Brief on COVID-19 Households and Jobs Tracker Wave 1

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Summary

1. 77.4% of households in Ghana experienced a decrease in income since March 16, 2020 when COVID-19 restrictions were introduced. This means that approximately 22 million Ghanaians are affected by reduced household income.
2. 82.8% of households who reported non-farm family business (36.1%) as an income source said they experienced a decrease in income since March 16, 2020.
3. There is general public anxiety, as 93.1% of households reported being worried about the effects of COVID-19.
4. 77.4% of households reported to be severely affected by increase in prices of food.
5. To cope with the effects of COVID-19, more than half (52.1%) of households reduced food consumption.
6. 27.0% of children scheduled for a vaccination since March 16, missed it due to COVID-19 related reasons.
7. School closure was considered among the main disruptions to households, but 96.6% of children are likely to return once schools reopen.
8. 35.0% of basic school children and 28.0% of SHS were not engaged in any form of learning while they were at home.
9. The biggest challenge faced by children for home learning is access to basic tools such as computers or phones; 25.6% for basic school children and 32.7% for SHS children.
10. Over half (57.4%) of children 6-14 years on school feeding programmes (29.9%) still received these meals after schools closed.

Introduction

From June 10 to June 25, 2020, GSS collected data in a nationally representative telephone survey to gauge the effects of COVID-19 on households and jobs in Ghana. This brief summarises the results as given by respondents into different thematic areas of this survey. More focused indepth reports with policy recommendations on each thematic area will be published soon by GSS.

Knowledge and Behavioural Change

Knowledge of the COVID-19 was universal, as 99.7% (99.7% for males and 99.5% for females) of the population have heard of it. When respondents were asked how someone contracts the virus, 72% (72% of males and 71.9% of females) indicated not using a mask or gloves while 68.5% (70.8% males and 64% females) mentioned handshaking as possible cause. 90.9% mentioned at least one of top three answer categories ("Hand shaking", "Touching of your face" or "Not using mask/gloves"). Attribution to witchcraft or supernatural causes was negligible at 1.2% (see Figure 1, for details).

Most people reported changing their behaviour patterns due to COVID-19, with 94.8% reporting more frequent handwashing in the seven days prior to the survey. 93.9% indicated they have avoided physical greetings and 85.8% avoiding gatherings of more than 25 people such as family meetings, parties, church/mosque, funerals, etc. in line with government directives. Two out of five (44.8%) of respondents cancelled their travel plans (see Figure 2).

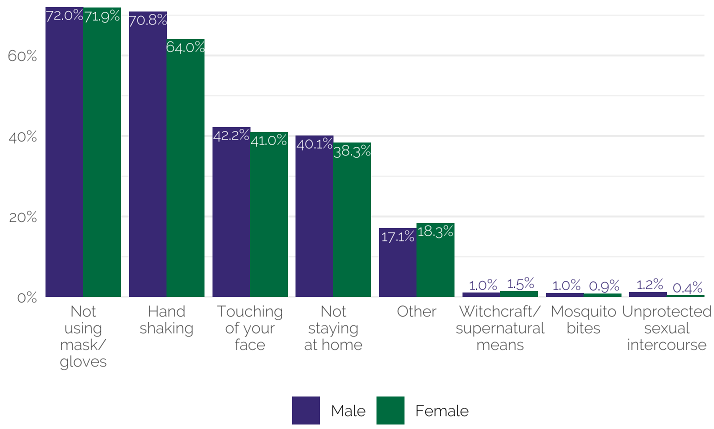


Figure 1: Knowledge on mode of COVID-19 transmission by sex. *Multiple responses were possible and categories were not listed to respondents.*

