Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Summary Report | June 2022

Two years on since the beginning of the pandemic, COVID-19 continues to have cascading and evolving impacts on how people in the Caribbean earn a living and meet their critical needs. CARICOM launched the Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey to gather data on people's livelihoods, access to markets and food security and provide snapshots of these impacts over time. This report analyses data from the fourth round of data collection, which took place from 25 January to 8 February 2022. It compares findings with survey round conducted in June 2020. Implemented by the World Food Programme, the short online survey was circulated in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines via social media, media outlets, SMS and emails.

February 2022

506 Respondents | **75** Female | **25%** Male | **40** Average age | **5** Average household size

February 2021*

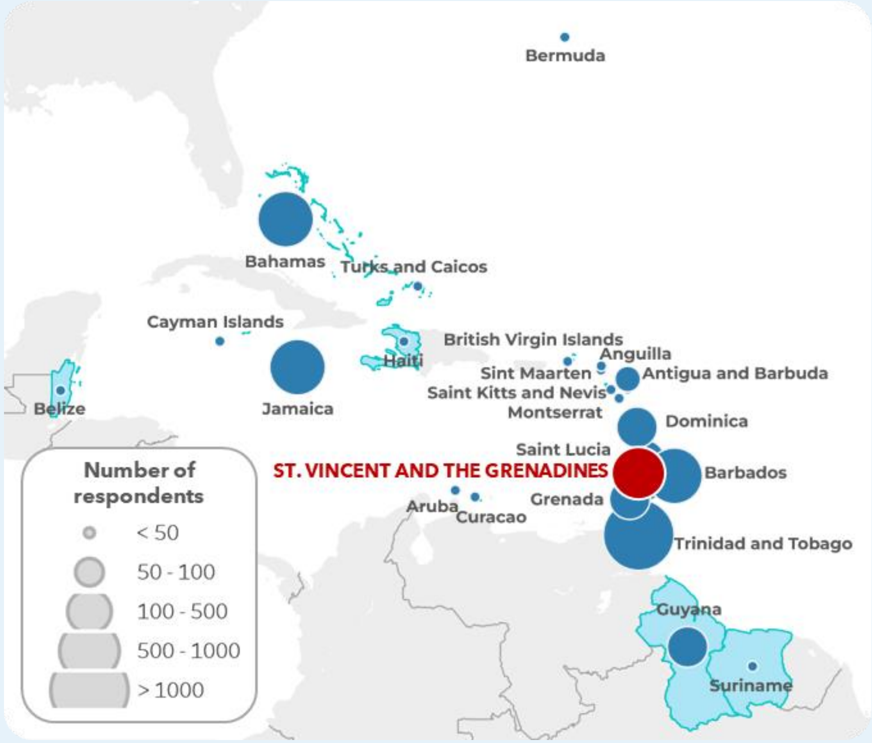
*Comparison with the February 2021 survey round is not included because of the low number of responses from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

June 2020

114 Respondents | **78** Female | **22%** Male | **38** Average age | **5** Average household size

April 2020*

*Comparison with the February 2021 survey round is not included because of the low number of responses from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



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 VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES Summary | June 2022

- Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continue to be impacted by the health crisis and the resulting economic downturn.
- The pandemic continues to impact people's livelihoods. Over half of respondents faced a disruption to their livelihoods in the two weeks prior to the survey, above the levels recorded in June 2020. The reasons for disruptions have also shifted. The predominant reason is the unaffordability of livelihood inputs and less so transport limitations, while fear of illness remains a major factor.
- Over two-thirds of respondents predict at least moderate impacts to their livelihoods in the future. Those with lower incomes, reliant on informal income sources or assistance, and living in rural areas have the most pessimistic outlooks.
- Negative impacts on incomes remain widespread, with 55% of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries since the start of the pandemic, which is a slightly lower share compared to June 2020 (59%).
- Respondents mainly worry about illness (48%), followed by unemployment (42%) and meeting their food needs (37%), with lowest income respondents most worried about food needs and unemployment.
- Food prices are increasing, with 91% of respondents reporting higher than usual food prices, which is a significant increase from 68% of respondents in June 2020.
- Nearly half of respondents reported challenges accessing markets in the week prior to the survey, primarily due to a lack of financial means. Respondents are increasingly buying cheaper and less preferred foods and purchasing smaller quantities than usual.
- According to the survey responses the prevalence rates of food insecurity showed over half of respondents (57%) are moderately or severely food insecure, with the lowest income household being the most food insecure.
- Fewer people are going a whole day without eating and skipping meals compared to June 2020. Lowest income households were most likely to resort to negative coping strategies, and almost half of the lowest income respondents reported to have no food stocks at the time of the survey (47%). Respondents are resorting to more severe actions, with 76% drawing on savings to meet immediate food and other needs, half reducing expenditures on education and health, and 45% selling productive assets.
- Differences in impacts are most pronounced when comparing income groups. Households describing their incomes as below and well below average show the poorest results across all key metrics of well-being.
- One tenth of respondents have received some form of government support. However, almost none were receiving assistance at the time of the survey. Food basket/hampers were the most common type of support received.
- Women appear disproportionally impacted by an increase in time spent on domestic work and childcare due to the pandemic.
- Food insecurity risks deepening in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, given continued economic impacts of COVID-19, supply chain disruptions, rising inflation, and global reverberations of the Ukraine crisis. It is critical to invest in strengthening of national and regional food systems, social protection and emergency preparedness to promote recovery and protect people from future shocks.
- While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data is not necessarily representative, and the use of an online questionnaire limits inputs from people without internet connectivity.

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES Summary | June 2022

All respondents

Comparisons with the February 2021 and April 2020 survey rounds are not included because of the low number of responses from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

		Feb-22	Jun-20
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	55%	45%
	Reduction/loss of income	55%	59%
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	48%	47%
MARKETS	Lack of market access	46%	22%
	Change in shopping behaviour	87%	77%
	Increase in food prices	91%	68%
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	40%	46%
	Lack of food stock	28%	19%

Respondents with perceived well below average income

Comparisons with the February 2021 and June 2020 survey rounds are not included because of the low number of responses from respondents with well below average income in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Information on income level was not collected in April 2020.

		Feb-22
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	75%
	Reduction/loss of income	76%
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	76%
MARKETS	Lack of market access	67%
	Change in shopping behaviour	95%
	Increase in food prices	97%
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	63%
	Lack of food stock	47%

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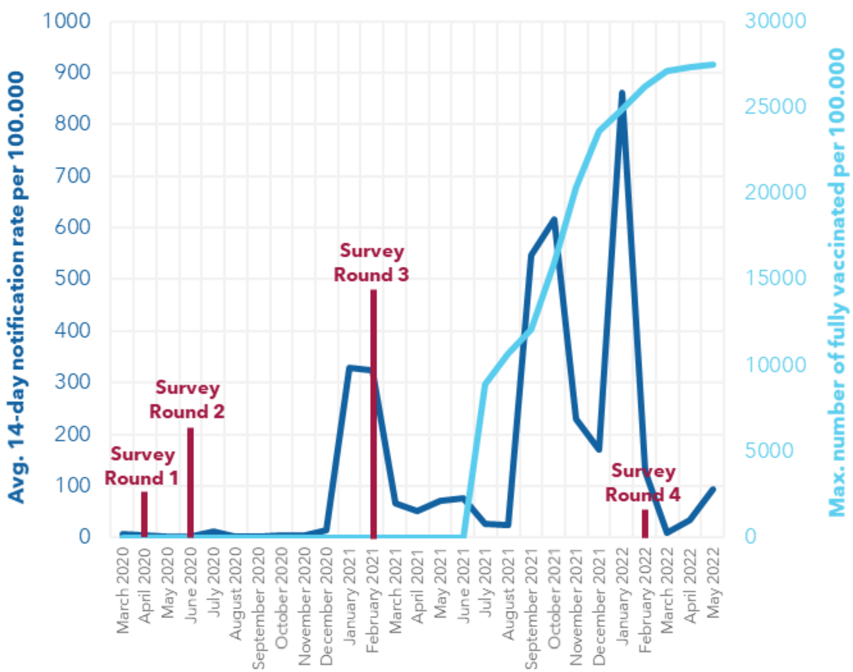
COVID-19 | Situation and response

COVID-19 cases and government responses

Since the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in early March 2020, the country experienced four waves of infections. The most recent wave resulted in an unprecedented increase in the number of new cases in late January 2022, shortly before the launch of this survey. Unlike most countries in the region, there has been no strict lockdown or curfew in the country. However, protocols were established restricting social gatherings and international travel. Schools across the country were closed in March 2020 with a gradual reopening from October 2021.

New COVID-19 cases and vaccination in St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

*Average rate of COVID-19 cases and maximum number of fully vaccinated people per month in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Number of fully vaccinated includes those who received all doses prescribed by the initial vaccination protocol.



Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the Our World in Data, 31.5.2022

The country's COVID-19 National Vaccination Deployment Programme began in early March 2021, but as of the end of April 2022, only 28% of the country's population were fully vaccinated, which is far below the worldwide coverage of 60%.

Broader developments and government responses

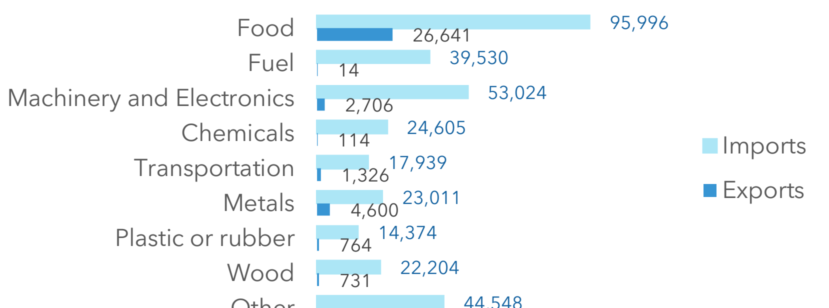
Like many Caribbean islands, the economy of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was affected by the global decline in tourism as a result of the pandemic. To mitigate the negative impact on households and businesses, the government announced a Recovery and Stimulus Package in late March 2020. The package included financial support to hospitality workers through the implementation of a Displacement Supplementary Income. Financial support was also provided to affected persons from other sectors through an Unemployment Benefit through the National Insurance Services. Informal sector workers, bus and taxi operators, and cultural and creative professionals were also granted income support. The government also introduced an altered regime for the granting of sick leave for central government employees with flu-like symptoms, respiratory problems or COVID-19 infections.

The socioeconomic impact from the COVID-19 pandemic was compounded by the eruption of the La Soufrière volcano on the island of Saint Vincent on 9 April 2021, which resulted in the displacement of more than 23,000 people, as well as long-lasting impacts for the country's economy and people's livelihoods. Among other measures to support people, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines partnered with the World Food Programme to implement the Soufriere Relief Grant, which provided cash transfers to over 3,000 displaced vulnerable households, reaching over 19,000 people. The ash fall from the eruption also took a heavy toll on the agricultural sector, leading the government to declare a food security emergency.

Emerging issues | Implications of Ukraine crisis

The crisis in Ukraine is having wide implications on international supply chains, inflationary pressure and economic growth (see Annex). Most affected will be countries which have high import dependency on the Russian Federation and Ukraine on key commodities, but spill over effects are expected also elsewhere. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, like most economies of the Caribbean, is a net importer of commodities. In 2019, overall imports were valued at US$ 335.2 million and were nearly nine times the value of exports, which amounted to US$ 38.2 million. Food is the single most important traded commodity, both as a share of overall imports (29% in US$ value) and exports (70%). Wheat or meslin flour alone make up 23% of total export value, followed by beer and waters (12%) and animal feed (11%). Petroleum makes up 11% of total imports.

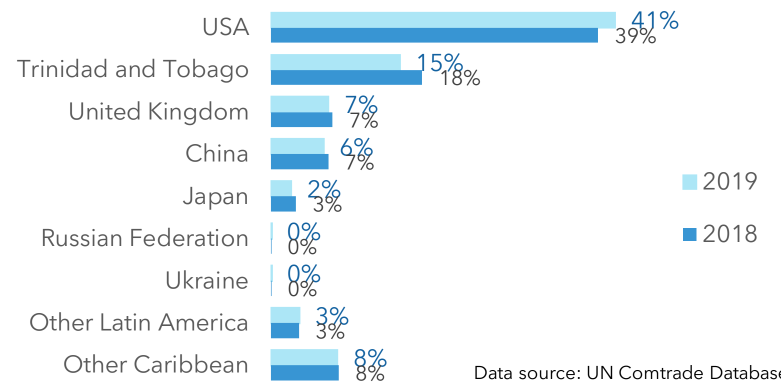
Share of commodity trade in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in million US$ (2019), by product group



Data source: UN Comtrade Database

The United States is the main import partner of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It contributes to nearly 41% of total imports and the largest share of imports of cereals (85%) and meat products (66%). However, Caribbean economies represent the main market for the placement of exports (82% in US$ value) and are also an important source of imports (23%). Almost all of its fertilizer is imported from the Dominican Republic (82%) while most of its fuel needs are covered from Trinidad and Tobago (56%) or the United States (39%). Imports from the Russian Federation or Ukraine for any of these commodities were either non-existent or insignificant in 2019.

Top 5 import partners based on US$ value (all commodities)



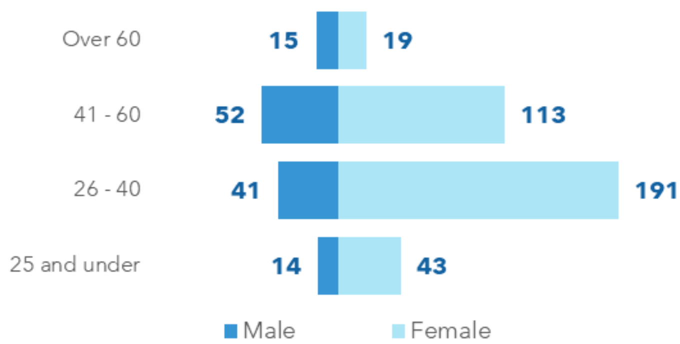
Data source: UN Comtrade Database

The negative balance of trade of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines makes it still vulnerable to price fluctuations and supply chain shocks in international markets, which may translate to inflationary pressure domestically. While annual point to point inflation was low or negative during the first year of the pandemic, it began a gradual upwards trajectory from mid-2021 onwards, to stabilize at 3.6% in February 2022. Main contributors to the upward trends were the Consumer Price Index (CPI) sub-categories of: ''Transport' (8.1%), 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages' (5.7%), 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' (4.3%) and 'Health' (3.0%). It is expected that international commodity prices will continue to rise while oil prices will stabilize, but at an elevated level.

So far, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) has not introduced changes to its monetary policy with the discount interest rate remaining at 2%, ever since it was lowered from 6.5 in April 2020. With the new Appropriations Bill, the government has increased spending plans for the 2022 fiscal year. Approved in January, the new budget estimate amounts to 1.33 billion EC dollars, up by 9.6% compared to the 2021 fiscal year. It intends to invest further into social protection, reconstruction and incentivize future-oriented recovery, while refraining from new tax measures.

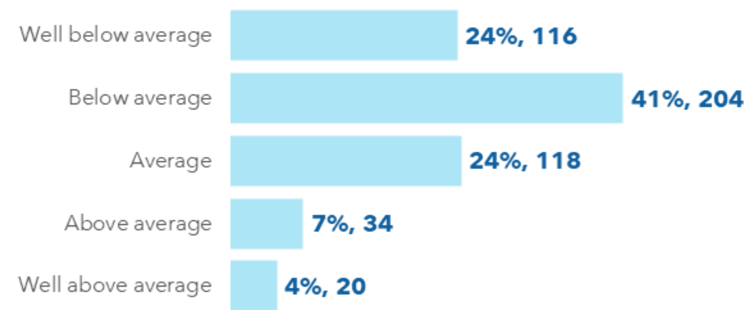
RESPONDENTS | Demographics

Age and sex

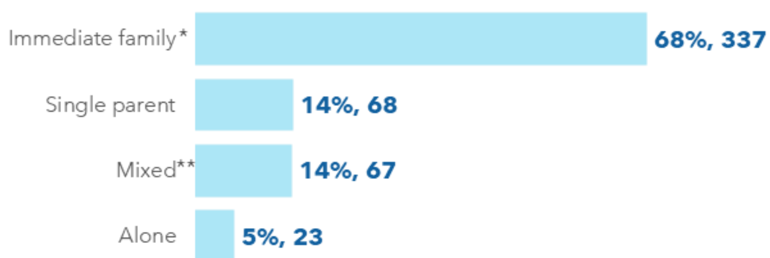


Perceived income levels

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

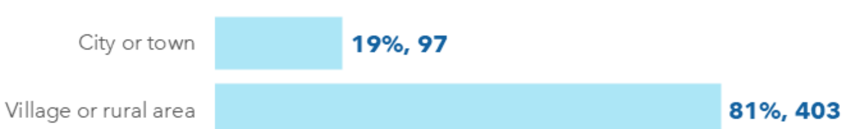


Household composition



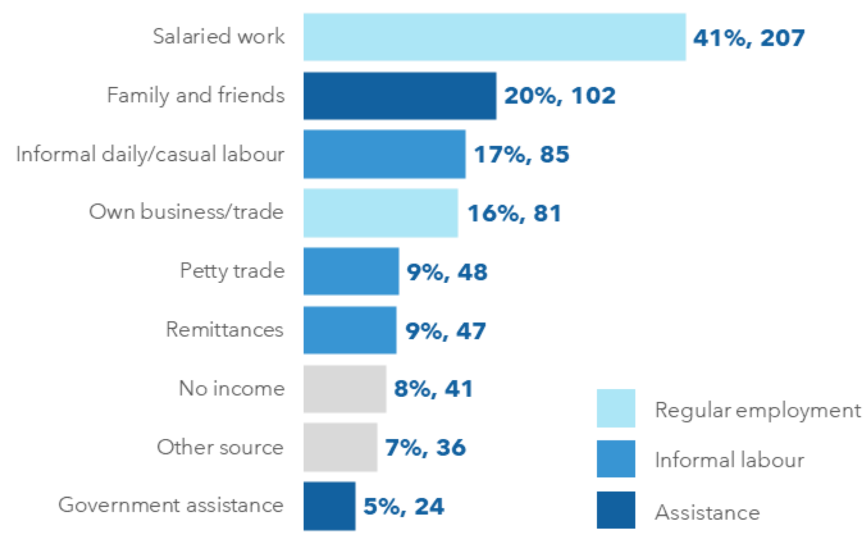
* Immediate family includes partner, children and grandparents.
** Mixed households are composed of immediate family members, other relatives as well as non-family members.

Urban/rural location



Main income sources

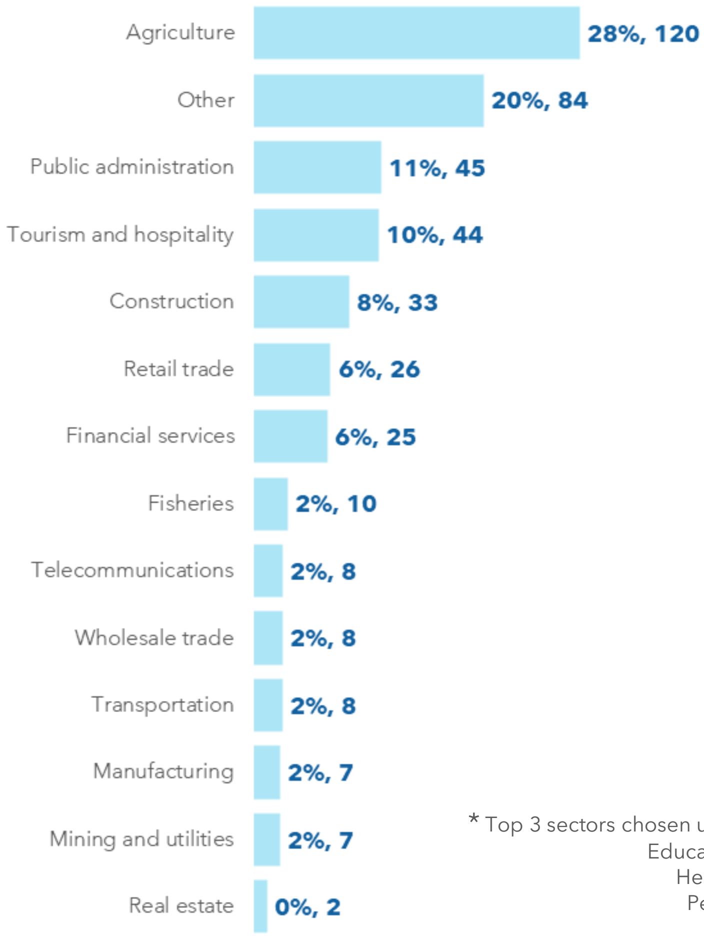
Respondents were asked to indicate the main income source(s) for their household. Multiple choices could be selected.



RESPONDENTS | Demographics

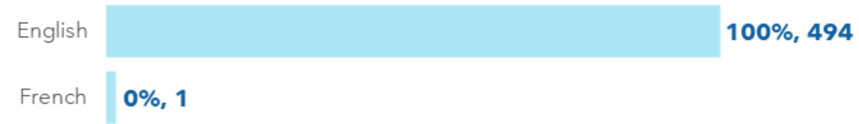
Main income sector

Respondents were asked to indicate the sector that represents their household's main source of income. The percentages were calculated for the respondents that indicated having an income.



* Top 3 sectors chosen under "Other":
Education, teaching
Health, medicine
Pension, retired

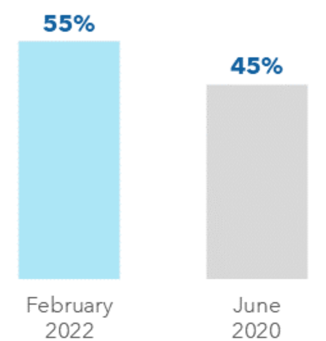
Language



LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

▶ Impacts to livelihoods remain widespread, with over half of respondents 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 (55%), the ability to pursue their livelihood remained compromised in the two weeks prior to the survey. This proportion has increased, compared to the early stages of pandemic, when disruptions were experienced by 45% of respondents. The disruption to livelihoods seems slightly more widespread compared to the regional average (50%).

