



# COVID-19 IN LAC

## ECUADOR

2021 LAC HIGH FREQUENCY PHONE SURVEYS: Results Phase II, Wave 1



April 2022

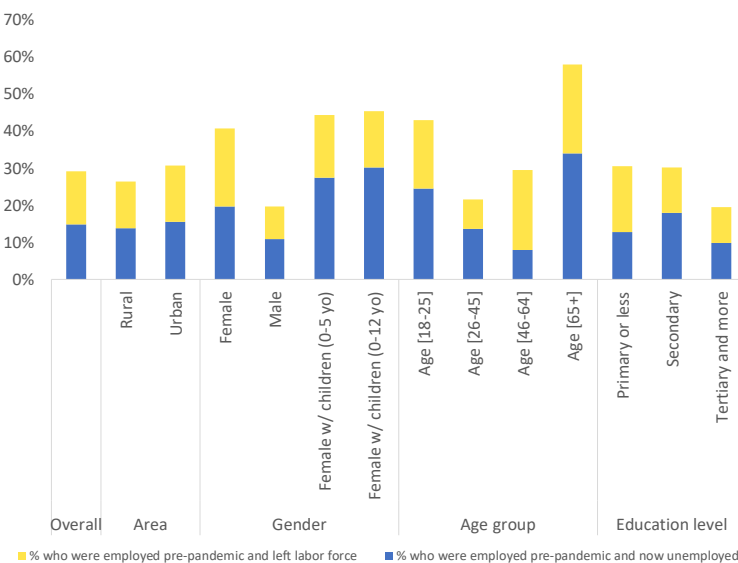
Like other countries in the LAC region, Ecuador was severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the country's GDP fell by 7.8 percent, above the region's contraction of 6.7 percent. In 2021, GDP started to recover with an estimated growth of 3.9 percent, yet recovery in the labor market was slower.

The High-Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS) conducted in Ecuador in mid-2021, showed that the impact on welfare was still being felt over a year into the pandemic. About 3 out of 10 workers had lost their pre-pandemic job, and almost half of them had exited the labor force altogether. Women, especially those with children, young adults, the elderly, and low-skilled workers, were more frequently affected by job losses. The pandemic also took its toll on the quality of work. By mid-2021, 27.2 percent of the previously formal workers had transited into informal jobs, while average working hours dropped from 44.3 hours a week to 35.0. On the other hand, a large share (41.1 percent) of the formerly inactive population entered the labor force during the pandemic. Almost three-quarters of them found a job, although most in informality.

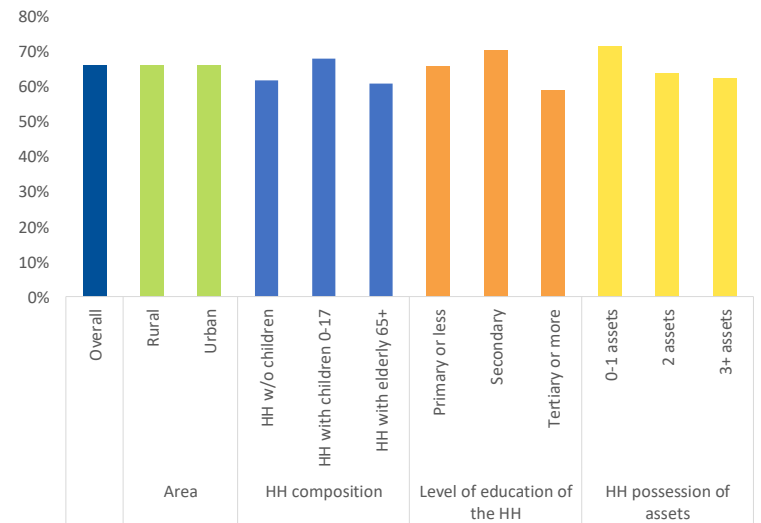
These conditions deteriorated household welfare and food security. By mid-2021, two-thirds of households reported that their income remained below pre-pandemic levels. Around 70 percent of households reported a reduction in income from wages and family businesses. The erosion of household income and the transitions from inactivity suggest that government transfers were insufficient to compensate for income losses, even though 21.8 percent of households received emergency assistance during the pandemic. There were also concerning impacts on food security: by mid-2021, 16.7 percent of households reported an adult had stopped eating for an entire day due to lack of money or other resources, and nearly half of households said they ran out of food in the 30 days preceding the survey, almost twice than before the pandemic. This situation was even more pervasive among the more vulnerable households, as proxied by the level of education of the household head and asset ownership.

