



# COVID-19 IN LAC

## DOMINICA

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



September 2022

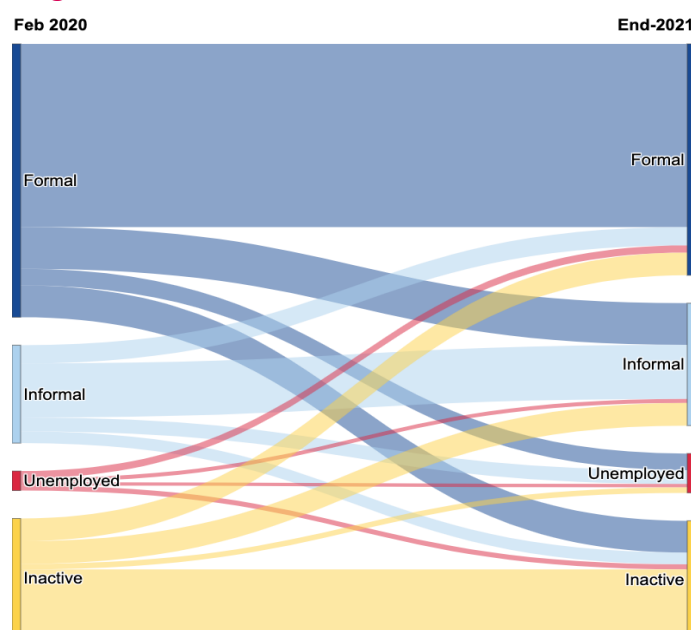
Although initially spared, Dominica ultimately faced a relatively high number of confirmed Covid-19 cases and deaths due to the pandemic. International and domestic mobility restrictions affected the tourism, construction, wholesale, and retail sectors, interrupting the economic recovery from Hurricane Maria and leading to a contraction of 16.6 per cent of GDP in 2020. More than two years since the start of the pandemic, the Dominican labour market is slowly beginning to recover. Job loss rates increased 3.0 percentage points between June and December 2021, going from 17.0 per cent to 20.0 per cent; that is, one in five people who had been employed before the pandemic lost their jobs by the end of 2021. Of these, 11.7 per cent dropped out of the labour force altogether, and 8.2 per cent became unemployed. These job losses highlighted the gender gap: women were almost twice as likely to lose their jobs as men (26.4 per cent versus 14.6 per cent). By the end of 2021, 42.7 per cent of the population that had not been economically active also entered the labour force. This rate was especially high among young people and younger adults: four out of every five people aged 25-54 became economically active, as did three out of every five aged 18-25. Some 89.2 per cent of those who joined the labour force found employment; half of them were in informal jobs. Indeed, 55.8 per cent of those who held formal jobs were unemployed or were economically inactive before the pandemic moved into informal employment by late 2021, which reveals a significant decline in the quality of employment in the country. Two-thirds of women, people with secondary education, and people between 25 and 54 years of age moved into the informal segment. The pandemic also triggered an increase in domestic unpaid work. In mid-2021, 57.5 per cent of respondents said that the time they spent helping their children with schoolwork had increased, and this figure only dropped by 2.1 percentage points by the end of the year. Despite these reductions, there was a 12.0-percentage-point rise in the share of respondents with primary education or less and aged 18-24 who reported that their care burden had increased. By late 2021, 59.5 per cent of women reported that they were spending more time helping their children with school activities (3.4 percentage points more than in the middle of the year), while 49.9 of men said so (1.3 percentage points less than in the middle of the year).

### 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	20.0%	42.7%	55.8%	-2.1
Females	26.4%	40.0%	66.6%	-3.4
Males	14.6%	47.0%	50.0%	-1.3
18 to 25 years old	21.6%	63.4%	59.1%	12.2
26 to 45 years old	18.2%	81.5%	66.1%	-8.1
46 to 64 years old	20.3%	37.9%	53.5%	1.6
65 and older	28.7%	14.3%	42.7%	2.3
Primary or less	19.7%	17.8%	47.0%	12.5
Secondary	23.7%	53.9%	66.4%	-5.1
Tertiary and more	16.8%	55.5%	54.2%	-9.0

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

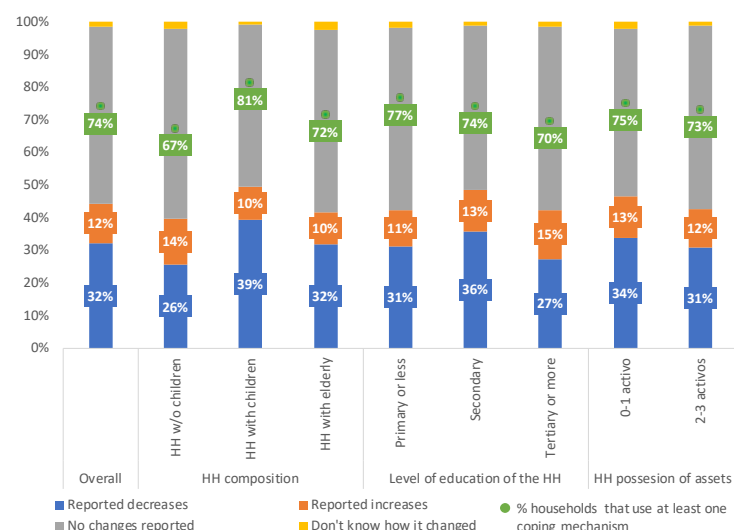
Figure 1: Transitions in the labour market