When considering the different characteristics of people responding to the survey (such as age, sex, perceived income level or main sources of income) the biggest differences are linked to people's level and source of income. Among respondents who described their income as well below average, 75% reported livelihood disruptions, compared to 39% of those with average income levels.

"Had to move to find work" - Female, 46

"Take jobs well below my qualifications" - Male, 28

"Help from overseas has stopped because of covid see" - Female, 52

"High debt due to covid 19 protocols can't do my small business as usual..." - Female, 40

"Due to covid 19 I was unable to continue selling food by the roadside that use to help me out a lot and then the volcanic eruption made things worse. Now I'm just sitting at home unemployed and can't provide for my family . I wish I'm can get some help to restart my food business." - Female, 36

"Loss of job of persons in the household due to covid19" - Female, 27"Reduce salary hence cut back on food and other to pay mortgage and bills" - Male, 46

"Working in the travel industry my income has been reduce because of the pandemic" - Female, 40

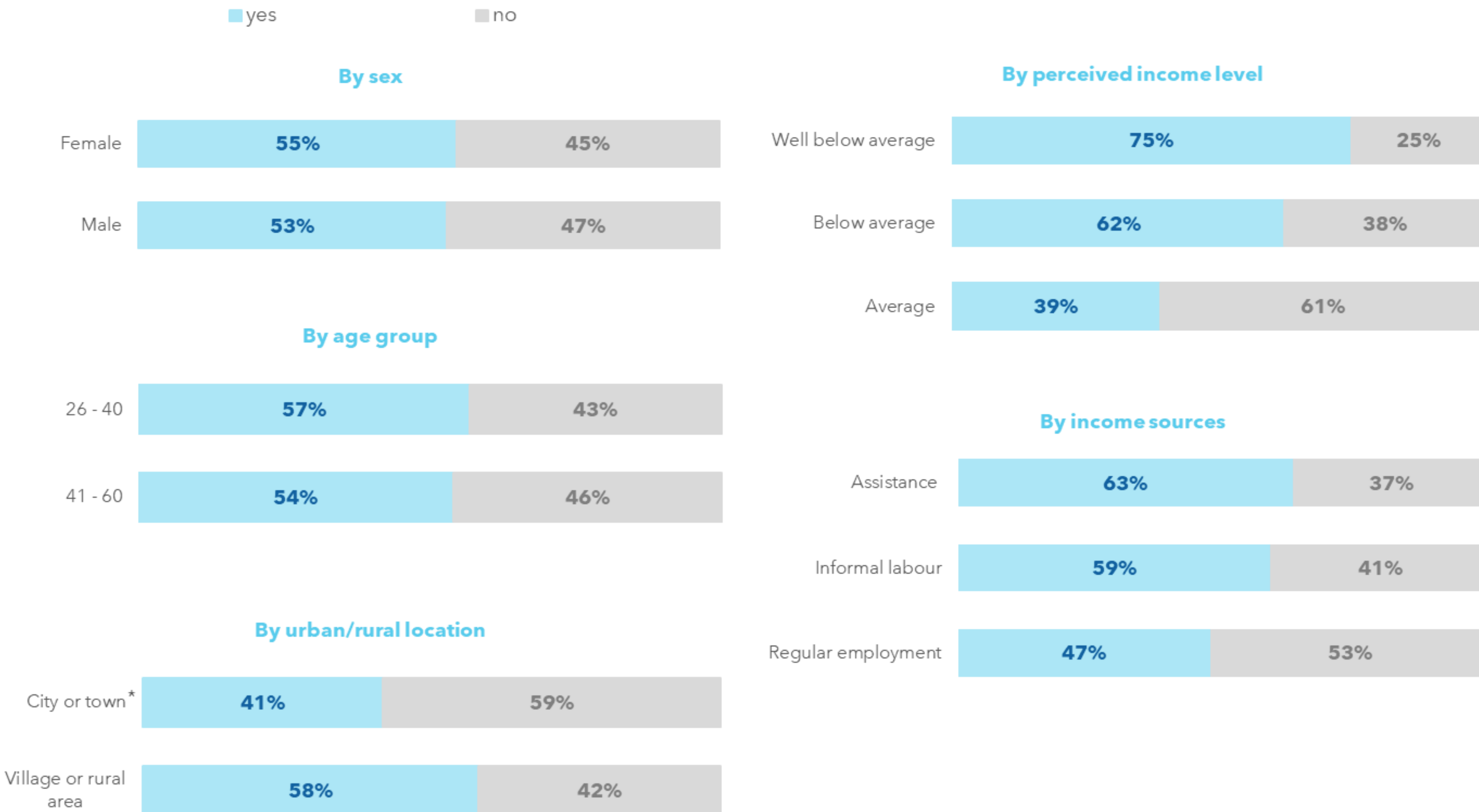
"Shift system at work and less pay" - Male, 67

"Am no longer employed, jobs is very hard to get. The virus is spreading so far" - Female, 26

"I was laid off my job, I had bills to pay, rent to pay. I had no idea where I should turn to" - Female, 26

LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

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



* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

▶ The unaffordability of livelihood inputs became the main factor behind livelihood disruptions, affecting mainly lowest-income households.

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

	Feb-22	Jun-20
Livelihoods inputs are too expensive	40%	22%
Concerned about leaving the house due to outbreak	38%	36%
Movement restrictions	15%	14%
Adult members of the household are unwell	14%	0%
Increased demand for goods/services	12%	6%
Reduced demand for goods/services	11%	14%
Transport limitations	10%	24%
Other	7%	16%
Livelihoods inputs are unavailable	7%	8%
No market to sell products	7%	8%

The main driver behind livelihood disruptions in the two weeks prior to the February 2022 survey was the unaffordability of or lack of access to livelihood inputs, cited by 40% of respondents. This factor has grown steadily in importance since the early days of the pandemic and is linked to wider trends related to supply chain disruptions and price rises in the Caribbean. It has also become the main disruption factor for households in the region (39%).

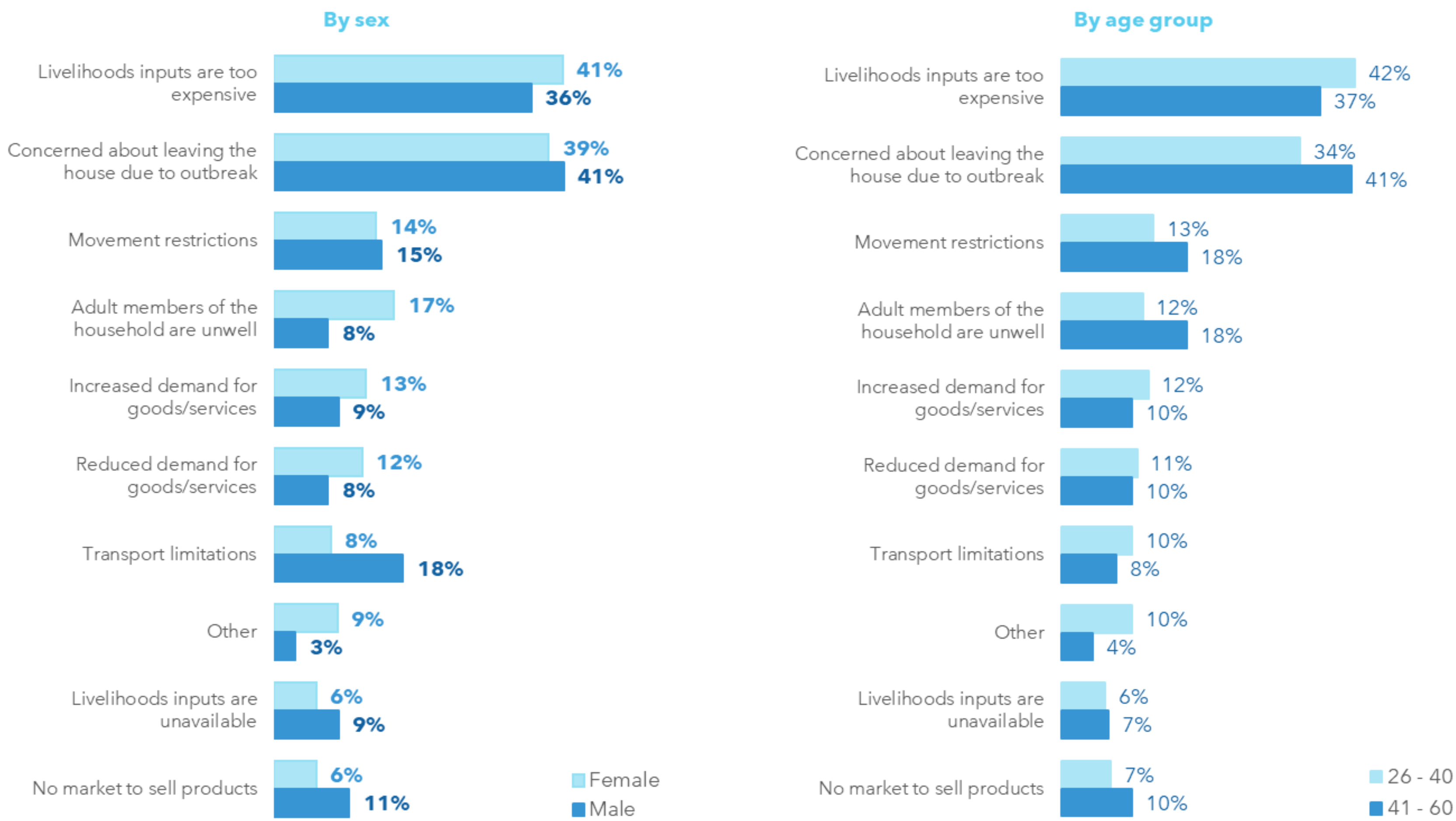
Most impacted by this constraint are households with well below average income (50% of those facing disruptions) and those relying primarily on assistance (51%) or engaged in informal/casual sources of income (47%). Female respondents appear slightly more sensitive to the unaffordability of livelihood inputs (41%) compared to their male counterparts (36%).

Concern about leaving the house due to the outbreak was an important contributor to livelihood disruptions. Compared to compared to June 2020, this reason was cited by a similar proportion of respondents (38%), and remaining at a similar level (36%). They are also the most dominant factor for livelihood disruptions among households with average incomes (57%). Older respondents were also more sensitive about leaving the house due to the outbreak compared to younger respondents, in line with regional trends. Among men, transport limitations were the third most important reason for livelihood disruptions (18%), and over twice the rate of female respondents (8%).

Overall, transport limitations have declined in importance as a disruptive factor. However, adult members of the household being unwell has notably increased as a reason, likely due to the spike of COVID-19 cases at the time of the survey as a result of the omicron variant.

LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

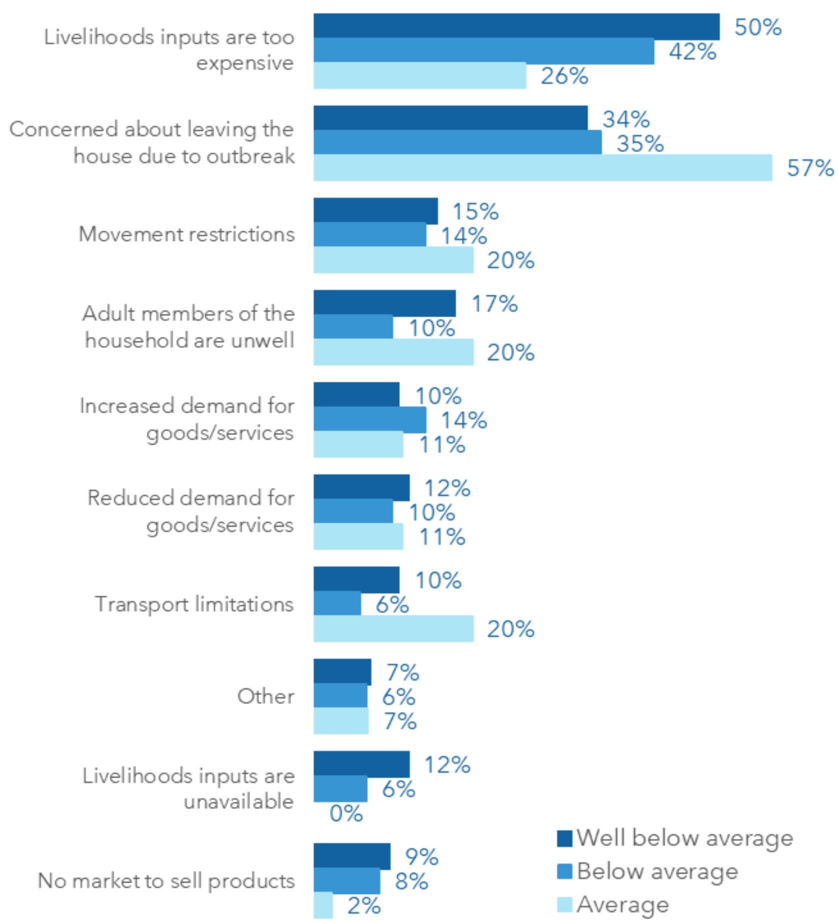
For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were...
Multiple choices could be selected.



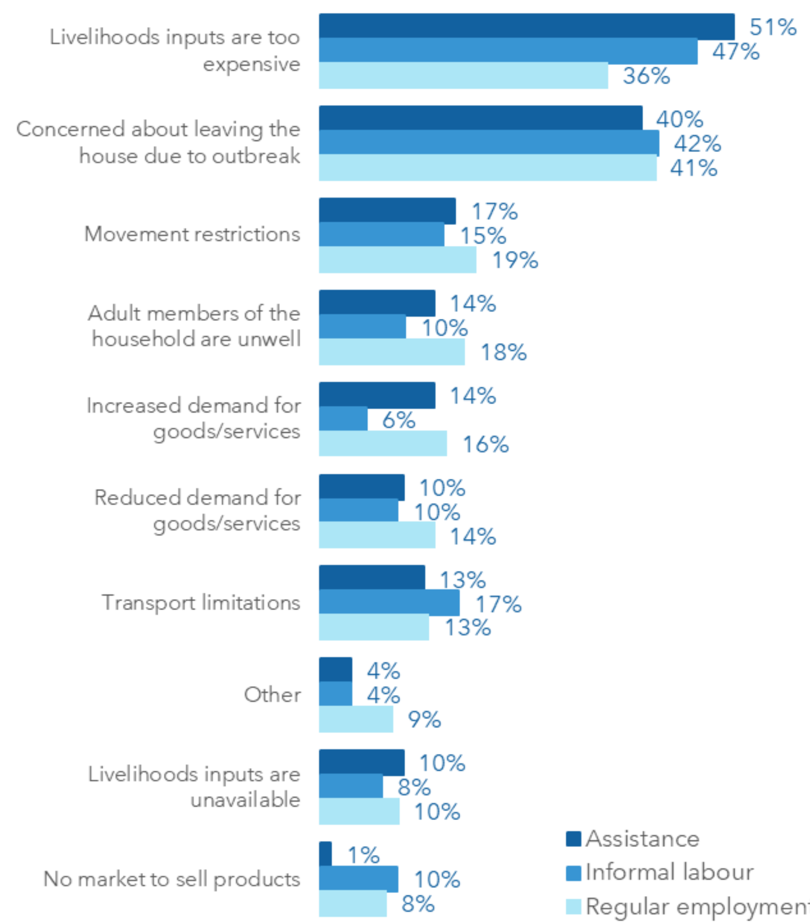
LIVELIHOODS | Reasons for livelihood disruptions

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

By perceived income level

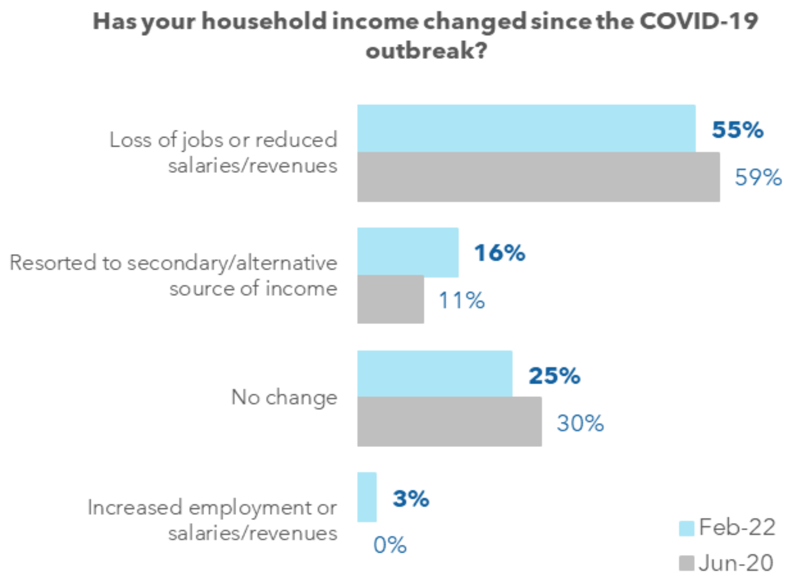


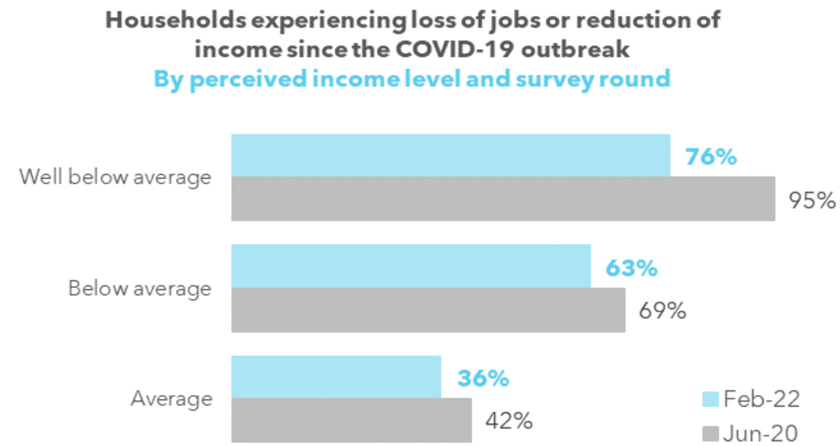
By main income source



LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income

▶ The majority of respondents have faced job loss or income reductions in their households.





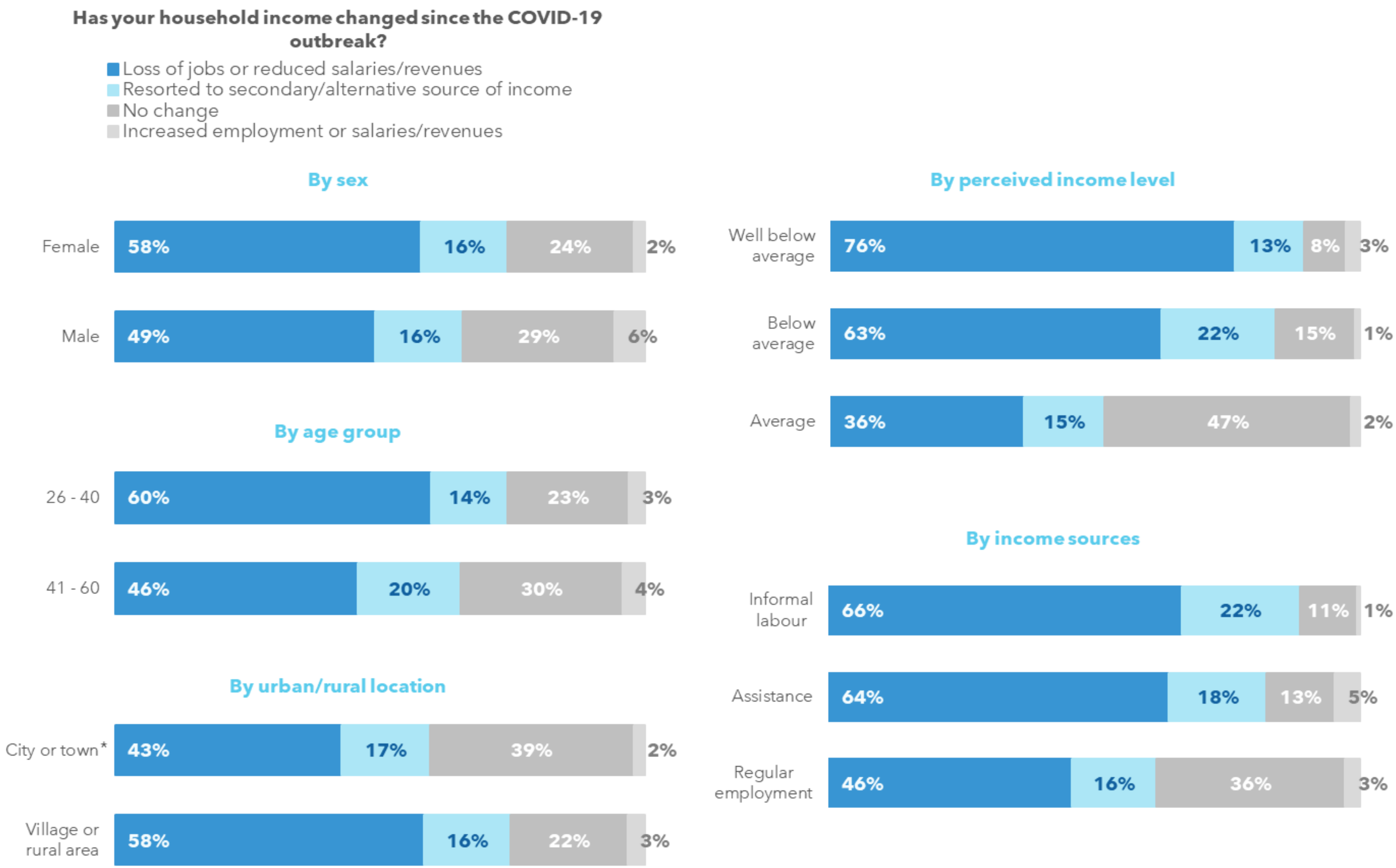
Impacts to income continue to be widespread, with 55% of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries since the COVID-19 outbreak. With the proportion of households with loss of income or reduced salaries only marginally declining since June 2020, the overall situation suggests the continuation of economic hardship with many people facing decreased income, similar to trends in the region (57%).

