

The Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 on Households in Cambodia

Results from a High-Frequency Phone Survey of Households
Round 6

10 February–23 March 2022
(CSES and IDPoor sample)



22 June, 2022

High-Frequency Phone Survey of Households in Cambodia

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6
Survey period	11–26 May 2020 (LSMS+) 11–28 June 2020 (IDPoor)	17 August– 7 September 2020	14 October– 6 November 2020	17 December 2020– 12 January 2021	01–21 March 2021	10 February– 23 March 2022
Sample size	1,684 respondents 700 (LSMS+) 984 (IDPoor)	1,667 respondents 612 (LSMS+) 1,055 (IDPoor)	1,665 respondents 481 (LSMS+) 1,184 (IDPoor)	1,687 respondents 410 (LSMS+) 1,277 (IDPoor)	1,688 respondents 378 (LSMS+) 1,309 (IDPoor)	2,518 respondents 1,706 (CSES) 812 (IDPoor)
Coverage	LSMS+: National, Urban and Rural IDPoor: National					CSES: National, Urban and Rural IDPoor: National
Partnerships	World Bank; MoP, NIS; MoSVY;	World Bank; MoP, NIS; MoSVY; National Social Protection Council (NSPC)				

Note: MoP: Ministry of Planning; NIS: the National Institute of Statistic; MoSVY: Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation

CSES sample is nationally representative of all households, and IDPoor sample is drawn from the beneficiary list of the conditional cash transfer for pregnant women and child under the age of 2 and therefore more likely to be poor. IDPoor households comprised about 20 percent of total households.

Key Findings (I)

Access to Food Staples, Health & Education Services

- Nearly all households were able to access basic goods and services (food staples, medicines, and health services) when needed in February–March 2022, as markets and the health system continued to meet demand.
- Nearly universal COVID-19 vaccination rates thanks to high vaccine availability and low levels of vaccine hesitancy.
 - As of February–March 2022, 98 percent of the respondents had been vaccinated against COVID-19.
 - Three-fourths of unvaccinated respondents would like to get vaccinated.
- Although all schools resumed in-person instruction on November 1, 2021, 1 in 17 children aged 6–17 years (who ever attended school) are currently not in school. Dropout rates are even higher for children from IDPoor households.
 - 15 percent of children aged 15–17 years currently not in school, school drop out rates are the highest at the upper secondary level.
 - Dropout rates do not differ by gender.
 - More than twice as many children from IDPoor households are currently not attending school than children from CSES households.
 - Every second child out of school is because of a lack of money.

Key Findings (II)

Employment and Income

- Employment has **surpassed pre-pandemic levels** when **82 percent** of respondents were working.
 - By February–March 2022, **91 percent** of main earners in CSES households **worked** in the week preceding the survey. With **78 percent** of main earners working, employment levels are lower among IDPoor households.
 - Those who stopped working primarily cite seasonality as the reason.
- Revenues of **non-farm family businesses** are **stabilizing**. Low consumer demand remains the driver of revenue losses.
 - In February–March 2022, **65 percent** of CSES households operating a non-farm family business reported having made “the same revenue” relative to the previous month, compared to **46 percent** in March 2021, **37 percent** in December, **40 percent** in October, **31 percent** in August, and **37 percent** in May 2020.
 - In February–March 2022, **57 percent** of IDPoor households operating a non-farm family business reported having made “the same revenue” relative to the previous month, compared to **29 percent** in March 2021, **46 percent** in December, **44 percent** in October, **42 percent** in August, and **18 percent** in June 2020.
 - About **85 percent** of family businesses with reduced or no sales mention having fewer or no customers.
- About 1 in 3 households continued to report that their household income had declined.
 - In February–March 2022, **27 percent** of CSES households reported a decline in household income relative to the previous round, compared to **45 percent** in March 2021, **48 percent** in December, **51 percent** in October, **63 percent** in August, and **83 percent** in May 2020.
 - In February–March 2022, **37 percent** of IDPoor household reported a decline in household income relative to the previous round, compared to **52 percent** in March 2021, **46 percent** in December, **44 percent** in October, **57 percent** in August, and **88 percent** in June 2020.
 - Households reported that their total household income declined by **8 percent** since the last interview.

Key Findings (III)

Social Assistance (SA)

- By February–March 2022, **97 percent** of eligible IDPoor households had **received** some **SA** and **96 percent** of eligible IDPoor households had **received** the **COVID-19 relief cash transfers** that the government began to disburse in June 2020.
- Only **4 percent** of eligible IDPoor households had **yet to receive these relief transfers** and among those, registration—required to receive the transfers—has been declining. Lack of awareness of the COVID-19 cash transfer program was the main reason why eligible households remained unregistered.
- **Amount and frequency of cash transfers** disbursed to beneficiary households are **as expected**: As of February–March 2022, nearly half of the beneficiaries had received **20 cash installments**, averaging to a total of **US\$763** since the launch of the program.
- Beneficiary households perceive the **relief cash transfers** to have been **important** for and to have **improved** their **economic well-being**.

Key Findings (IV)

Coping Strategies

- Households **most commonly** reported having had to **reduce** their **consumption** to cope with the COVID-19 crisis.
- However, a higher share of households **borrowed from friends and family (38 percent)**, **loan from financial institute (31 percent)**, **delayed payment obligations (30 percent)**, **sold assets (26 percent)**, or engaged in **additional income-generating activities (36 percent)** in response to the pandemic in February–March 2022 than during the earlier period of COVID-19 (May–June 2020).

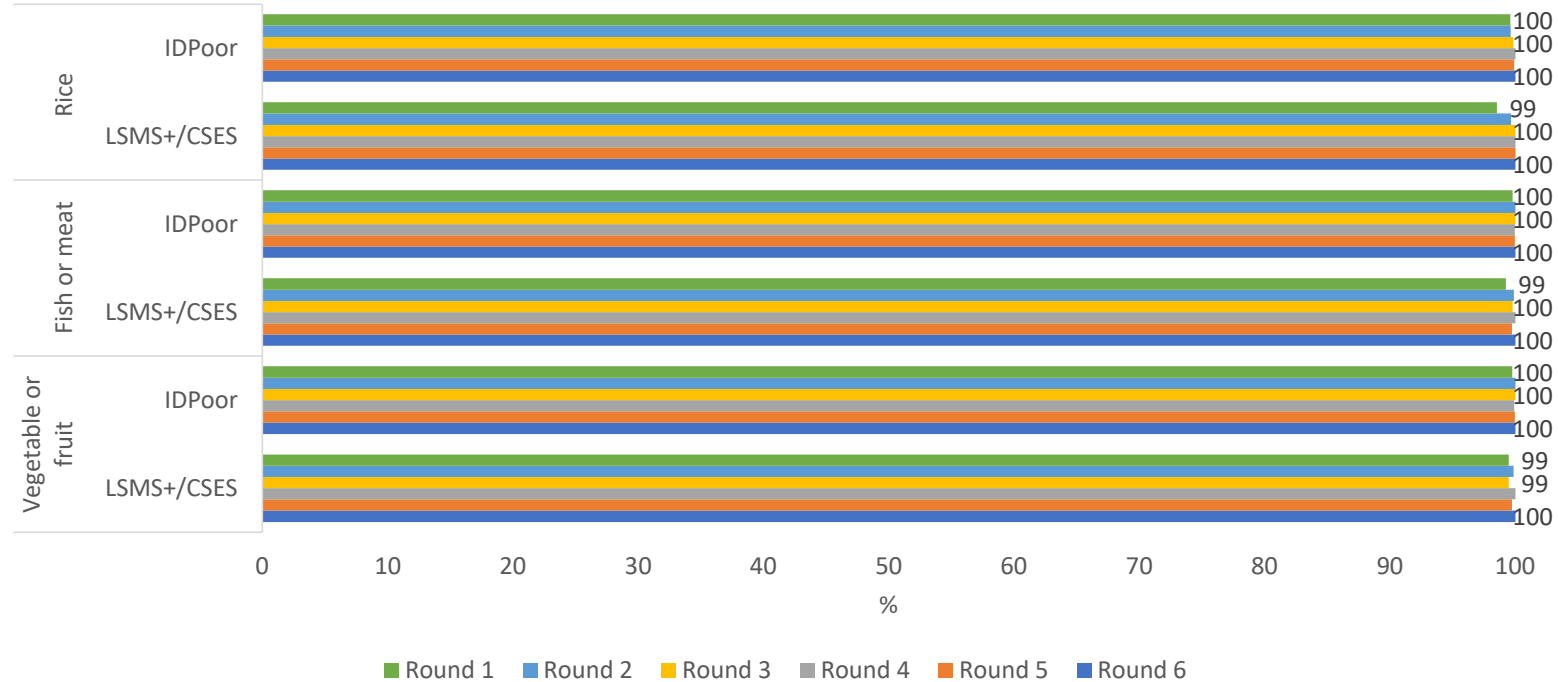
Food Insecurity

- After **moderate-or-severe food insecurity** and **severe food insecurity** fell sharply between August and October 2020, food insecurity stabilized and has remained almost unchanged between March 2021 and February–March 2022.
- **Moderate-or-severe food insecurity** continues to be much **more elevated among IDPoor households** in February–March 2022.
 - Among CSES households, the prevalence of moderate-or-severe food insecurity was **17 percent** in February–March 2022, **21 percent** March 2021, **25 percent** in December, **25 percent** in October, and **49 percent** in August 2020.
 - Among IDPoor households, the prevalence of moderate-or-severe food insecurity was **46 percent** in February–March 2022, **42 percent** in March 2021, **44 percent** in December, **49 percent** in October, and **67 percent** in August 2020.

Access to Basic Necessities

Access to food staples remained robust as markets continued to function well since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

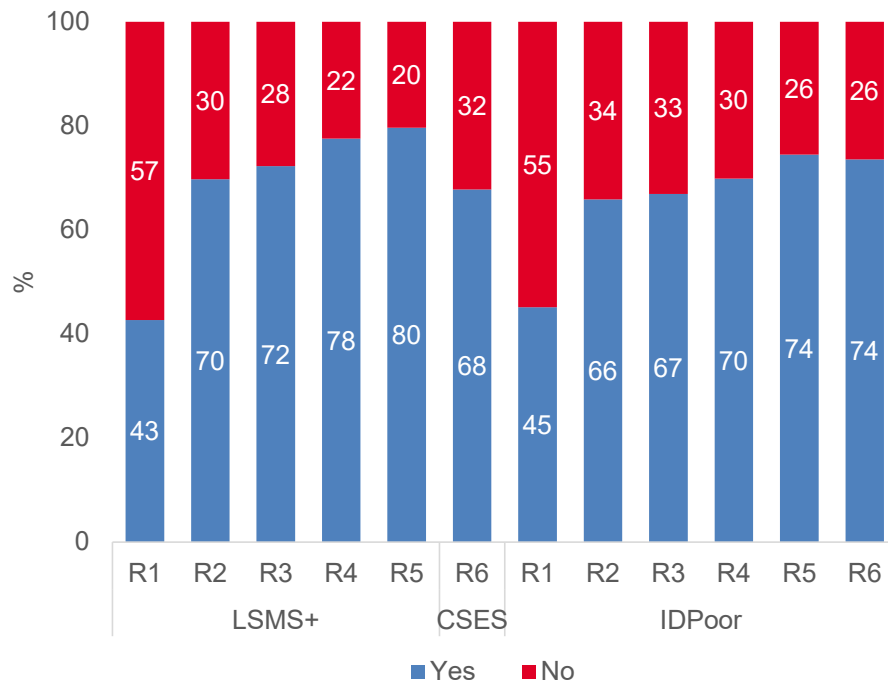
In the last 7 days, was your household able to buy...
(conditional on having tried to buy [staple food])



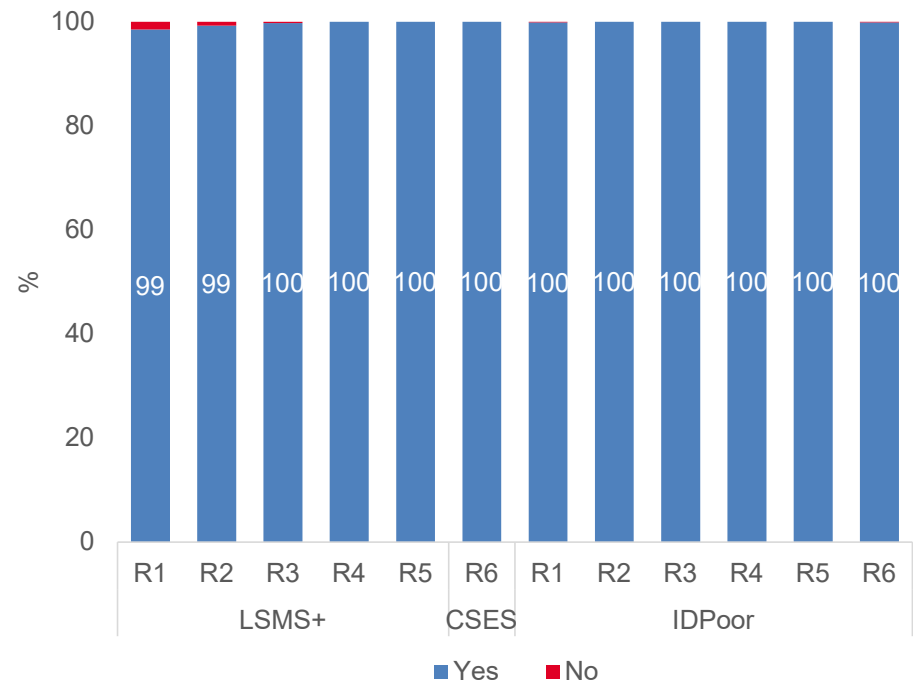
Note: LSMS+ sample for R1-R5, CSES sample for R6.

Nearly all households have been able to access medicine when needed throughout the pandemic.

