

The Covid-19 pandemic severely impacted the Jamaican economy by disrupting the tourism and service sectors, with real GDP contracting by 10.0 percent in 2020. Although real GDP expanded at 4.6 percent in 2021, more was needed for a complete economic rebound. High-Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS) data collected at the end of 2021 indicate that Jamaican households had not yet fully recovered from the pandemic's adverse effects on different welfare dimensions.

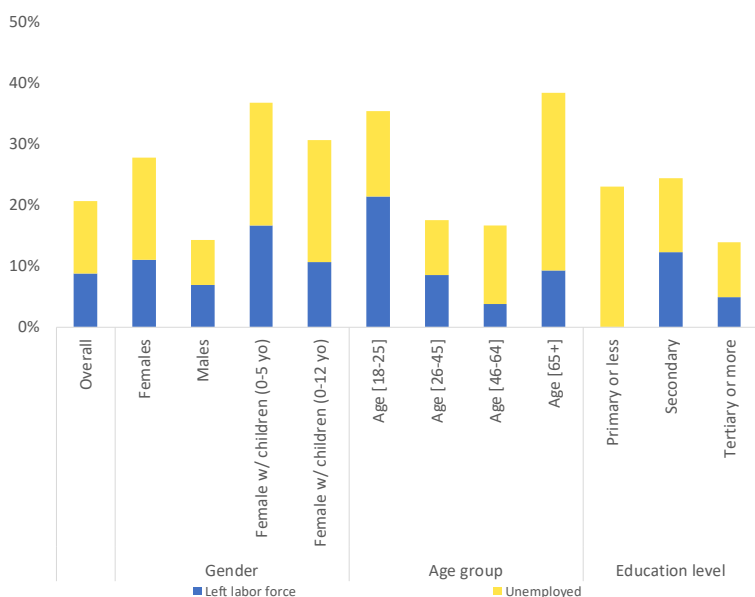
At the end of 2021, a fifth of pre-pandemic workers were still out of work. Women who had lost their pre-pandemic jobs found it harder to return to work, especially those with small children at home. Among workers who had jobs before the pandemic, 27.7 percent of women were unemployed or out of the labor force at the end of 2021, compared to 14.2 percent of men. For women with children aged 0-5 years in the household, this share was even higher at 36.8 percent.

Informal employment increased relative to the pre-pandemic period, reflecting a deterioration in job quality. This trend was more pronounced for male workers and those with the lower levels of education (primary education or less). The survey data show that a notable proportion of the pre-pandemic inactive population, that is those who were previously out of the labor force, entered the labor force to work or search for work by the end of 2021 (42.2 percent). This could be a reaction to deteriorating household finances as nearly 30 percent of households mentioned this coping behavior to meet their basic needs.

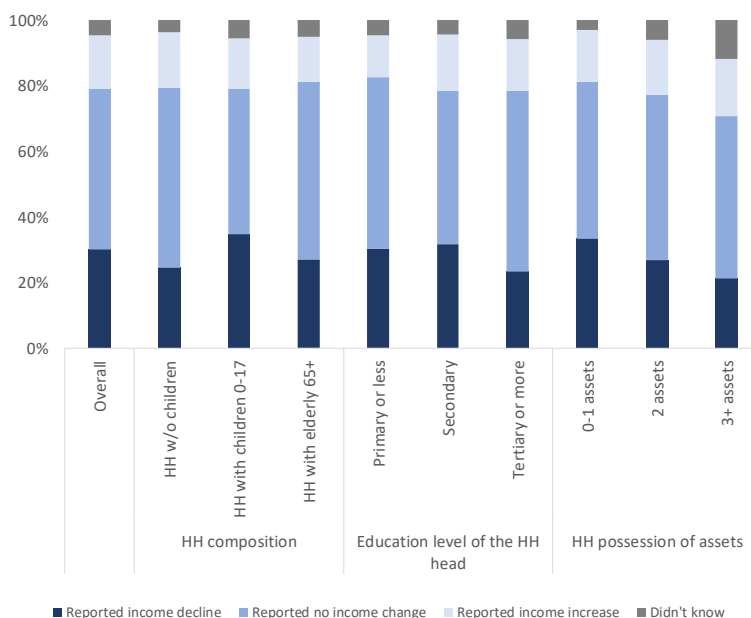
Consistent with the partial and uneven recovery of the economy and labor market, many households were still struggling to make ends meet at the end of 2021. About 80 percent of Jamaican households reported no increase in income since mid-2021, a time at which more than half of the households had reported a decrease in total income compared to their pre-pandemic income. Over 70 percent of households declared insufficient resources to cover their basic needs, much higher than the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) regional average of 56.1 percent. Furthermore, 71.8 percent of households had resorted to at least one coping mechanism to cover their basic needs. The coping mechanisms included using savings, previously inactive household members looking for work, or halting payments for rent or debt installments. At the end of 2021, close to 44 percent of households reported running out of food due to a lack of resources. This figure was more than 10 percentage points higher than the LAC average but also considerably above the pre-pandemic level (21.0 percent of households, based on a retrospective question). The HFPS data also show that about 4 in 10 Jamaican adults had reported mental health problems by the year-end, with a higher prevalence among the population aged 18 to 25.

School attendance increased by almost 10 percentage points during the second half of 2021 to 87.2 percent. Nevertheless, it remained considerably lower than the pre-pandemic level (98.3 percent). The HFPS data also suggest that, at the end of 2021, similar proportions of men and women had increased the time spent accompanying children's education. This contrasts with the LAC trend of women on average being more likely than men to have increased the time spent on this activity.

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	20.5%	42.2%	40.5%	45.7%	55.2%	42.8%
Females	27.7%	34.5%	37.1%	39.1%	54.3%	45.0%
Males	14.2%	57.1%	43.5%	50.8%	56.3%	40.5%
18 to 25 years old	35.3%	61.8%	39.2%	41.7%	59.7%	54.7%
26 to 45 years old	17.5%	47.9%	36.1%	38.7%	52.7%	41.3%
46 to 64 years old	16.6%	41.4%	45.3%	53.1%	62.4%	36.6%
65 and older	38.3%	19.5%	62.8%	80.7%	32.5%	44.2%
Education: Primary or less	23.0%	35.2%	74.0%	85.3%	51.2%	41.9%
Education: Secondary	24.3%	50.3%	50.7%	53.8%	53.6%	45.6%
Education: Tertiary or more	13.8%	29.6%	17.0%	23.9%	59.6%	38.0%

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	70.5%	71.8%	21.0%	43.9%	98.3%	87.2%	84.2%
HH w/o children (0-17)	64.7%	64.4%	19.0%	37.2%	-	-	-
HH with children (0-17)	75.3%	78.0%	22.7%	49.7%	98.3%	87.2%	84.2%
HH with elderly (65+)	70.7%	70.7%	19.7%	42.7%	98.4%	86.1%	84.4%
0-1 assets	78.0%	72.3%	25.7%	50.1%	96.6%	80.9%	77.3%
2 assets	61.5%	71.6%	15.6%	35.9%	99.6%	95.4%	92.6%
3+ assets	68.0%	65.4%	14.1%	45.3%	100.0%	67.7%	67.7%
HH Head Edu: Primary or less	72.7%	65.3%	17.6%	49.0%	98.1%	76.1%	72.3%
HH Head Edu: Secondary	72.6%	72.8%	24.6%	46.9%	97.8%	86.4%	83.9%
HH Head Edu: Tertiary or more	60.7%	73.2%	14.3%	31.0%	99.5%	94.8%	93.9%

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](#).