The most marked differences in responses was found across perceived income levels. Job loss or reduced income was reported by the vast majority of respondents describing their household income as well below average (76%), compared to those with average (36%) income levels.

Important differences were also observed across sources of income, between age groups and household location. Job and income loss was most widespread and consistently high among the respondents with casual labour income sources (66%), compared to those with regular employment (46%). Almost two thirds of those under 40 years of age were affected (60%) compared to those between 41 and 60 years (46%).

Female respondents and those living in rural areas were also more sensitive about job/and income loss (both 58%) compared to male respondents (49%) and those residing in urban areas/towns (43%).

LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income

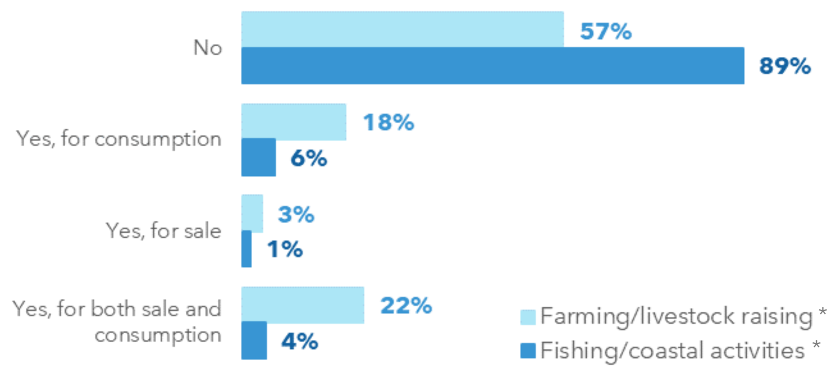


* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

▶ One in four respondents reported being engaged in farming, gardening or livestock raising.

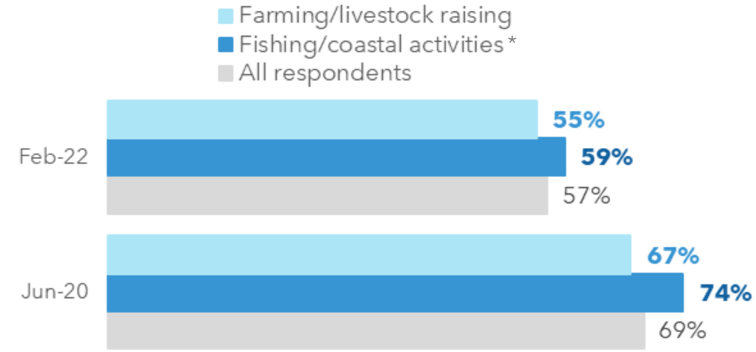
Is your households engaged in farming/fishing?



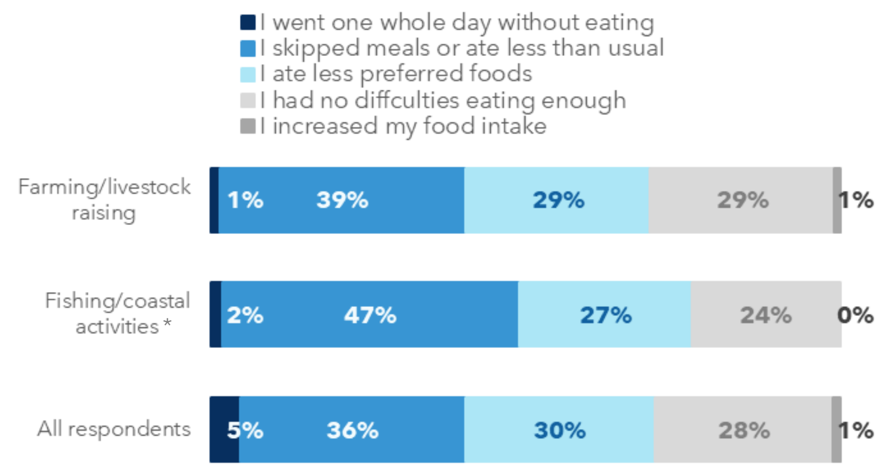
Over 40% of respondents reported being engaged in farming, gardening or livestock raising and 11% in fisheries/coastal activities. In both cases these activities are primarily for household consumption, or for complementing existing incomes, with vegetable production being the main farming activity and aquaculture or inland fisheries the main fishing activity. One third of respondents undertaking farming (34%) and fishing (31%) derive their household income primarily from salaries and about one fifth of both groups also derive their income from casual labour.

Those engaged in fishing/coastal activities appear to be facing more challenges related to income and food consumption, however this finding should be treated with caution due to the low number of respondents engaged in fishing. During both surveys those engaged in fishing were more likely to report loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues and skipped meals or eaten less than usual in the two weeks prior to the survey compared to other respondents.

Loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues among respondents engaged in farming/fishing



Food situation among respondents engaged in farming/fishing



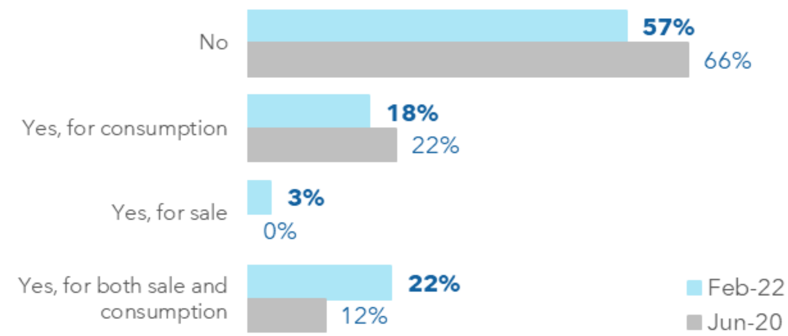
*Low response numbers in this category may affect results.

LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

For those engaging in agriculture/ livestock raising, the activities are...
Multiple choices could be selected.

Farming/livestock raising	Feb-22	Jun-20
Vegetables	73%	82%
Banana/plantains	53%	50%
Small ruminants	33%	26%
Corn	24%	24%
Poultry	20%	24%
Other	13%	3%
Swine	11%	3%
Rice	10%	8%
Large ruminants	5%	3%
Pulses	3%	0%

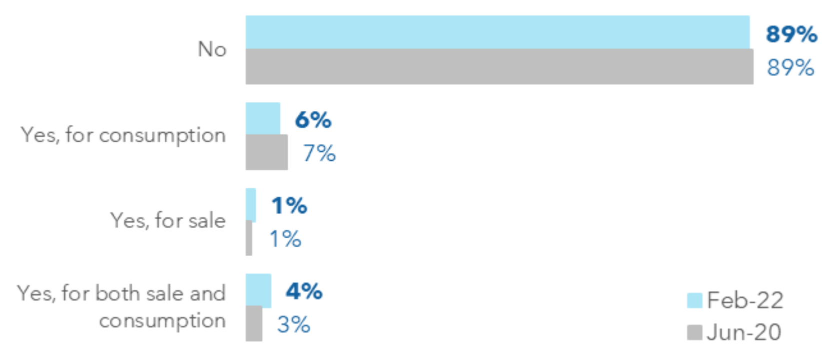
Is your households engaged in farming/livestock raising?



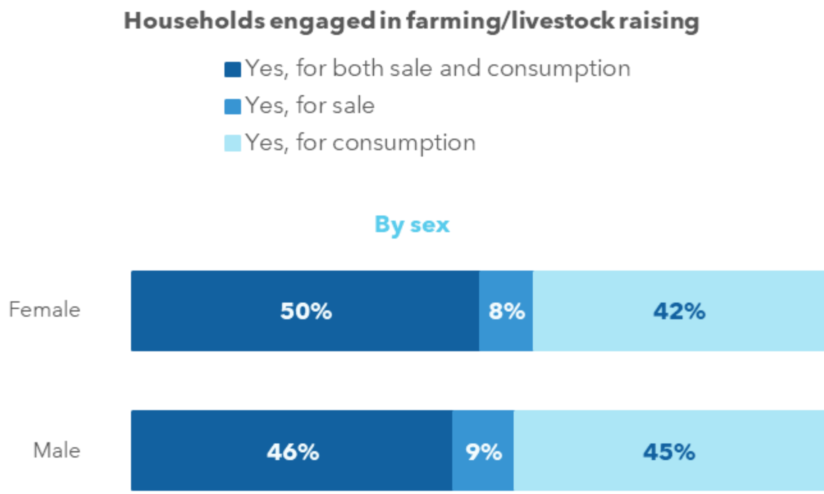
For those engaging in fishing/coastal activities, the activities are...
Multiple choices could be selected.

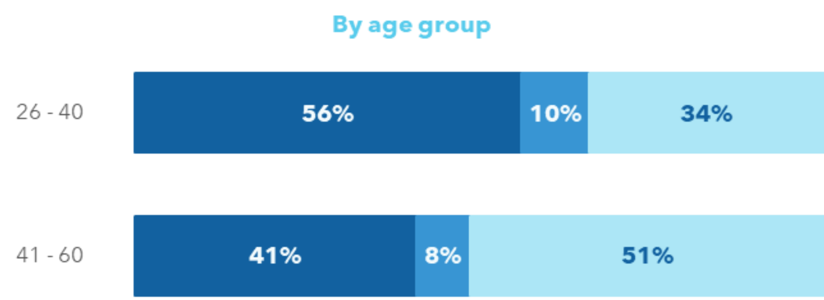
Fishing/coastal activities	Feb-22	Jun-20
Small scale aquaculture	33%	25%
Inland fisheries	27%	42%
Marine/coastal fisheries	11%	33%
Fishing gear production	11%	0%
Other	7%	8%
Processing of fish/fisheries products	5%	0%
Mangrove/beach activities	4%	8%

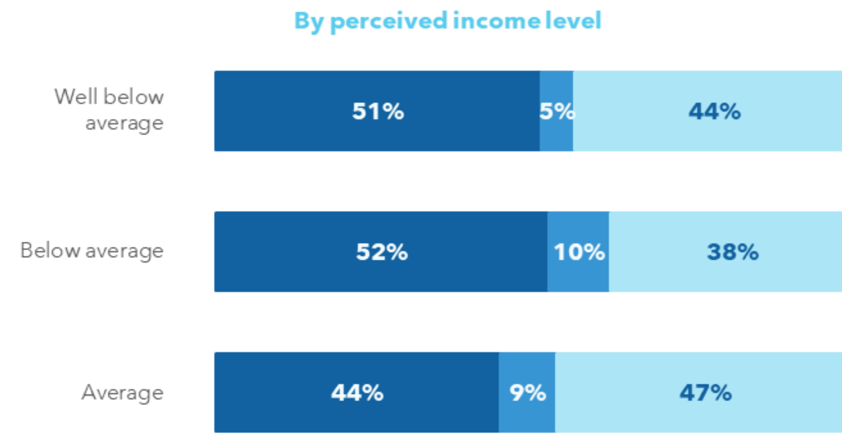
Is your households engaged in fishing/coastal activities?



LIVELIHOODS | Farming







"Cannot sell my produce because I'm self employed" - Female, 35

"less sales of agriculture produce" - Female, 46

"Loss of crops and damage to home because of volcano eruption" - Female, 41

"Things are very slow plus volcano lost of cross and now is dry weather so farming is down and less you have water on farm and I don't have water there" - Female, 32

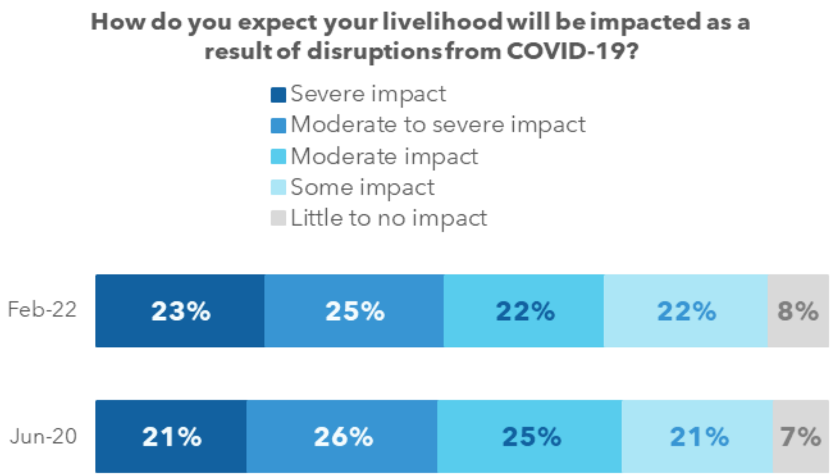
"Loss of assistant workers on the farm. Loss of sales and markets for vegetables." - Male, 60

"Business are very very slow and affected by the volcano the eruption of the volcano" - Male, 55

"I'm unemployed because my employer laid off workers because of COVID-19 to led to me doing odd jobs when they are available" - Female, 24

LIVELIHOODS | Future livelihood impacts

▶ Two out of three respondents anticipate at least a moderate impact on their livelihoods. Nearly half of lowest income households expect impacts to be severe.



"Less jobs opportunity" - Female, 20

"The uncertainty surrounding covid 19" - Male, 54

"I was laid off my job, I had bills to pay, rent to pay. I had no idea where I should turn to" - Female, 26

"I lost my job cause tourism industry was not functioning" - Male, 18

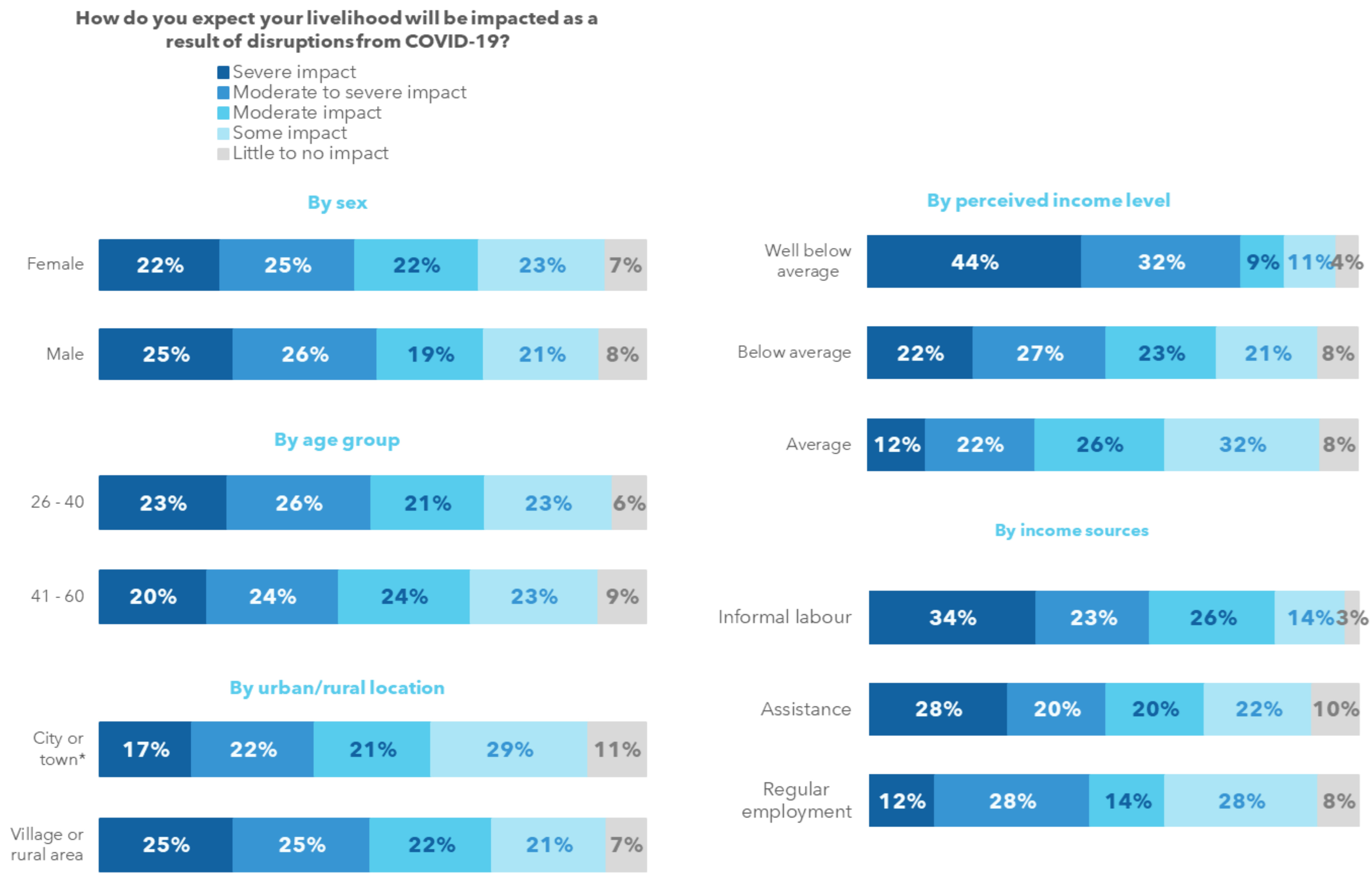
"The help I used to get from my brother is no longer available because he has lost his job due to the Covid." - Female, 37

Respondents continue to expect that the COVID-19 pandemic will negatively impact their livelihoods in the future. Looking ahead, 48% anticipate "moderate to severe" or "severe" impacts to their livelihoods, which is identical to the June 2020 survey round, but slightly higher compared to the regional average (44%). Only 8% expect little or no impact.

The perspective of respondents with different levels of income varied substantially. Those with the lowest incomes are the most worried about the future of their livelihoods, in line with findings at the regional level. Among respondents with income levels perceived as well below average, 44% expect their livelihoods to be severely impacted in the future, which is much higher than 12% of those with an average income level.

Households relying or unstable and more informal sources of income and assistance, as well as those living in rural areas were also noticeably more pessimistic in terms of future livelihood impacts.

LIVELIHOODS | Future livelihood impacts

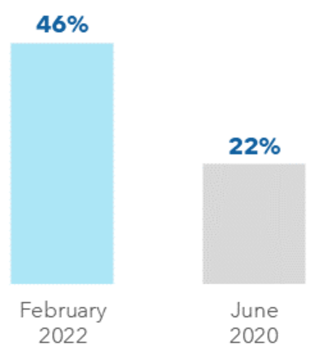


* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

MARKETS | Access

▶ Market access has worsened and is a challenge for nearly half of respondents.

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



"I use to sell fruit juice and punch at sporting activities mainly because of covid I don't sell much" - Female, 41

"Since the out break of Covid 19 in St Vincent source of income is not coming in like before so I'm way back behind with my rent and bills and because cost of living is so high we could barely buy food at the grocery store every day food and gas prices going up" - Female, 34

"Bills went sky high because of having to housed extra persons . getting back to normal is taking a lot longer than planned" - Female, 43

"I think biggest is buying food grocery prices are really high and work is slow bills getting paid is problem" - Female, 37

"Covid 19 has cause a scarcity in food items and an increase on food and other items also a restriction on travelling" - Male, 45

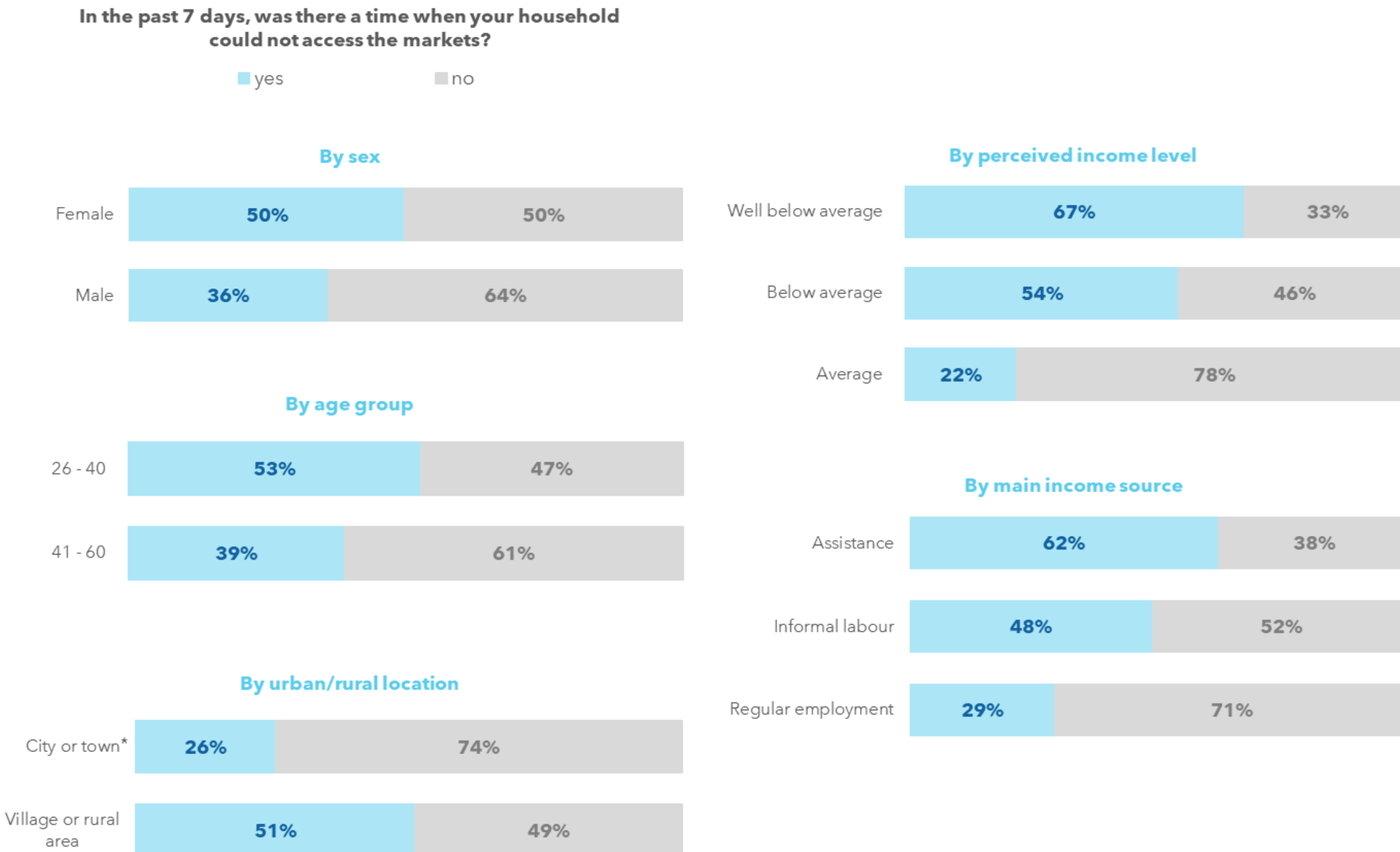
Almost two years after the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, people's access to markets is limited, and appears to have worsened compared to the early months of the pandemic. Nearly half of respondents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reported difficulties accessing markets in the week prior to the survey in February 2022, more than double the proportion in June 2020. Market access problems in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines appeared more widespread compared to the overall Caribbean, where a third of respondents reported difficulties in accessing markets. The market access situation in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines may also be due to the impact of the La Soufriere volcanic eruption in April 2021.