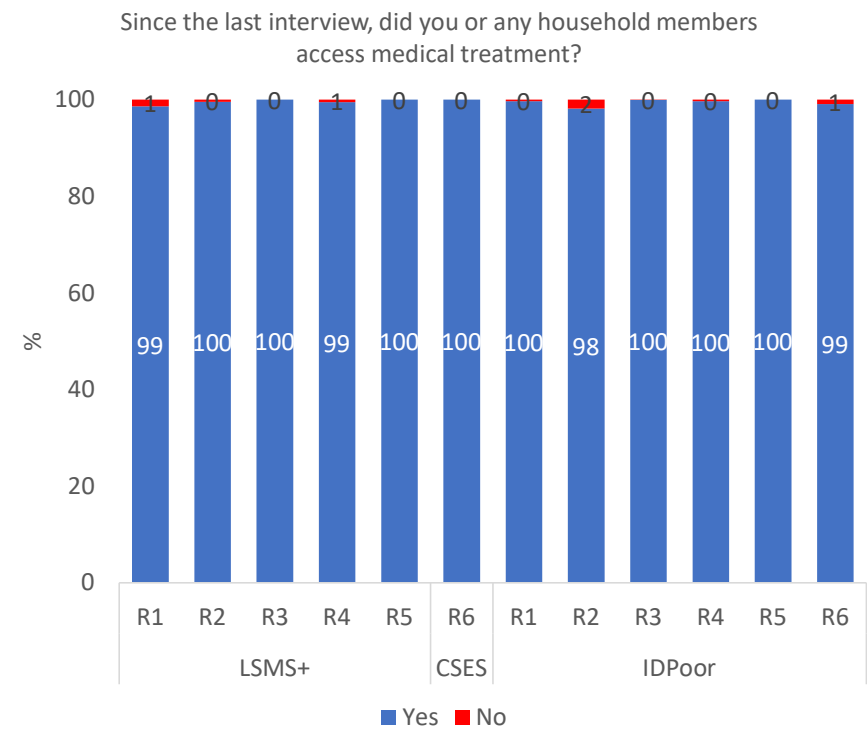
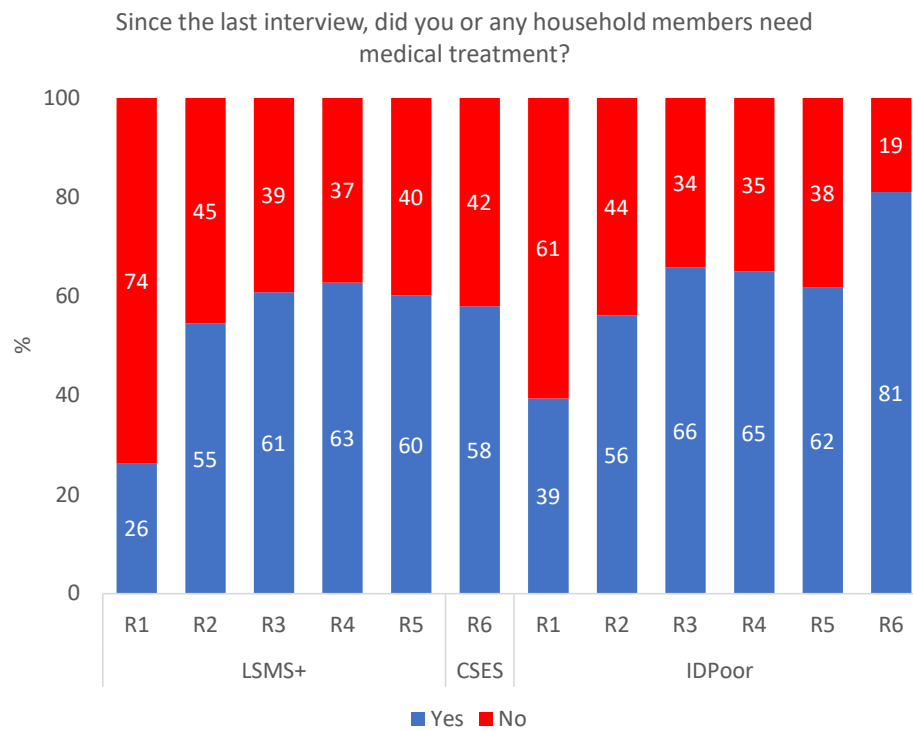
In the last week, has your household tried to buy medicine?



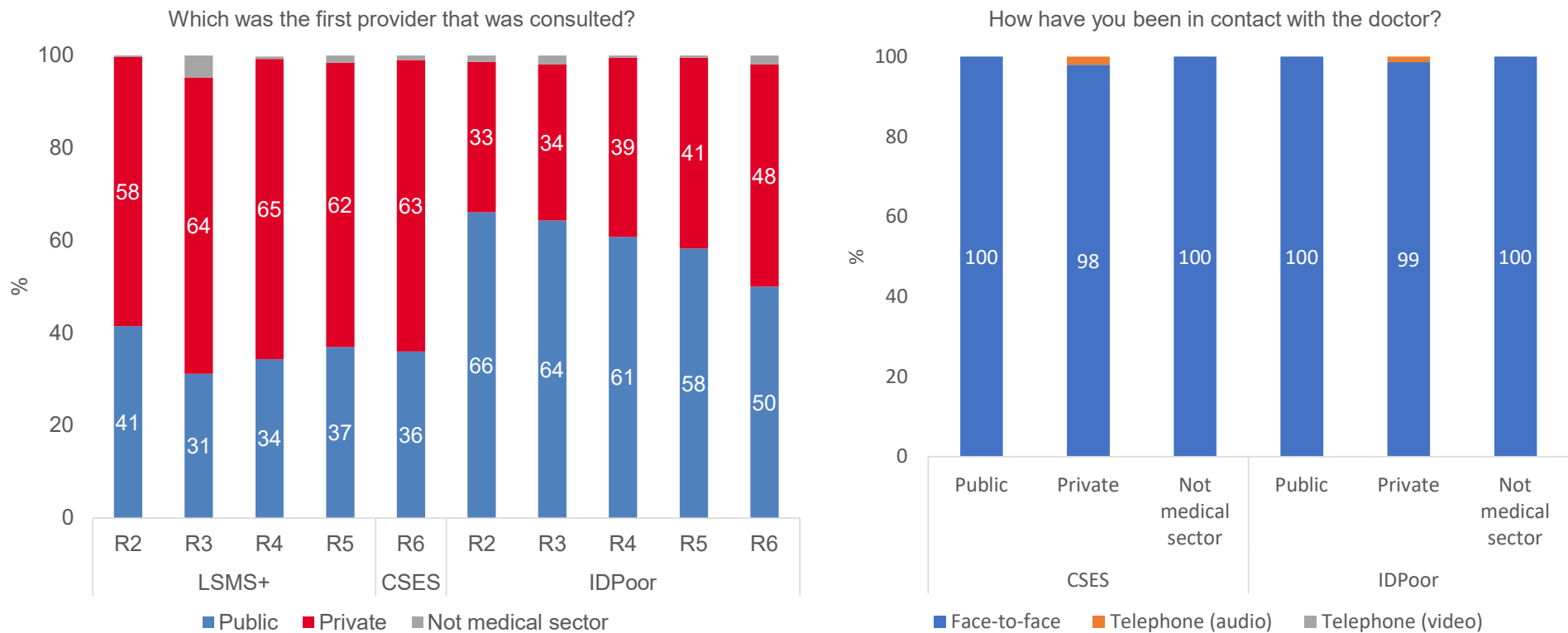
In the last week, has your household been able to buy medicine? (for those who tried to buy)



Nearly all households have been able to access health services when needed throughout the pandemic.



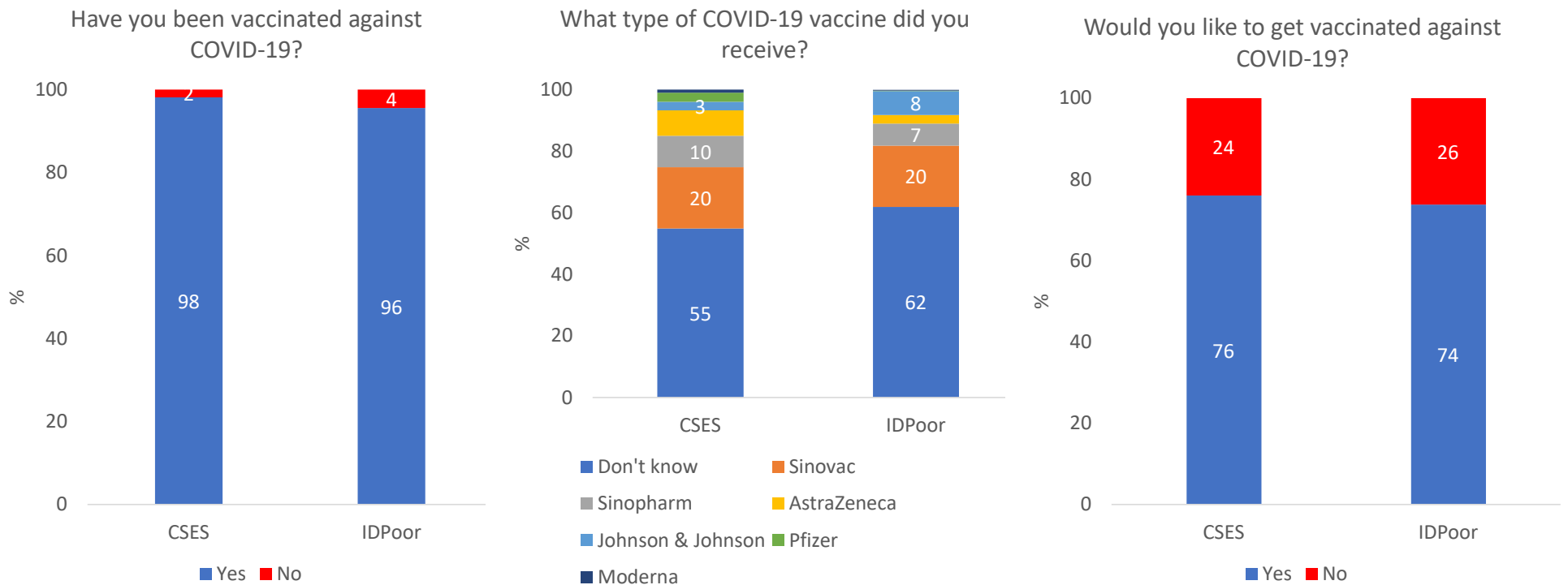
Public health facilities, consulted mostly by IDPoor households, and other medical providers operate almost exclusively face-to-face.



For those who were able to access medical treatment since the last interview or March 2021.

Note: Round 6.

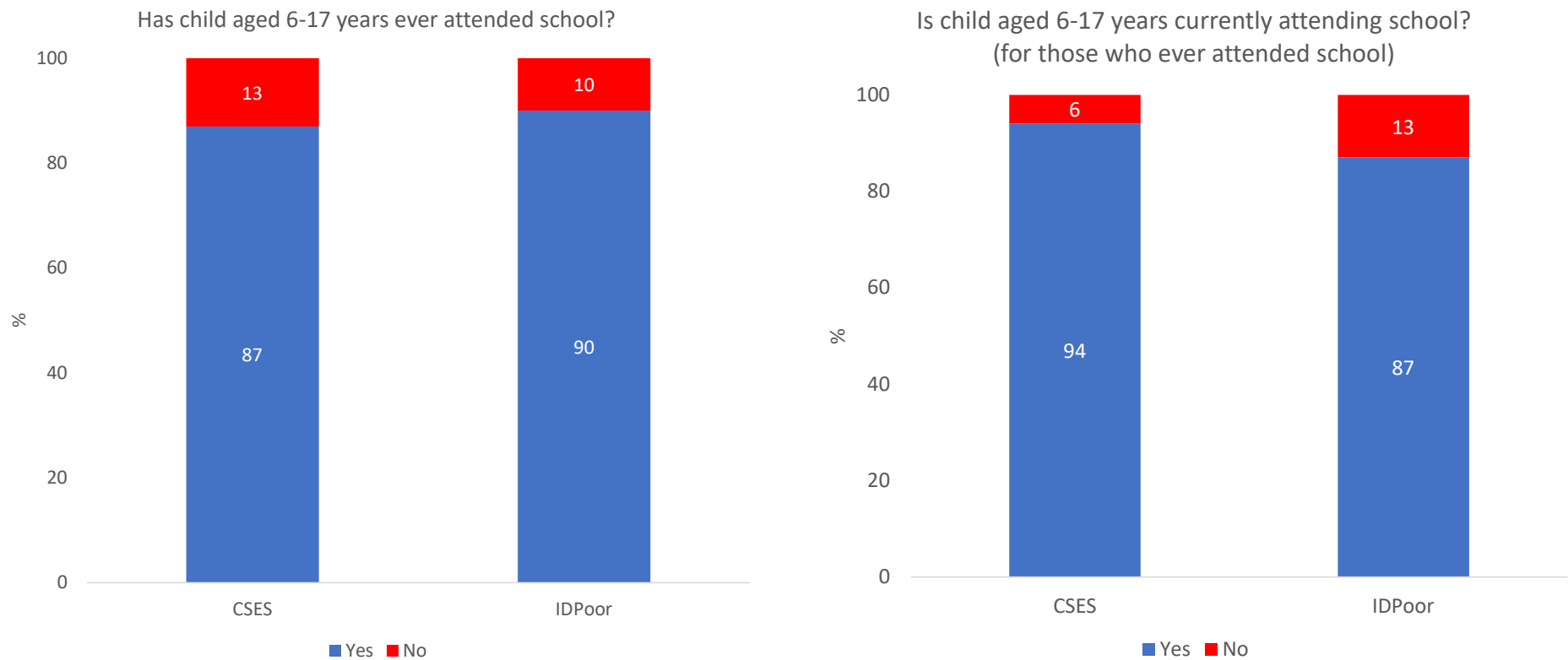
Cambodia achieved nearly universal COVID-19 vaccination coverage thanks to high vaccine availability and low levels of vaccine hesitancy.



For those who have received the COVID-19 vaccine.

