



COVID-19 IN LAC

COLOMBIA

2021 LAC HIGH FREQUENCY PHONE SURVEYS: Results Phase II, Wave 2



September 2022

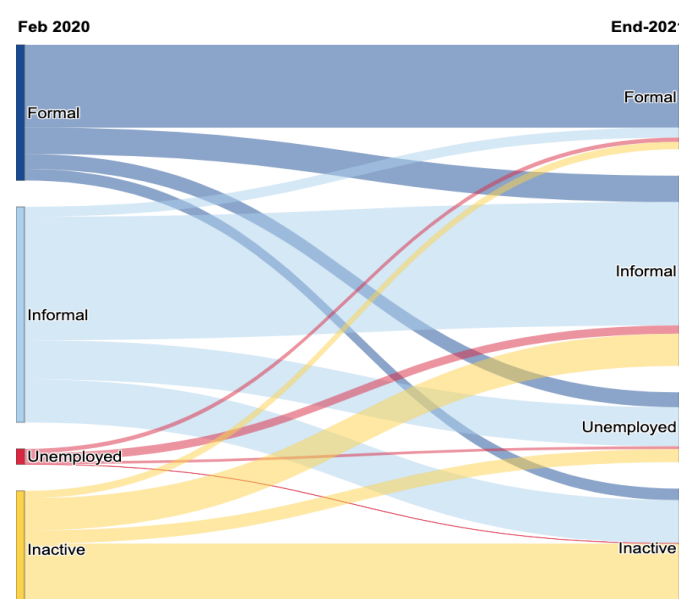
Colombia's GDP fell by 6.8 per cent in 2020, when some 2.4 million jobs were lost. The official unemployment rate was 15.9 per cent, approximately 1.5 times higher than the previous year. The recovery in 2021 was slow: by the end of the year, 30.9 per cent of those who were employed pre-Covid had lost their jobs. Half of them continued to seek employment (15.4 per cent), while the other half dropped out of the labour force altogether. Job loss was much more frequent among older adults (64.6 per cent). The numbers of people leaving the labour market were offset by the entry of 45.1 per cent of those who were previously economically inactive, probably to avoid falling into poverty. About three out of five young people (18–25 years old), adults (26–45 years old) and people with higher education entered the labour force. While 75.2 per cent of those entering the labour market managed to work, four out of five of these jobs were informal (81.2 per cent). More than one-third (35.1 per cent) of those who had held formal jobs or were economically inactive or unemployed before Covid moved into informal employment by the end of 2021. This is particularly concerning given that informal employment rates in Colombia were already quite high before the pandemic. This slow recovery may be associated with the fact that there were only minimal changes in the percentage of the population reporting increased time spent providing support for their children's education. Among respondents in rural areas and those with low educational levels, the amount of this time increased, while those with tertiary education or higher reported a 10.4-percentage-point decrease.

Key indicators: Individuals (18+ years old)

Distribution among groups	Labour		Childcare	
	% of employed population (pre-pandemic) who lost their pre-pandemic job	% of inactive population (pre-pandemic) who entered the labour market	% of formal, unemployed or inactive (pre-pandemic) who were working and transited into informality	Change in % of population reporting an increase in time spent supporting children's education activities (compared to pre-pandemic) between mid-2021 and end of 2021(pp)
Overall	30.9%	45.1%	35.1%	0.5
Urban	30.1%	43.6%	38.3%	-2.3
Rural	33.9%	50.6%	26.8%	7.8
Females	40.3%	41.2%	32.5%	-2.7
Males	22.2%	52.2%	37.5%	4.4
18 to 25 years old	28.9%	59.4%	53.8%	-4.8
26 to 45 years old	27.5%	61.7%	33.8%	1.5
46 to 64 years old	27.9%	34.5%	21.6%	6.3
65 and older	64.6%	17.9%	38.9%	-8.4
Primary or less	37.7%	36.3%	20.4%	9.3
Secondary	32.0%	43.7%	36.1%	-0.8
Tertiary and more	23.9%	58.2%	50.9%	-10.4

Source: LAC High Frequency Phone Surveys, Phase II, Wave 2

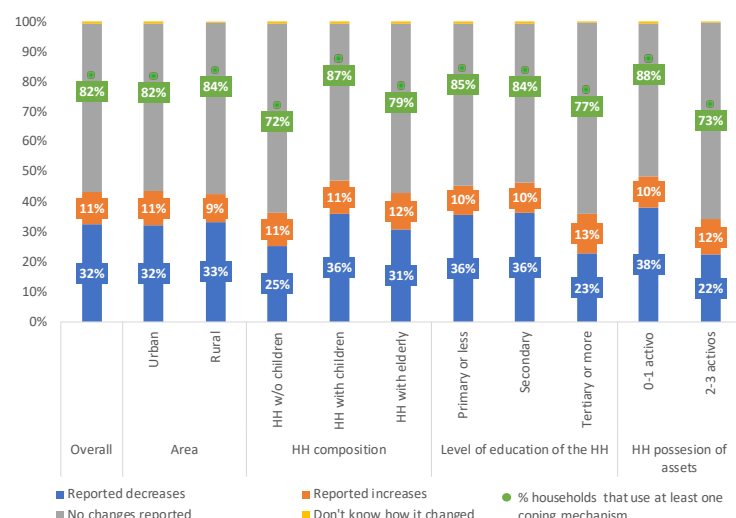
Figure 1: Transitions in the labour market