Similar to the overall region, people's challenges in accessing markets can be mainly attributed to a lack of financial means (see page 23 for a detailed summary of reasons). Accordingly, when comparing respondents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the level of market access varies significantly depending on respondents' perceived income level. Of those describing their household income as well below average, 67% reported challenges accessing markets, compared to 22% of those with a perceived average income.

Similarly, market access also varies based on households' main income sources. Of those relying primarily on social assistance, 62% reported market access constraints, followed by 48% of those relying on informal labour, and 29% of those earning most of their income from regular employment.

The degree of market access also varies by respondents' sex and age group. Access constraints were more widespread among female respondents (50%) than among male respondents (36%). In the 26- to 40-year-old age group, 53% faced market access challenges, compared to 39% in the 41- to 60-year-old age group.

MARKETS | Access



* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

▶ Lack of financial resources is the main barrier to accessing markets.

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.

	Feb-22	Jun-20
Lack of financial means*	87%	32%
Concerned about leaving the house	15%	20%
Adult members of the household were unwell	9%	0%
Other	6%	28%
Adult members of the household were self quarantining	5%	4%
Transport limitations	4%	24%
Movement restrictions	3%	4%
Markets/grocery stores closed	2%	0%
Security concerns	0%	4%

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

Lack of financial resources is by far the greatest barrier to people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in accessing markets, as indicated by 87% of respondents who experienced a time when they could not access markets in the week prior to the survey. This proportion has increased significantly from 32% in June 2020.

These findings are consistent with broader regional trends showing that the reasons for market access problems have changed since the early months of the pandemic, with lack of financial resources clearly emerging as the greatest barrier to market access. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, this trend over time likely also reflects the continued socioeconomic impact from the La Soufriere volcanic eruption in April 2021.

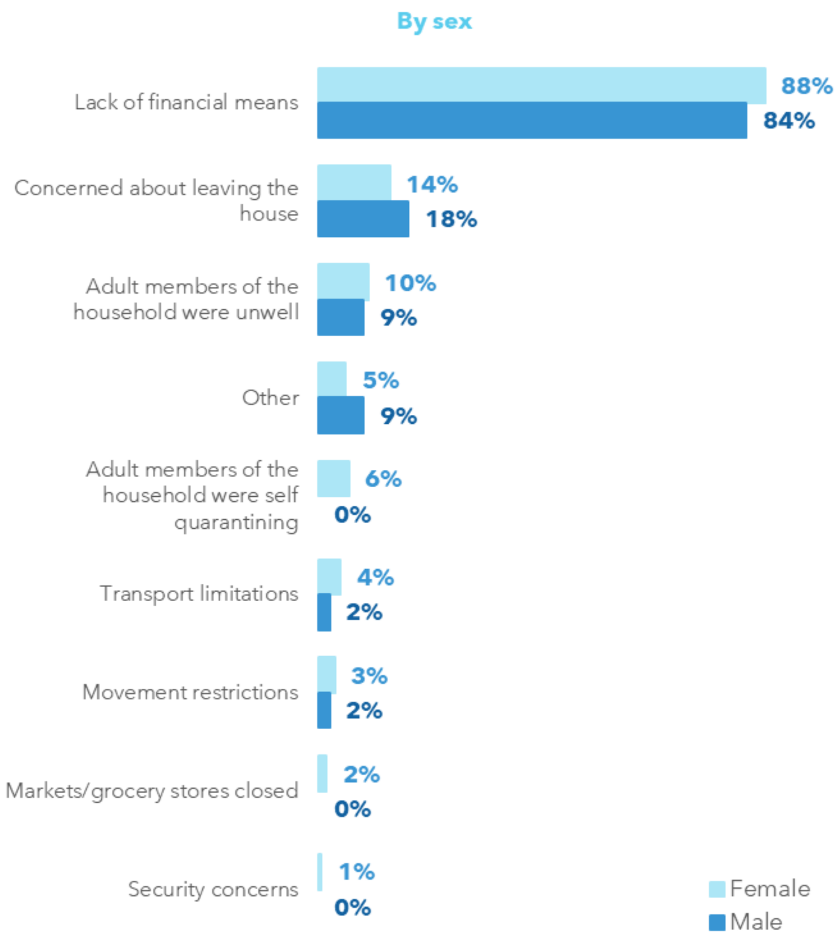
Apart from lack of financial resources, other reasons for limited market access are far less common. For example, concerns about leaving home were the second most common reason, cited by 15% of respondents who experienced market access problems

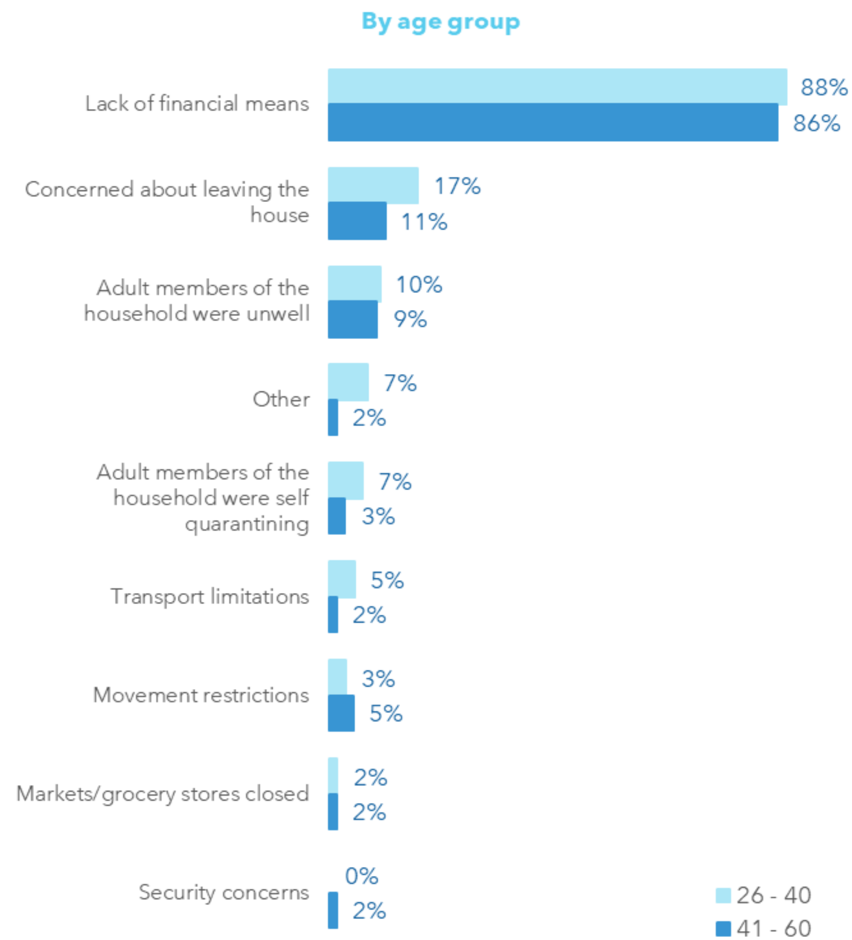
Respondents' reasons for limited market access in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines varied significantly based on respondents' perceived household income levels. Among respondents who faced market access constraints, lack of financial resources was cited by 94% of those describing their income as well below average, compared to 77% of those describing their income as average. Respondents with incomes perceived as average were more likely to cite transport limitations (15%) as a barrier to market access compared to respondents with incomes perceived as below or well below average.

Barriers to market access did not differ significantly between sexes and age groups (26-40 years and 41-60 years).

MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

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.

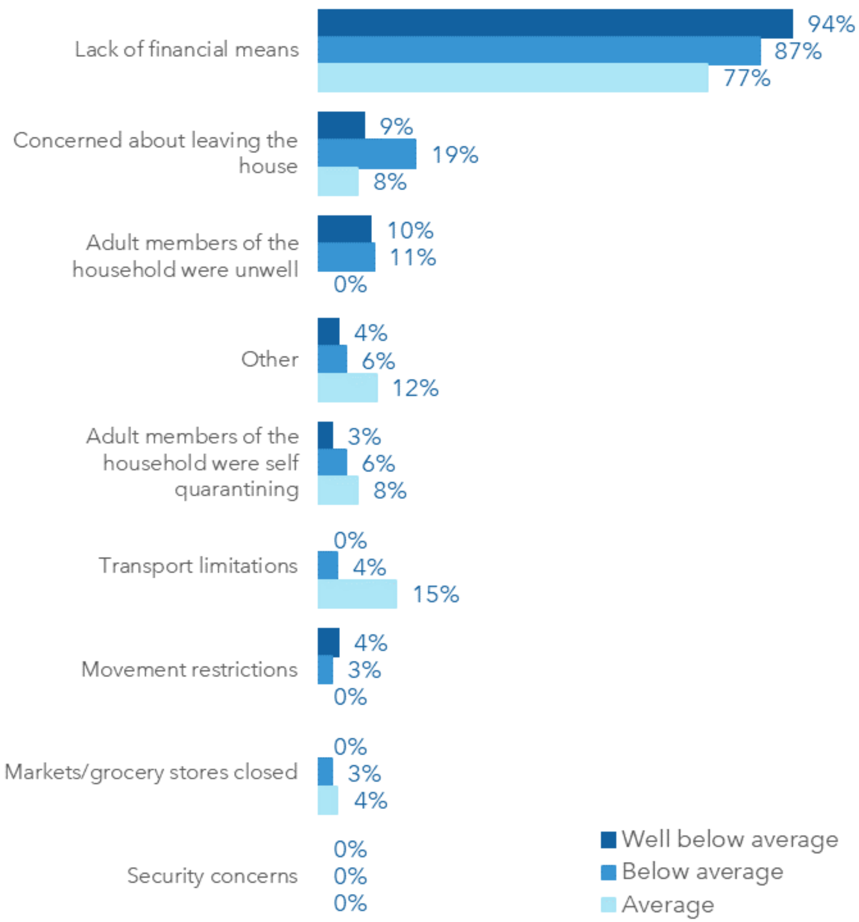




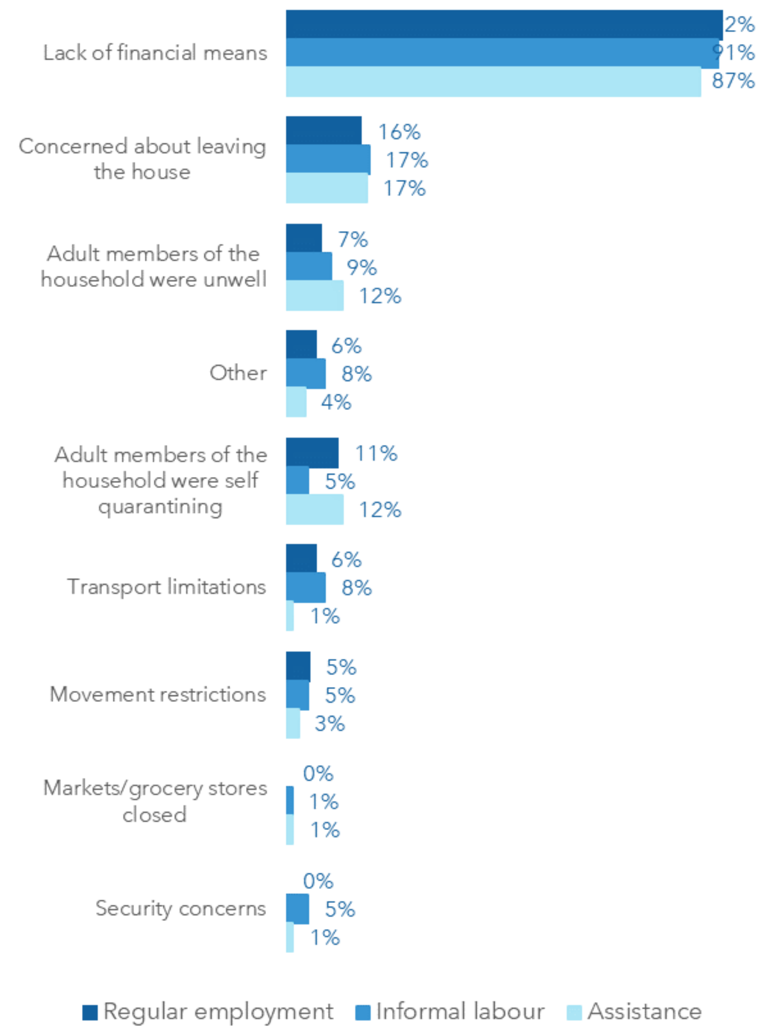
MARKETS | Reasons for limited market access

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.

By perceived income level



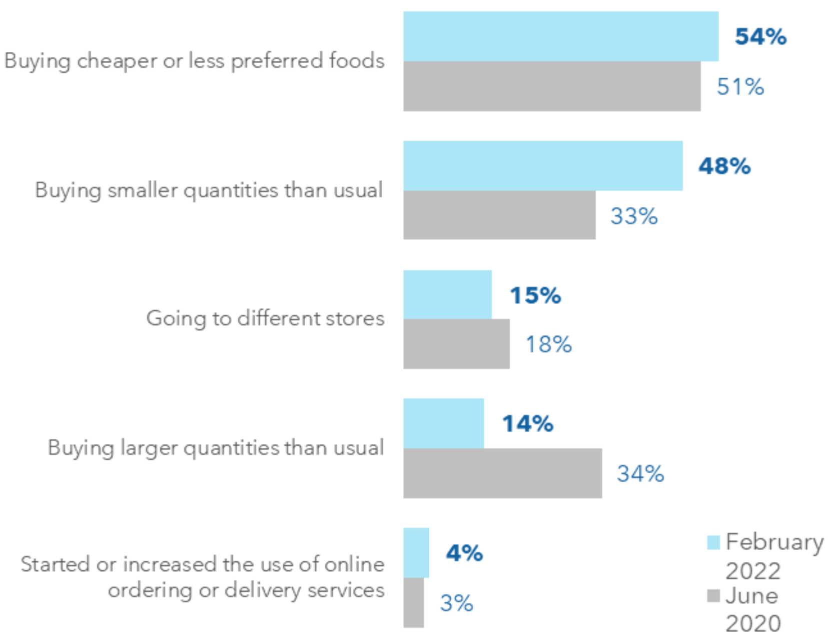
By main income source



MARKETS | Shopping behaviour

▶ Respondents continue to adapt by buying cheaper foods and smaller quantities than usual.

Respondents who reported a change in shopping behaviour are...
Multiple choices could be selected.



The pandemic continues to affect how people shop, and the ways in which people adjust their shopping behaviour are also changing. Overall, 87% of respondents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reported a change in their shopping behaviour compared to before the pandemic, which is an increase from 77% in June 2020. These findings are similar to the Caribbean as a whole where 88% indicated a change in how they shop. However, trends in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines likely also reflect the continued socioeconomic impact from the April 2021 volcanic eruption.

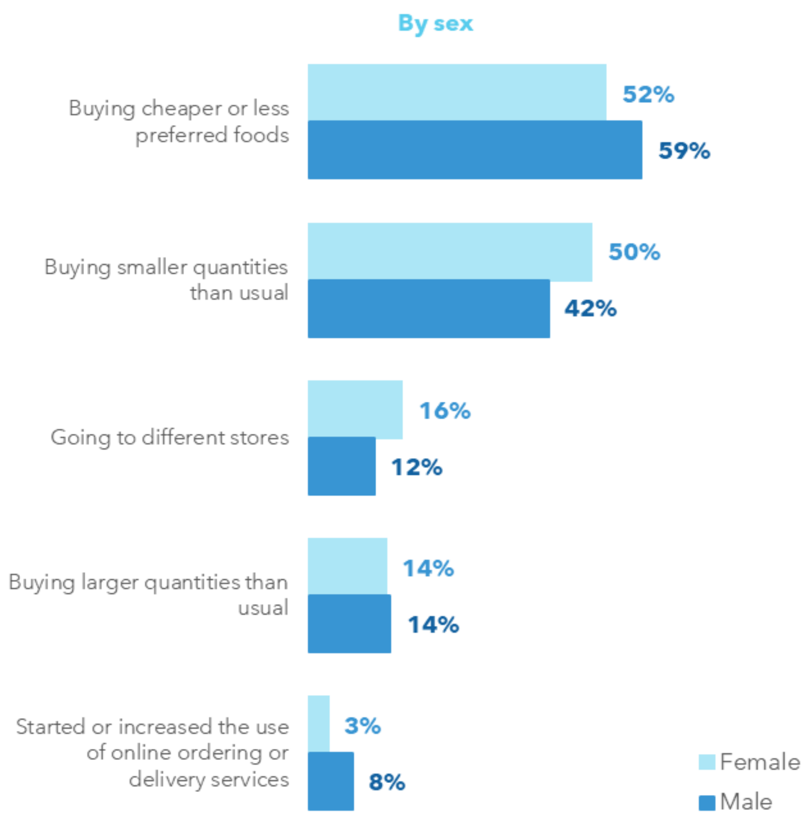
Respondents are primarily adapting by buying cheaper or less preferred goods and buying smaller quantities than usual. More than half of those who have changed their shopping behaviour are resorting to buying cheaper or less preferred food, which is consistent with the region as a whole. Similarly, 48% of those who have changed their shopping behaviour are buying smaller quantities than usual, an increase from 33% in June 2020.

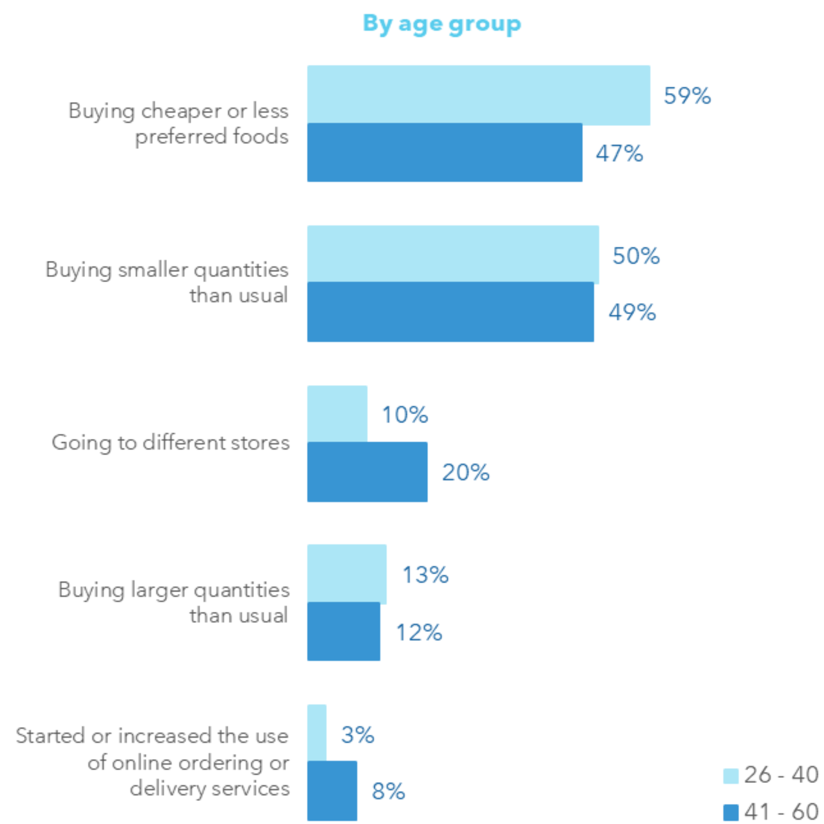
Of those respondents who have changed their shopping behaviour, fewer are adapting by buying larger quantities (14%) compared to June 2020 (34%). These trends are consistent with the region as a whole, where respondents' shopping behaviour has shifted from stockpiling in the early months of the pandemic to more compromises as the economic impact worsens for most households.

