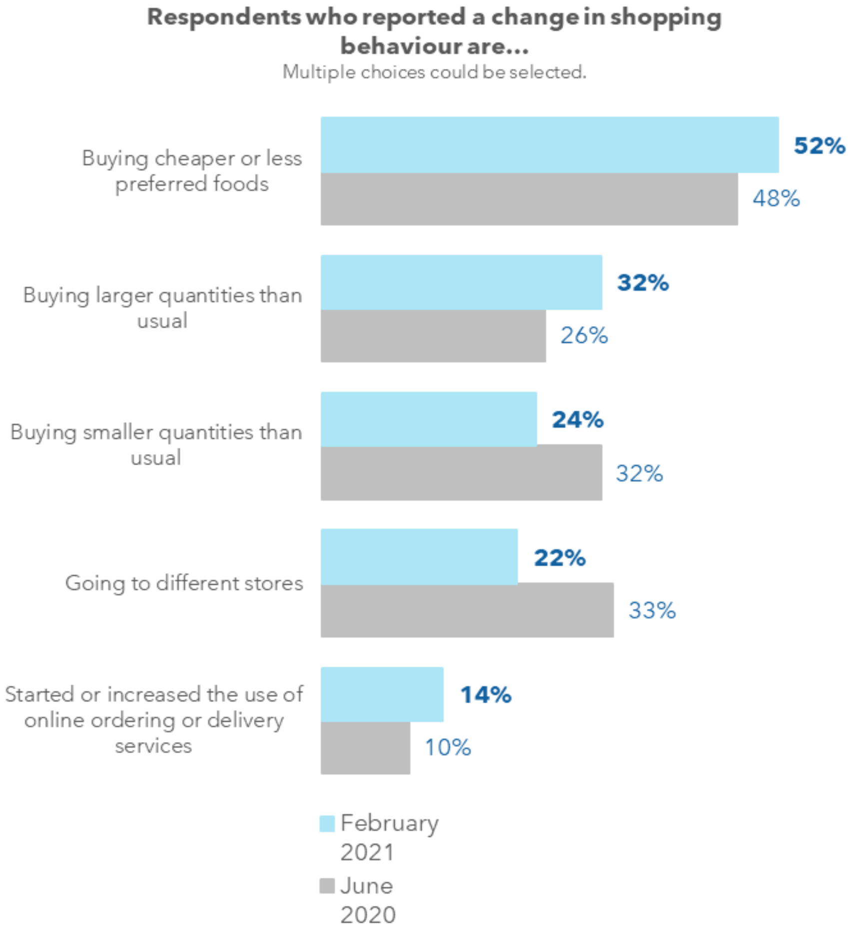
Lack of financial means is overwhelmingly reported as the main reason for limited market access, cited by 88% of those who faced a time when they could not access markets in the week prior to the survey. This is a significant increase since June 2020 when 37% of the respondents cited lack of money as the main issue in market access.

Concerns about leaving the house due to the pandemic continue to affect almost one in four respondents with limited market access. Transport limitation, security concerns and movement restrictions are less common reasons for limited market access when compared with June 2020. On the other hand, closures of markets and grocery stores are affecting a slightly larger proportion of respondents than in June 2020 (an increase from 4% to 12%).

Financial constrains in Antigua and Barbuda are affecting a slightly larger proportion of those unable to access markets than in the whole Caribbean region where on average 84% of respondents cited lack of financial means as the main issue limiting market access.

MARKETS | Shopping behaviour

► Majority of respondents continue to buy cheaper or less preferred foods, while also switching to buying larger quantities than in June 2020.

