Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey

Regional Summary Report | April 2020

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

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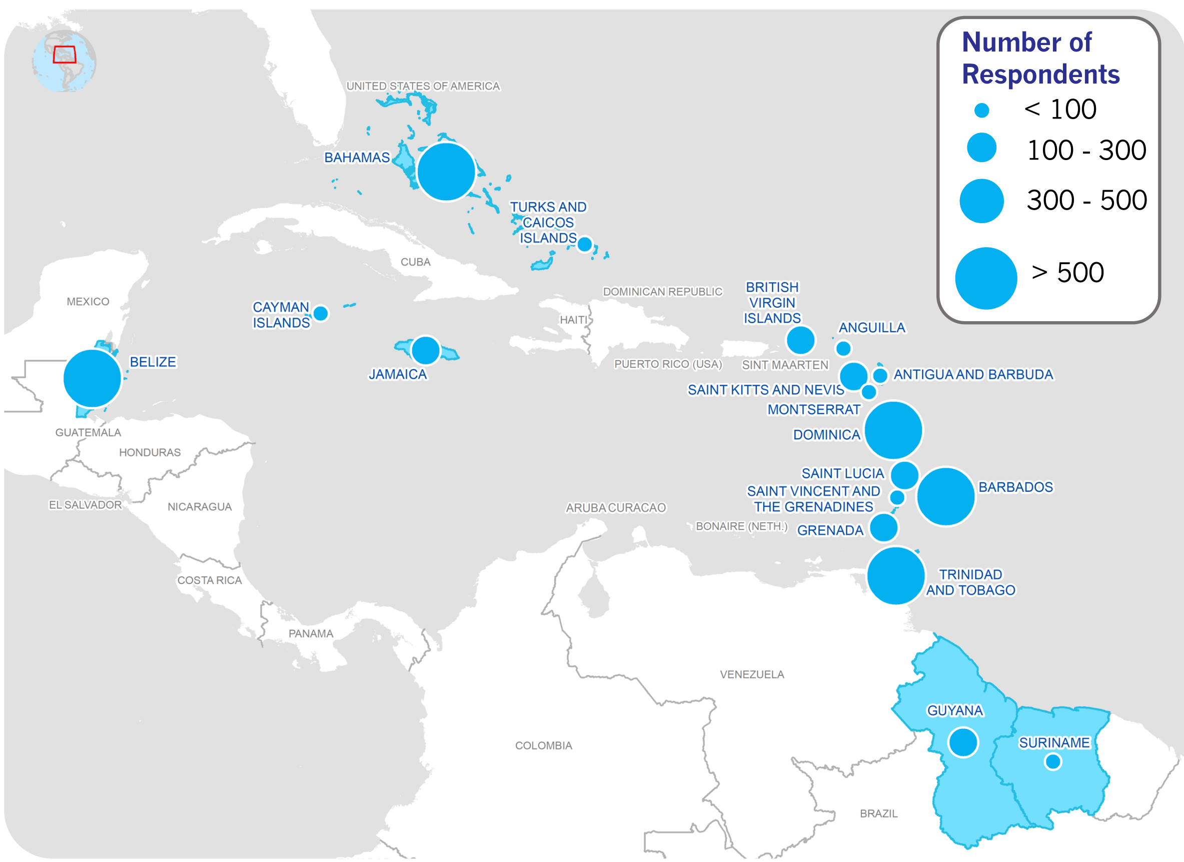
The COVID-19 pandemic is having far-reaching impacts on how people earn a living and meet critical needs. The Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey was launched by CARICOM to rapidly gather data on impacts to livelihoods, food security and access to markets. Prepared by the World Food Programme with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the survey link was shared via social media, email and media. This summary analyses data collected from 1-12 April 2020.