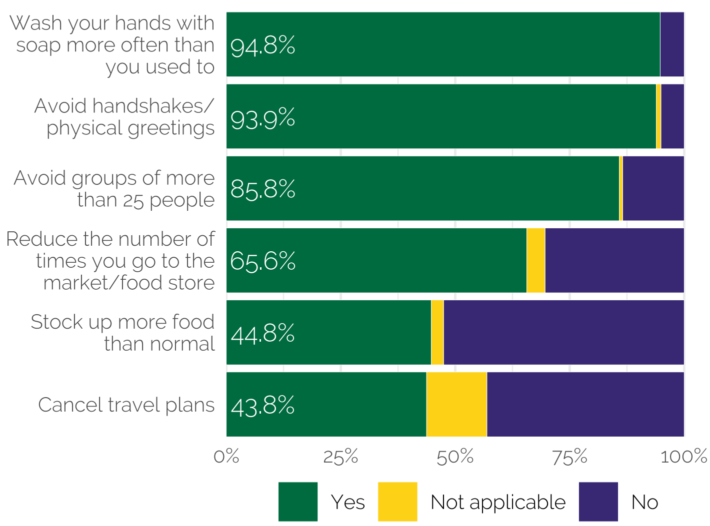


Figure 2: Answers to the question: *"In the last 7 days, did you ... ?"*

93.1% of respondents expressed that they were either very concerned or concerned about *'the potential effects of the coronavirus on them and their households'* Nonetheless, 89.6% of respondents said that they were *"satisfied with the government's response to the coronavirus crisis"*. Of the 10.4% other respondents (multiple responses possible), 38.5% (4.0% of total) indicated they were not satisfied due to of lack financial assistance from the government, 36.1% (3.7% of total) due to the late response by the government, 33.1% (3.4% of total) due to limited testing points, 25.9% (2.6% of total) because a shortage of medical materials, 4.5% (0.5% of total) because of lack of electricity and 54.0% (5.6% of total) had other reasons.

The survey sought to understand the sources of information for households on COVID-19. Radio (83.3%) and television (79.6%) were cited as the most important sources of information with television (49.2%) being the *'most trusted news source.'* The third most commonly cited source was SMS (14.7%), while social media (12.4%) does not seem to be an important source of COVID-19 information in Ghana.

Jobs and Income

To understand the effects of the pandemic on jobs and household income, the survey asked the principal respondent of each household employment related questions. Seven out of ten (30.2%) of respondents indicated that they had not worked in the previous seven days. Of these respondents, 36.0% (or 6.1% of all respondents) did not work due to COVID-19 related safety concerns. A further 20.4% (3.4%), mentioned COVID-19 work suspension as the reason for not working, while 2.4% (0.4%) attributed it to reduction in staff due to less business. The rest had other reasons for not working (retirement, seasonal workers, etc.).

Nationally, more than three-quarters (77.4%) of households reported that the total household income has reduced since March 16, 2020 and 3.1% reported an increase in income. Across the regions, there were disparities in percentages of households indicating that total household income decreased. In the Greater Accra Region 70.2% of households reported decreased household income compared with Bono 83.1% which saw the largest percentage of household indicating a decrease in household income (see Figure 3).

Not all sources of income were affected equally. 82.8% of households who received income from a non-farm family business in the last 12 months (36.1% of households listed this as a source of income) indicated that this income decreased since March 16. In contrast, 55% of households who received income from wages from employment (35.3% of respondents) indicated that this income decreased since March 16. The 3.8% of households who depend largely on pensions reported that their income remained the same (84.4%) (Figure 4).