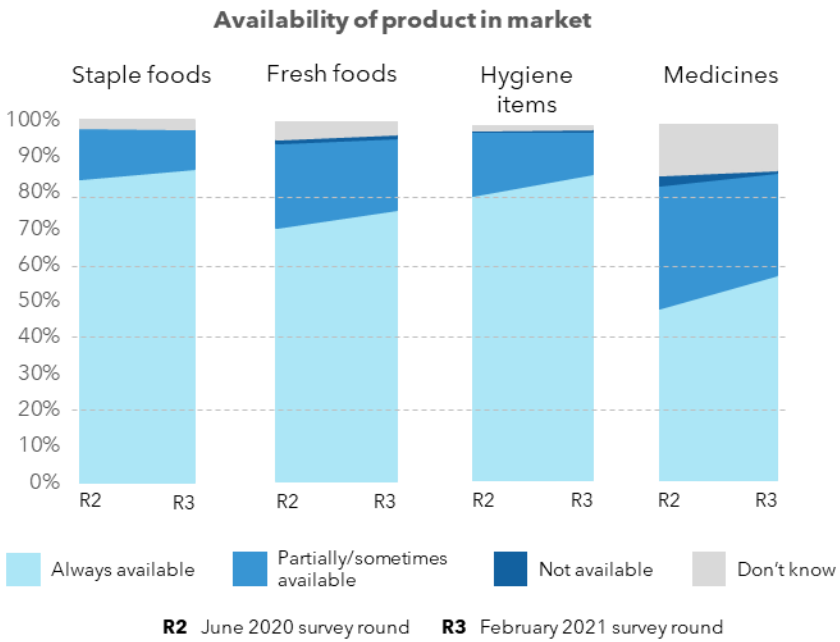


The pandemic has changed how people shop, but these changes have evolved over time. The vast majority of respondents (85%) have changed their shopping behaviour compared to before the pandemic, which is identical to levels in June 2020 (85%), and similar to average levels in the Caribbean (84%). Respondents are more frequently resorting to buying cheaper and larger quantities of foods compared to June 2020, possibly to cope with reduced income, to deal with curfews and to reduce the need to shop frequently. More respondents are also resorting to online ordering and delivery. On the other hand, fewer respondents are buying smaller quantities of food and going to different stores compared to June 2020.

Overall, more than half of the respondents in Antigua and Barbuda are spending less time shopping than before the pandemic (58%), which is almost identical to the drop at regional level (57%). Similarly, the most common changes in shopping behavior in the Caribbean 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 still do not seem to be fully available.



The availability of key products has improved since June 2020, but some items are still not fully available in stores and markets. When compared to the Caribbean region, the availability of all key items seems to be lower in Antigua and Barbuda.

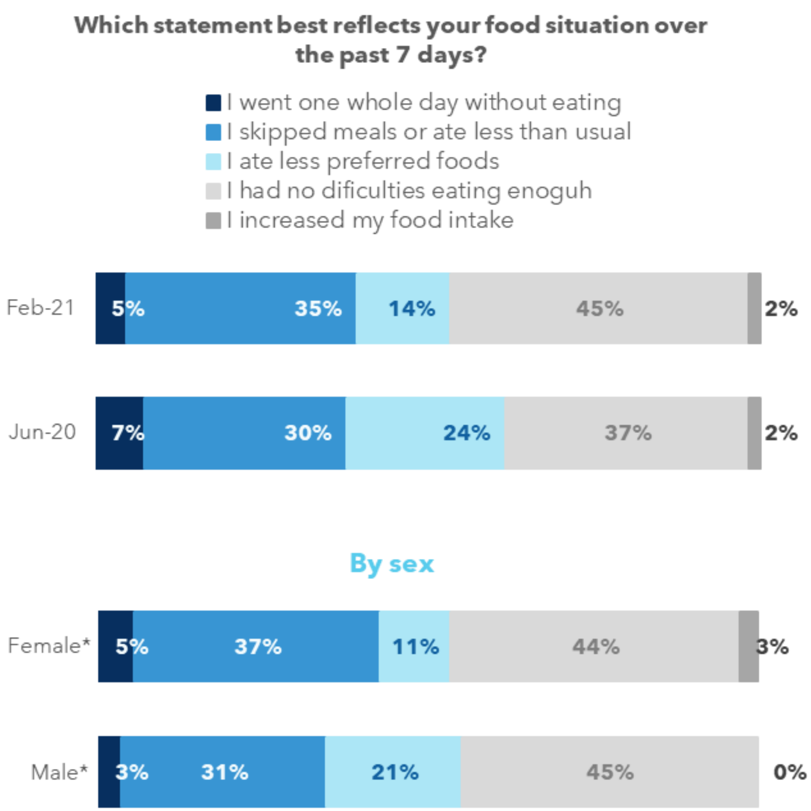
The reported availability of staple foods and hygiene items continues to increase, 86% of respondents in February 2021 indicating that both items are always available in their markets. However, 11% of respondents continue to report partial availability of staple foods and 12% report partial availability of hygiene items. Less than 1% of respondents highlighted that hygiene items are not available in markets.