4,537 Respondents

19 Countries & Territories

69 | 29% Female | Male

42 Average age



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At a glance

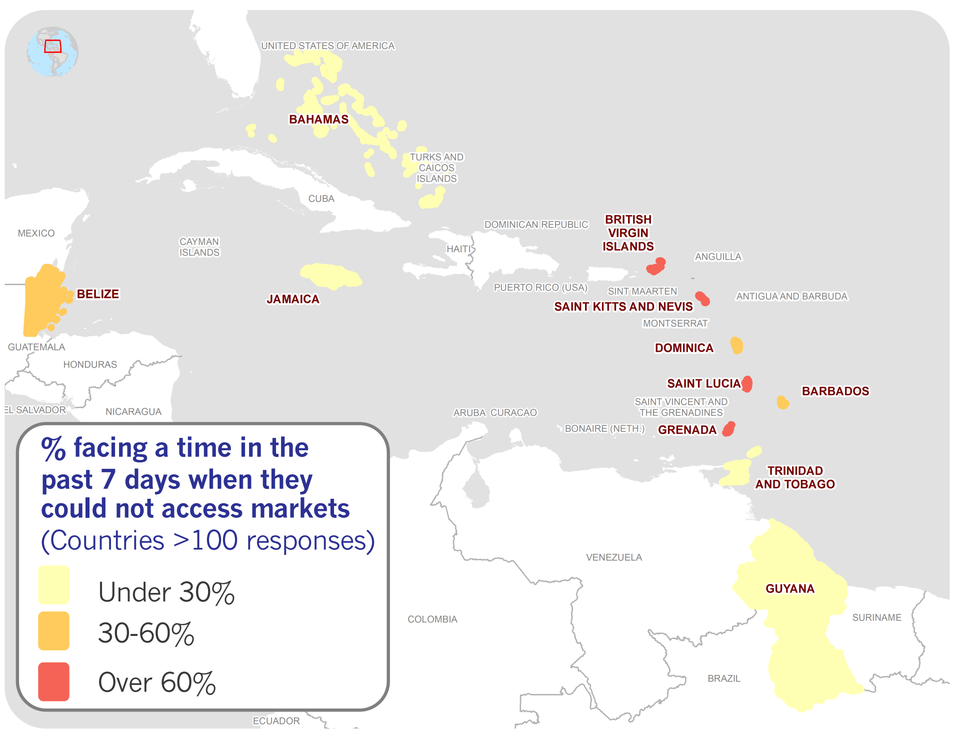
- COVID-19 has caused widespread disruption to livelihoods, driven primarily by movement restrictions and concerns about leaving the house.
- Half of respondents have faced a change in income, owing mainly to job loss or reduced revenue/salary. People owning businesses or engaged in casual labour or petty trade appear most impacted.
- Most respondents were able to access markets in the previous seven days but with substantial variations across the region. Those unable to do so cited movement restrictions, store closures and concerns about leaving the house.
- Availability of food, hygiene items and medicines appears to be less than normal, but very few respondents indicated that items were unavailable.
- People are changing how they shop, with most respondents purchasing larger quantities.
- Most respondents are not having difficulty eating enough, but some are eating less preferred foods.
- At the regional level, trends were broadly consistent between male and female respondents, though further country-level analysis may reveal greater gender differences.
- While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data is not representative, and the use of a web-based questionnaire limits inputs from those without connectivity.

IMPACT ON MARKETS

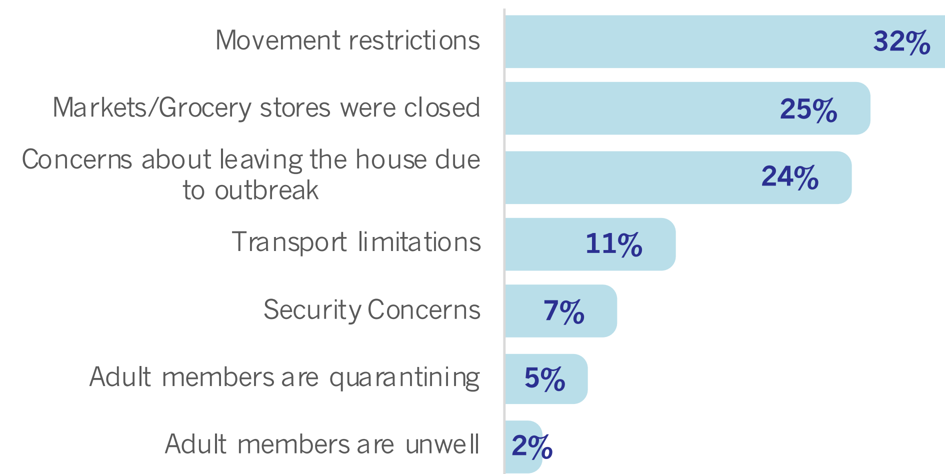
Access to markets in the past 7 days

Most people reported being able to consistently access stores and markets. However, 37% of respondents experienced a time in the previous seven days when they could not access grocery stores or markets. This finding was similar for male and female respondents, but it varied considerably across the region.