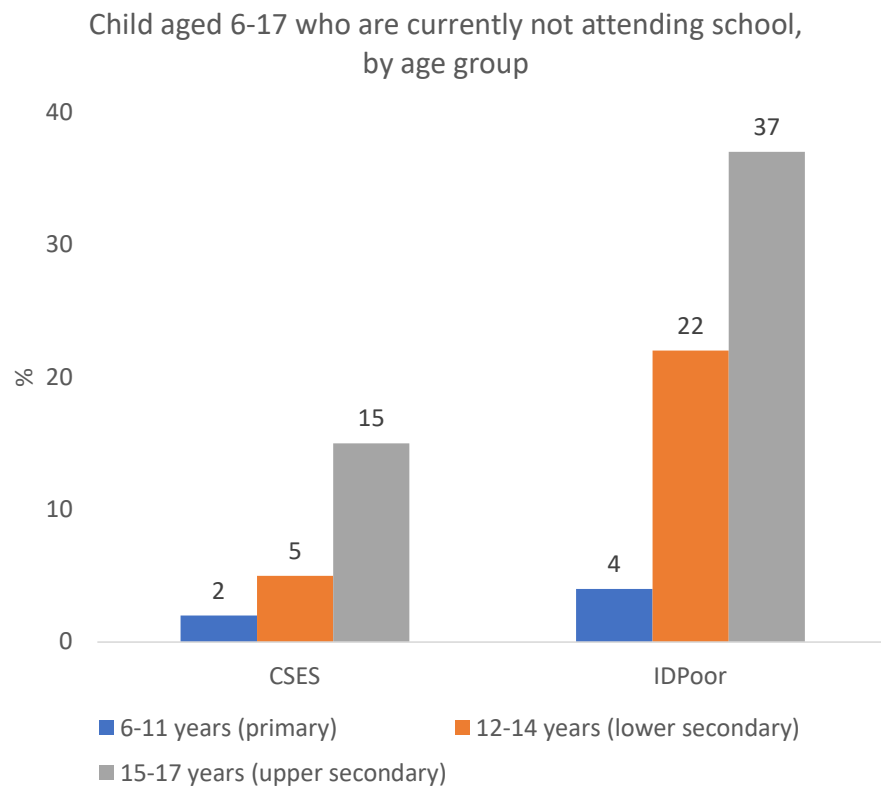
For those who have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19.

1 in 10 children aged 6–17 have never attended school. Of the remaining children who ever attended, 1 in 17 are currently not in school.

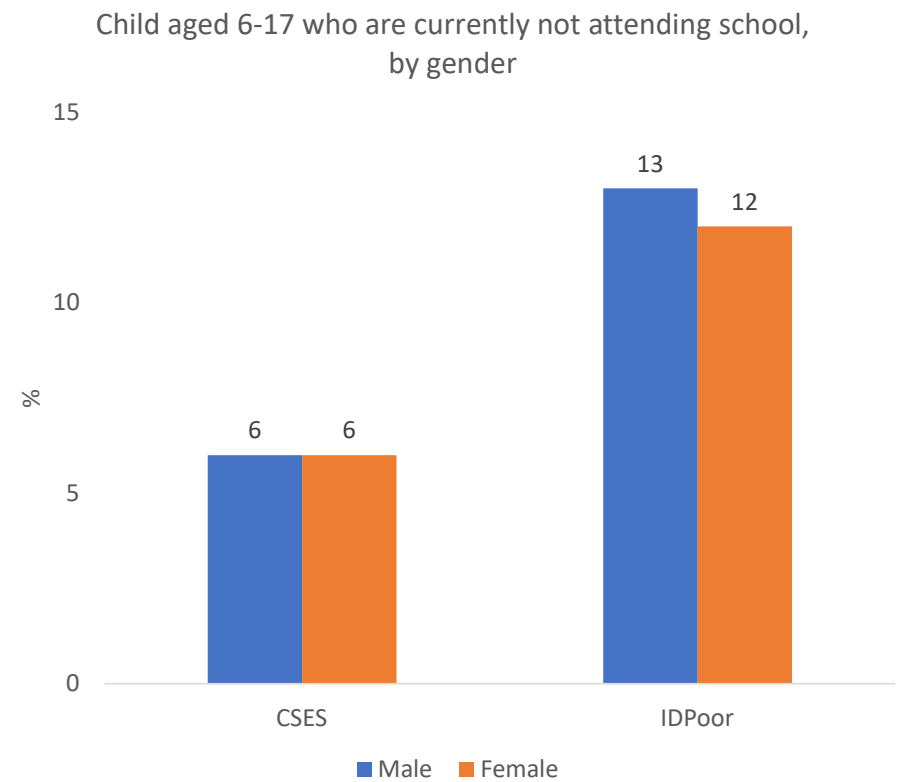


Note: All schools have resumed in-person instruction with strict measures in place on November 1, 2021.

Children aged 15–17 years are more likely to be out of school than children of primary and lower secondary age.

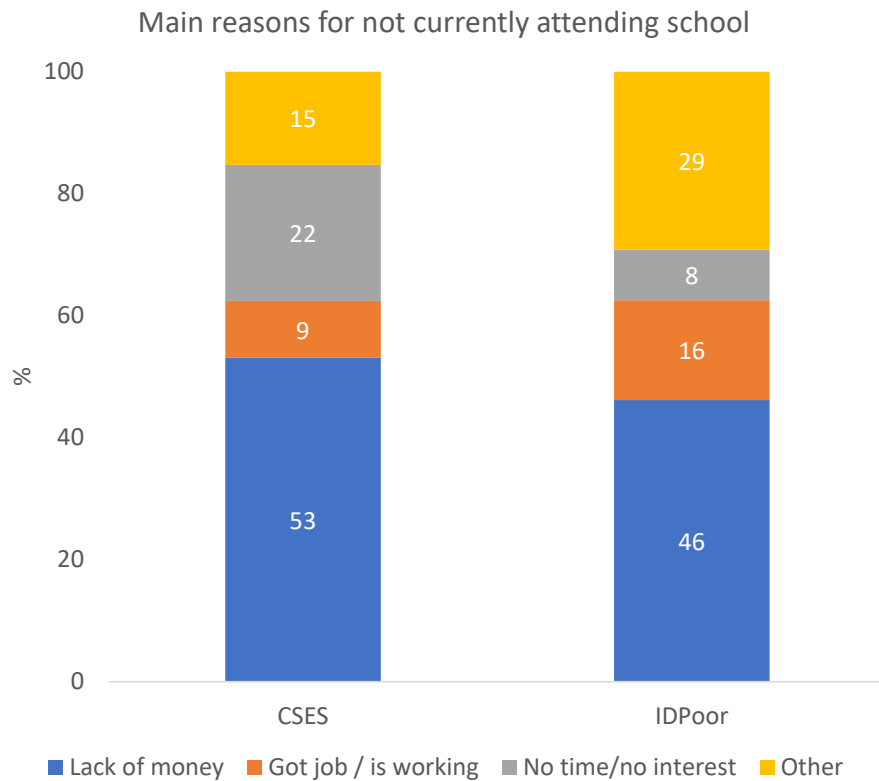


Note: Condition on children who ever attended school.

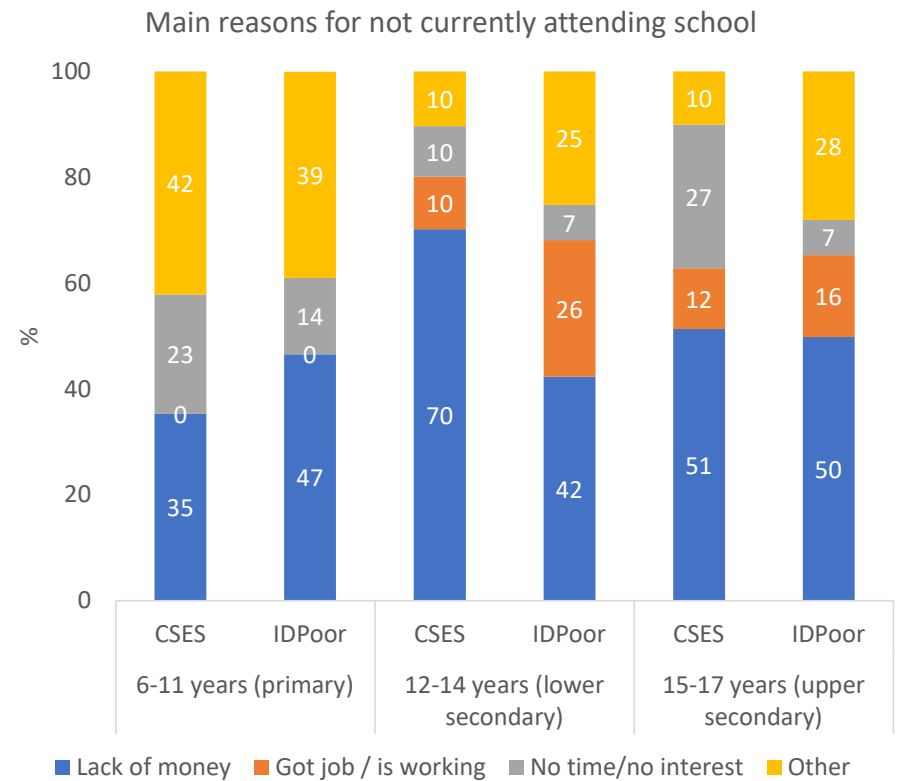


Note: Condition on children who ever attended school.

Every second child is out of school mainly because of a lack of money.

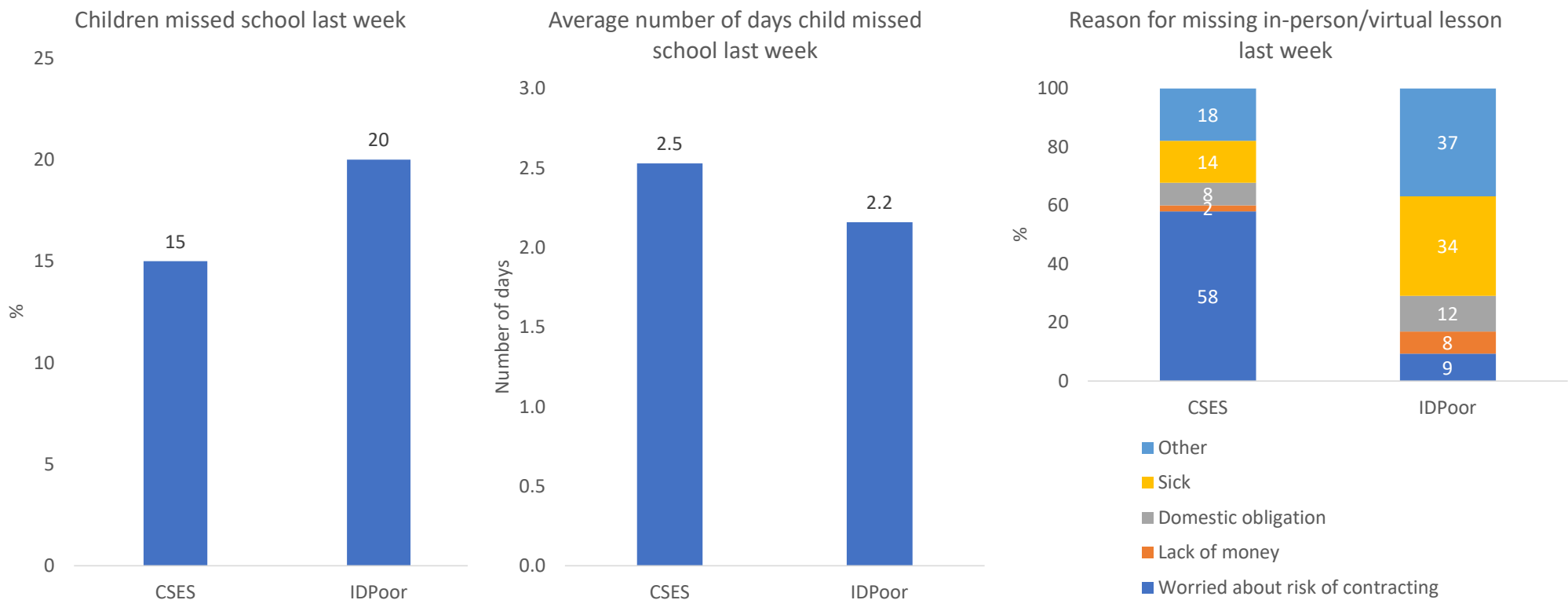


Note: Condition on children who are currently not attending school.



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3 in 20 children aged 6–17 missed school last week. They missed 2.5 days on average, primarily because of worries about contracting COVID-19 and sickness.



Note: Round 6. Condition on children who are currently attending school.

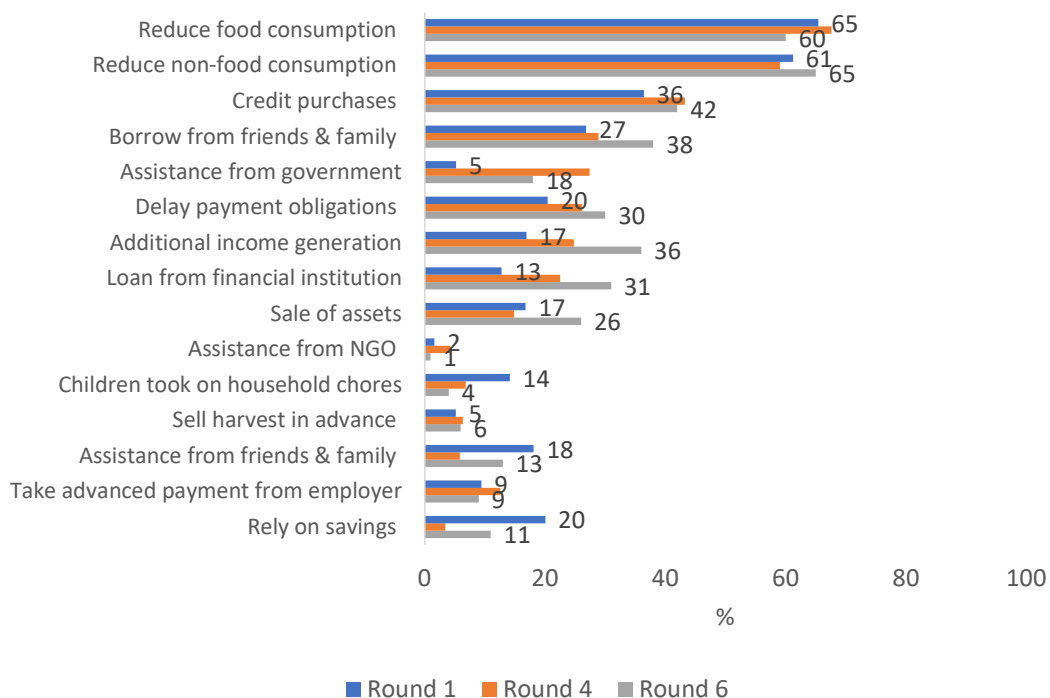
Note: Round 6. Condition on children who are currently attending school.