As in the previous survey, fresh foods are marginally less available than staple foods, but their availability appears to be increasing with 75% of respondents reporting that fresh foods are always available. However, 20% 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 58% of respondents reporting that medicines are always available in February 2021, 29% of respondents still indicate that medicines are not always available and less than 1% report that medicines are fully unavailable.

FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

▶ Impacts on household food consumption are widespread and remain a major concern.



* Low response numbers in these categories may affect results.

COVID-19 continues to have a negative impact on people's food consumption, with 35% of respondents skipping meals or eating less than usual during the week leading up to the February survey, and 5% going a whole day without eating. Another 14% of respondents reported eating less preferred foods. These results show no significant improvement since June 2020.

Overall, food consumption trends in Antigua and Barbuda 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.

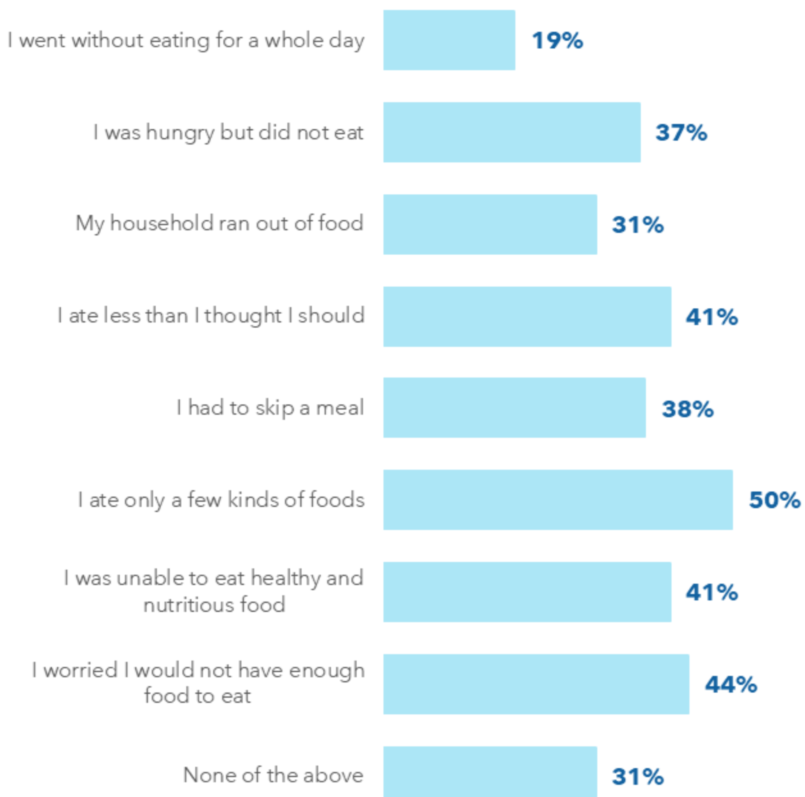
When considering respondents' demographic characteristics such as gender, it appears that women in Antigua and Barbuda experience negative impacts on food consumption more frequently compared to men.

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

- A significant proportion of respondents is 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.

When asked about the 30 days leading up to the February survey, 19% of respondents from Antigua and Barbuda experienced a time when they went a whole day without eating, 37% of respondents experienced a time when they were hungry but did not eat, and 31% reported a time when their household ran out of food.

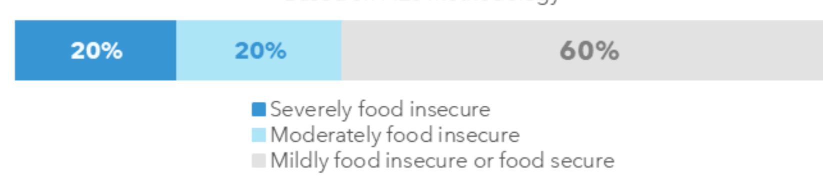
Additionally, 41% of respondents in Antigua and Barbuda said they had experienced a time when they ate less than they thought they should, and 38% skipped a meal. Worries about not having enough to eat were reported by almost half of the respondents.

Nutrition and variety of foods consumed are also concerning, with 50% experiencing a time when they ate only a few kinds of foods and 41% when they were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food.

Based on the FIES methodology, it is estimated that 20% of respondents in Antigua and Barbuda are moderately food insecure and additional 20% severely food insecure. For more information on the FIES methodology, see page 27.