Changes in shopping behaviour appear closely linked to respondents' income levels. Among respondents who changed how they shop, those describing their household income as well below average were more likely to resort to buying cheaper or less preferred foods (63%) compared to those describing their income as average (45%). By contrast, households with a perceived average income and which changed their shopping behaviour did so more often by buying larger quantities than usual (19%) compared to households describing their income as well below average (5%).

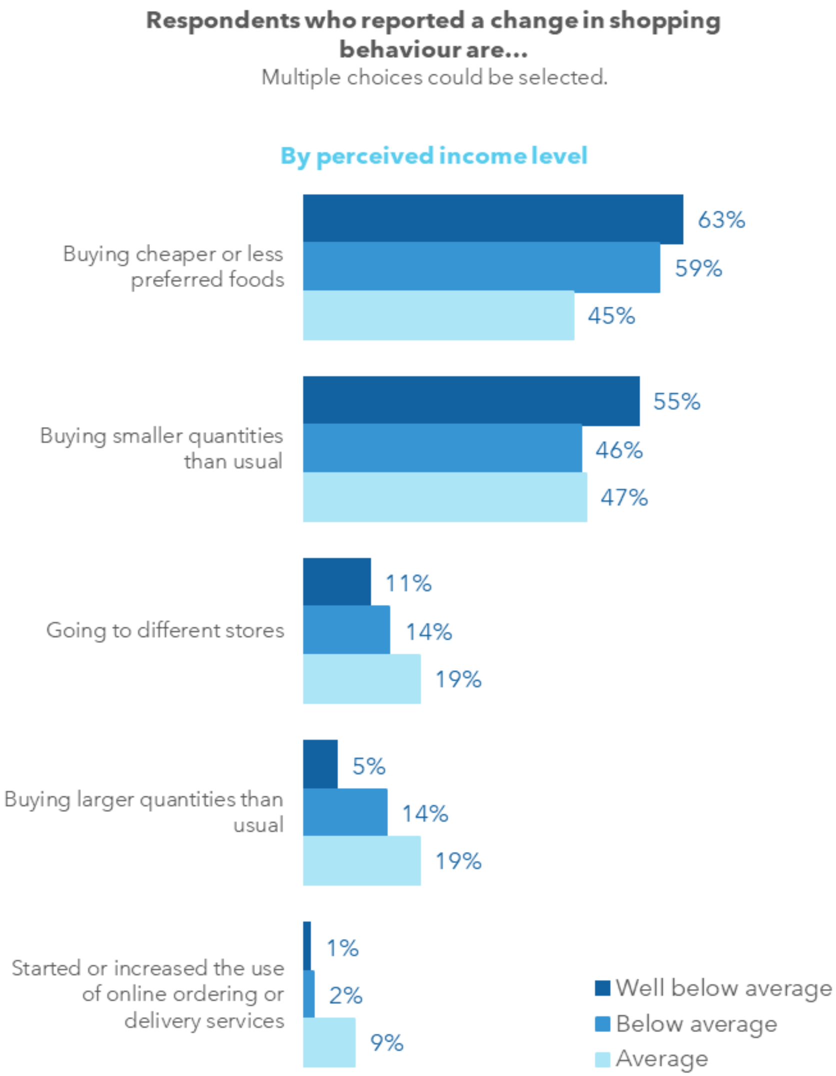
MARKETS | Shopping behaviour

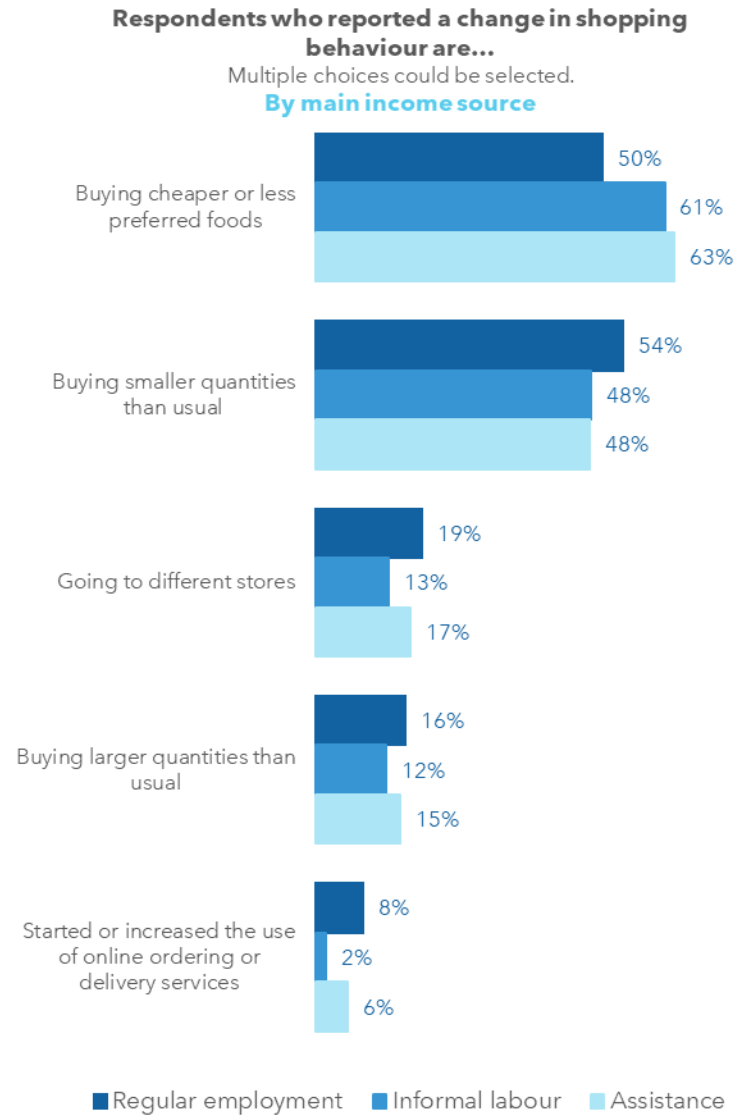
Respondents who reported a change in shopping behaviour are...
Multiple choices could be selected.





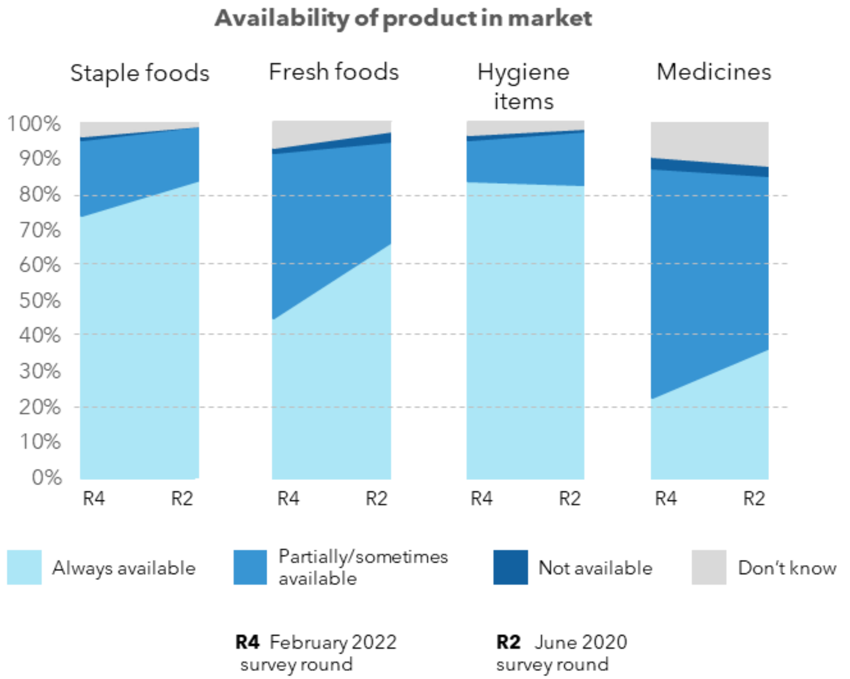
MARKETS | Shopping behaviour





MARKETS | Availability

▶ Fresh food and medicines are only partially and to a lesser extent than in June 2020.



"Covid 19 affects me so badly because I am a janitor by the school if covid 19 cases increase and school close down my salary decrease" - Female, 51

"Loss of crop due to volcano eruption" - Male, 60

"My business have been closed have to depend on help" - Female, 70

In the Caribbean, market disruptions have been a concern since the start of the pandemic, due to movement restrictions and global supply chain issues, as well as the region's dependence on imported goods.

In the region, the overall availability of key commodities gradually improved since the first survey in April 2020 at the start of the pandemic, despite a slight decline in overall availability in February 2022.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the level of availability in February 2022 varied by items. Despite a decline in reported availability of staple foods since June 2020, their availability remained high, with 74% of respondents reporting that they were always available. Hygiene items also remained widely available, as reported by 86% of respondents, consistent with June 2020 levels.

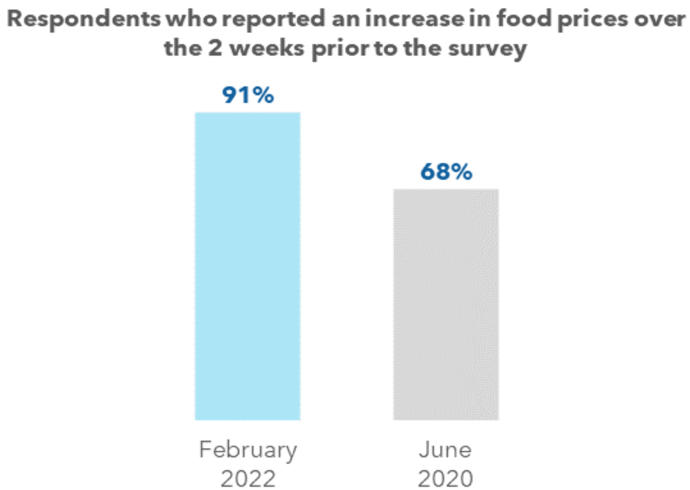
Approximately half of respondents (45%) indicated fresh foods always being available while fresh foods were only partially/sometimes available for 46% of respondents. This reflects a negative trend in the availability of fresh foods compared to June 2020. This negative trend may also be influenced by the impact of the La Soufriere volcanic eruption in April 2021 on the country's agricultural production.

The availability of medicines appears to have declined. The majority of respondents, 64%, reported that they were only partially/sometimes available, compared to 48% of respondents in June 2020.

Very few respondents (1-3%) indicated that essential goods were unavailable, which is consistent with previous survey rounds.

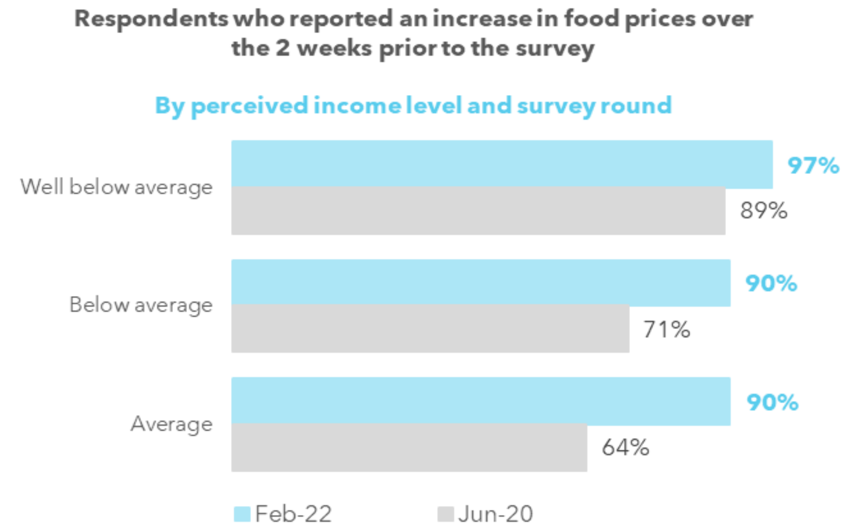
MARKETS | Food prices

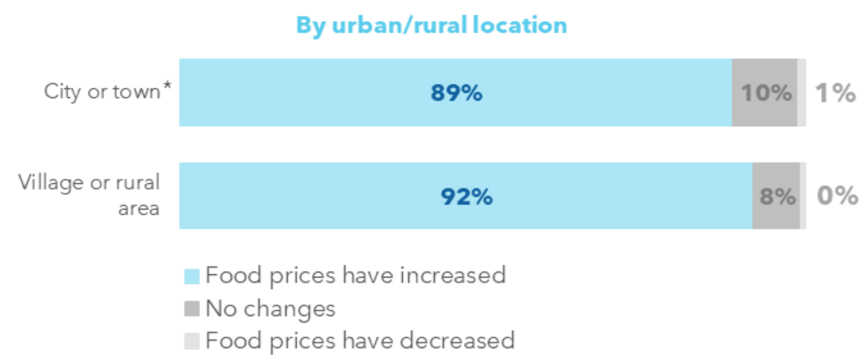
▶ Nearly all respondents identified an increase in food prices.



Food price rises are being felt and observed, with 91% of respondents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reporting an increase in the two weeks leading up to the survey in February 2022, compared to 68% of respondents in June 2020. This trend is in line with the region as a whole, where the share of respondents reporting food price rises increased from 78% in June 2020 to 93% in February 2022.

Food price changes are perceived similarly across income groups, but respondents with lower income levels noted prices increases more frequently than others. Among respondents who describe their household income as well below average, 97% reported an increase, compared to 90% of those describing their income as average. No significant differences in perceived food price increases were found between respondents from urban (89%) and rural areas (92%)

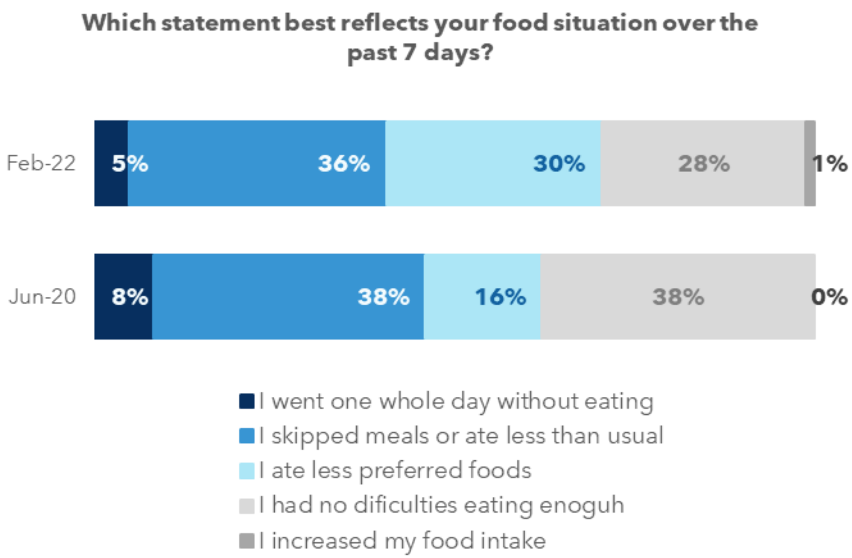




* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

▶ Food consumption is stable or slightly improved but Vincentians are still compromising their preferences to meet their food needs.



Respondents from St. Vincent and the Grenadines food consumption patterns continued deteriorating, like those of most other countries in the region, with 5% of respondents indicating to have gone an entire day without eating in the week prior to the survey, and 36% of them skipping meals or eating less than usual. These results are similar to the levels of food consumption of the country found in June 2020, with some small improvements in the proportion of people going a whole day without eating (8% in June 2020 and 5% in February 2022) and skipping meals or eating less than usual (36% in February 2022 compared to 38% in June 2020) at the expense of a deterioration in the proportion of people eating less preferred foods (16% in June 2020 and 30% in February 2022).

The number of people reporting no difficulties eating enough food also decreased from 38% in June 2020 to 28% in February 2022, indicating that while mere access to food might be stable or improved people are still compromising or adopting coping strategies to meet their food needs.

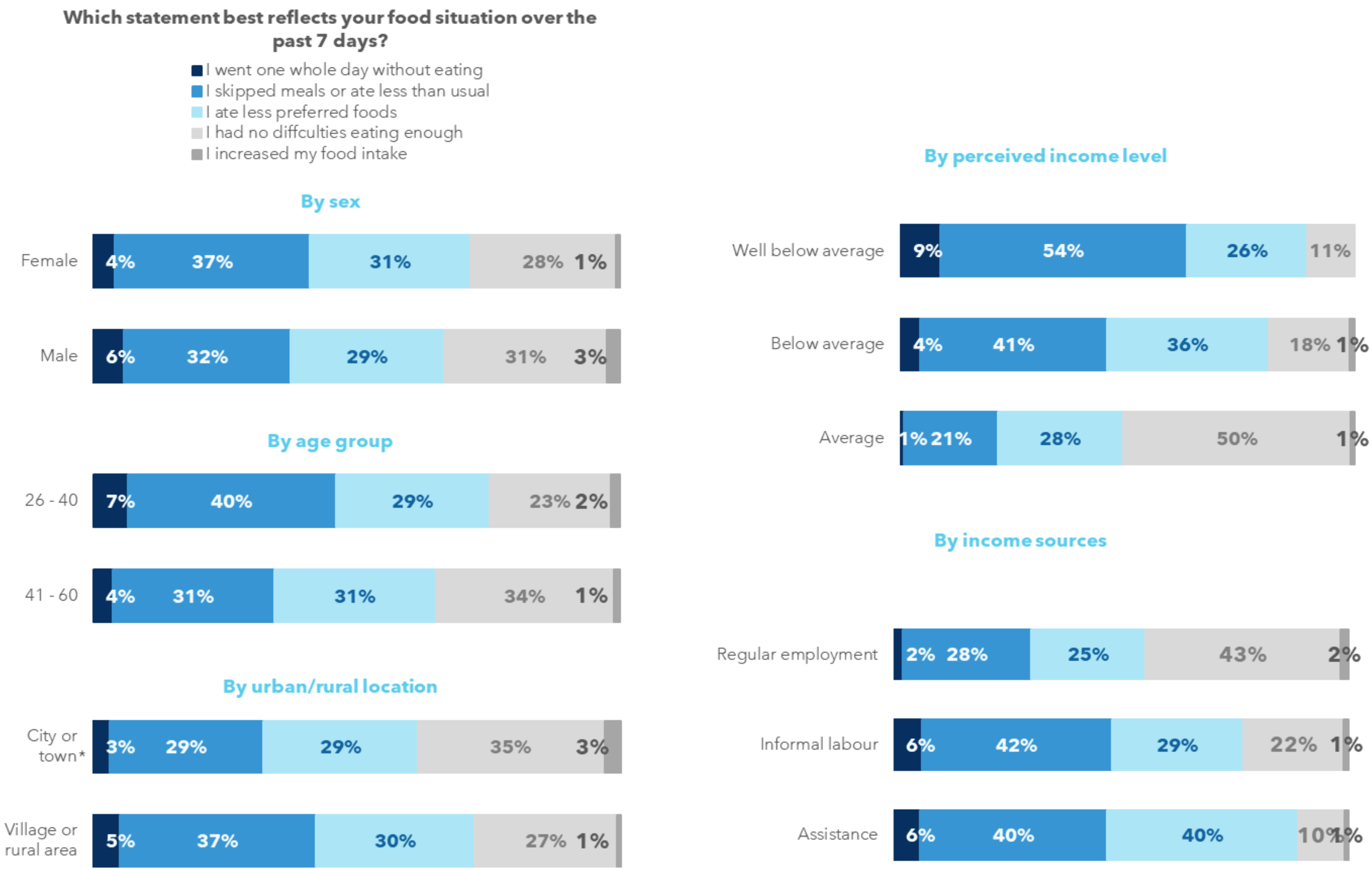
In line with findings observed at the regional level in February 2022, the impacts on food consumption in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines appear to be the most severe for households with the well below average income levels, with 9% going a whole day without eating and 54% skipping a meal or eating less than usual in the week preceding the survey. Only 11% had no difficulty eating enough compared to 50% of households classifying their income as average.

Differences in the impacts on food consumption also varied across age groups and sources of income. Respondents under 40 years of age were more likely to reduce their food consumption than older respondents. Among respondents aged 40 and younger, 76% skipped meals, ate less than usual or went a full day without eating, compared to 66% of those over 40 years of age.

Sources of income also reflect differences amongst groups. Those relying on assistance (support from family and friends and government assistance) were most impacted, with 86% having gone an entire day without eating, skipping meals or eating less than usual compared to 55% of those with more stable income sources such as salaried work and own business.

The food consumption patterns of respondents living in villages or rural areas was also more significantly affected than that of respondents located in cities or towns. It appears that women in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines experienced more negative impacts on food consumption compared to men.

FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption



* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

FOOD SECURITY | Coping strategies

► People are adopting negative coping strategies to meet their immediate food needs, compromising other priorities.

Survey respondents were asked whether in the 30 days prior to the survey they had reduced essential non-food expenditures, spent savings or sold productive assets to meet their food needs. Of all respondents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 76% resorted to spending savings, and 50% reduced essential non-food expenditures, such as on education and health. Furthermore, 45% of respondents sold productive assets to meet food or other needs, potentially undermining their long-term income generation. The trends in adopting negative coping strategies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are corresponding to those of the regional average in February 2022.

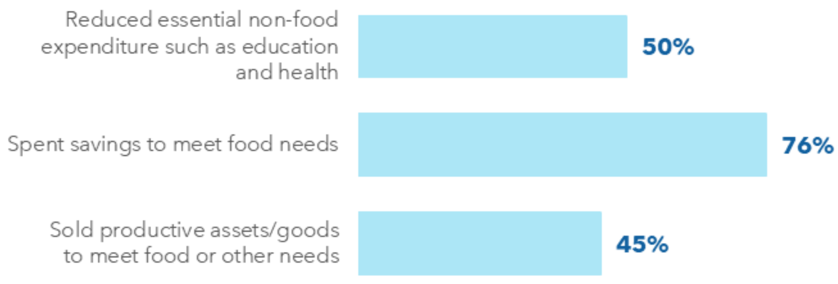
Households with below or well below average incomes are resorting to these coping strategies much more frequently than others. Almost twice as many respondents who classify their income as below average have sold productive assets/goods to meet food needs compared to those with an average income.