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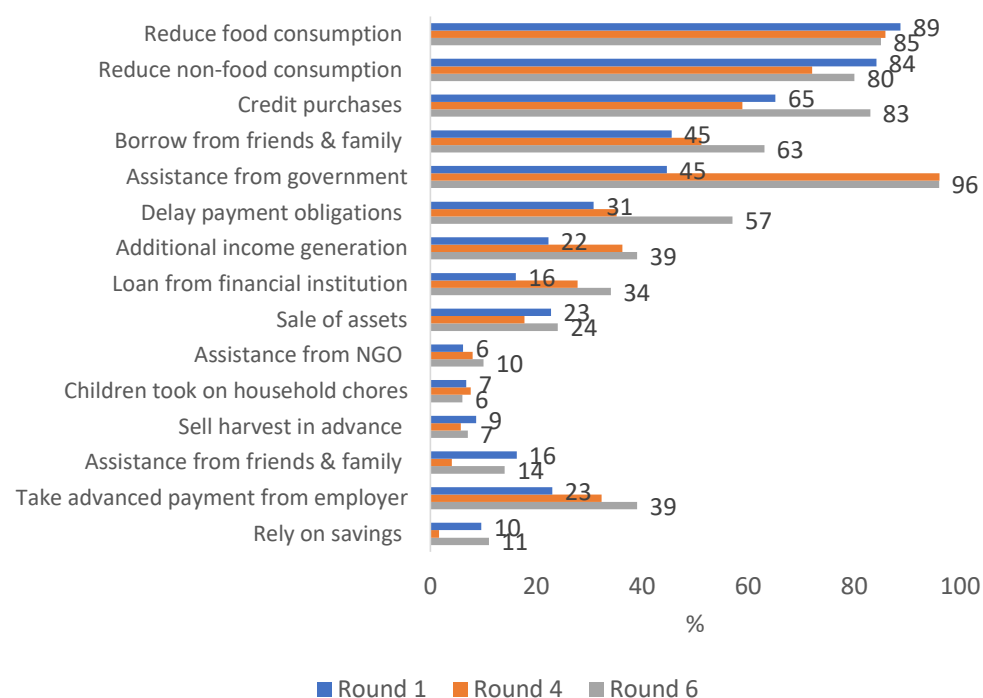
Coping Strategies

While many households reduced consumption to cope with the pandemic, an increasing share borrowed, delayed payment obligations, sold assets, or engaged in additional income-generation.

Has your household had to ... in response to the COVID-19 crisis? (Since COVID-19 outbreak; LSMS+/CSES)



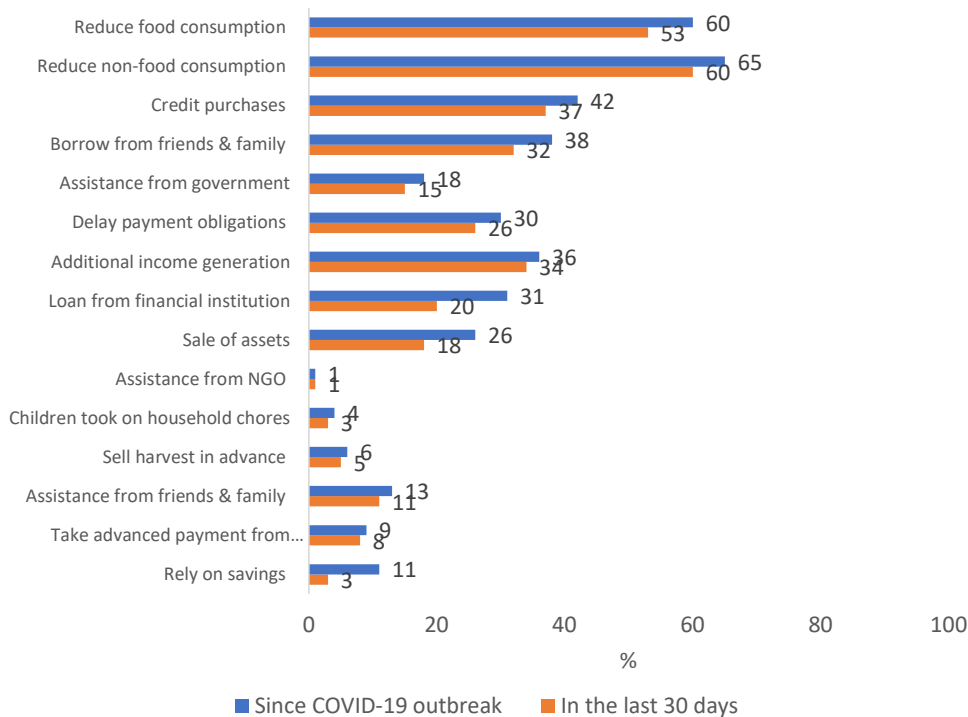
Has your household had to ... in response to the COVID-19 crisis? (Since COVID-19 outbreak; IDPoor with valid equity card)



Note: LSMS+ sample for R1 and R4, CSES sample for R6.

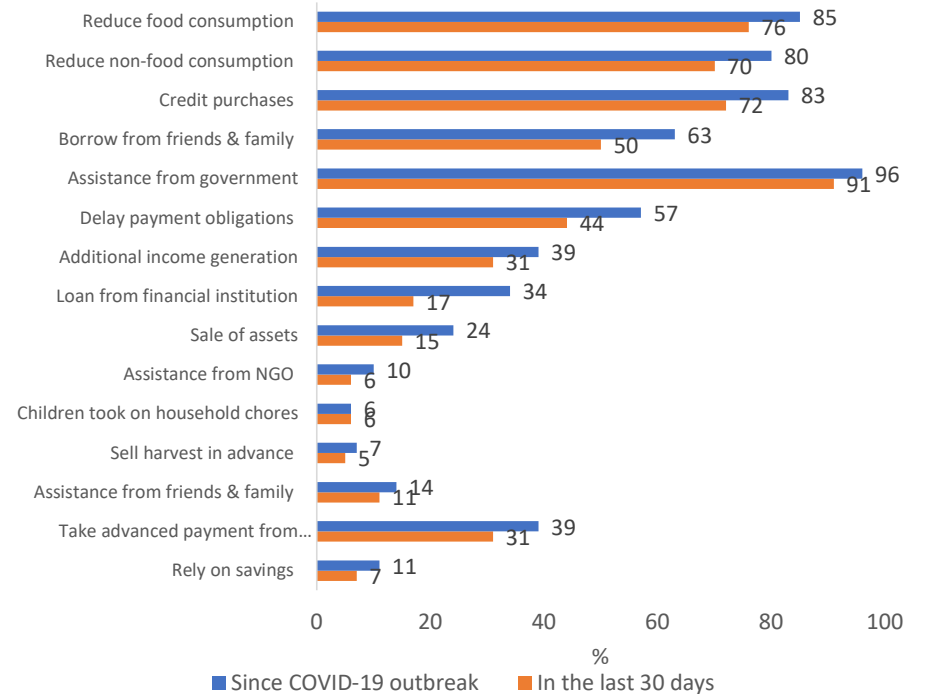
Many households reduced their consumption over the last 30 days to cope with the pandemic, suggesting negative COVID-19 impacts remain severe.

Has your household had to ... in response to the COVID-19 crisis?
(CSES)



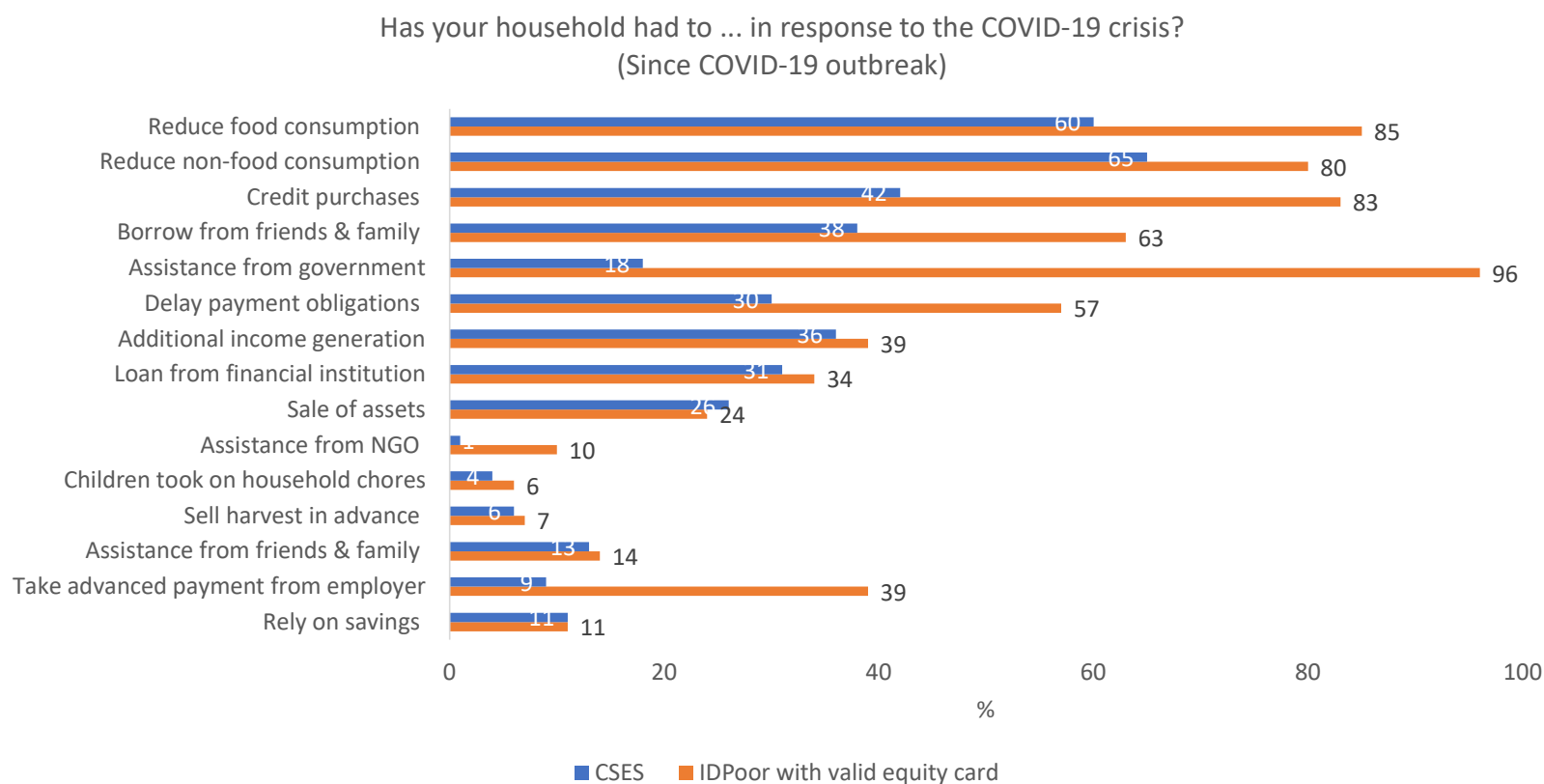
Note: Round 6.

Has your household had to ... in response to the COVID-19 crisis?
(IDPoor with valid equity card)



Note: Round 6.

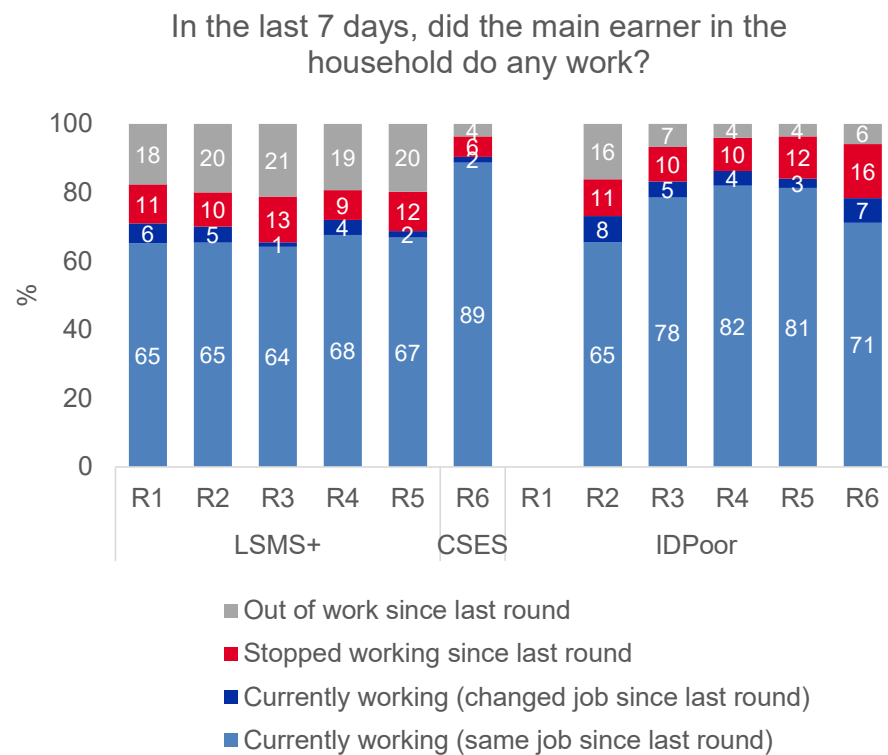
Although IDPoor households were more likely to reduce consumption, purchase on credit, borrow, delay payment obligations, or take advanced payment from employer to cope with the pandemic, almost all received assistance from the government.



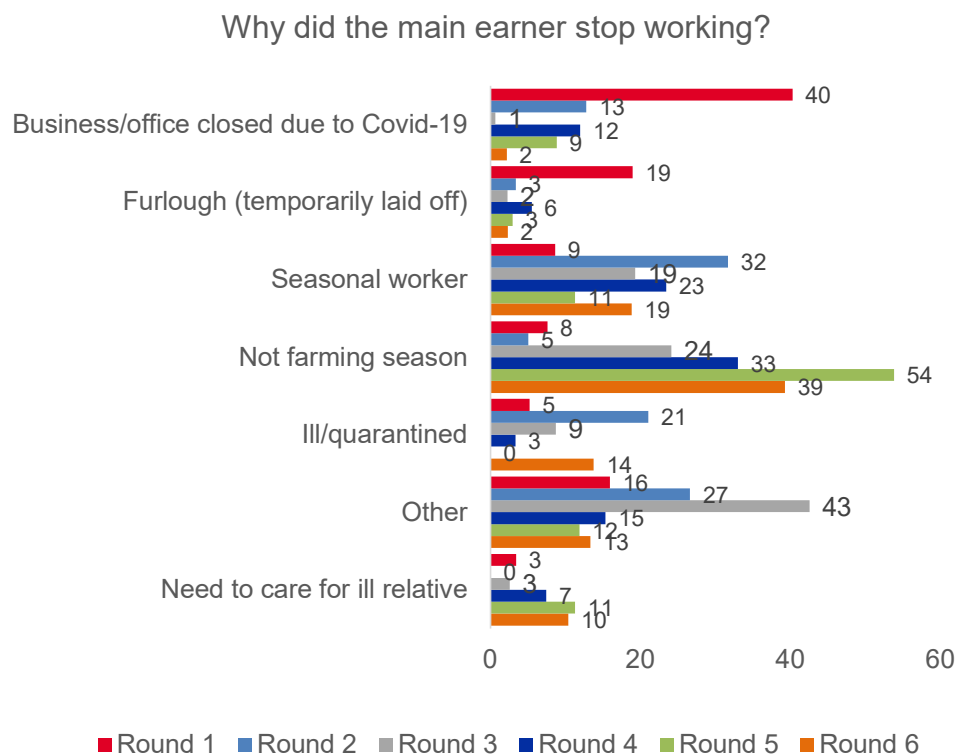
Note: Round 6.