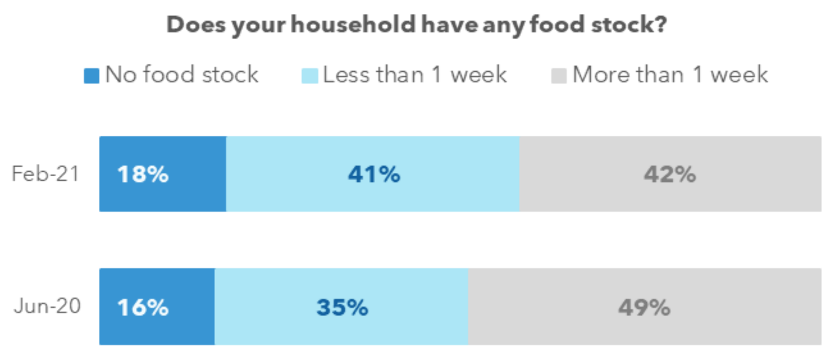
Prevalence rates of food insecurity

Based on FIES methodology



FOOD SECURITY | Food stocks

▶ Most households have some food supplies, but increasingly they report a lack or shorter availability of food stocks.



While the majority of households (82%) have food supplies at home, 18% of respondents do not have any food stocks at all at the time of the survey in February. This is similar to the June 2020 survey, when 16% of respondents had no food supplies in their household.

Of all respondents, 42% reported having more than a week's worth of food supplies in their household, which is a slight decrease from 49% in June 2020. The higher share in June 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 as in Antigua and Barbuda, with availability and size of household food stocks having slightly decreased compared to June 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 stocked than higher income households.

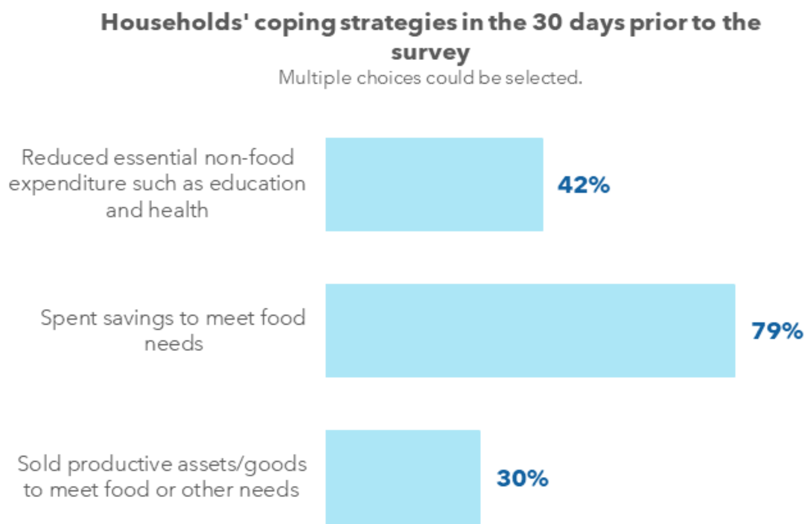
"Everyday is a struggle to provide basic needs." - Male, 31 years

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

"We're trying to cut back. There's less available in stores, or not finding usual products and substituting for less." - Female, 64 years

FOODSECURITY | 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.



"Loss of additional income from side jobs has affected saving ability and home repairs ." - Female, 32 years

"Don't have money to buy device for my kids them to do their school work." - Female, 37 years

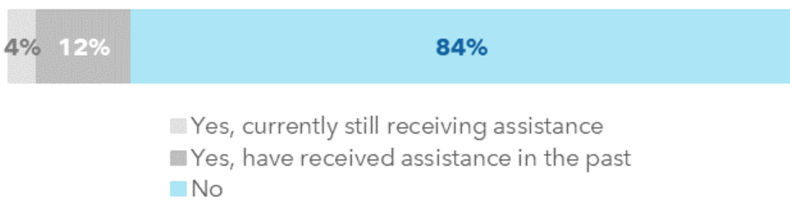
In the February survey round, respondent were asked if in the 30 days prior to the survey they reduced essential non-food expenditures, spent savings or sold productive assets to meet their food needs. Of all respondents, 79% resorted to spending savings, and 42% reduced essential non-food expenditures, such as on education and health. Furthermore, 30% of respondents sold productive assets to meet food or other needs, potentially undermining their long-term income generation.