In some countries, (Jamaica, Guyana, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago) fewer than 30% of respondents faced a time in the previous week without access to markets. In others, the majority had a time when they could not (Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia). The differences were likely driven by the varying restrictions put in place by governments during the survey period.



Main reasons household could not access the markets/stores



The main factors limiting market access were a combination of movement restrictions, closure of markets/stores and concerns about leaving the house. The reasons did not vary substantially between men and women. Respondents aged 18-25 expressed different reasons, which appear linked to a greater reliance on others and on transport for going to markets. Their primary constraints to accessing markets were transport limitations and adult members of the household being self-quarantined.

"Although our country is not currently on lock down or curfew, I am scared to go outside."

"I am currently under curfew no income comin in at the moment...don't want to drive car don't want to waste gas....shop when I have to....."

"Inability to go to stores due to being in at-risk category has led to purchasing from distributors and having supplies delivered."

IMPACT ON MARKETS

Availability of items in stores

	Staple Food	Fresh food	Hygiene	Medicines
Always Available	63%	52%	61%	37%
Partially/ sometimes available	30%	38%	31%	41%
Not available	2%	2%	3%	4%
Don't know	5%	8%	5%	18%

The availability of food and other items is less than usual, but very few respondents indicated that key items were unavailable. Staple food, fresh food and hygiene items were generally always or sometimes available in stores, with 2-4% of respondents stating that they were unavailable. Fresh food appears marginally less available than staples. Noticeably fewer respondents indicated that medicines were always available, with one-fifth not knowing either way.

"Less available food products and some fruits and vegetables available in the supermarket are old and rotting"

"Lack of medicine. No supply at local pharmacy and their supplier"

"I had to go to the supermarket more than once a week because I could not find anything at one place..."

Food prices

The majority of respondents (59%) perceived an increase in prices. The survey did not inquire on the extent of price increases or items affected.

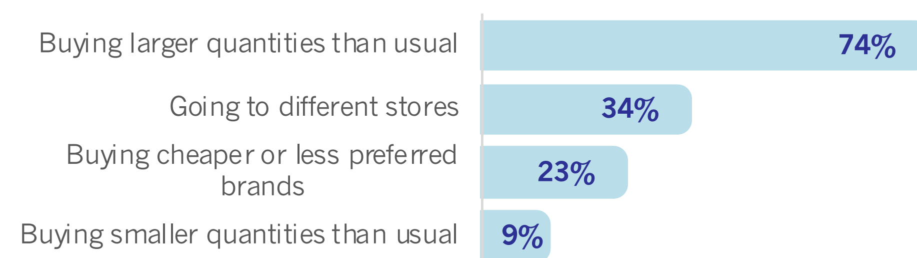
59% Observed an increase in food prices

40% Observed no changes in food prices

Shopping behaviour

People are altering how they shop, with 84% of respondents making changes compared to normal times. Of these, by far the most common shift is buying larger quantities than usual. About a third are going to different stores, and 23% are buying cheaper or less preferred brands. Some are making smaller purchases than usual. Shopping trends varied little between men and women. However, respondents over 60 are not purchasing in bulk as much compared to other age groups.

How have you changed your shopping behaviour?
(Specific changes made by respondents who have shifted shopping behaviours)