People residing in villages in Saint Vincent are more likely to have adopted negative food coping strategies. In villages 49% of respondents adopted selling productive assets as a negative coping strategy compared to 29% of respondents of those in city's or towns.

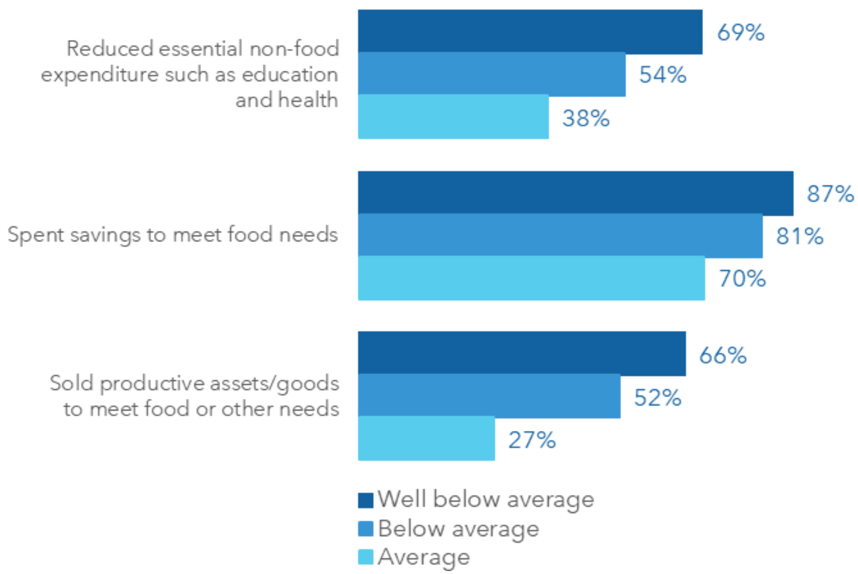
Both women and men were found to more frequently to spend their savings to meet their food needs as their main coping strategy. Respondents aged under 40 were also more likely to adopt any of the negative coping measures compared to older respondents.

Households' coping strategies in the 30 days prior to the survey

Multiple choices could be selected.

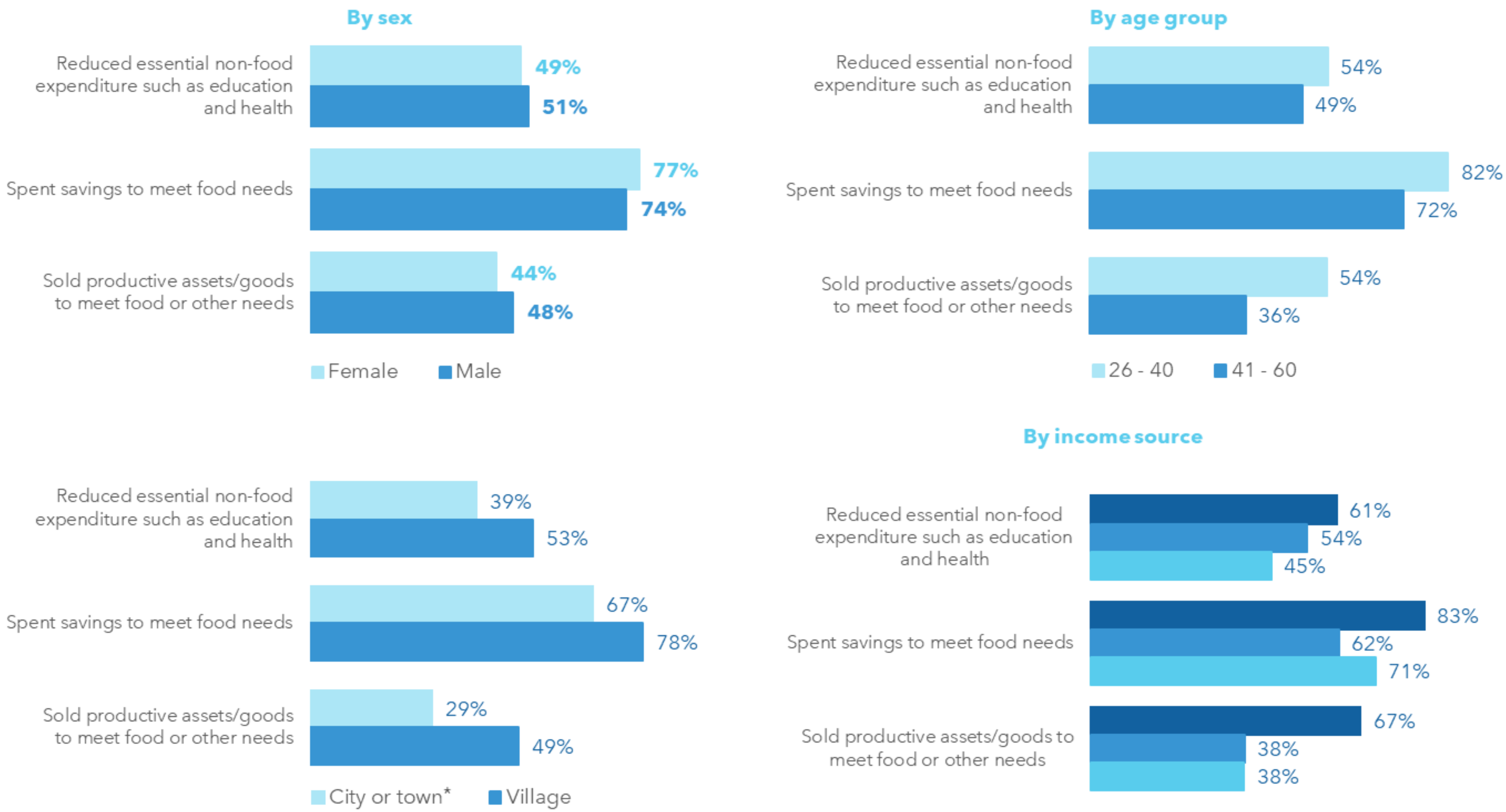


By perceived income level



FOOD SECURITY | Coping strategies

Households' coping strategies in the 30 days prior to the survey
Multiple choices could be selected.

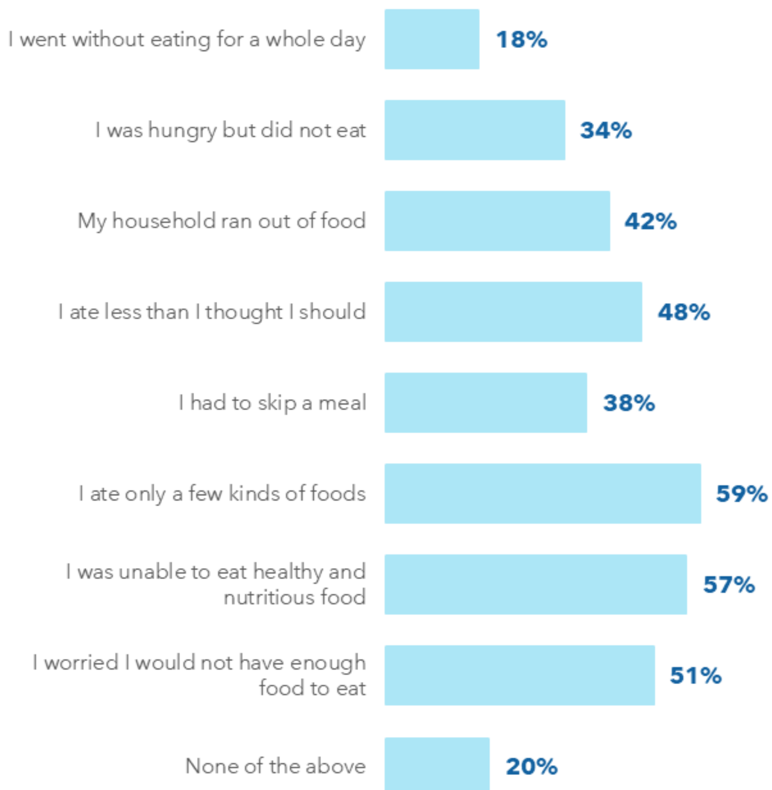


* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

▶ Respondents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are experiencing increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints.

Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?
Multiple choices could be selected.



The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was used to provide a picture of food insecurity experienced by respondents during the 30 days preceding the survey. The FIES, which is an indicator used for the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero hunger (SDG 2), is a metric of severity of food insecurity at the household or individual level. It relies on people's self-reported food-related behaviours and experiences associated with increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints (see page 53 for an explanation of the methodology).

Over half of respondents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines worried they would not have enough food to eat in the month leading up to the survey. Maintaining a diverse diet was not feasible for 59% of respondents, and 57% were not able to eat healthy and nutritious food in the first place. 18% of respondents reported experiencing a time when they went a whole day without eating and 34% of respondents experienced a time when they were hungry but did not eat. 42% of respondents indicated that their household had run out of food in the previous 30 days.

Only 20% of respondents did not experience any of the situations listed above.

"Worried about paying my bills (light, water, internet)" - Female, 41

"My kids not eating properly" - Female, 40

"Unemployment is serious matter when you can't provide healthcare expenses and nutritious food for your family. Education expenses among other things" - Male, 48

"I have suffer a lot from the volcanic eruption am living in the red zone now my family had the covid and my main concern is my mom who is a diabetic no medication in the hospital we have to buy and the little money we have we can hardly buy food and pay bills have yo try and make ends meet" - Female, 38

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

"Having to beg for food" - Female, 33

"My partner lost his job and so I had to use my entire income to cover my mortgage and had to depend on relatives and friends for assistance" - Female, 49

"Have to used my savings" - Female, 51

"Only leaving my house when needed and eating all my meals at home to save money" - Female, 56

"The income has dropped so badly and there more bills and lest payment" - Female, 34

"Lost job unable to pay bill hardly buy food supplies" - Female, 33

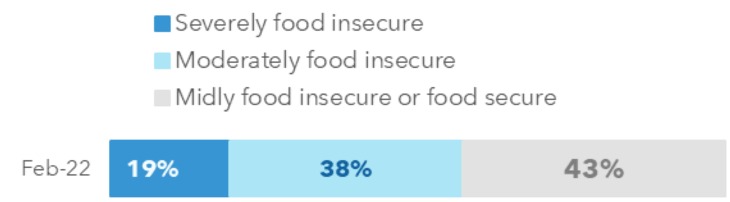
"From the covid everything go down and the volcano can't get no jobs can't eating" - Female, 50

"By not being able to work and get the right kind of food to sustain my family" - Female, 46

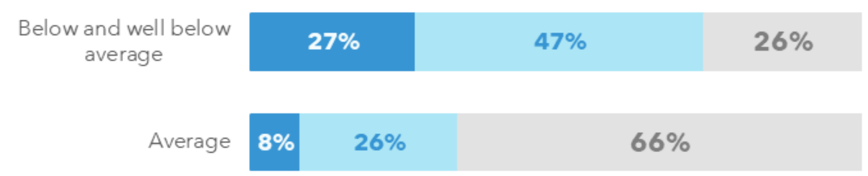
"My husband loss his job in the heart of covid19 where there are time we all go to bed many times with one meal a day and hungry" - Female, 52

"The biggest change we have made is making sacrifices such as reducing meal sizes to ensure there is food on the table" - Female, 52

Prevalence rates of food insecurity
Based on FIES methodology

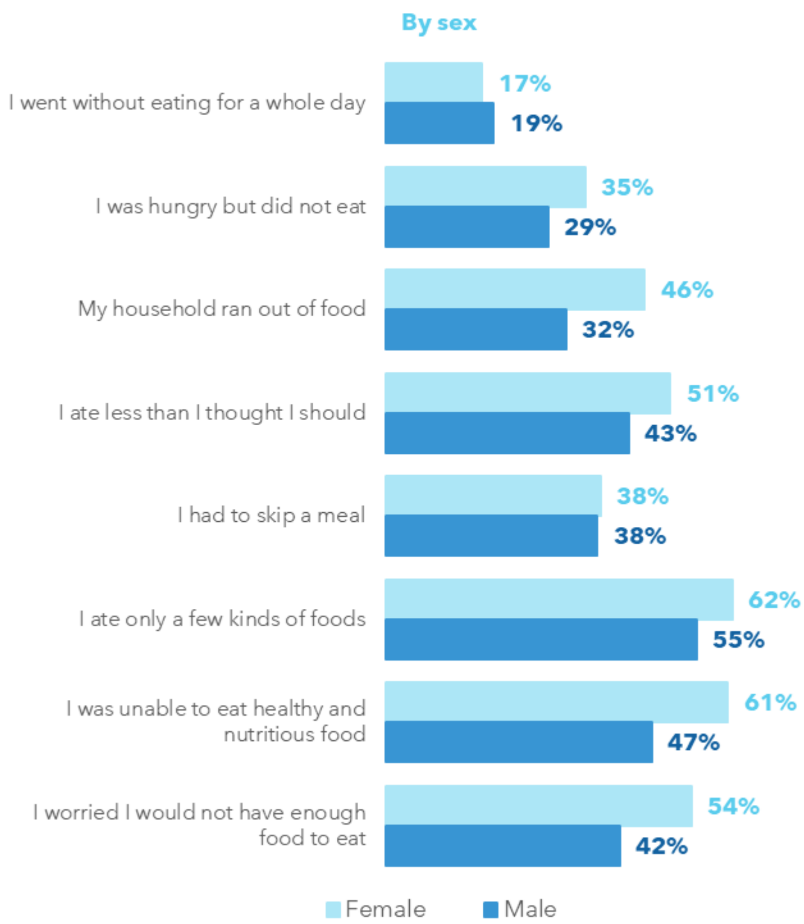


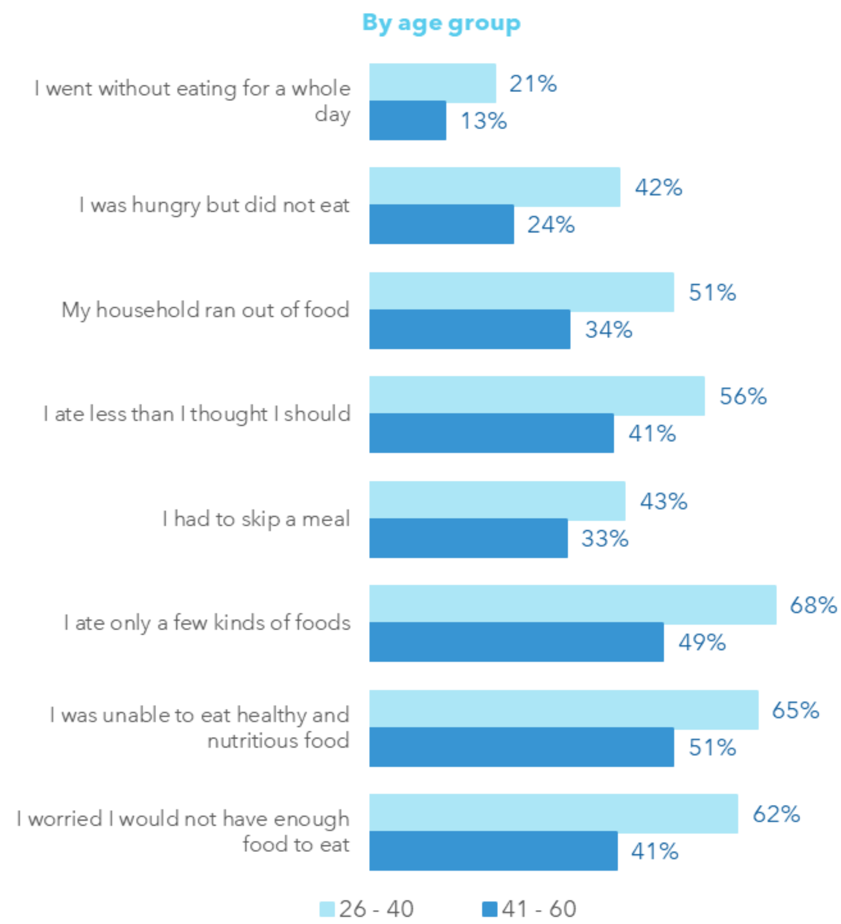
Prevalence rates of food insecurity
By perceived household income
Based on FIES methodology



FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?
Multiple choices could be selected.

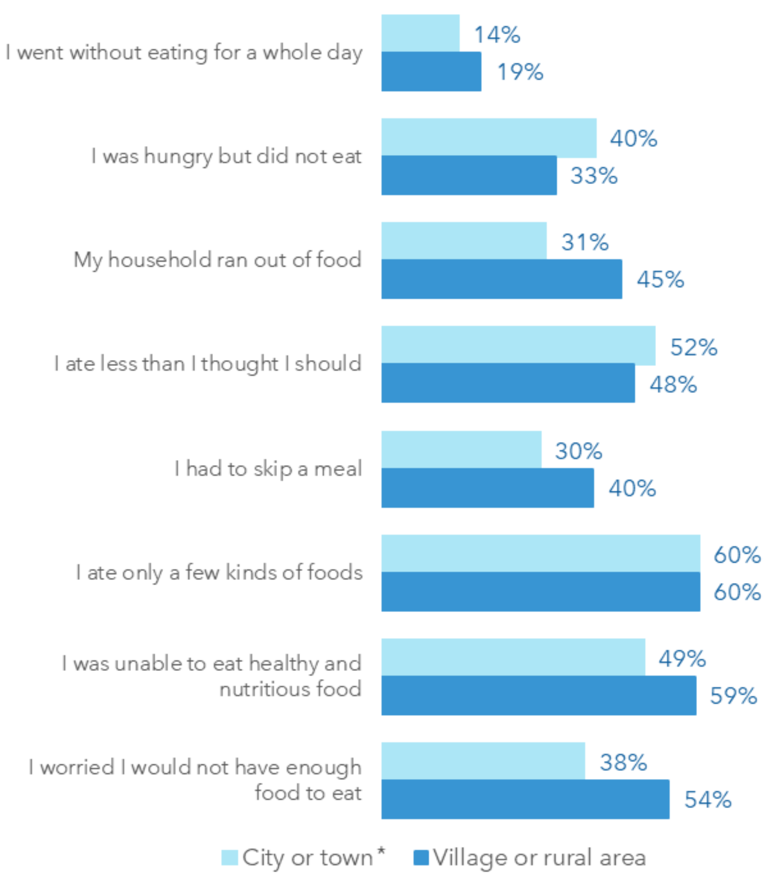




FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

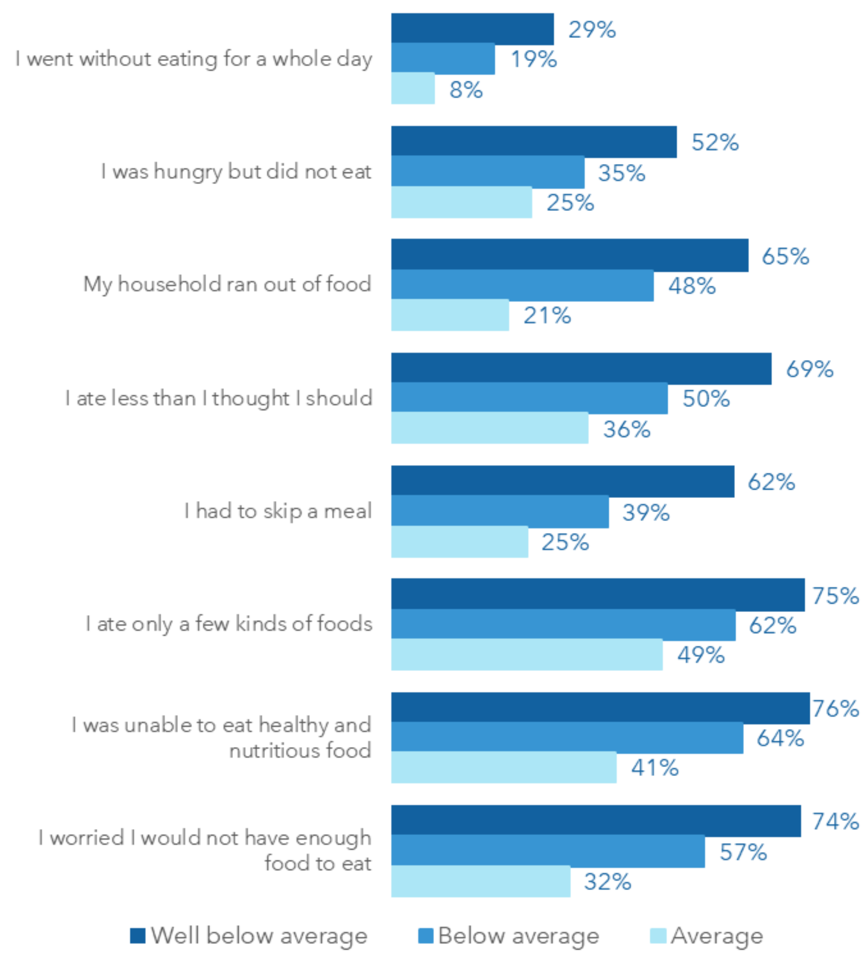
Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?
Multiple choices could be selected.

