



COVID-19 IN LAC

BELIZE

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



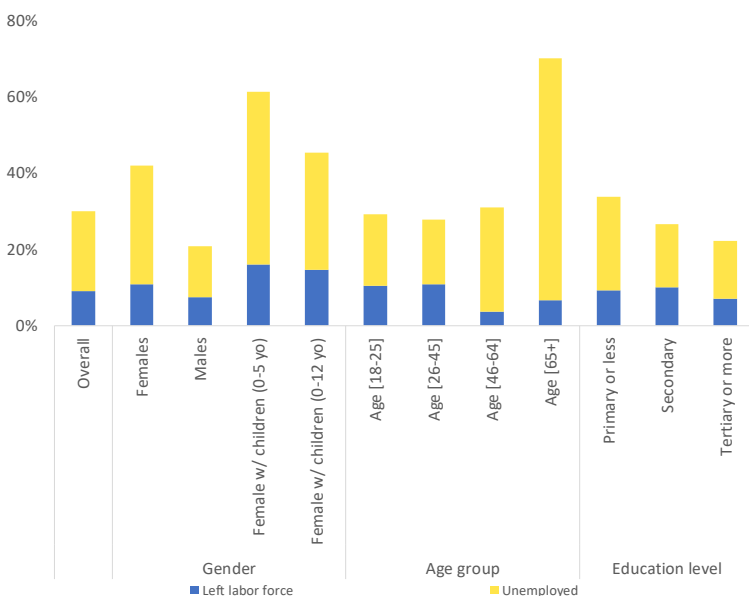
Belize's real GDP grew at 16.3 percent in 2021, one of the fastest growth rates in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The recovery was fueled by the revitalization of tourism and tourism-related investments. Labor market outcomes also began to improve in 2021, with a 4.5 percentage point decline in unemployment and a 6.8 percentage point increase in labor force participation with respect to 2020, but they are still lagging behind pre-pandemic ones. Moreover, the recovery in the labor market has been unequal, with stronger outcomes for men than women, and driven by jobs of lower quality and wages.

According to the second wave of the High-Frequency Phone Survey data collected in 2021, Belize is still struggling with job loss and inactivity. Among those employed before the pandemic, 30.0 percent had lost their job by the end of 2021, a higher rate than that registered in mid-2021. Of these, 8.9 percent were unemployed, and the remaining 21.1 percent left the labor force. This number compares poorly with the rest of the LAC region, where only 22.4 percent of those employed had lost their job by the end of 2021. Women exited the workforce at a faster rate than men, as 1 in 3 working women before the pandemic were no longer actively participating in the workforce, while only 1 in 7 men were no longer active at the end of 2021. Quality of employment also declined, with informality levels increasing drastically from 30.9 percent before the pandemic to 40.5 percent by the end of 2021. Once again, women were more affected than men: informality rates were 48.7 percent among women and 35.5 percent among men by the end of 2021.

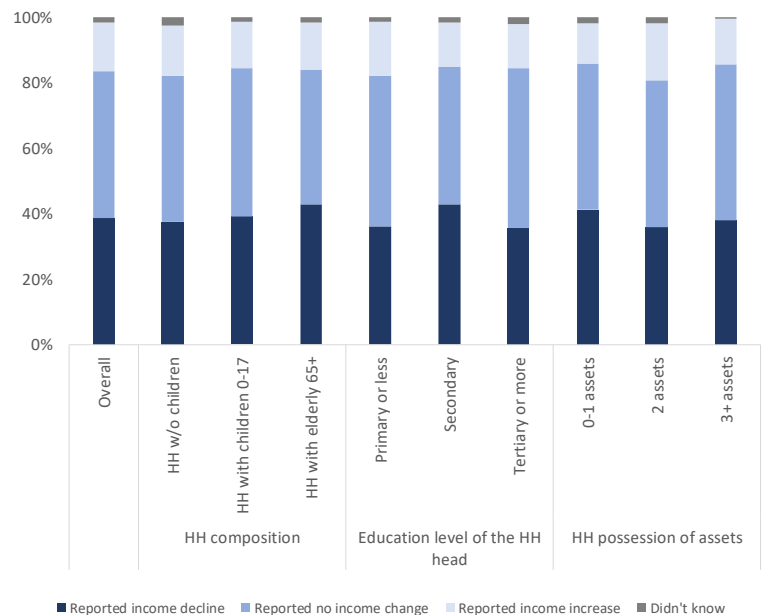
The weak labor market outcomes are reflected in the evolution of households' income. By the end of the year, 38.6 percent of households reported a reduction in income compared to mid-2021. Income reduction was more common among households living with dependents (the elderly and children). Households also reported struggling to cover their basic needs. By the end of 2021, 56.8 percent of households reported not having enough resources to afford necessities, and nearly three-quarters had to resort to at least one coping mechanism, such as using savings and suspending the payment of rent or debt installments. Food insecurity, measured as the percentage of households that ran out of food in the previous 30 days, has remained high since the start of the pandemic. By the end of 2021, 45.2 percent of households still suffered from this food insecurity, considerably higher than the LAC average (30.1 percent) and only slightly lower than in mid-2021 (49.2 percent). Food insecurity was higher among households with less educated household heads (51.3 percent) than among households with more educated heads (23.1 percent).