Employment Patterns and Household Income

Employment surpassed pre-pandemic levels when 8 in 10 respondents were working. However, employment level was lower among IDPoor households.

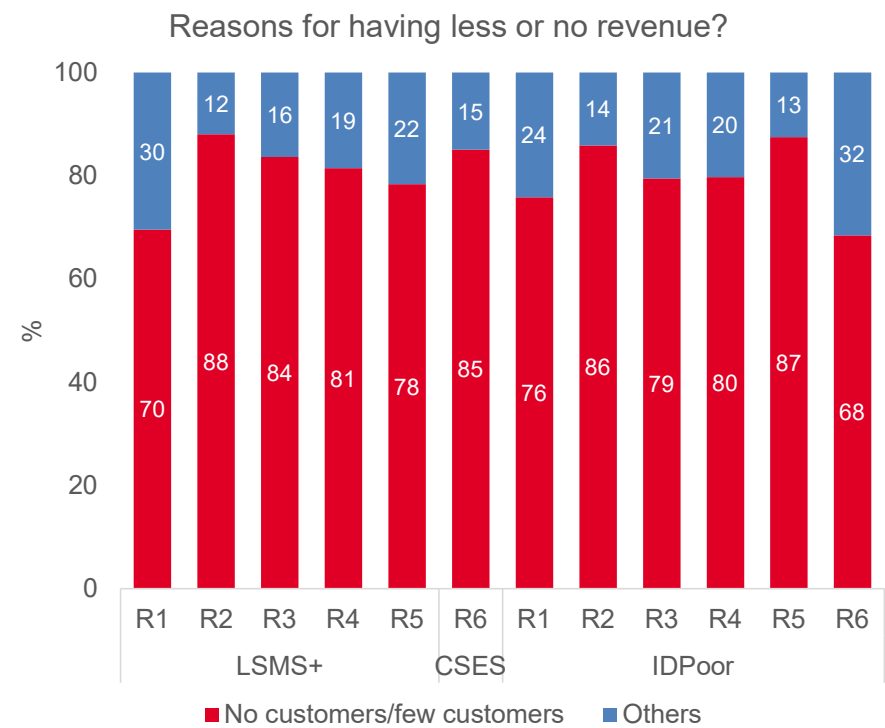
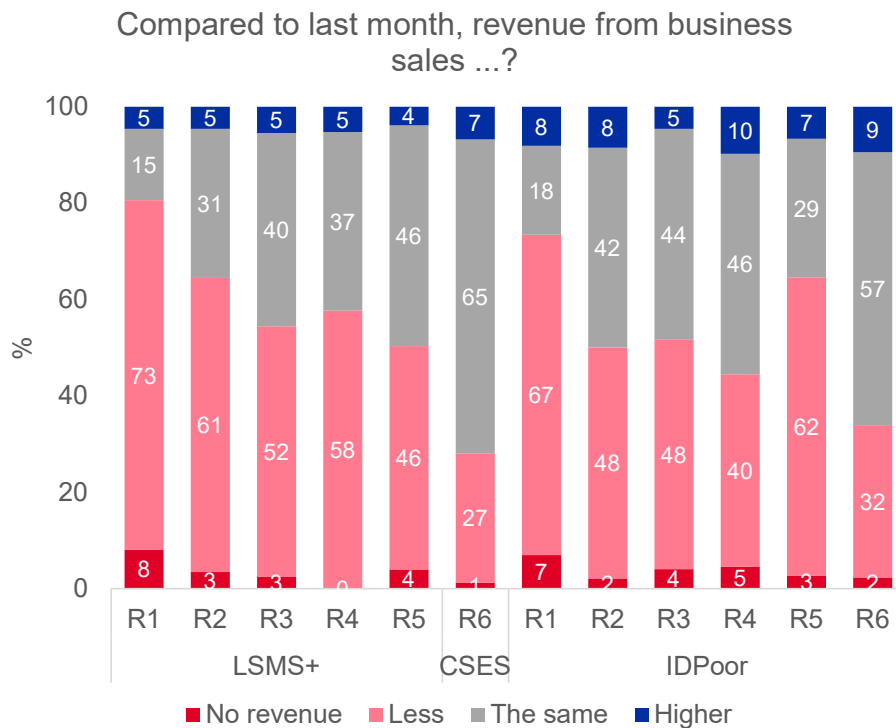


“Before the COVID-19 outbreak” is the reference period in round 1. Respondent for LSMS+ households and main earner for CSES and IDPoor households.



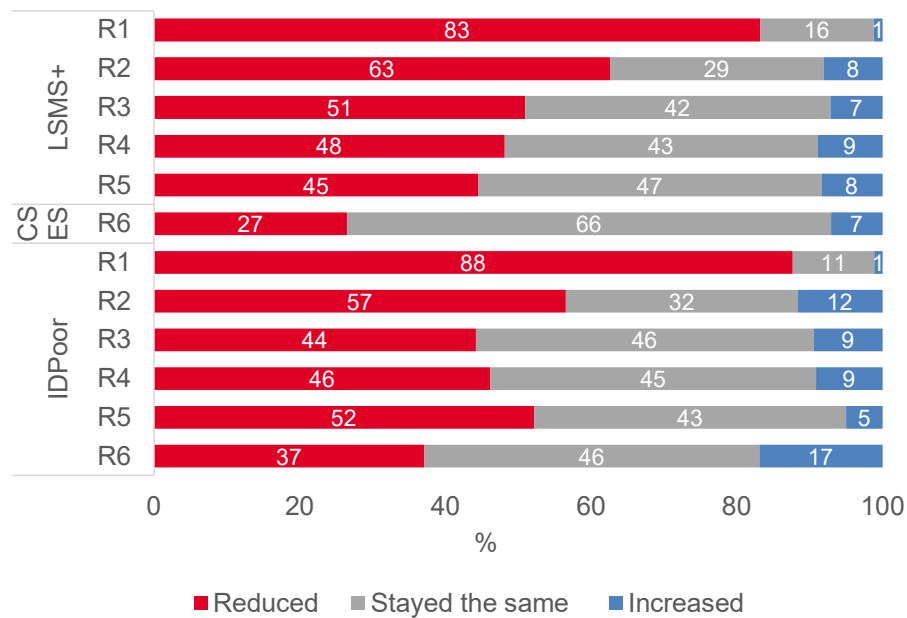
Source: LSMS+ sample for R1-R5, CSES sample for R6. “Other” reasons in round 3 are mostly related to flooding.

Revenues of non-farm family businesses are stabilizing. Low consumer demand remains the main driver of revenue losses.

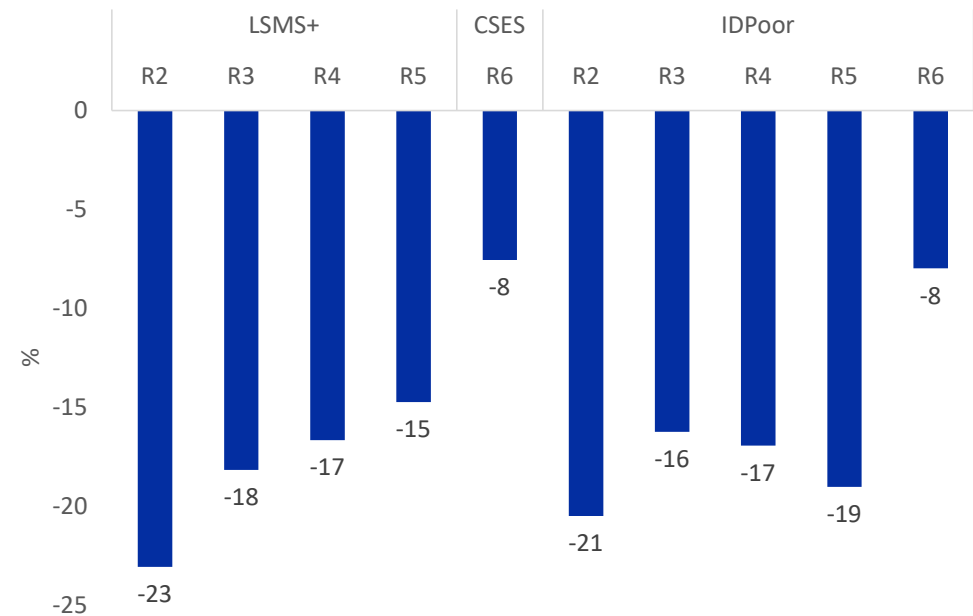


Income has stabilized for 2 in 3 households by Feb.–Mar. 2022.

Changes in total household income since the last interview



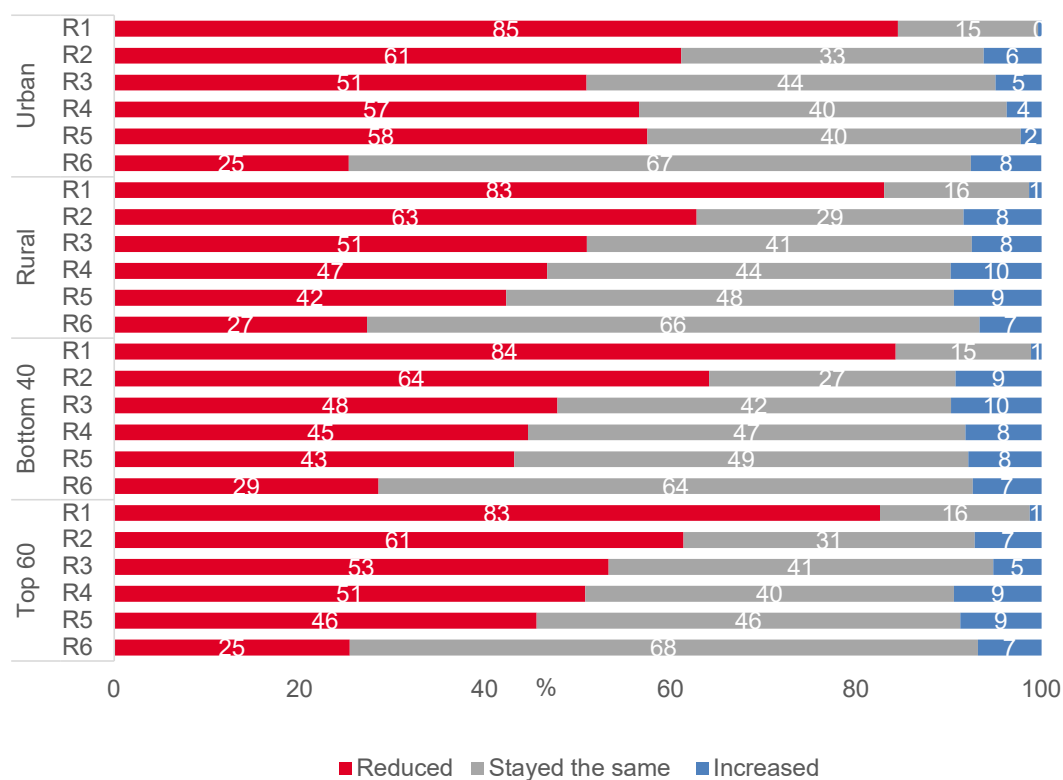
How much did total household income change (in %) since the last interview?



"Before the COVID-19 outbreak" is the reference period for R1.

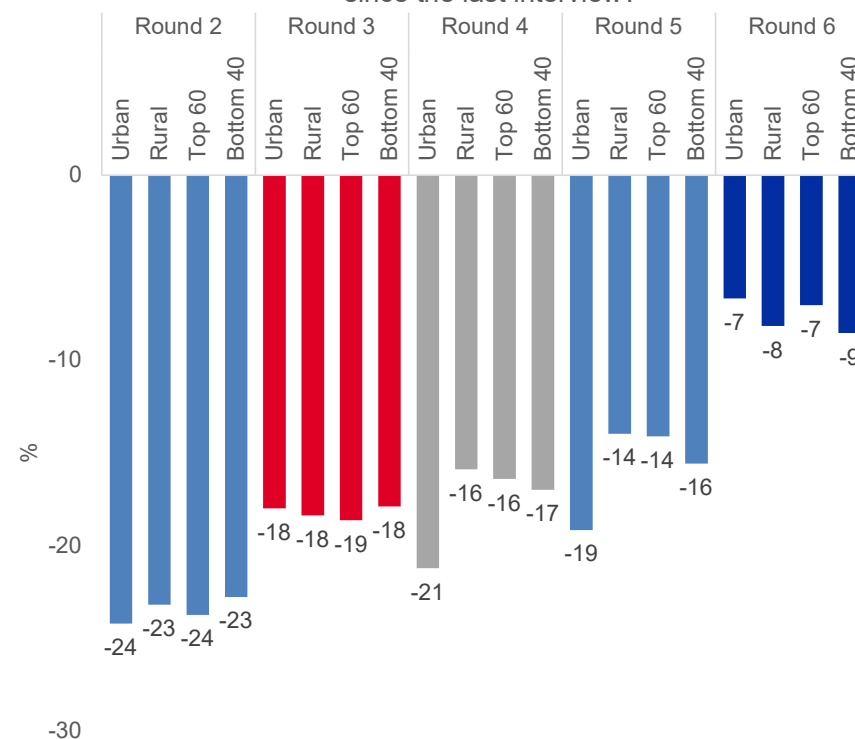
Household income has stabilized in both urban and rural areas and across the income distribution.