Most of these trends are in line with the overall region where households with perceived incomes below or well below average more frequently engaged in any of the three coping strategies. However, respondents in Antigua and Barbuda were more likely to spend savings in order to meet their food needs (79%) when compared to the Caribbean region (67%).

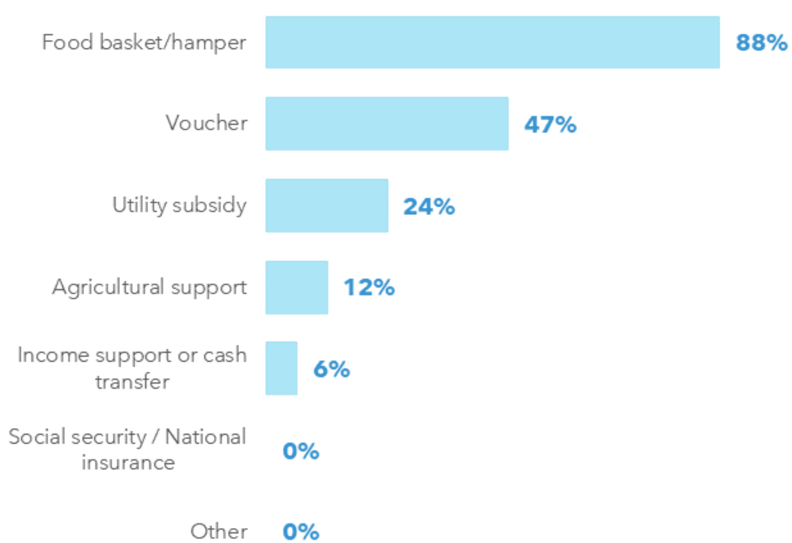
WIDER IMPACTS | COVID-19 assistance

▶ Food basket/hamper and vouchers were the most commonly received forms of government assistance.

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



Respondents who received assistance from the government, have received the following...
Multiple choices could be selected.



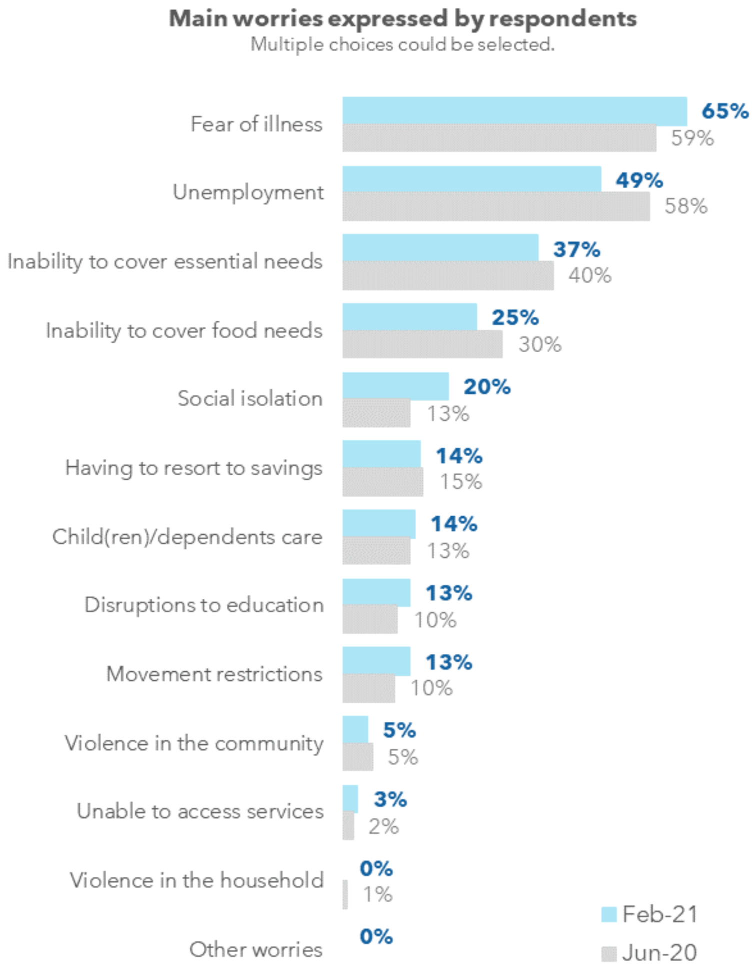
Out of 16% of respondents reported to have received government assistance in response to COVID-19 pandemic, every fourth still received assistance when the survey was implemented.