By urban/rural location



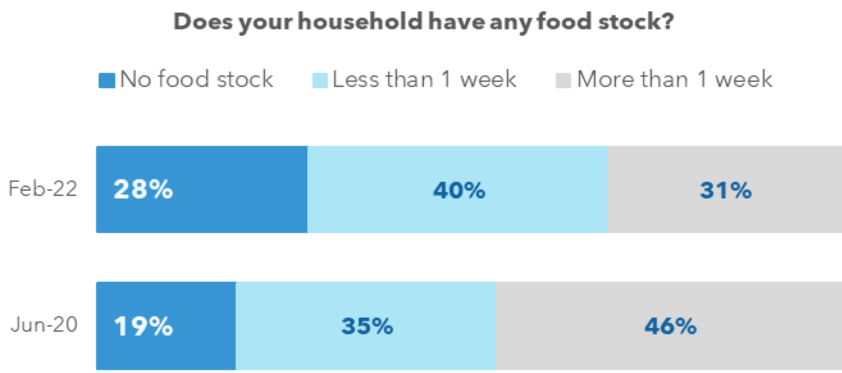
* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

By perceived income level



FOOD SECURITY | Food stocks

▶ An increased proportion of households reported having no food stocks at all or food stocks available for less than a week.



"I eat by my mother before I go home. I don't cook often so I won't waste food , eat more bread, I don't over buy because I don't want to have spoilage, their is nothing I can do about my electricity bill or water bill I have no choice but to pay the cost, food prices have increase so I eat less often, I don't go out with friends or alone because I can't afford it, I try to pay my insurance before other bills because I don't want to lose it." - Female, 27

"The increase of goods and services spend what little you have and nothing coming in it is difficult to deal with very challenging" - Male, 67

"financially affected ,had to spend less from savings" - Male, 40

"I have had to do without meals so that my kids are comfortable" - Female, 35

In February 2022, 31% of respondents reported having more than a week's worth of food supplies in their households. This represents a decrease from 46% in January 2020.

Similarly, an increased proportion of respondents (28%) reported to have to food stocks compared June 2020 (19%). While some of these changes are likely driven by people not needing to "stock up" related to lockdowns, people's means is also an influencing factor.

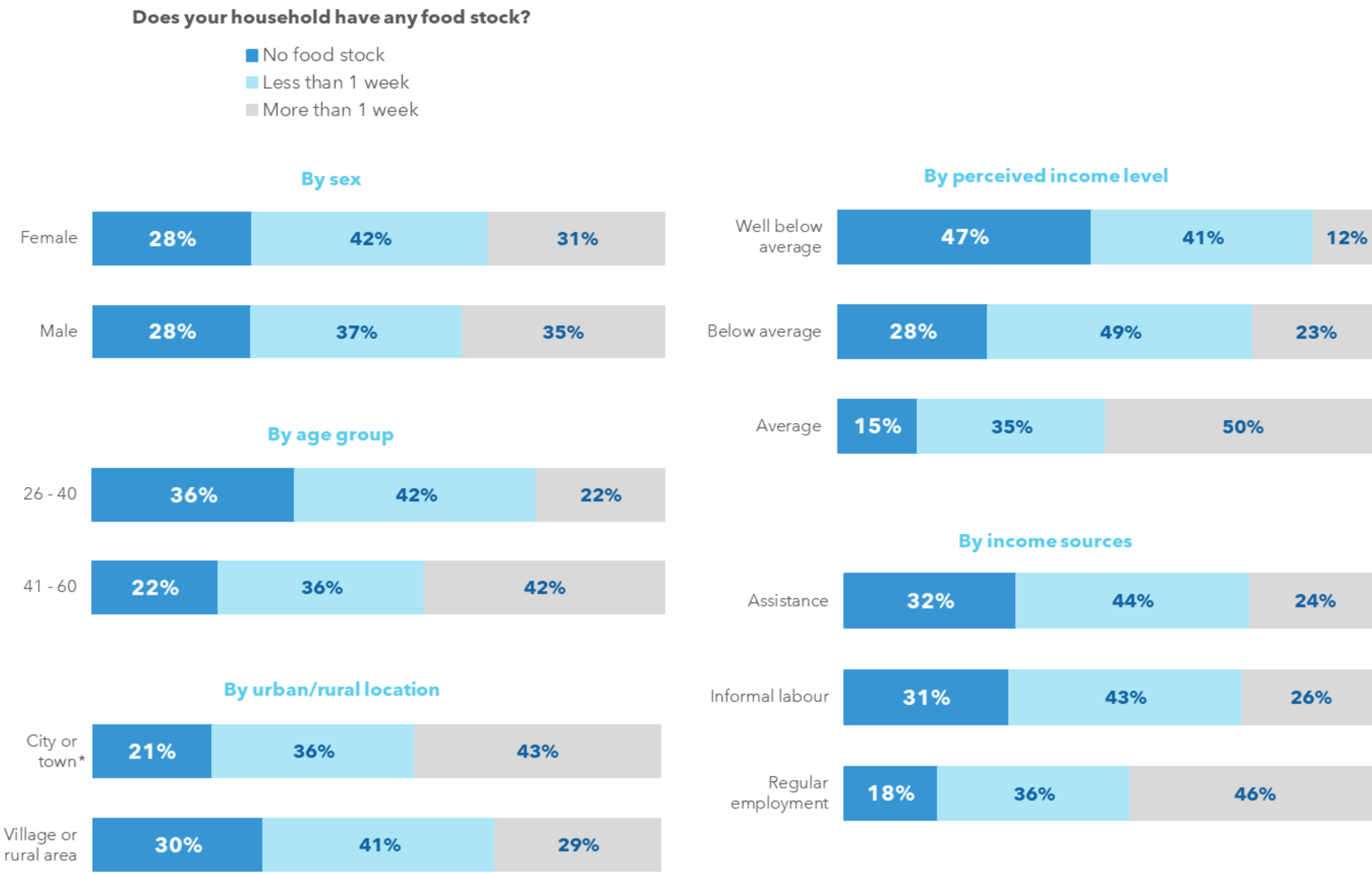
Of respondents with a perceived income of well below average, 47% had no food stocks at all at the time of the survey and only 12% had more than a week's worth of food stock, compared to 50% of households with an average income.

It also appears that younger age groups tend to have less food stocks or for shorter periods of time (less than a week) compared to respondents aged over 40, of whom 42% have food stocks worth more than a week.

Households who derive their income primarily from salaried work or their own business/trade tend to have larger food stocks than households that rely mainly on informal sources of income (including remittances), on government assistance or have no income.

The longer-term stocks reported by female respondents were lower than those reported by male respondents, while women seem to be better placed at short-term (less than a week) food stock availability.

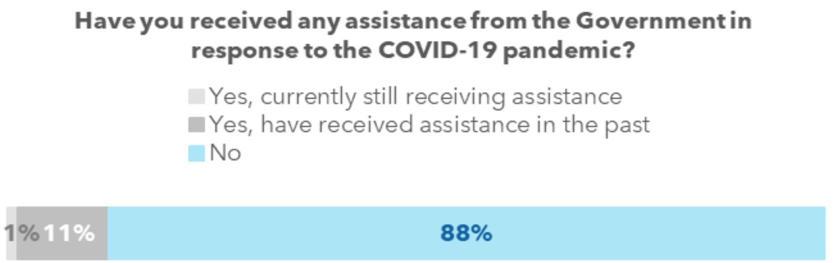
FOOD SECURITY | Food stocks

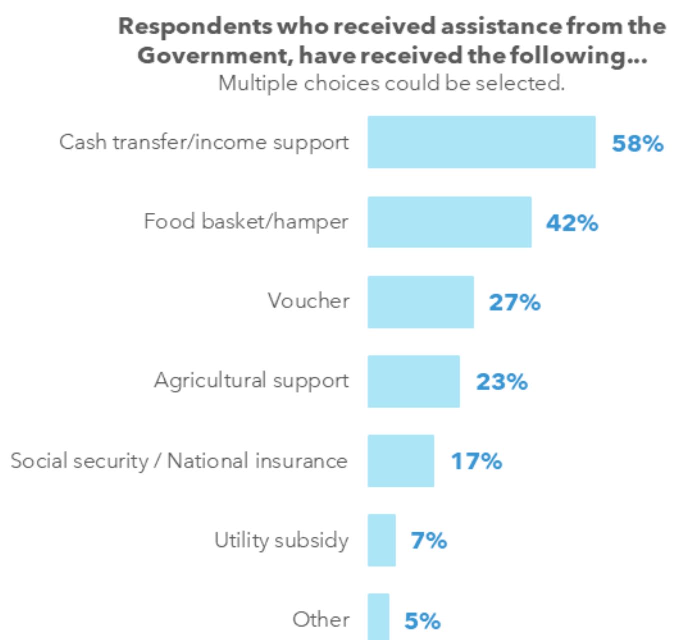


* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

WIDER IMPACTS | COVID-19 assistance

▶ Respondents most commonly reported to have received assistance in cash, followed by food basket/hamper.





Almost none of the respondents from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are reporting to still be currently receiving assistance. While 12% of respondents have received some assistance in the past only 1% were still receiving assistance at the time of the survey. This is much lower than the regional average of 22%. While the survey focus was on COVID-19 assistance, the government and its partners also provided substantial relief support in response to the Soufriere volcanic eruption.

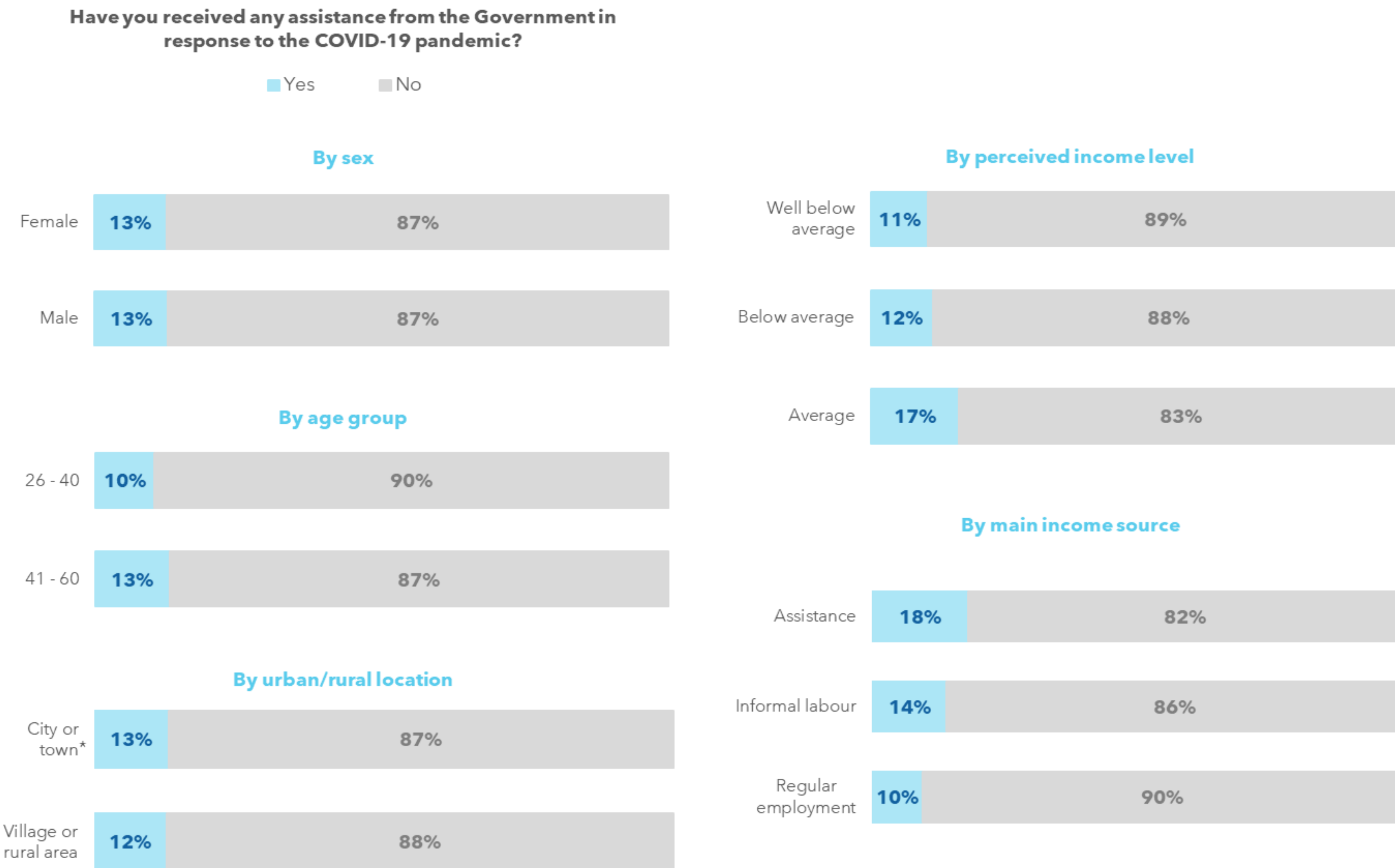
Respondents most commonly reported to have received assistance in cash, which could have been in the form of income support or cash transfers (58%), followed by food basket/hamper (42%) and vouchers (27%) . Local fresh food boxes were provided by Ministry of Agriculture to individuals affected by COVID-19. In addition, income and rental assistance were provided by Ministry of National Mobilization. Between April 2020 and June 2021, National insurance services provided income support to 6,000 persons economically impacted by the pandemic. Further income support was provided to vendors, entertainers, farmers, transport workers and handcart operators. The National Emergency Management Organisation coordinated government efforts in information sharing and educational programmes in response to the pandemic.

Nearly a quarter of respondents who perceive a below average income level (12% below and 11% well below) were more likely to receive assistance when compared to those who perceive an average income level (17%).

Recipients of assistance largely consisted of households who rely on government assistance (18%), followed by those engaging in informal labour (14%).

There were no marked differences between sexes and age groups.

WIDER IMPACTS | COVID-19 assistance



* Low response numbers in this category may affect results

WIDER IMPACTS | Main worries

▶ Fear of illness continues to be the leading concern among respondents.

Fear of illness is still the leading cause for concern among respondents. Perhaps attributed to the availability of vaccines and easing of restrictions, it is less so when compared to one year ago. This is followed by unemployment and inability to cover food needs.

Respondents of different income levels continue to experience contrasting impacts of the pandemic. Those associating themselves as well below and average income levels are less worried about illness, with over half (53%) citing unemployment and inability to cover food needs as their main concern. This is followed by inability to cover essential needs. In contrast, over half (56%) of those citing an average income, cited more concerns about falling ill and disruptions to education.

Some distinctions could be observed between male and female respondents. While both sexes identified fear of illness as their main worry, a higher percentage of women (40%) were more concerned about inability to cover food needs when compared to men (29%). A slightly higher percentage of women also more frequently cited unemployment and disruptions to education. Whereby men most frequently had to resort to their savings.

There were also some marked differences between age groups. Those 40 years and above cited more concerns with falling ill when compared to the younger respondents. Those aged between 26-40 years had more concerns with unemployment, inability to cover food and essential needs and caring for dependents/children. This is largely consistent with findings from the regional results.

Main worries expressed by respondents
Multiple choices could be selected.

Main worries	Feb-22	Jun-20
Fear of illness	48%	39%
Unemployment	42%	52%
Inability to cover food needs	37%	37%
Inability to cover essential needs	33%	33%
Disruptions to education	25%	19%
Child(ren)/dependents care	19%	15%
Having to resort to savings	18%	24%
Social isolation	13%	15%
Movement restrictions	7%	11%
Violence in the community	4%	5%
Other worries	3%	0%
Violence in the household	1%	0%
Unable to access services	1%	4%

By perceived income level

Main worries	Well below average	Below average	Average
Fear of illness	39%	47%	56%
Unemployment	53%	46%	33%
Inability to cover food needs	53%	41%	26%
Inability to cover essential needs	44%	36%	22%
Disruptions to education	18%	21%	35%
Child(ren)/dependents care	23%	21%	16%
Having to resort to savings	11%	18%	26%
Social isolation	9%	9%	19%
Movement restrictions	3%	5%	9%
Violence in the community	3%	2%	8%
Other worries	0%	3%	3%
Violence in the household	1%	0%	3%
Unable to access services	1%	0%	1%

WIDER IMPACTS | Main worries

Main worries expressed by respondents
Multiple choices could be selected.

By sex

Main worries	Female	Male
Fear of illness	49%	46%
Unemployment	43%	38%
Inability to cover food needs	40%	29%
Inability to cover essential needs	34%	30%
Disruptions to education	26%	21%
Child(ren)/dependents care	20%	18%
Having to resort to savings	17%	23%
Social isolation	14%	10%
Movement restrictions	6%	11%
Violence in the community	3%	7%
Other worries	2%	3%
Violence in the household	1%	1%
Unable to access services	1%	0%

By age group

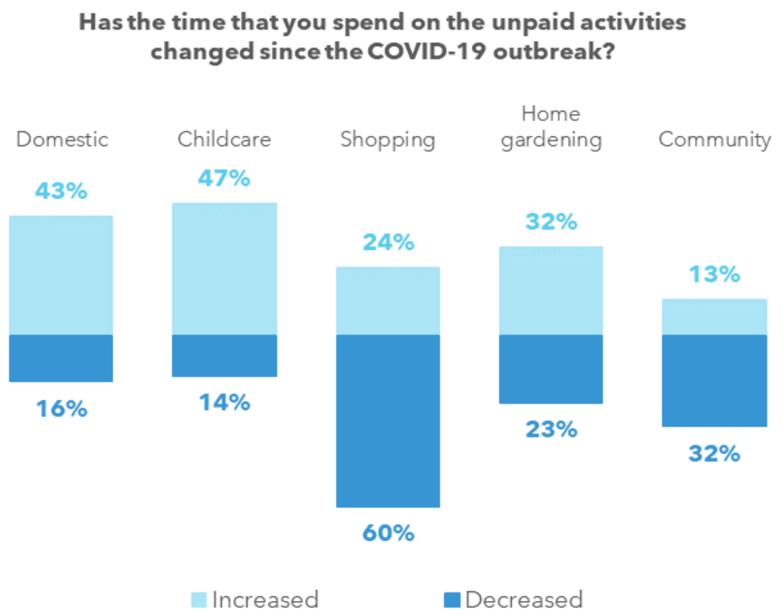
Main worries	26 - 40	41 - 60
Fear of illness	44%	57%
Unemployment	45%	31%
Inability to cover food needs	42%	30%
Inability to cover essential needs	37%	32%
Disruptions to education	25%	25%
Child(ren)/dependents care	26%	11%
Having to resort to savings	18%	20%
Social isolation	11%	17%
Movement restrictions	4%	8%
Violence in the community	3%	4%
Other worries	2%	3%
Violence in the household	1%	1%
Unable to access services	1%	0%

By urban/rural location

Main worries	City or town	Village or rural area
Fear of illness	55%	47%
Unemployment	40%	42%
Inability to cover food needs	28%	39%
Inability to cover essential needs	30%	33%
Disruptions to education	29%	24%
Child(ren)/dependents care	15%	20%
Having to resort to savings	16%	18%
Social isolation	20%	12%
Movement restrictions	7%	7%
Violence in the community	6%	4%
Other worries	4%	2%
Violence in the household	2%	1%
Unable to access services	1%	0%

WIDER IMPACTS | Unpaid care and work

▶ Respondents continue to curb their shopping activities, while time spent on domestic work and childcare increases.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents continue to increase time devoted to domestic work and childcare, while decreasing shopping activities. Nearly half of respondents (47%) reported to have increased time spent on childcare, followed by domestic work (43%), while over half (60%) continue to curb their shopping activities. This is slightly higher when compared to the regional average of 52% who reported decreasing shopping activities.

Across all income groups, a similar proportion of respondents reported increased time spent in domestic work and childcare. Respondents from well below average income levels (69%) more frequently reduced their shopping activities when compared to those who are average income earners (47%). Average income level households more frequently reported an increase in community work when compared to those below and well below average.

There were some marked differences between female and male respondents. Female respondents more frequently reported an increase in domestic work and childcare, whereby male respondents were more likely to report an increase in home gardening. More male respondents also reported no change for domestic work and not applicable for childcare.

"I was struggling before this pandemic and even more now the disruption in my children education and home schooling my youngest is the biggest change o have made for the past year" - Female, 37

"In my household we've had to use our utilities less, like going a day or two without using the electricity and water due to there being only one working person in the household and making the Bills each month is a bit of a stretch." - Female, 26

"Watching my love ones get sick,, after taking so many precautions is not funny. Taking care of your loved one when they are sick and ensuring they you don't get sick in the process is mentally taxing. leaving home and going out is a chore by itself. I think the full extent of its impact and the depth that it can affect and disrupt a home has not been thoroughly thought of and realized" - Female, 46

"Having my children absent from school for such a long period" - Female, 42

WIDER IMPACTS | Unpaid care and work

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

By survey round

Feb-22	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	43%	47%	24%	32%	13%
No change	35%	24%	14%	29%	31%
Decreased	16%	14%	60%	23%	32%
Not applicable	7%	16%	2%	16%	25%

Jun-20	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	50%	47%	25%	46%	7%
No change	43%	33%	29%	43%	49%
Decreased	5%	8%	47%	4%	19%
Not applicable	2%	12%	0%	7%	24%

By sex

Female	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	46%	51%	23%	30%	13%
No change	31%	23%	14%	31%	28%
Decreased	17%	13%	62%	24%	33%
Not applicable	7%	13%	1%	16%	26%

Male	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	31%	37%	27%	37%	15%
No change	46%	24%	15%	26%	37%
Decreased	14%	17%	56%	23%	28%
Not applicable	8%	22%	3%	14%	20%

By perceived income level

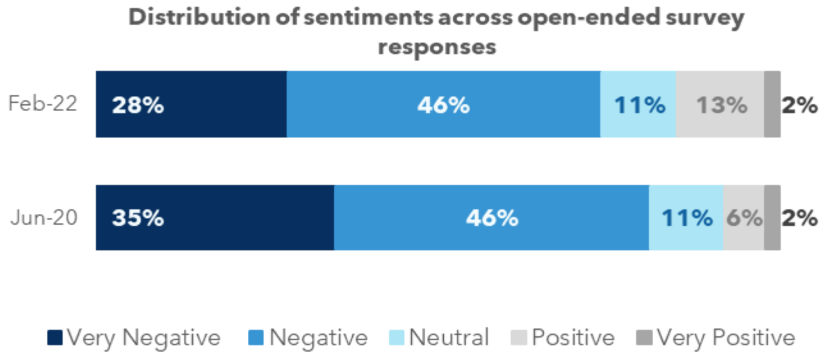
Well below average	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	42%	47%	24%	21%	8%
No change	26%	14%	4%	29%	27%
Decreased	23%	24%	69%	23%	30%
Not applicable	9%	15%	3%	26%	34%

Below average	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	49%	53%	31%	21%	10%
No change	29%	17%	9%	35%	32%
Decreased	15%	12%	57%	18%	29%
Not applicable	7%	18%	4%	26%	29%

Average	Domestic	Childcare	Shopping	Home gardening	Community
Increased	49%	47%	33%	30%	9%
No change	39%	21%	18%	40%	40%
Decreased	7%	5%	47%	7%	20%
Not applicable	6%	27%	3%	23%	31%

WIDER IMPACTS | Coping and adapting

▶ Respondents described the struggles of coping with the combined impacts of the La Soufrière eruption and the pandemic.