Changes in total household income since the last interview



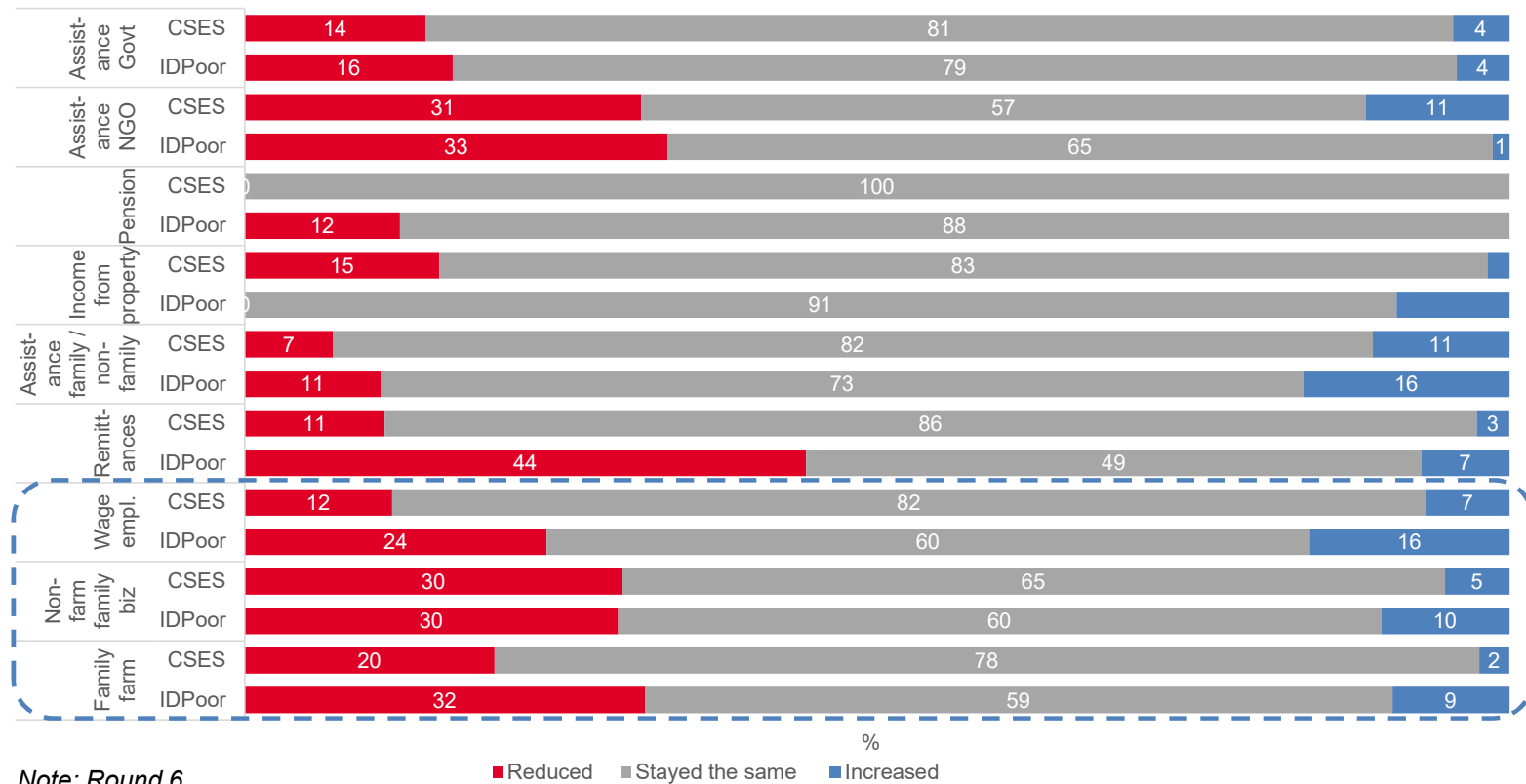
Source: LSMS+ sample for R1-R5, CSES sample for R6.

How much did total household income change (in %) since the last interview?



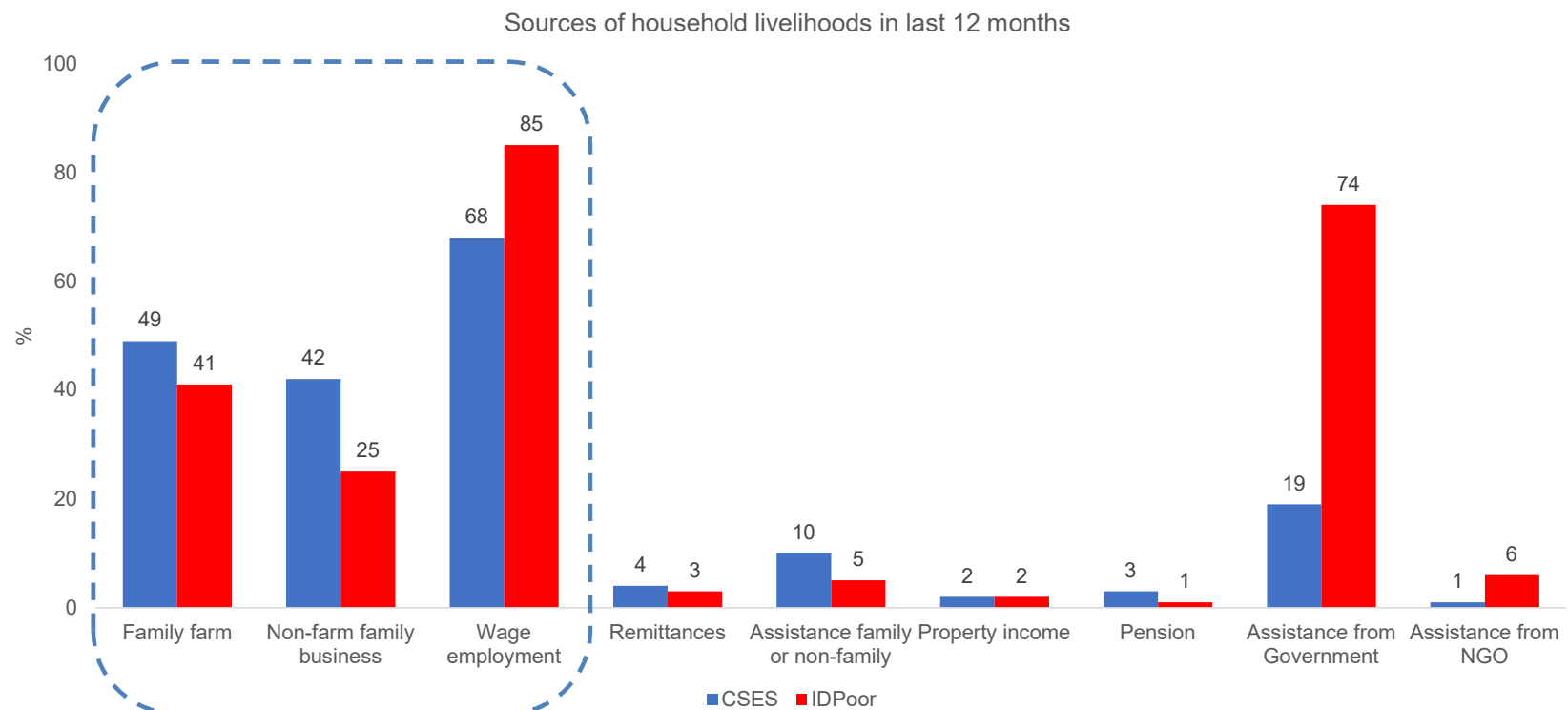
Relative to March 2021, 60 to 80 percent of households have labor income stabilized.

How has your income from ... changed since March 2021?



Note: Round 6.

Labor income was households' most important source of livelihood in the past year.

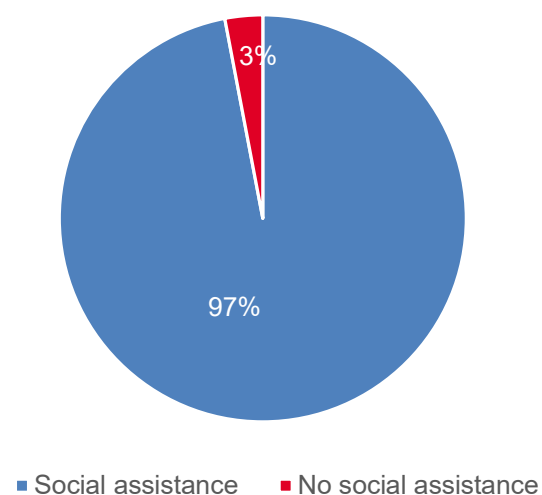


Note: Round 6.

Social Assistance

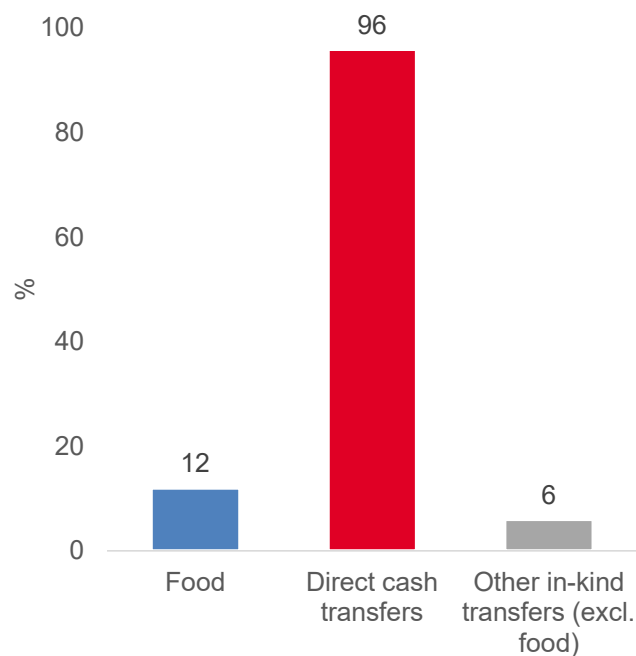
Almost universal social assistance (SA) coverage: 97% of eligible IDPoor households received some form of SA, mostly via cash from the government.

Share of social assistance beneficiaries since last interview or March 2021



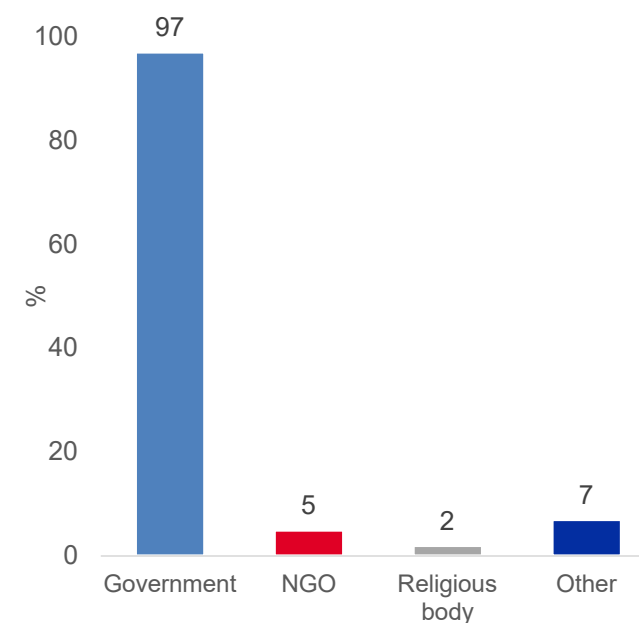
Source: Eligible sample (IDPoor households with a valid equity card). Round 6.

Share of beneficiaries reporting receiving types of SA



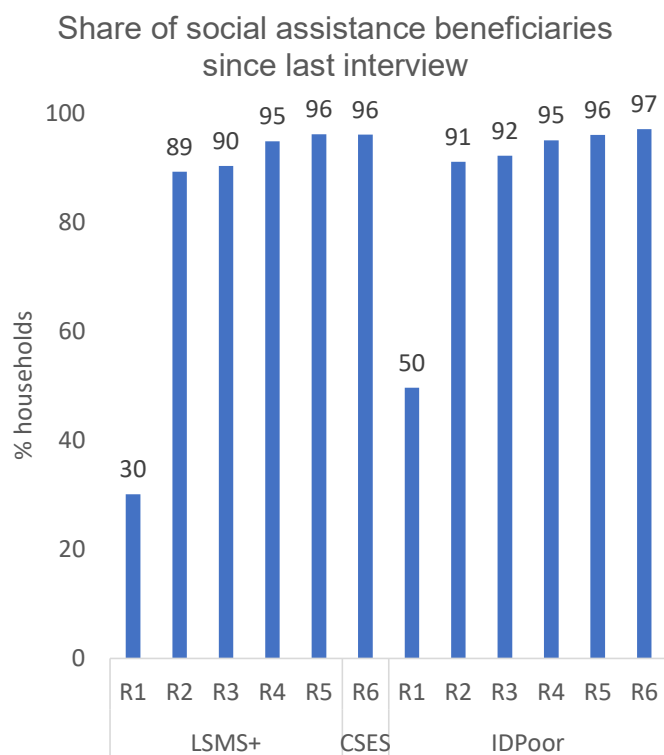
Source: Eligible IDPoor sample. Round 6.

Share of beneficiaries reporting ... as main source of SA

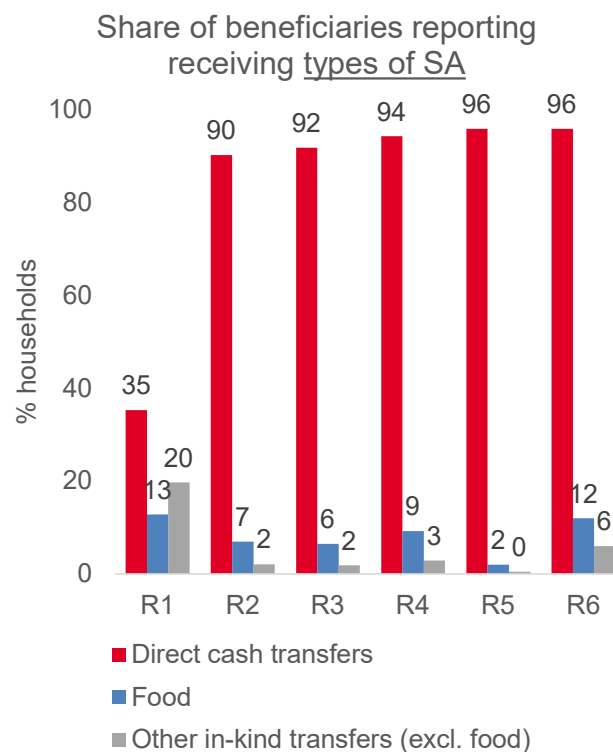


Source: Eligible IDPoor sample. Round 6.