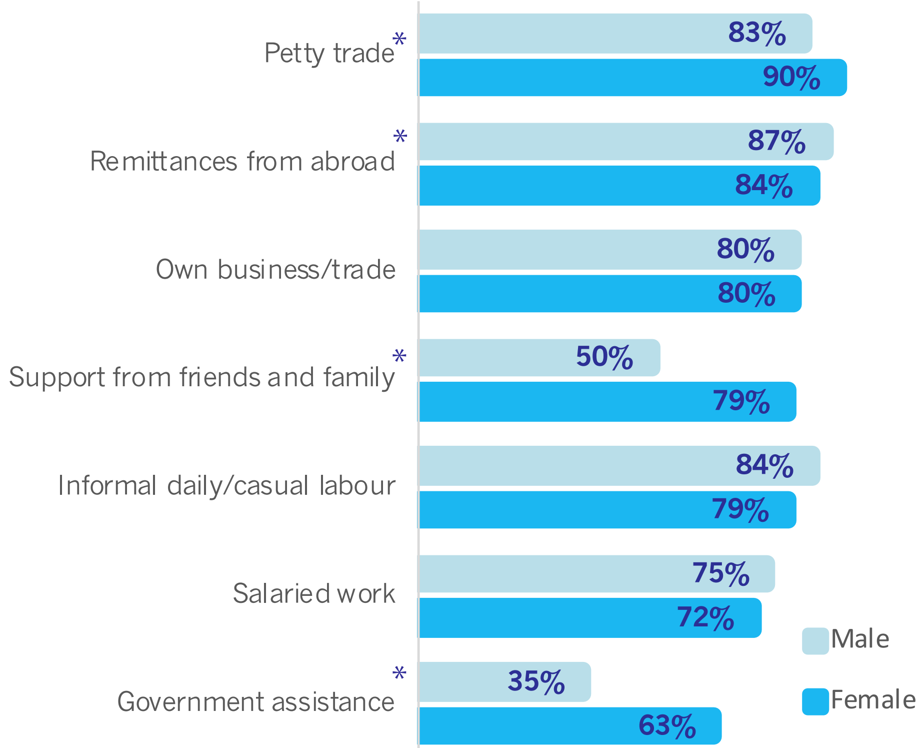


IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Disruptions to livelihoods

Livelihoods are being widely disrupted by the pandemic, with 73% of respondents indicating that their ability to carry out their livelihoods was affected in the last two weeks. While impacts were reported regardless of people's main sources of income, these appear most prevalent among those engaged in petty trade. Households receiving remittances and support from families and friends are also broadly affected, which could indicate that the people lending support are in worse positions to do so. Recipients of government assistance were slightly less impacted. Women in these income categories appear to be particularly affected.

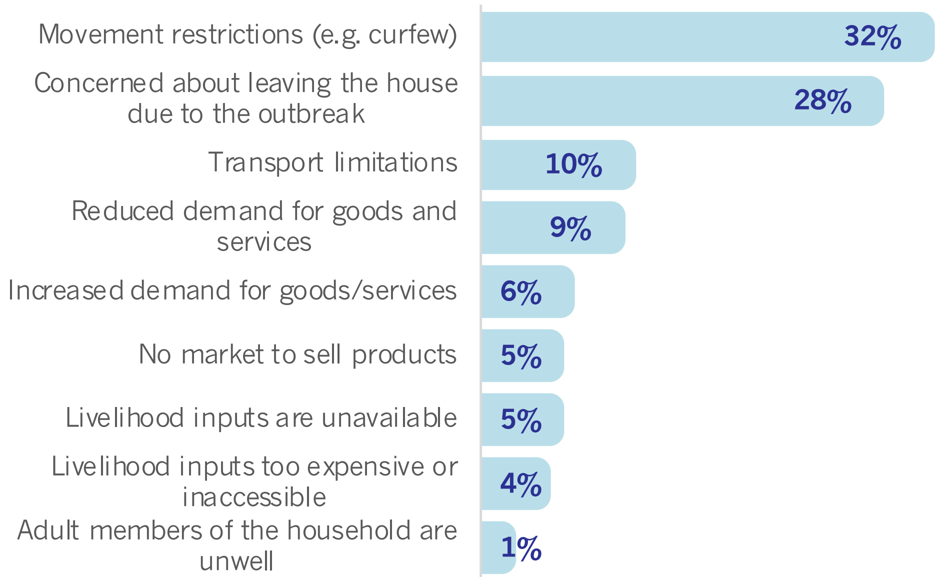
Was your livelihood affected in the last 2 weeks?



*Low response numbers in these category may affect results.

Reasons for disruptions

What were the main reasons for disruptions to your livelihood activities?



Movement restrictions were the primary driver for disruptions to livelihood activities. These findings are consistent with the strategies to curb the spread of the coronavirus introduced by several Caribbean countries in late March and early April, including travel restrictions, curfews and restricting non-essential business operations. Concerns about leaving the house was also a key reason. While reasons for livelihood disruptions are relatively consistent regardless of people's primary sources of income, a drop in the demand for goods and services was more commonly reported by business owners.