Internet connectivity was critical to households' resilience during the pandemic throughout the region. It is still a significant challenge in Ecuador. Of 70.7 percent of households with an Internet connection, 68.6 percent reported having quality problems with the service. Virtuality was the prevalent form of school attendance in Ecuador until June 2021. 93.4 percent of school-age children were attending school at the time of the survey (online or in-person). Most children were engaged in learning activities involving direct interaction with a teacher (83.4 percent) but attending school in person was still exceptional. School closures increased the burden of household responsibilities on adults. Unequal intra-household arrangements resulted in 48.9 percent of women versus 33.0 percent of men reporting an increase in the time spent supporting children's education during the pandemic. However, a third of men reporting an increased burden is unprecedented.

### JOB LOSS (% OF PRE-PANDEMIC WORKERS)



### HOUSEHOLDS (%) WITH REDUCED INCOME



Source: World Bank and UNDP LAC High Frequency Phone Surveys, Phase II, Wave 1.

## KEY INDICATORS: INDIVIDUALS (18+ years old)

Distribution among groups	Labor		Childcare responsibilities		Health	Finance
	% of employed population (pre-pandemic) who lost their pre-pandemic job	% of inactive population (pre-pandemic) who became active (employed or unemployed)	% of formal workers (pre-pandemic) who became informal	% of population who spent more time accompanying children's education	% of population who is not planning to get vaccinated or unsure (vaccination hesitancy)	% of population using mobile wallets
Overall	29.0%	41.1%	27.2%	41.5%	20.7%	5.5%
Rural	26.3%	53.4%	25.7%	36.4%	20.5%	3.0%
Urban	30.6%	34.7%	28.1%	44.7%	20.9%	6.9%
Females	40.6%	38.1%	29.0%	48.9%	17.4%	6.2%
Males	19.6%	48.6%	26.2%	33.0%	24.2%	4.7%
18 to 25 years old	42.8%	52.7%	21.0%	36.6%	27.9%	8.0%
26 to 45 years old	21.5%	56.9%	31.7%	47.2%	20.5%	6.4%
46 to 64 years old	29.4%	31.2%	24.2%	39.2%	21.7%	3.9%
65 and older	57.7%	4.4%	5.8%	1.3%	6.0%	0.1%
Primary or less	30.4%	21.7%	26.5%	25.9%	22.5%	3.3%
Secondary	30.0%	49.4%	30.7%	51.2%	21.2%	5.3%
Tertiary and more	19.4%	49.7%	16.6%	60.1%	12.5%	14.0%

Source: World Bank and UNDP LAC High Frequency Phone Surveys, Phase II, Wave 1.

## KEY INDICATORS: HOUSEHOLDS AND CHILDREN

Distribution among groups	Income		Food Insecurity	Education (6-17 yo)		Connectivity
	% HH that report a reduction in total income (current v. pre-pandemic)	% HH that received Emergency Government Transfers during the pandemic	% HHs that ran out of food (last 30 days)	% of children in school age who attended school (in person or virtually)	% of children in school age who interacted with teacher (in-person or online classes)	% HHs that had problems with internet service due to poor access quality / speed
Overall	66.1%	21.8%	48.5%	93.4%	83.4%	68.6%
Rural	66.2%	28.2%	56.5%	95.0%	79.7%	67.9%
Urban	66.1%	18.3%	44.3%	92.4%	85.7%	68.8%
HH w/o children (0-17)	61.7%	16.0%	37.8%	-	-	64.8%
HH with children (0-17)	68.0%	24.2%	53.1%	93.4%	83.4%	70.2%
HH with elderly (65+)	60.8%	20.2%	44.2%	92.3%	82.4%	67.8%
0-1 assets	71.4%	25.7%	71.1%	90.9%	75.2%	65.3%
2 assets	63.9%	27.0%	46.3%	92.4%	82.5%	69.8%
3+ assets	62.5%	13.1%	26.4%	97.1%	93.2%	69.4%
HH education - Primary or less	65.8%	26.4%	58.9%	91.3%	76.0%	68.3%
HH education - Secondary	70.3%	25.5%	50.4%	95.1%	86.1%	70.0%
HH education - Tertiary or more	59.0%	9.5%	31.5%	95.1%	92.1%	65.7%

Source: World Bank and UNDP LAC High Frequency Phone Surveys, Phase II, Wave 1.

### 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 first wave was collected between May and July 2021, and the data is nationally representative for 24 countries: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, 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 data for Brazil was collected between July 26 and October 1. 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. Key indicators on socioeconomic effects are available at the [COVID-19 monitoring global dashboard](#), which provides 96 harmonized indicators across 50 countries in Latin America and the world. For further information, see [World Bank and UNDP \(2021\)](#).

Produced by the World Bank Group and UNDP.

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