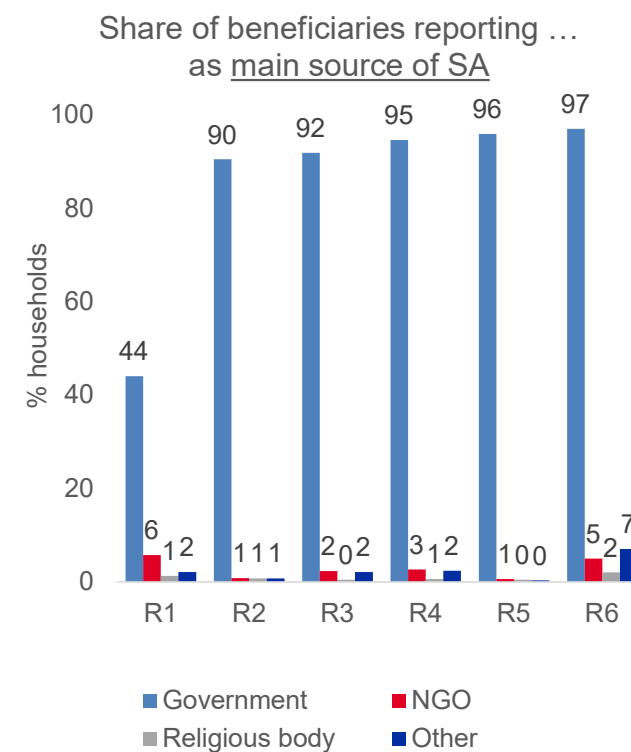
High social assistance (SA) coverage among eligible IDPoor since the launch of the government's COVID-19 relief cash transfer program in June 2020.



Source: Eligible sample (IDPoor households with a valid equity card).

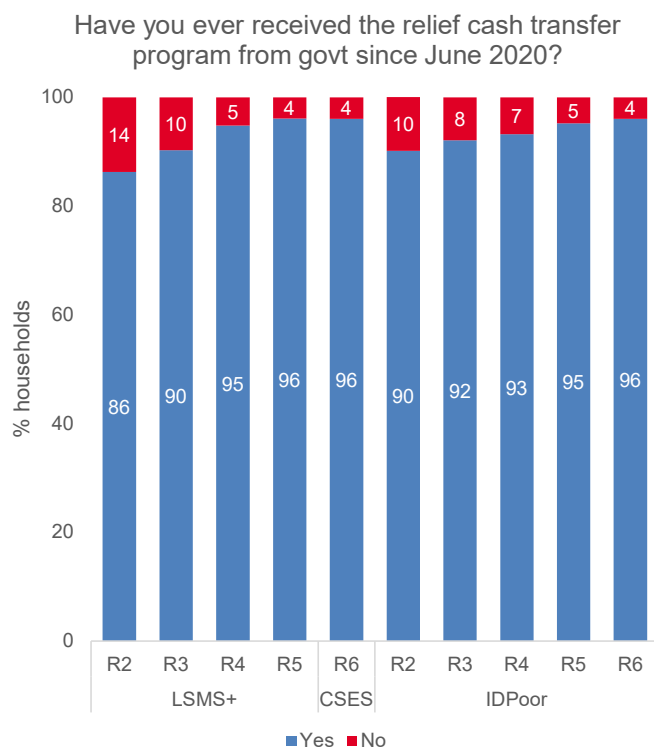


Source: Eligible IDPoor sample.

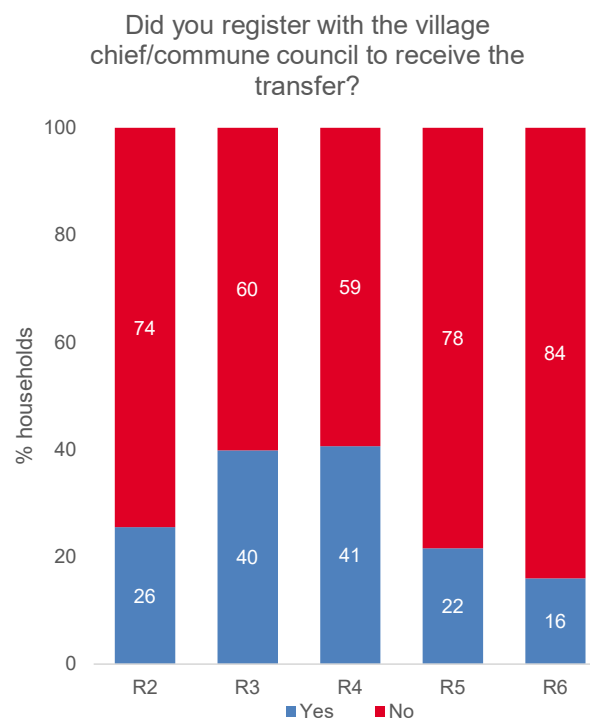


Source: Eligible IDPoor sample.

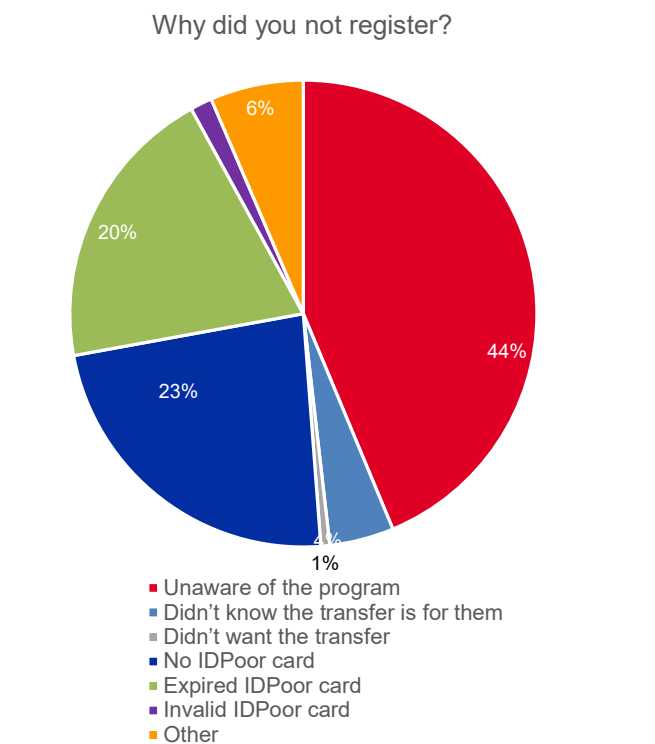
96% of eligible IDPoor have received the relief cash transfers. Registration among those yet to receive them has decreased—most commonly due to lack of awareness of the program, or no IDPoor card.



Source: Eligible sample (IDPoor households with a valid equity card).

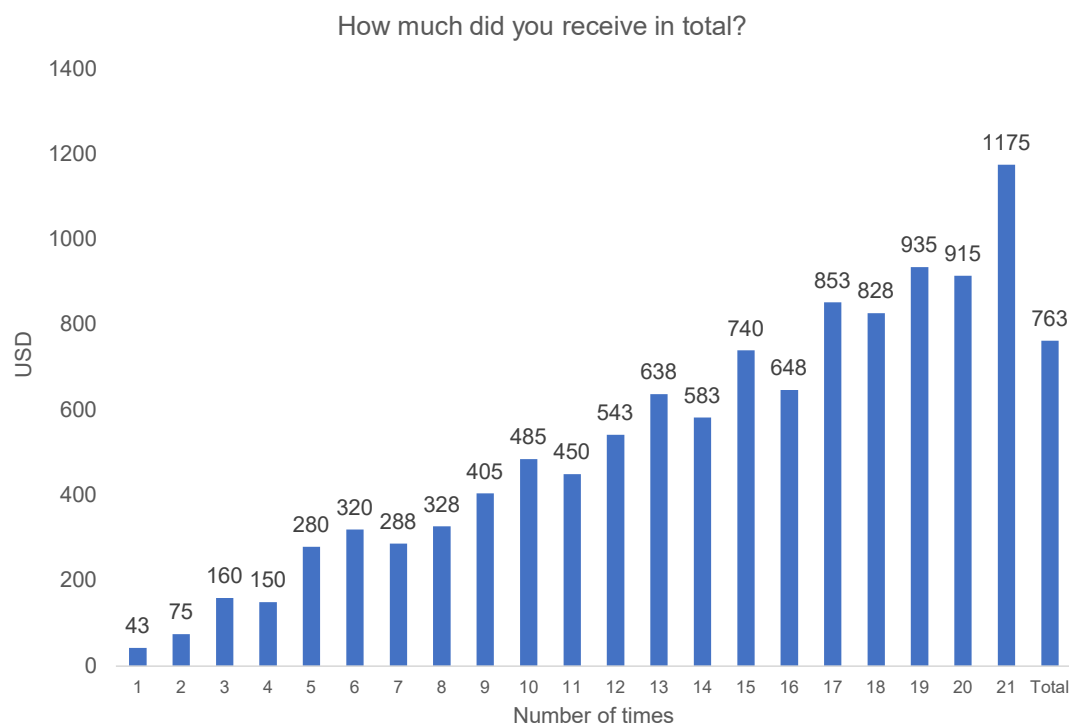
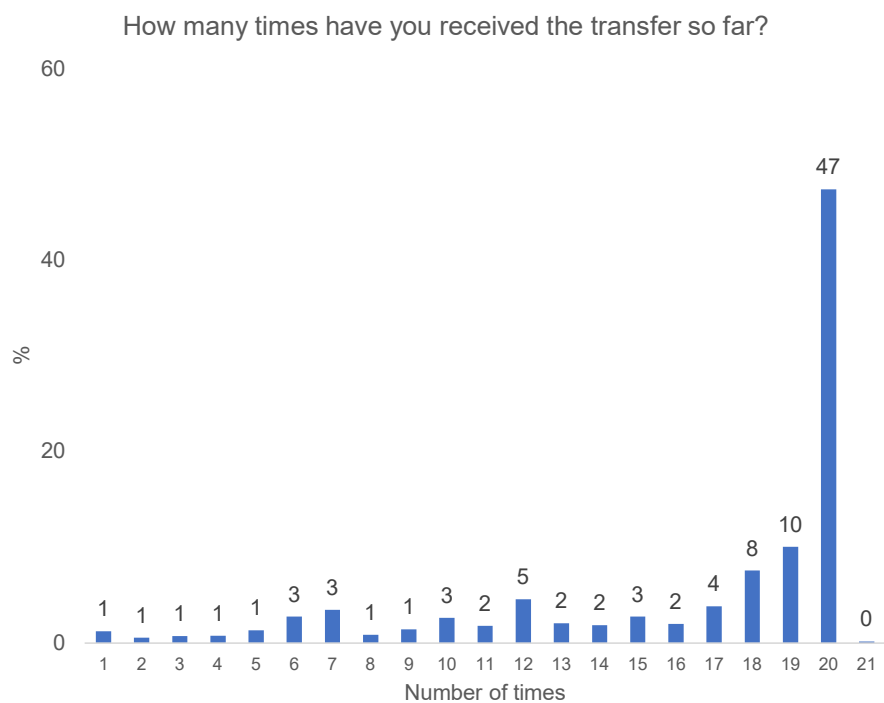


Source: Eligible sample (IDPoor households with valid equity card) that have not received relief transfers.



Source: Eligible sample (IDPoor households with valid equity card) that have not received relief transfers. R6.

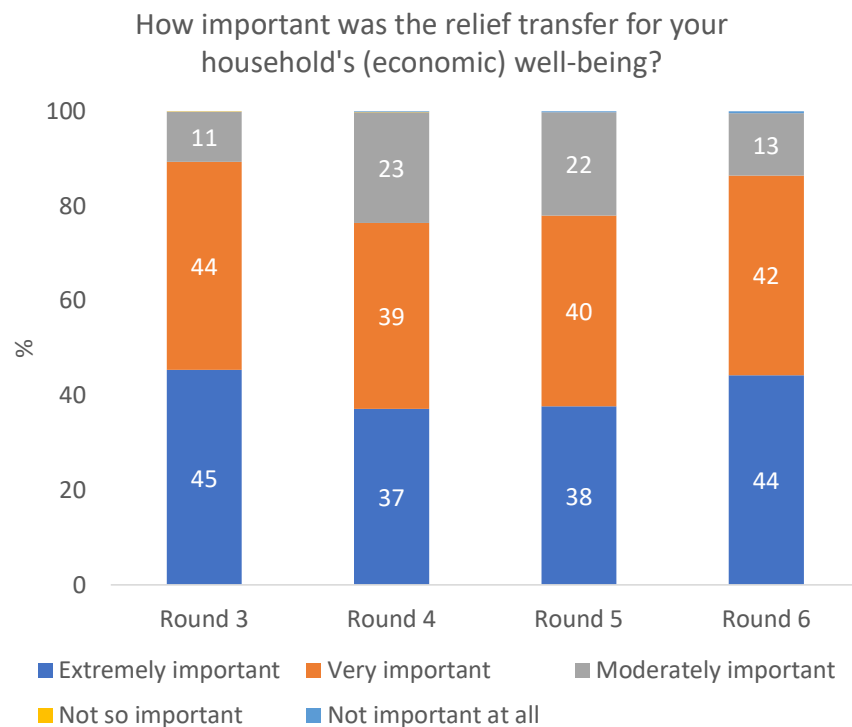
Frequency and amounts of cash transfers received are as expected: Nearly half of beneficiaries had received 20 cash payments by Feb.–Mar. 2022, averaging US\$763 in total.



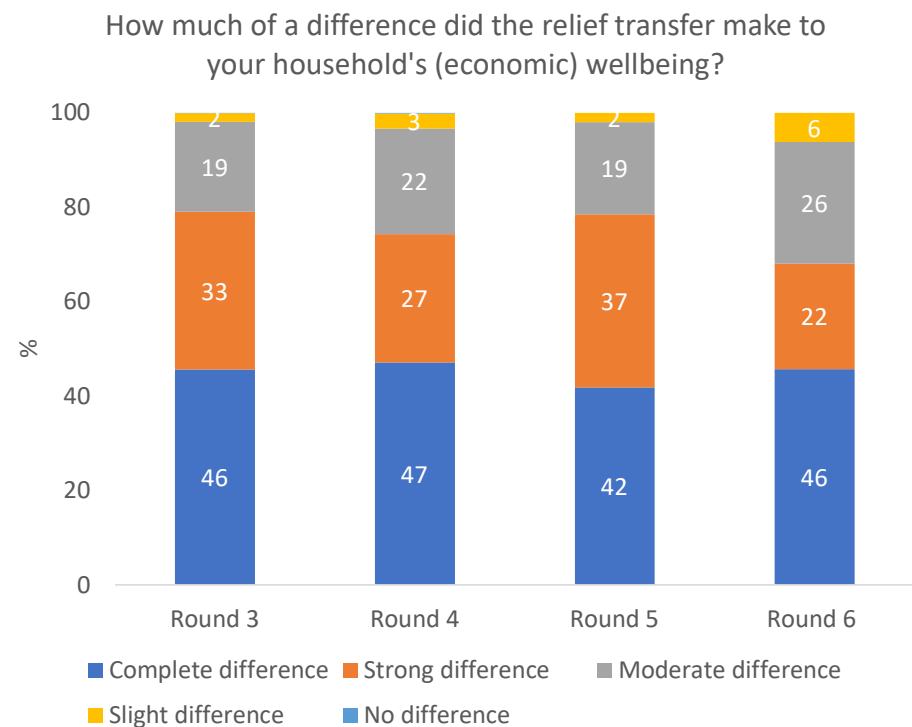
Source: IDPoor sample that have ever received the relief cash transfer program from the government since June 2020.