Despite a recovery in school attendance since 2020, education among school-age children remains below pre-pandemic levels. By the end of 2021, only 85.0 percent of children were attending school (in person or virtually), better than mid-2021 (65.4 percent), but lower than the LAC average (91.5 percent). Attendance was 16.0 percentage points higher for children with a household head who had tertiary education than for children with less educated household heads (primary education or less). Only 68.7 percent of children in school were interacting with a teacher during classes. Lower school attendance also resulted in a greater burden for parents accompanying their children at home, as 53.4 percent of respondents and 60.4 percent of women reported spending more time supporting their children's education.

JOB LOSS (% OF PRE-PANDEMIC WORKERS)



CHANGES IN TOTAL INCOME (%HH) SINCE MID-2021



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

KEY INDICATORS: INDIVIDUALS (18+ years old)

Distribution among groups	Labor				Childcare responsibilities	Health
	% of employed population (pre-pandemic) who lost their pre-pandemic job	% of inactive population (pre-pandemic) who became active (employed or unemployed)	% of employed population who is in informal employment		% of population who spent more time accompanying children's education than pre-pandemic	% of population who reported mental health problems
			Pre-pandemic	End-2021		
Overall	30.0%	39.3%	30.9%	40.5%	53.4%	40.3%
Females	41.9%	30.8%	36.5%	48.7%	60.4%	46.1%
Males	20.9%	65.8%	26.6%	35.5%	44.8%	34.5%
18 to 25 years old	29.2%	58.2%	35.2%	33.3%	41.1%	37.9%
26 to 45 years old	27.7%	34.1%	26.7%	36.8%	58.9%	44.2%
46 to 64 years old	31.0%	28.0%	35.2%	54.1%	51.1%	38.3%
65 and older	70.1%	24.3%	45.0%	62.8%	51.3%	24.1%
Education: Primary or less	33.7%	30.1%	35.9%	49.3%	48.6%	38.0%
Education: Secondary	26.5%	59.7%	31.6%	38.9%	56.3%	46.9%
Education: Tertiary or more	22.2%	46.4%	14.8%	18.0%	70.3%	40.3%

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

Note: National level results are compared against the regional LAC average: **Green** indicates that the country performs better than the LAC average in terms of preferred outcome, e.g. less informality, while **red** indicates that the country performs worse than the LAC average.

KEY INDICATORS: HOUSEHOLDS AND CHILDREN

Distribution among groups	Income & Coping		Food Insecurity		Education (6-17 yo)		
	% HH without enough resources to cover basic needs (self-reported)	% HH that resorted to at least one coping mechanism	% HHs that ran out of food		% of children in school age who attended school (in person or virtually)		% of children in school age who interacted with teacher in person (incl. hybrid teaching modes)
			Pre-pandemic	End-2021 (Last 30 days)	Pre-pandemic	End-2021	
Overall	56.8%	73.6%	17.7%	45.2%	95.4%	85.0%	68.7%
HH w/o children (0-17)	42.9%	66.0%	16.3%	32.3%	-	-	-
HH with children (0-17)	63.6%	77.4%	18.4%	51.6%	95.4%	85.0%	68.7%
HH with elderly (65+)	52.4%	68.8%	16.8%	42.2%	96.6%	89.5%	73.3%
0-1 assets	68.9%	73.4%	24.8%	57.6%	93.7%	78.0%	55.3%
2 assets	47.8%	74.8%	12.0%	35.4%	96.4%	89.9%	78.1%
3+ assets	34.7%	68.7%	7.7%	26.6%	98.1%	90.3%	79.3%
HH Head Education: Primary or less	61.4%	76.2%	21.9%	51.3%	93.4%	80.3%	64.0%
HH Head Education: Secondary	60.7%	75.3%	16.9%	49.5%	96.4%	86.2%	67.3%
HH Head Education: Tertiary or more	38.2%	66.1%	9.1%	23.1%	99.4%	96.3%	85.3%

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

Note: National level results are compared against the regional LAC average: **Green** indicates that the country performs better than the LAC average in terms of preferred outcome, e.g. fewer households running out of food, while **red** indicates that the country performs worse than the LAC average.

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. Data for the second wave was collected between October 2021 and January 2022 and included all countries except for Antigua & Barbuda and Brazil. 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 harmonized indicators across all world regions. Further information on the LAC HFPS II can be found [here](#).