



# COVID-19 IN LAC

## URUGUAY

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



September 2022

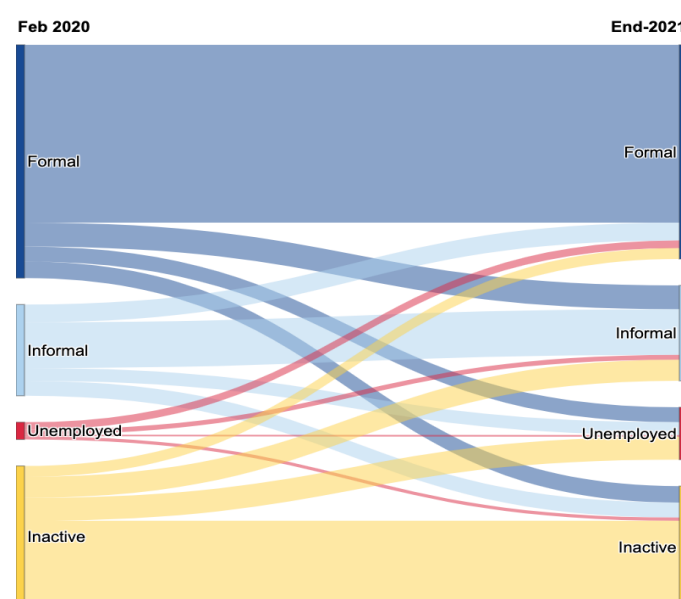
Although Uruguay was relatively successful in containing the spread of Covid-19 in 2020, its GDP fell by 5.9 per cent that year. In 2021, an exceptionally high number of Covid-19 cases per capita in early 2021 dashed expectations of a rapid recovery, even though the country's vaccination roll-out was good and exports increased substantially. Although GDP grew by 4.4 per cent in 2021, the adverse effects of the pandemic on the labour market were still being felt at the end of the year. Some 18.3 per cent of workers had lost their pre-Covid jobs—of these, 8.6 per cent became unemployed, and the remaining 9.7 per cent dropped out of the labour force altogether. Job loss was more frequent among women, young people and the less educated. These departures from the labour market were offset by the entry of 38.7 per cent of those who were economically inactive before the pandemic. This situation was more frequent in rural areas, where one out of every two of those who had been economically inactive became active. The rate of entry into the labour force was 68.8 per cent for young people and 67.8 per cent for younger adults. Some 52.2 per cent of workers who held formal jobs, were unemployed or were economically inactive moved into informal employment, revealing a clear decline in labour market conditions. Three out of every five workers in rural areas, aged 65 or older or with higher education moved into informal employment by the end of 2021. The pandemic also increased the amount of time spent on unpaid care work. By mid-2021, more than half of the respondents considered that the time spent helping their children with school activities had increased, but by the end of the year, this figure had decreased by 18.5 percentage points to 33.7 per cent. This decrease was more marked for the population with higher education, for whom it dropped from 70.2 per cent to 29.8 per cent.

### 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	18.3%	38.7%	52.2%	-18.5
Urban	17.8%	36.8%	50.2%	-18.9
Rural	21.6%	53.6%	63.6%	-14.7
Females	23.7%	39.1%	57.4%	-15.9
Males	13.3%	38.1%	47.4%	-24.0
18 to 25 years old	25.0%	68.8%	47.6%	-13.2
26 to 45 years old	15.6%	67.8%	57.6%	-24.9
46 to 64 years old	16.9%	35.9%	45.2%	-13.6
65 and older	31.8%	13.5%	65.8%	27.9
Primary or less	28.5%	30.1%	51.7%	-10.9
Secondary	19.9%	45.8%	49.1%	-15.9
Tertiary and more	9.0%	32.0%	65.3%	-40.4