Despite the government's efforts to contain the impact of the pandemic through emergency transfers, household incomes plummeted, and poverty increased sharply. By late 2021, around one-third of households reported a drop in their income in comparison with halfway through the year. Households with one or no assets reported more frequent income losses. Conversely, 10.8 per cent of households reported an increase in their income during this period. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, some 20.4 per cent of households reported running out of food. This share increased to 44.2 per cent in mid-2021 before shrinking somewhat to 35.3 per cent by the end of the year. Poorer households (those with one or no assets), those with less educated heads, and those in rural areas reported even higher rates of food insecurity. To mitigate income losses and cover their basic needs, 82.3 per cent of households used at least one of the following mechanisms: non-payment of financial obligations, use of savings or entry into the labour force.

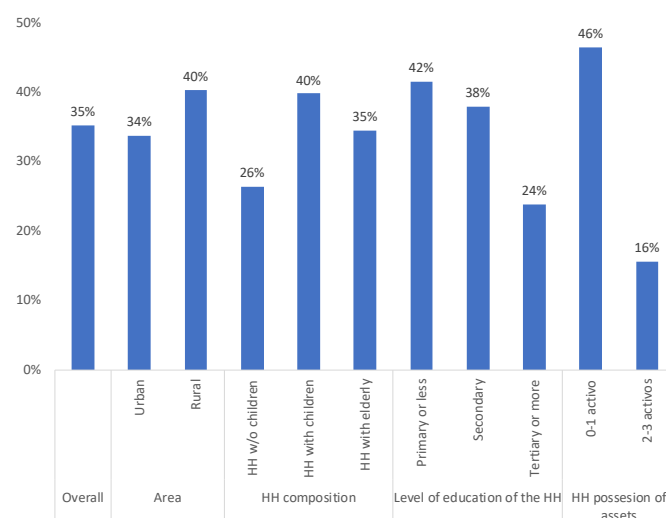
More specifically, nine out of ten households with limited asset ownership and underage children resorted to these mechanisms. Indeed, for 10.8 per cent of households with school-age children, these coping mechanisms included a child having to enter the labour force. This share was even higher for rural households (15.4 per cent). In-person school attendance rates in Colombia rose from 8.9 per cent in mid-2021 to 62.9 per cent at the end of the year. Although this share was higher for households whose heads had secondary education or higher and for those with more assets, the benefits of in-person teaching are not yet evident in children's educations: more than half of the respondents (53.9 per cent) said that their children are learning less than before the pandemic. It is thus likely that the long-term accumulation of human capital will be jeopardised by this crisis.

Figure 2: Households reporting a change in income (%)
End of 2021 vs. Mid 2021



Source: World Bank and UNDP LAC High Frequency Phone Surveys, Phase II, Wave 2

Figure 3: Household that ran out of food (%)
End of 2021



Key indicators: Households and children

Distribution among groups	Income	Coping		Food Insecurity	Education (6-17 yo)	
	% households that report a reduction in total income (End of 2021 vs. Mid 2021)	% of households that resorted to at least one mechanism to manage financial stress in 2021*	% of households reporting school-age children entering in the labour force	% households that ran out of food (last 30 days)	Change in the % of school-age children who attended face-to-face classes (End 2021 vs. Mid 2021) (pp)	% of enrolled children who are learning less than before the pandemic
Overall	32.5%	82.3%	10.8%	35.3%	54.0	53.9%
Urban	32.2%	81.8%	9.2%	33.7%	53.9	54.2%
Rural	33.3%	84.0%	15.4%	40.3%	53.8	53.3%
HH w/o children (0-17)	25.3%	72.1%	-	26.4%	-	-
HH with children (0-17)	36.2%	87.5%	10.8%	39.8%	54.0	53.9%
HH with elderly (65+)	30.8%	78.5%	13.1%	34.5%	44.8	54.3%
HH with 0-1 asset	38.3%	87.8%	12.8%	46.5%	51.8	52.1%
HH with 2-3 assets	22.4%	72.5%	6.7%	15.6%	57.6	57.3%
HH education - Primary or less	35.7%	84.6%	12.1%	41.5%	42.5	59.8%
HH education - Secondary	36.2%	83.8%	10.1%	38.0%	59.4	51.0%
HH education - Tertiary or more	22.7%	77.2%	10.9%	23.9%	57.0	52.8%

* Coping mechanisms are the strategies used to cope with the financial stress generated by the reduction in income during the pandemic. Particularly, non-payment of financial obligations, use of savings and entry into the labour force.

Source: World Bank and UNDP LAC High Frequency Phone Surveys, Phase II, Wave 2

HIGH FREQUENCY PHONE SURVEY

The World Bank and UNDP conducted a multi-wave High-Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS) in 2021 to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the welfare of Latin American and Caribbean households. The second wave was collected between November and December 2021, and the data is nationally representative for 22 countries: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, and Uruguay. The HFPS provides information on the welfare impacts that households experienced with respect to food insecurity, changes in employment, income changes, access to health and education services, and coping mechanisms. For further information see [Chapeau Phase II, wave 2](#).