Respondents were given the space to provide more nuanced insights on how they are coping with and adapting to the evolving impacts two years on since the declaration of the pandemic. Out of the 506 respondents, 247 responded to the open-ended question. This sentiment analysis classifies the overall feeling expressed within each response and how negative or positive it is. In February 2022, the respondents were expressing negative (46%) and very negative (28%) sentiments.

Respondents from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continue to suffer to compounding effects of COVID-19 with many still recovering from the La Soufriere eruption. The pandemic has impacted people's ability to carry out their livelihood activities as job and income loss is well voiced amongst the respondents. Respondents are having to adjust their consumption of food and other essential services, such as electricity, to cover bills and mortgage payments. Those dependent on the travel and entertainment industries especially seem to be feeling the strain.

Some sample responses:

Very negative (28%)

"I had to stop going around and selling my things because of fear of catching Covid." - Female, 39

"I operate at a school ,therefore for my income has gone out the door .school has just reopened and there has been so much disruptions with chicken teachers getting sick , its hard ." - Female, 47

Negative (46%)

"Because of my kids I have to adapt to certain things it's not easy when you have four kids in school 2 in primary and 2 in secondary where school fees have to be paid our house rent transportation for the kids I have to cut back on the lunch money sometime they go without breakfast or eating lunch" - Female, 40

Neutral (11%)

"Having my children absent from school for such a long period" - Female, 42

Positive (13%)

"Diversification, walking instead of crowding on public transportation" - Male, 64

"Adjusting to everything that is happening over the past year. I am getting around bit by bit me and my family" - Female, 25

Very positive (2%)

"Well I get to see how the world can become and I live different move different just to keep safe me and my two kids and wife" - Male, 29

"I've learnt to use less" - Male, 42

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

JUNE 2020

FEBRUARY 2022

CONCLUSION

Since the first survey was launched in April 2020, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, much has changed in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Vaccines have become available, travel has been re-introduced and the government has implemented various programmes to cushion the economic blow and encourage recovery. Yet, this survey shows that COVID-19 continues to have profound impacts on how people in the country meet their most pressing needs and try to earn a living. For many people these have deepened and recovery has been thwarted as a result of damage and displacement experienced from the La Soufriere eruption in 2021, which was followed by Hurricane Elsa. The economic reverberations continue to take a toll on livelihoods, incomes, food security and mental wellbeing. Despite signs of recovery, the underlying picture remains deeply concerning.

Many people continue to face disruptions to their livelihoods, and the impact on incomes remains pervasive. The resources that people have are not going as far with now increasing food prices. More and more people are therefore buying cheaper or less preferred foods, purchasing in smaller quantities, drawing on savings and reducing other critical expenditures on health, education and livelihoods to make ends meet. On top of these unsustainable measures, they report skipping meals, going to bed hungry and being worried about feeding their families.

Impacts to jobs and unemployment remain a critical concern. With many restrictions ended and significant efforts in response the volcanic eruption, there is some cause for optimism on economic recovery. However, the picture in February 2022 was one of struggles related to employment, food security, and concerns about the future. The decrease of incomes, lost jobs and increased costs of living have recalibrated the baseline of well-being, in negative terms for most. Food insecurity seems to be more widespread compared to the region as a whole.

These impacts are hitting hardest those who can least afford it – particularly families with the lowest incomes, those who rely on less formal source of income or assistance for their living, younger respondents and those living in rural areas. It will therefore take substantial effort and directed investment to make sure that those already in difficulty are not left even further behind as the country seeks to turn the corner on the pandemic.

The survey also highlights that unpaid time spent on childcare and domestic work are still greater than before the pandemic, and these activities are disproportionately shouldered by women. Continued and deepened analysis on gender dynamics remains a priority to ensure that recovery processes are gender-responsive and continuously support women's empowerment.

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines implemented various policy measures to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic on people and businesses. Social protection played a crucial role, including through unemployment benefits and income support for self-employed persons. Given the continued impact on incomes and livelihoods, including from the volcanic eruption in April 2021, it is critical to keep investing in safety nets and people's resilience, particularly for those living in poverty and facing different facets of vulnerability.

Similar to other Caribbean economies, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is highly exposed to global and regional shocks. The combination of COVID-19 impacts on household economy, supply chain disruptions and rising inflation, as well as the anticipation of another active hurricane season and the global economic effects of the Ukraine crisis present the country with a serious multi-pronged challenge for food security. Strengthening national emergency preparedness, social protection, and food systems must be therefore a strategic recovery and development priority, in line with broader CARICOM objectives and recommendations. See the next page for recommendations from the regional survey.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from the Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey Regional Summary Report, February 2022

1. Increase investments in **agri-food systems, regional food production, productivity and trade,** and develop targeted initiatives to resolve bottlenecks to **import reduction**

2. Accelerate initiatives on **digital transformation** and data to promote **food systems and food security**

3. Develop and expand creative initiatives to **increase demand for local foods**

4. Advocate for tailored financing terms, develop innovative **risk informed financing** options and accelerate efforts to **access climate finance**

5. **Expand social protection and social services** and invest in systems to respond to **future shocks**

METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fourth 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 8 February 2022. The survey was circulated via email, social media, SMS, media and other communication channels. WFP performed the data collection 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.

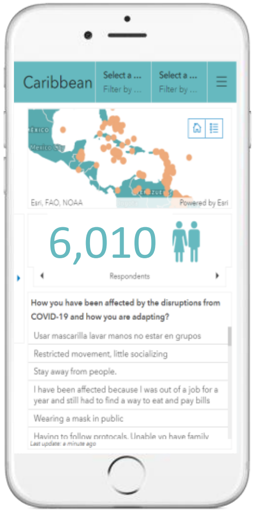
The qualitative analysis performed builds on earlier collaboration with Joseph Xu from Google's AI unit using Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP, a branch of AI which analyses and interprets human languages, provided: (a) a sentiment analysis to determine the distribution of very negative to very 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 and Grenada. Special thanks to the International Telecommunication Union for their support in facilitating the SMS distribution. Thanks to UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago for circulating the survey link.

While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data is not representative, and the use of a web-based questionnaire limits inputs from those without connectivity. Responses were over-represented from two countries, with 26% of responses coming from Trinidad and Tobago and another 17% from Trinidad Barbados. 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, Camilla Spallino, Trisandhi Gosine, Elisaveta Gouretskaia, Darko Petrovic, Sarah Bailey and Regis Chapman.

Survey form



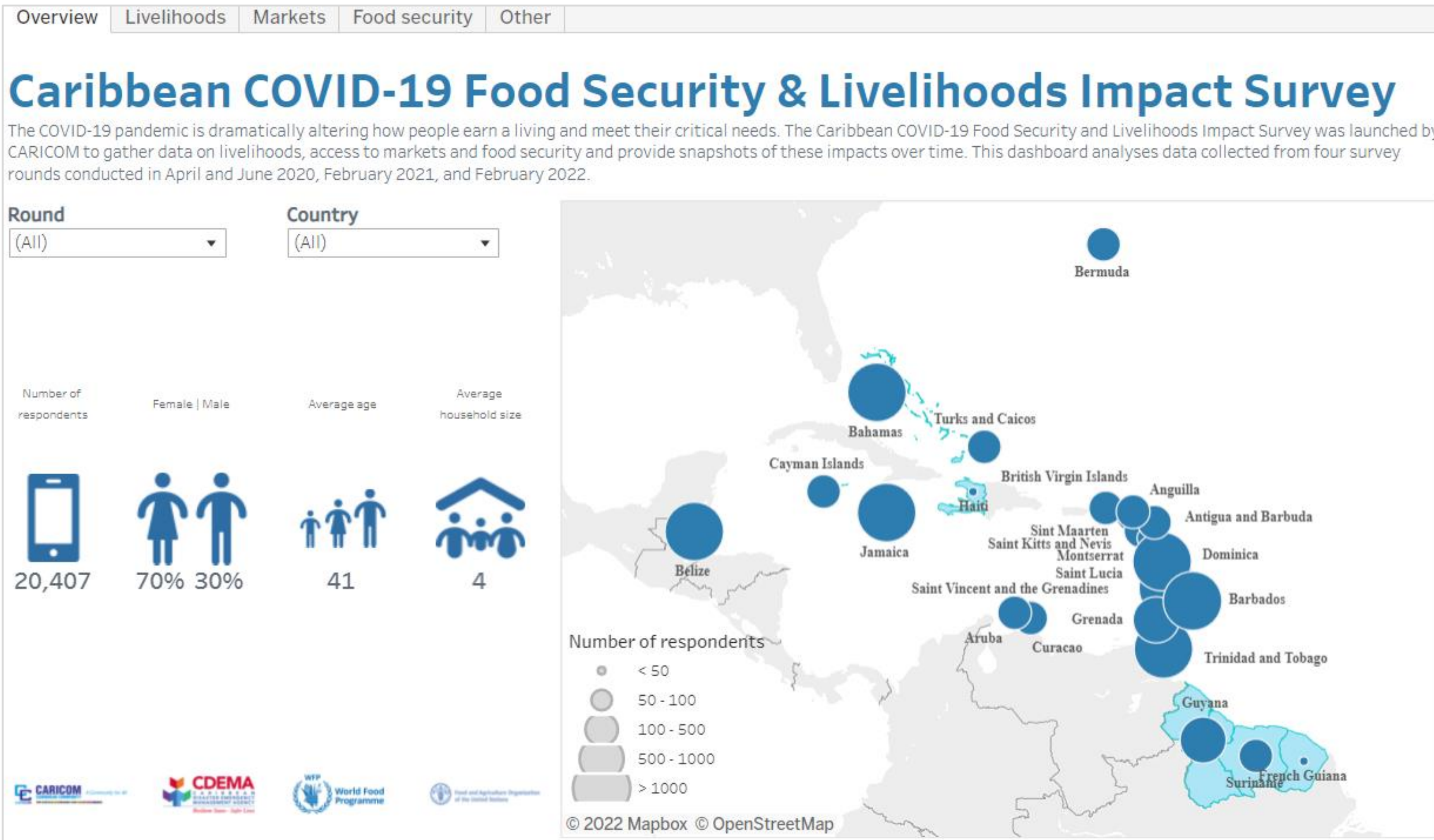
Dashboard for Smartphones

Dashboard for PCs/Laptops

METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A new feature of the fourth survey round is the development of a Tableau dashboard which analyses data collected from four rounds of the Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey conducted in April 2020 (Round 1), June 2020 (Round 2), February 2021 (Round 3), and February 2022 (Round 4). The dashboard can be accessed through the link or the QR code to the right.

SCAN the QR code to see the Food Security & Livelihood Impact Survey dashboard online. It may take a second to load. Alternatively, follow this link: https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/CaribbeanCOVID-19FoodSecurityLivelihoodsImpactSurveyRound1-4/Overview

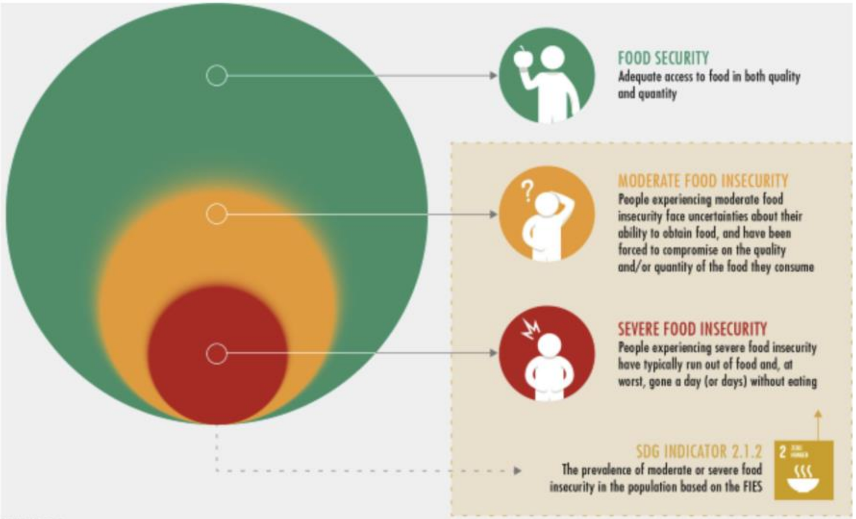


CALCULATION OF FOOD INSECURITY ESTIMATES

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was used for calculating food insecurity estimates presented in this report. 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 eight questions during a 12 months or 30 days recall period: while the 12 months recall period is typically used for SDG monitoring, reference to the past 30 days is in order to assess recent food insecurity and its risk factors or consequences.

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 FAO's methodology and FIES online App.

For more information on the FIES, see FAO's 'The Food Insecurity Experience Scale: Measuring food insecurity through people's experiences' and FAO's "Implementing the FIES in surveys"



Interpreting FIES indicators (Source: FAO).

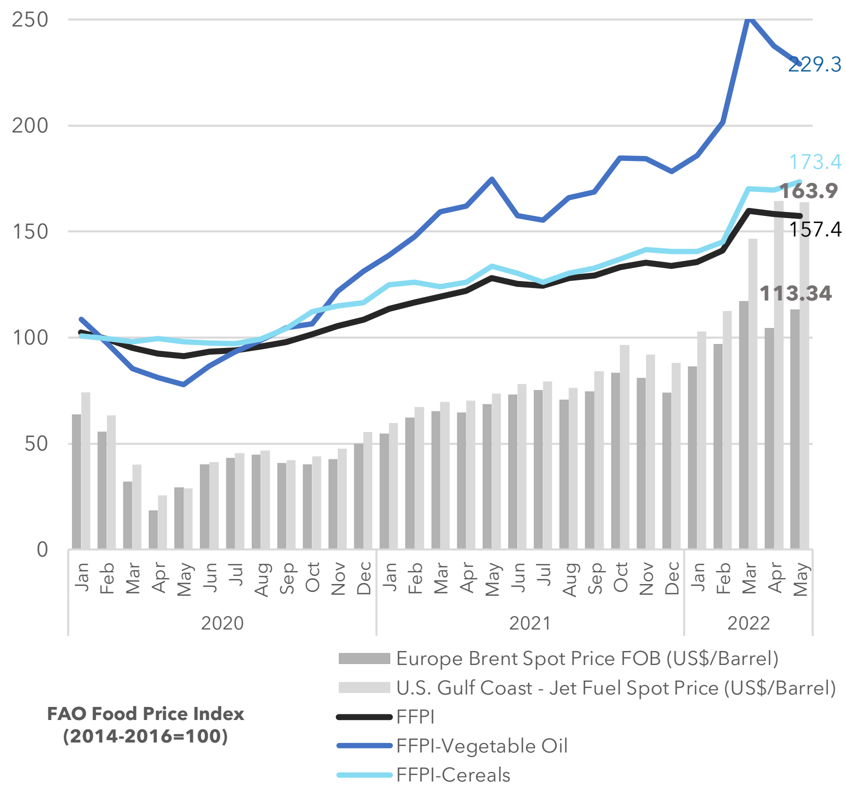
Annex | Regional implications of Ukraine crisis

Promoting recovery and food security will be paramount against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis. While the full range of implications remains uncertain, repercussions are expected to be felt widely, including in the Caribbean. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicts for the year 2022 at least a 1 percent reduction in global economic growth and up to 2.5 percent higher inflation on aggregate across the world, on top of current inflationary trends. Most acutely affected will be global prices of energy and commodities, such as grains and metals, due to additional disruptions in supply chains and volatilities in financial markets. The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) has already reached an all time high in March 2022 with 159.7 points and remains elevated.

The Russian Federation is a major producer of natural gas, oil, and solid fuels and together with Ukraine is a primary exporter of key agricultural commodities, such as wheat and maize, rapeseed, sunflower seeds and sunflower oil. Both countries are also major producers of fertilizers and export disruptions may further impact agricultural production and food security, particularly in import-dependent countries. Reverberations of the conflict on global supply chains and food systems are also expected to be felt in this region. Heavy import dependency among most Caribbean economies on fuel, food products and agricultural inputs means that global changes in oil, jet fuel, shipping and commodity prices will further drive inflationary trends. This will particularly affect small island states, people living in poverty and vulnerable households, who are still reeling from the effects of COVID-19.

For most Caribbean countries, the primary source markets for the importation of food, fuel and chemicals are the United States of America, countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union. While overall direct trade with Russia and Ukraine is negligible, increasing international prices for staple foods and fertilizer is expected to have cascading effects in this region too.

Adjustments to government budgets are also expected under new fiscal realities and will also depend on future oil price movements, which means that financing for public services such as education, health, or social protection may be at risk from cuts. However, it is critical to protect and increase these over time to promote inclusive economic recovery and prevent the rise in inequalities. Growing humanitarian needs in Ukraine and international financial support also means that resources from donors and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) will be increasingly stretched and under pressure.

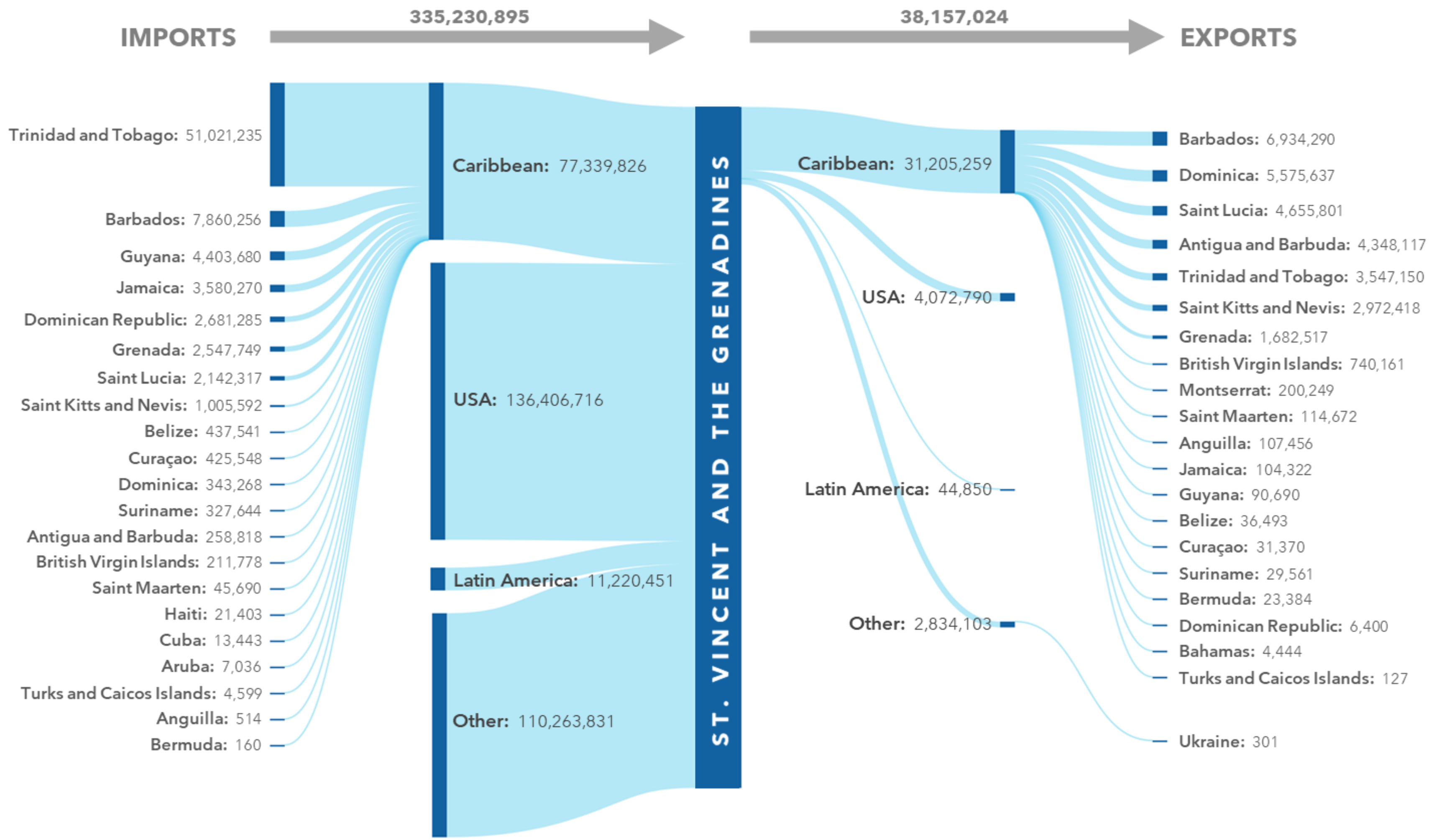


Source: FAO, US Energy Information Administration

Annex | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines trade flows

Import and export of all commodities in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2019, based on US$ value

Source: UN Comtrade



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SCAN the QR code to see all the Food Security & Livelihood Impact reports online. Alternatively, follow this link: www.wfp.org/publications/caribbean-covid-19-food-security-livelihoods-impact-survey-round-4-february-2022

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