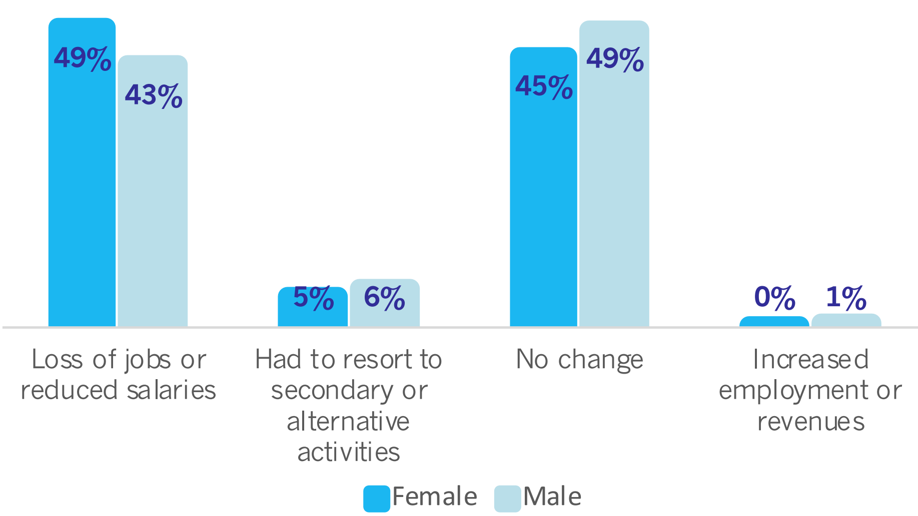
IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Income changes

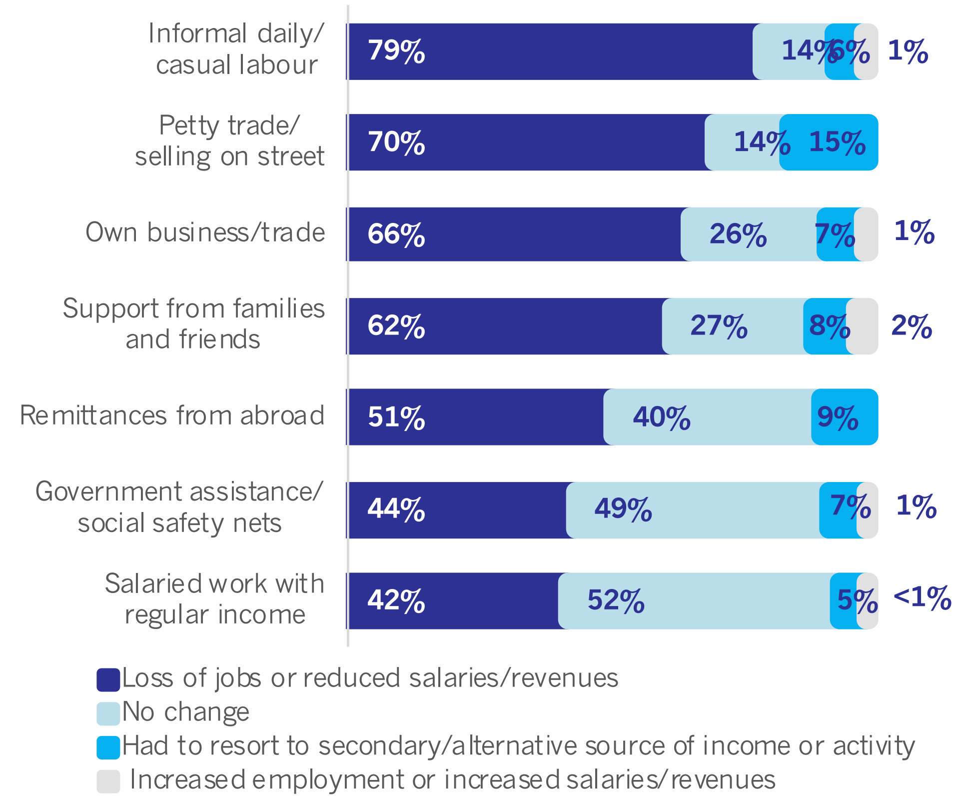
The pandemic is already resulting in lost income. Nearly half of respondents reported that they experienced job loss or reduced income/revenue in the previous two weeks. This trend is most visible among those engaged in daily/casual labour (reported by 79%), petty trade (70%) and business owners (66%). Job loss or reduced income were less prevalent among those with salaried work (42%) and government assistance (44%). The latter may indicate that safety nets are serving to buffer negative income impacts. Income changes also varied across the region (see Annex 4).