The 16% of respondents who reported to have received assistance claim to be supported mainly through food basket/hamper (88%) and vouchers (47%). One in four persons received a utility subsidy. See page 4 for more information on government social protection responses in Antigua and Barbuda.

The percentage of people receiving assistance in Antigua and Barbuda is similar to the broader Caribbean region, with15% of respondents receiving some form of government assistance in response to COVID-19. Three percent were still receiving assistance when the survey was implemented. However, in the region only a third of those getting support received food baskets/hampers and a quarter received vouchers. Income support/cash transfers and social security were common forms of support in other countries compared to Antigua and Barbuda.

WIDER IMPACTS | Main worries

► Fear of illness and unemployment continue to be the main worries expressed by respondents.



The fear of illness continues to be a growing concern among respondents in Antigua and Barbuda. By February 2021, around two thirds of respondents cited fear of illness as their main worry which is consistent with a spike of the number of active COVID-19 cases starting from January 2021 (see page 4). In addition, half of the respondents are also concerned about unemployment and over a third worry about inability to cover essential needs.

Trends in Antigua and Barbuda 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%).

"Childcare has been impacted by Covid-19. I would normally sign my child up for programs on breaks and holidays, now I have to take time off or use vacation days." - Female, 47 years

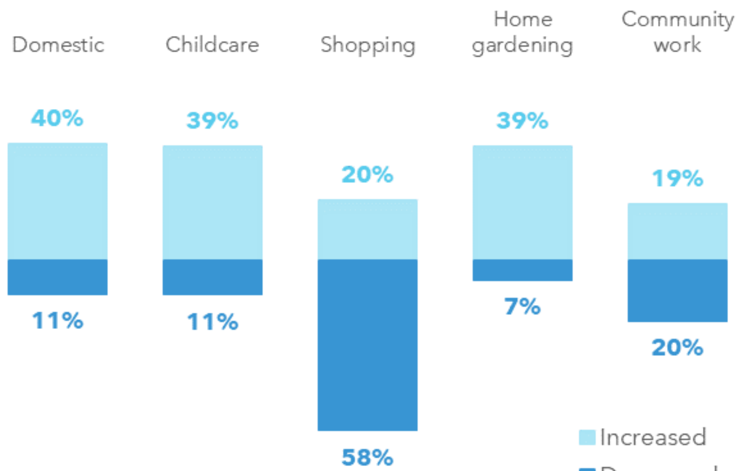
"Lack of social interaction and travelling occasionally bothers me but I do cope with other activities." - Male, 53 years

"Travel restrictions that prevent families from personal interaction. Thank God for the internet and its available resources." - Female, 60 years

WIDER IMPACTS | Unpaid care and work

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

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



The COVID-19 restrictions and worries significantly reduced shopping activity for over half of respondents (58%). On the other hand, the pandemic has increased the amount of unpaid work at home, placing an additional burden on some household members. Two out of five households reported to have increased time devoted to domestic work (40%), childcare (39%) and home gardening (39%).

Most of the trends in Antigua and Barbuda are similar to those in the Caribbean where 44% of respondents reported an increase in time spent on domestic work, 39% reported an increase in childcare, and 57% reported a decrease in shopping activity. However, an increase in home gardening appears to be more significant in Antigua and Barbuda than in the region where only 27% of respondents reported an increase in time spent on this activity.

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

	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community work
Increased	40%	39%	20%	39%	19%
No change	47%	31%	22%	42%	41%
Decreased	11%	11%	58%	7%	20%
Not applicable	2%	18%	0%	12%	19%

"Social interaction is essential. Not being able to sit with friends for fear of infection is depressing." - Female, 44 years

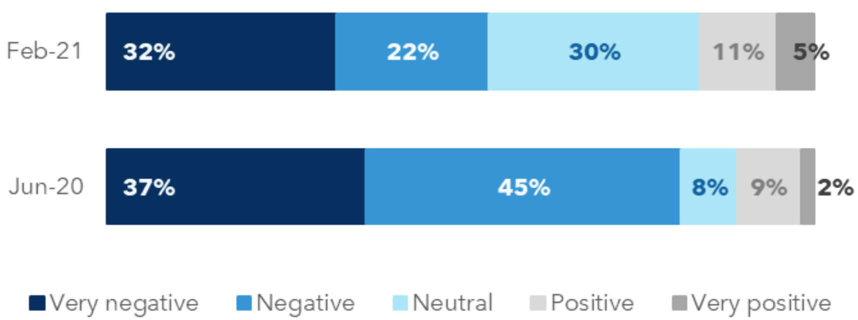
"I'm just fearful for my family and when my children are at home, I'm at work." - Female, 45 years

