



COVID-19 IN LAC

COLOMBIA

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

Colombia experienced a fall of 6.8 percent of GDP in 2020. Around 2.4 million jobs were lost that year. The official unemployment rate was 15.9 percent, about 1.5 times larger than the previous year. Despite efforts from the government to contain the impact through emergency transfers, household income plummeted, poverty sharply increased and other dimensions of wellbeing worsened. In 2021, the economy started to recover. However, official figures from 2021 show a slower recovery of the labor market, and a deceleration in its recovery rhythm compared to 2020.

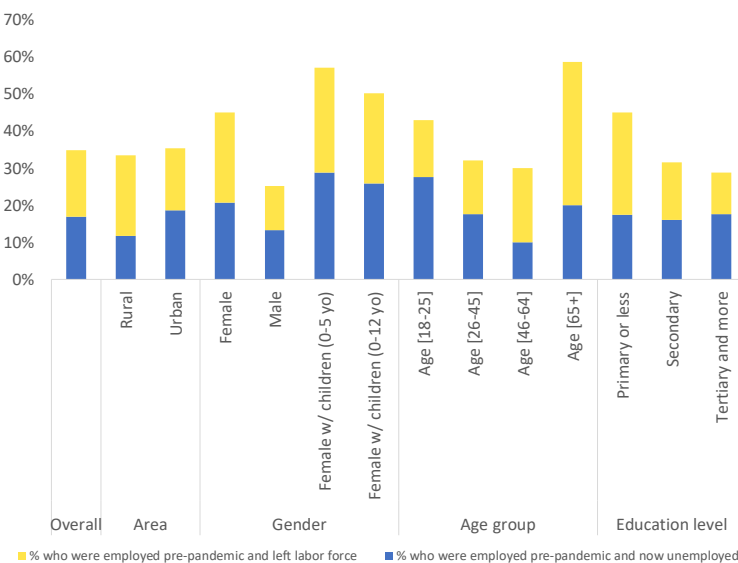
In mid-2021, 34.8 percent of the pre-pandemic workers (older than 18) had not returned to work - women, low educated workers, and youth in an even higher proportion - and more than half of them (51.6 percent) had exited the labor market altogether. Of the new inactive, 33.7 percent were women with no children under 18, and 29.8 percent were men with primary or secondary education. Most remarkable was the entry of 43.8 percent of the pre-pandemic inactive individuals to the labor force, likely to avoid falling into poverty. Most of the new active were women (58.4 percent). While most of the previously inactive and unemployed workers found jobs, these new jobs tend to be informal. Also, 18.0 percent of the pre-pandemic formal workers transited to informal jobs during the pandemic. Both findings are worrisome in the context of an already very high informality rate.

Around two-thirds of households still reported their total income was below pre-pandemic levels by mid-2021. The share of households reporting income loss was one of the highest in the region. It varied across household types, with the poorest households (with one or no assets) and households with primary-educated heads reporting income losses more frequently than the average household. While 20.4 percent of households reported running out of food before the pandemic, the share was 44.2 percent in mid-2021, close to the levels observed in 2020. The poorest households (with one or no assets), families with secondary-educated heads, and rural households report food insecurity at even higher rates.

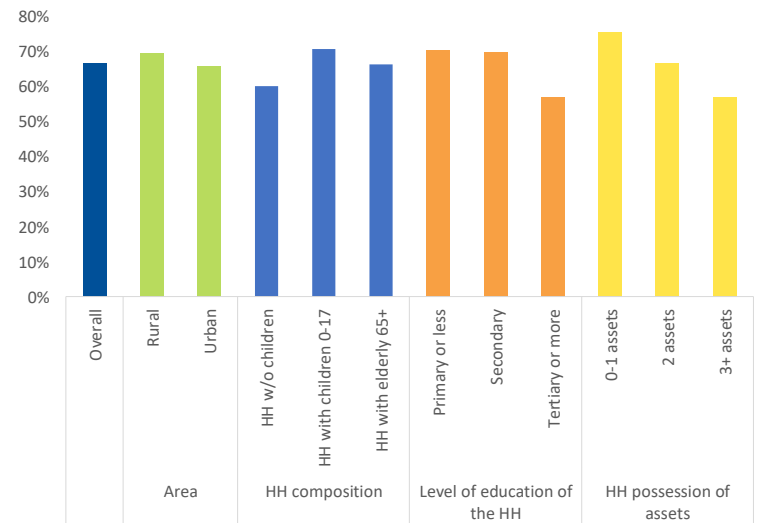
Long-term pandemic effects on human capital accumulation are likely to affect the poor and vulnerable the most. Access to learning remains a concern, particularly for children in rural areas and from poorer families.

On the positive side, there was a recovery in access to health services once mobility was restored in 2021. A short-term health challenge identified was vaccination hesitancy, which persisted in around 1 out of 10 people.

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	34.8%	43.8%	18.0%	47.6%	11.3%	19.4%
Rural	33.4%	48.1%	36.2%	39.4%	15.8%	11.7%
Urban	35.2%	42.6%	14.5%	50.7%	9.8%	22.0%
Females	44.9%	38.4%	17.8%	57.6%	11.7%	17.3%
Males	25.1%	54.5%	18.1%	34.1%	10.8%	21.8%
18 to 25 years old	42.8%	62.6%	14.0%	46.6%	16.3%	33.3%
26 to 45 years old	32.0%	63.2%	18.2%	54.0%	12.6%	21.0%
46 to 64 years old	29.9%	33.0%	19.6%	35.8%	6.6%	15.5%
65 and older	58.5%	11.8%	15.3%	19.1%	9.9%	3.3%
Primary or less	44.9%	36.0%	25.9%	37.6%	11.3%	5.1%
Secondary	31.4%	46.4%	22.3%	48.3%	11.7%	17.4%
Tertiary and more	28.7%	51.0%	10.7%	60.8%	10.6%	38.7%

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	66.7%	24.2%	44.2%	81.4%	53.1%	70.4%
Rural	69.6%	30.3%	49.8%	79.3%	48.1%	79.7%
Urban	65.9%	22.4%	42.6%	82.3%	55.1%	68.0%
HH w/o children (0-17)	60.2%	15.9%	33.8%	-	-	62.4%
HH with children (0-17)	70.7%	29.3%	50.7%	81.4%	53.1%	75.2%
HH with elderly (65+)	66.2%	23.6%	46.4%	84.0%	66.3%	73.0%
0-1 assets	75.4%	31.0%	59.5%	77.2%	43.7%	74.5%
2 assets	66.6%	23.4%	44.5%	84.5%	55.5%	70.6%
3+ assets	57.0%	17.1%	26.6%	86.4%	69.3%	66.4%
HH education - Primary or less	70.3%	32.4%	43.6%	82.4%	55.4%	75.4%
HH education - Secondary	69.9%	24.3%	51.6%	80.8%	49.9%	68.9%
HH education - Tertiary or more	57.0%	13.6%	32.5%	81.2%	59.3%	66.7%

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 \(2021\)](#).