Income impacts are more common among younger people (aged 18-25), with 61% facing job loss or reduced income. People aged 60 and older were less affected by job loss or a reduction in salaries/revenues. Slightly more female respondents reported job loss/reduced income than male.

Has your household income changed over the past 2 weeks?



Income changes by sources of income



"Our Hardware store business is starting to see declines in sales. We are unsure if we will be able to afford our staff in the coming weeks."

"My company will go bankrupt if tourists don't return within 6 months. I am trying to keep my employees ...but the most essential staff will be laid off.“

"Since I am in the farming business the demand for our crops has increased substantially."

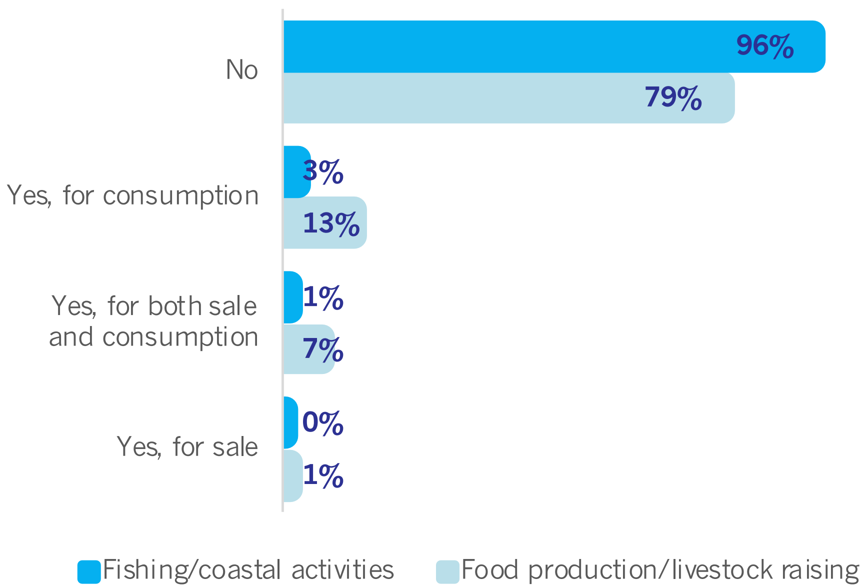
IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Households engaging in farming & fishing

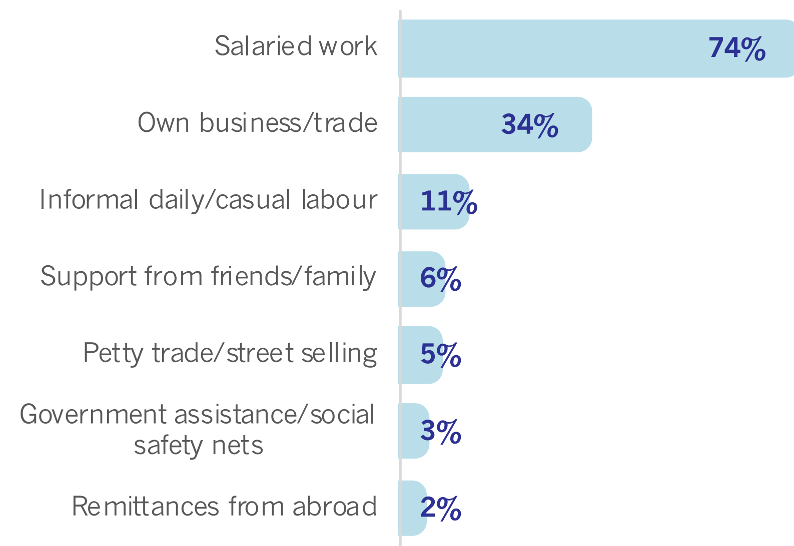
One-fifth of respondents produce food or raise livestock, and 4% are engaged in fisheries/coastal activities. In both cases these activities are primarily for their own consumption. Most of these respondents earn income from salaries, and one-third have their own business or trade. Households engaged in food production, livestock or fishing or coastal activities reported similar income impacts as other respondents.