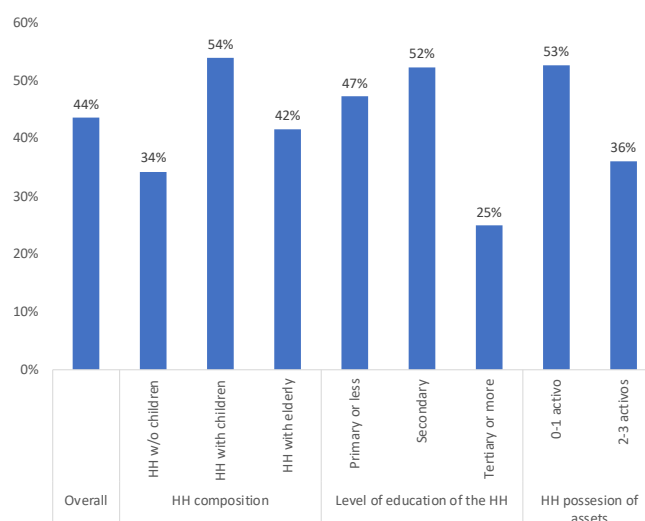
Changes in the labour market and government transfers have begun to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic on household welfare. None of the strategies used have made up for the lost income caused by the pandemic; nearly one-third of households (32.2 per cent) reported that their income had declined since the middle of the year. These income losses were even higher for households with children under 18 (39.3 per cent). As a result, 73.9 per cent of households resorted to at least one of the following coping mechanisms to make up for lost income and cover their basic needs: non-payment of financial obligations, the use of savings and entry into the labour force by adults and children who were not previously economically active. These strategies were more frequent in households with dependent children (81.3 per cent) and less educated heads (76.7 per cent). The entry of children into the labour force is noteworthy. Specifically, in 9.7 per cent of households with school-age children, a child had to seek employment as a strategy to cope with the financial stress triggered by the pandemic. The households that resorted most frequently to this mechanism were those with lower asset ownership rates (17.1 per cent). Despite all these efforts to cover their basic needs, 43.6 per cent of households reported going without food in the 30 days leading up to the survey.

This value was 3.3 percentage points above that reported in mid-2021 and 25.2 percentage points above pre-pandemic levels. The most vulnerable households (those with low asset ownership rates and less educated heads) and those with dependent children were more frequently affected by food insecurity. Dominica was one of the few countries in the region where schools were fully open for the entire first half of 2021, such that its in-person attendance rate was 96.9 per cent, one of the highest in the region at the time. However, the rapid increase in Covid infections in the second half of the year prompted the country to step up measures to contain the spread of the virus. Mobility restrictions and school closures for the remainder of the academic year caused the face-to-face attendance rate to drop by 93.6 percentage points to 3.3 per cent, the lowest in the region. These changes caused significant setbacks to the quality of education—indeed, 43.2 per cent of respondents said they thought children were learning less than before the pandemic. This figure is especially concerning for households with low asset ownership rates, where 58.5 per cent of respondents agreed that the quality of education has declined. All these developments could have negative effects on both long-term human capital formation and future welfare, especially for the most vulnerable households.

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



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



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

## 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 coping mechanism to manage financial stress in 2021*	% of households reporting school-age children entering in the labour force as a coping mechanism	% 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	32.2%	73.9%	9.7%	43.6%	-93.6	43.2%
HH w/o children (0-17)	25.8%	67.2%	-	34.2%	-	-
HH with children (0-17)	39.3%	81.3%	9.7%	54.0%	-93.6	43.2%
HH with elderly (65+)	32.0%	71.5%	9.3%	41.6%	-92.1	39.8%
HH with 0-1 asset	33.9%	75.0%	17.1%	52.7%	-93.6	58.5%
HH with 2-3 assets	30.8%	73.0%	7.0%	36.1%	-93.8	38.2%
HH education - Primary or less	31.3%	76.7%	10.0%	47.3%	-93.3	44.6%
HH education - Secondary	35.9%	74.0%	10.6%	52.4%	-92.9	42.4%
HH education - Tertiary or more	27.4%	69.6%	5.6%	25.0%	-95.3	41.4%

\* 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](#).