Note: Total amount of relief cash transfers received from the government by the number of transfers received so far.

Beneficiary households perceive the relief cash transfers to have been important for and to have improved their economic well-being.

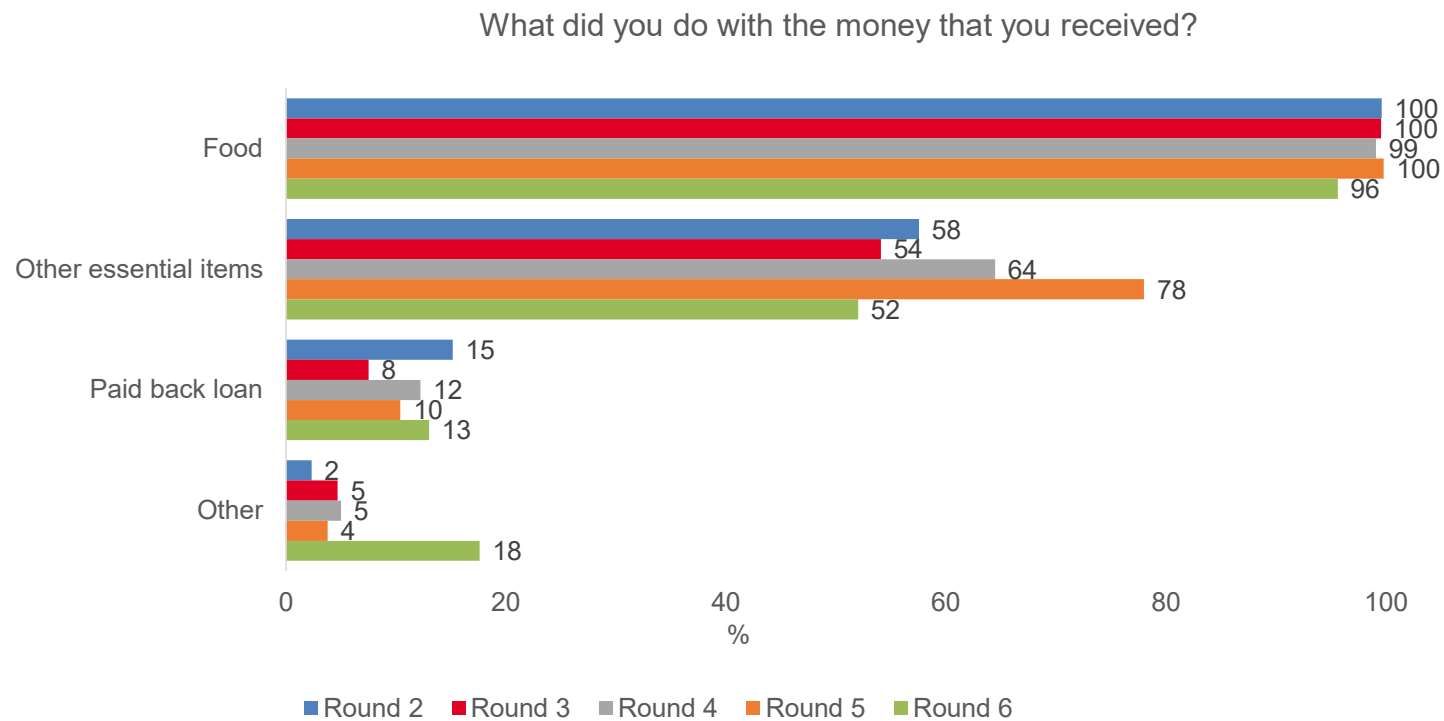


Source: IDPoor sample with valid equity card who ever received relief cash transfer program.



Source: IDPoor sample with valid equity card who ever received relief cash transfer program.

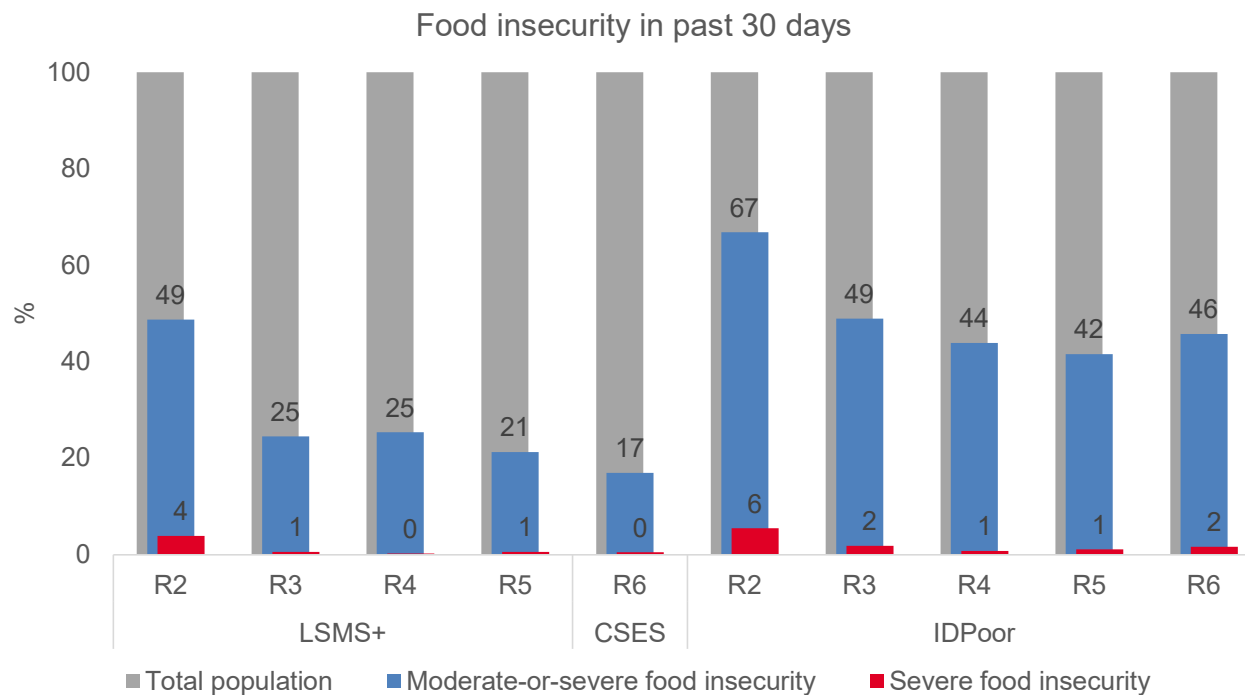
Nearly all beneficiary households continue to spend their relief cash transfers on food. 1 in 2 beneficiaries also use them to buy other essential items.



Source: IDPoor sample with valid equity card who ever received the relief cash transfer program from the government since June 2020. "Other" reasons in round 6 are mostly related to education and health expenses. This is based on multiple choice answer.

Food Insecurity

Moderate-or-severe food insecurity and severe food insecurity remained unchanged, and more elevated for IDPoor.



“In the last 30 days” is the reference period.

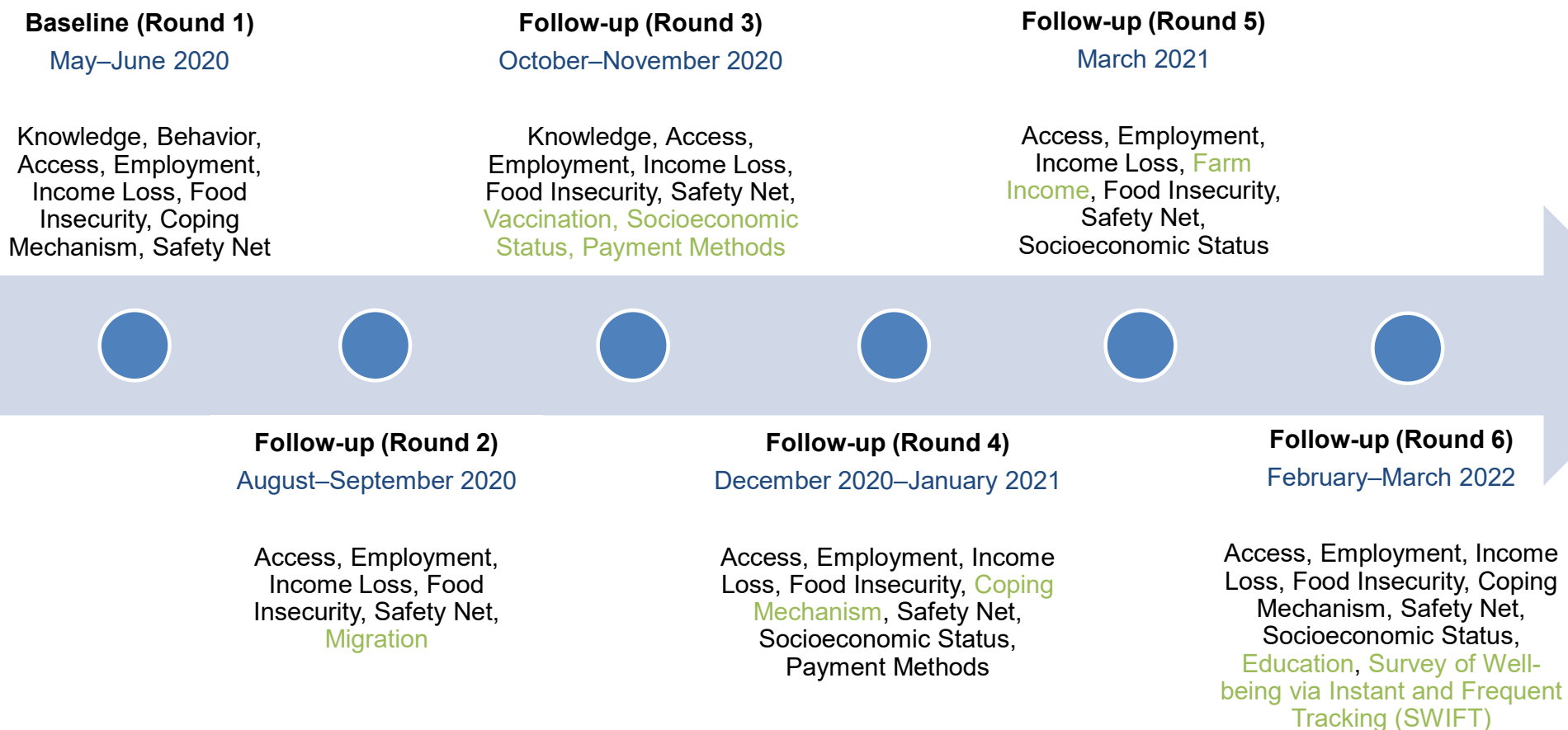
People experiencing moderate levels of food insecurity will typically eat low quality diets and might have been forced, at times during the year, to also reduce the quantity of food they would normally eat, while those experiencing severe levels would have gone for entire days without eating, due to lack of money or other resources to obtain food.

Prevalence of food insecurity, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), was estimated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Concluding remarks

- The pandemic led to a sharp slowdown and Cambodia's first economic contraction in 25 years. After the country began working toward reopening at the end of 2021, economic activity started to [recover](#) and [gain momentum](#). The [economic growth projection for 2022](#) was [revised upwards](#) to 5.1 percent in March 2022, from a projected real GDP growth of 4.5 percent in October 2021.
- The pandemic's [negative impacts on employment and household incomes have started to subside](#). By February–March 2022, [more Cambodians worked](#) than before the pandemic and [incomes have stabilized](#) for 2 in 3 households since March 2021.
- The government continued to disburse [COVID-19 relief cash transfers](#), which provided [poor and vulnerable families](#) with a [much-needed safety net](#) during the pandemic.
- However, only [15-20 percent](#) of households have been covered under the government's current assistance program (much less than households that are negatively affected by COVID-19)—posing a risk to increased poverty.
- For households to recover, a broad set of measures will be needed to [support jobs](#) and provide more [broad-based assistance](#) including financial support for children who are yet to return to school.

Implementation plan



Annex: Types of social assistance programs

	Eligibility criteria	Transfer amount
COVID-19-related Social Assistance Programs		
Relief cash transfer program for poor and vulnerable households	IDPoor households	(See next slide)
Unemployment benefits for suspended workers in garment and tourism sector	Garment and tourism workers in the formal sector	US\$70 per month for two months (US\$40 paid by the government, and US\$30 paid by the factory)
Non-COVID-19-related Social Assistance Programs		
Conditional cash transfer for pregnant women and children under 2	IDPoor households	US\$190 for 1,000 days
Home grown school feeding program	All households with children in targeted schools	
Scholarship program	Performance-based (school) IDPoor households (government)	

Annex: Relief cash transfer program for poor and vulnerable households during COVID-19

	Phnom Penh		Other urban		Other rural	
	IDPoor 1	IDPoor 2	IDPoor 1	IDPoor 2	IDPoor 1	IDPoor 2
Household	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$20	\$20
Each member	\$13	\$9	\$10	\$7	\$6	\$4
Vulnerable member						
Child aged 0–5	\$10	\$7	\$10	\$7	\$6	\$4
Disability	\$10	\$7	\$10	\$7	\$6	\$4
Adult aged 60+	\$10	\$7	\$10	\$7	\$6	\$4
HIV/AIDS	\$10	\$7	\$10	\$7	\$6	\$4

IDPoor1 households (very poor) are estimated to receive on average \$67 per month, while IDPoor2 (poor) are estimated to receive \$52.

Thank you

Wendy Karamba and Kimsun Tong led the Cambodia High-Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS) team that comprised of Abla Safir and Isabelle Salcher. Nuppun Research Consulting implemented the survey with technical and financial support from the World Bank. Financial contributions for the HFPS were received from Global Tax Program (GTP). The team is grateful to the National Institute of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation for their collaboration, as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization for their analytical support on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES).

Website: [Monitoring the Impact of COVID-19 on Households in Cambodia](#)

Contact:

Wendy Karamba
Kimsun Tong