Given the limited respondents engaged in farming (for sale) and fishing/coastal activities, more assessment and analysis on their constraints will be important to gauge how farmers and fisherfolk are being impacted.

Households producing food, raising livestock or engaged in fisheries/coastal activities



Main income sources of households engaged in farming & fisheries



"We have food planted that we shall eat and share with our community and family. We have suspended selling at our farm gate because of the COVID-19 threat."

"Assistance is required for implementing animal housing to increase production and yields. This is particularly true for small farmers."

"The restriction of movement has severely impacted us because we live near the beach and aren't allowed to fish to feed our household."

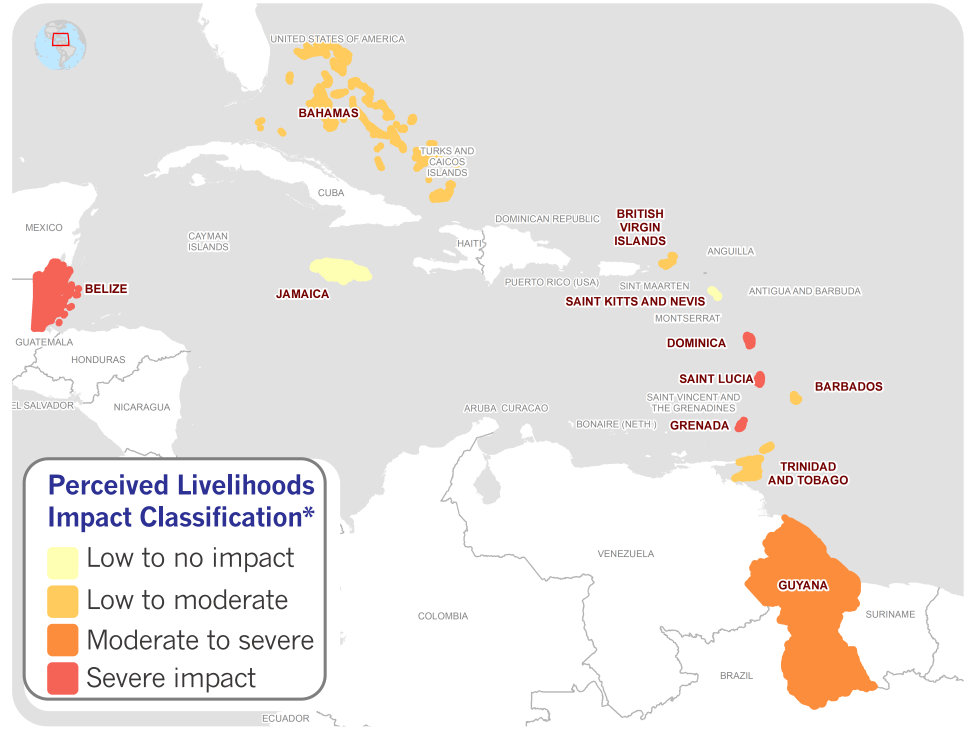
"I am a fisherman and this COVID-19 has my fishing disrupted because I can't stay out as long as usual and can't leave at my usual time because of the curfew."

IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS

Future livelihood impacts

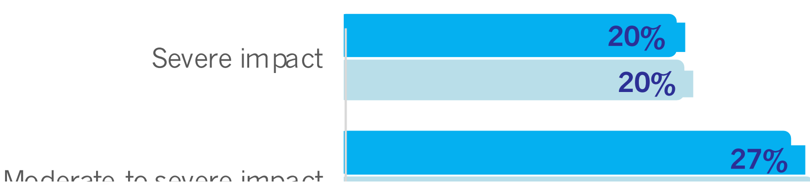
As people look ahead, the question is not whether their livelihoods will be impacted but how severe this impact will be. Only 10% anticipate little to no impact. Nearly half expect that livelihood impacts will be “moderate to severe” or “severe”. The predicted severity of livelihood impacts was consistent across male and female respondents, but it varied across countries and territories.

Respondents engaged in daily/casual labour and petty trade have the most pessimistic outlook, with one-third predicting severe impacts to livelihoods (compared to 15% of salaried workers). Among households that rely on daily/casual labour, petty trade, remittances, support from others or their own business/trade, most expect “moderate to severe” or “severe” impacts to their livelihoods.



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

Perceptions on how severely livelihoods will be impacted



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