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

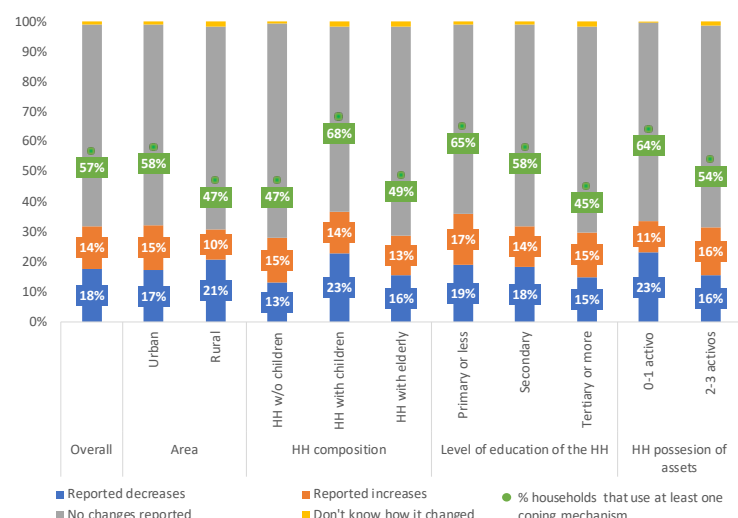
Figure 1: Transitions in the labour market



According to the National Household Survey, poverty levels had increased by 12.0 percentage points by the end of 2020. By the end of 2021, the negative effects that the pandemic was having on household welfare were still evident, albeit to a lesser extent. Some 17.6 per cent of households reported drops in their income levels compared with the middle of the year. Households with dependent children, those with lower asset holdings and those in rural areas were hit hardest by income losses. At the same time, 14 per cent of households reported that their income increased over the same period. Furthermore, 12.6 per cent of households reported having gone without food during the 30 days prior to the survey. Rural households, those with underage children and less educated heads were the most likely to experience food insecurity. Some 56.7 per cent of households had to resort to at least one new mechanism to make up for reduced means as a result of the pandemic.

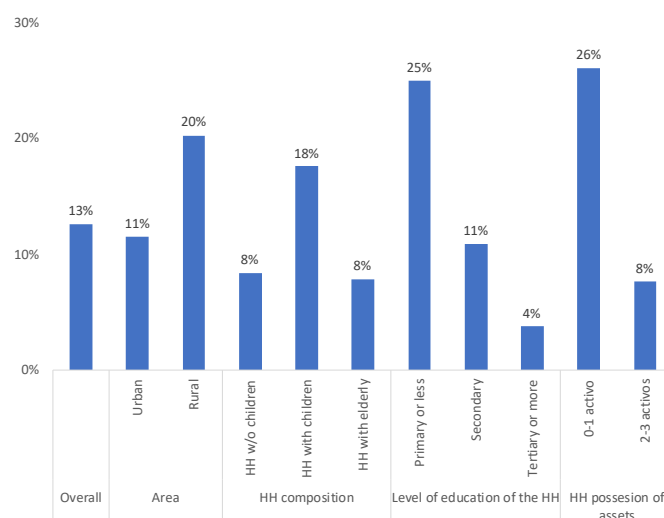
This figure was higher for households with dependent children, less educated heads and lower rates of asset ownership. One of the strategies used to cope with the financial stress triggered by the pandemic was the entry of school-age children into the labour force. Although this mechanism was used by only 4.5 per cent of total households, the share increased to 11.7 per cent for households with lower rates of asset ownership. Between mid-2021 and the end of the year, the proportion of school-age children attending face-to-face classes increased by 67.2 percentage points to 94.6 per cent, one of the highest rates in the region, as a result of schools reopening fully during the second half of 2021. Despite this increase in the in-person attendance rate, one-quarter of respondents said they thought that children are learning less than before the pandemic. This view is particularly high for households with a higher level of education.

**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	17.6%	56.7%	4.5%	12.6%	67.2	24.5%
Urban	17.2%	58.1%	4.2%	11.5%	66.4	25.5%
Rural	20.9%	47.0%	5.8%	20.3%	72.5	20.7%
HH w/o children (0-17)	13.2%	47.0%	-	8.4%	-	-
HH with children (0-17)	22.9%	68.3%	4.5%	17.6%	67.2	24.5%
HH with elderly (65+)	15.6%	49.0%	1.5%	7.9%	53.3	23.9%
HH with 0-1 asset	23.1%	64.2%	11.7%	26.1%	66.3	25.4%
HH with 2-3 assets	15.6%	53.9%	3.1%	7.6%	67.4	24.4%
HH education - Primary or less	19.1%	65.0%	6.8%	25.0%	55.3	17.5%
HH education - Secondary	18.3%	58.0%	4.3%	10.9%	69.7	28.5%
HH education - Tertiary or more	15.0%	45.0%	1.8%	3.8%	76.7	27.0%

\* 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](#).