"Schools have to be closed and my children learning habits have changed." - Female, 35 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. Work, income and family are the most common themes. Concerns about illness and changing protocols are a source of anxiety among respondents as their livelihoods continue to be impacted. Those experiencing loss of income are feeling anxious about how to meet bills and payments. The inability to see and interact with friends and family continue to be a source of stress and anxiety among respondents. Many also expressed concerns of disruptions to their own or their children's education and extra-curricular activities. Sentiment analysis revealed that there were overall less negative but more polarizing comments compared to June 2020. Some respondents are starting to normalize technology for work, shopping, education, and to connect with family and friends.

Some sample responses:

Very negative (32%)

"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 (22%)

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

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

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

Neutral (30%)

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

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

Positive (11%)

"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

CONCLUSION

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

Market access and price perceptions slightly improved since June 2020, but a quarter of respondents is still unable to access markets primarily due to the lack of financial means and increasing food prices. Households are having to curb their shopping habits due to lack of finances and movement restrictions and most increasingly resort to buying cheaper or less preferred foods.

Food insecurity is a growing concern, with a worrying number of respondents reducing the amount they eat. A large share of the population appears to meet their food needs only at the expense of productive assets or investments in health and education, which risks undermining their long-term income generation capacity and human capital.

A third of respondents expects severe disruptions to their livelihoods and expresses very negative attitudes in the context of the pandemic. Worries about unemployment, contracting the illness, or the inability to meet food or other essential needs are widespread.

Containment measures have also caused domestic and childcare activities to increase. While data limitations for this round prevent an analysis of the share of activities between sexes, 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 despite governments' efforts to mitigate the crisis by introducing policies and programmes to support incomes and food security, disruptions to livelihoods and incomes remain widespread. On most metrics of well being, available data suggests a similar situation in Antigua and Barbuda compared to the average in the Caribbean. In the region, lowest-income households are particularly struggling to make a living and meet their basic needs.

In the face of these impacts, it is crucial that continued investments are made into social protection, vulnerability analysis and sector specific research (e.g., impact on small-scale fisheries, casual labourers, tourism and retail trade) to provide ongoing and tailored support to the most vulnerable 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.

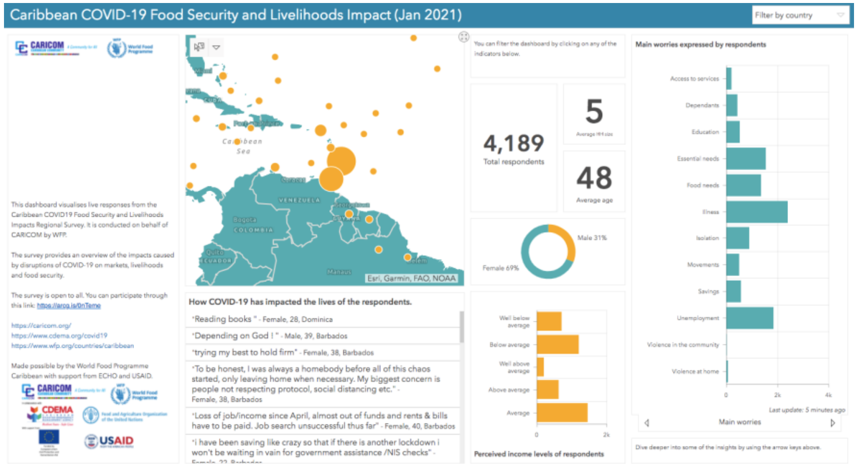
WFP expresses warm appreciation to Flow and Digicel for distributing the survey link by SMS in Barbados, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago. Special thanks to the International Telecommunication Union for their support in facilitating the SMS distribution.

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

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

Survey form

Dashboard for Smartphones



Dashboard for PCs/Laptops

CALCULATION OF FOOD INSECURITY ESTIMATES

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was used for calculating food insecurity estimates presented in this report (see page 17).

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 17).

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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