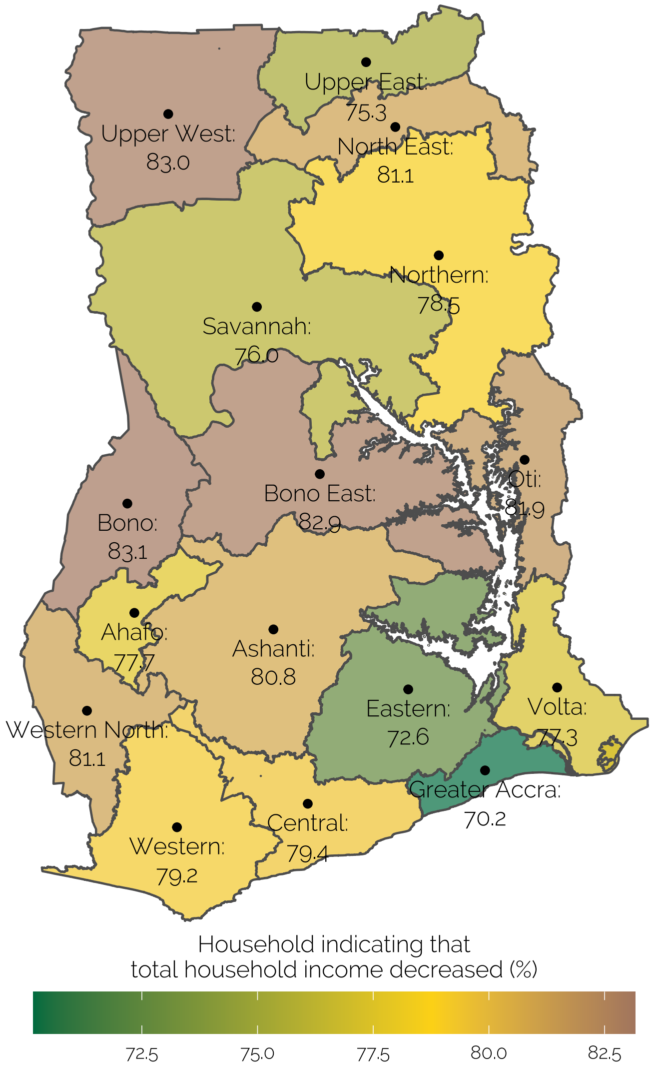


Figure 3: Households reporting decrease in household income since March 16 by region.

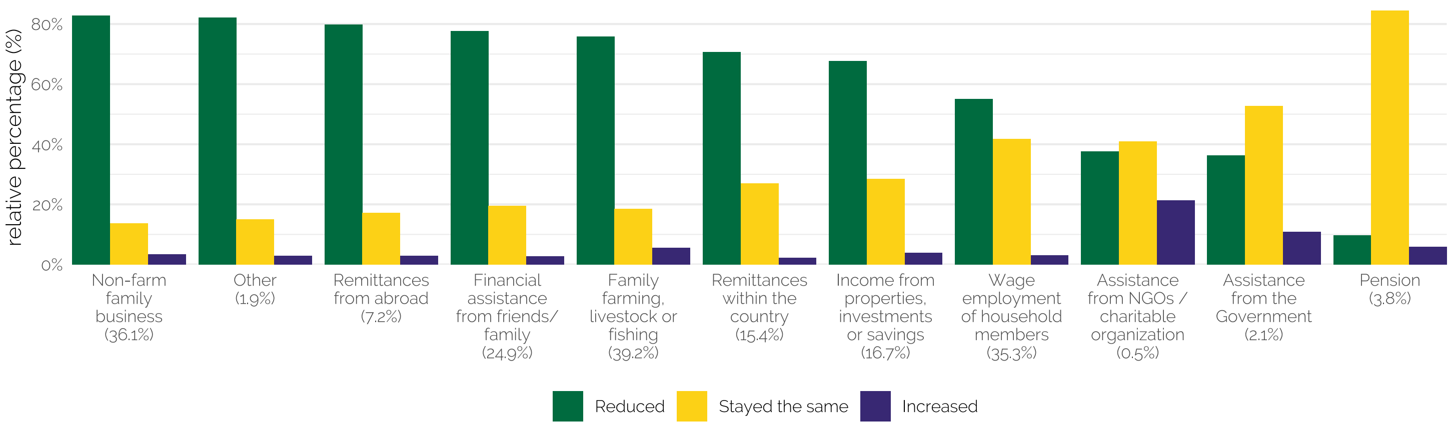


Figure 4: Change in household income by sources since March 16, 2020. *(%) on x-axis indicates which percentage of households indicated receiving this source of livelihood in the last 12 months.*

Access to Basic Needs and Healthcare

The survey sought to understand household's access to basic necessities, such as food, healthcare and basic services. Rice (81.7%), maize (74.7%), yam (49.7%) and cassava (49.3%) were reported to be the most important staple foods for households across the country and nearly three-quarters of households indicated that they could easily have access to them. 15.9% of households reported not being able to buy at least one staple food in the seven days prior to being interviewed. Plantain had the highest non-accessibility for about 10% of households in the seven days prior to being interviewed. The main reasons for not being able to buy staple foods were the increase in price (62.7%) and financial constraints (19.2%). Local markets being closed (1.6%), restrictions to go outside (3.2%) or shops running out of stock (8.0%) were less mentioned as reasons. For cocoyam (73.7%) and sorghum (83.3%) increased prices were most commonly cited as the reason for not buying the staple food. For plantain, this was 56.5%, while 19.2% gave shops not having stock of it as the reason.

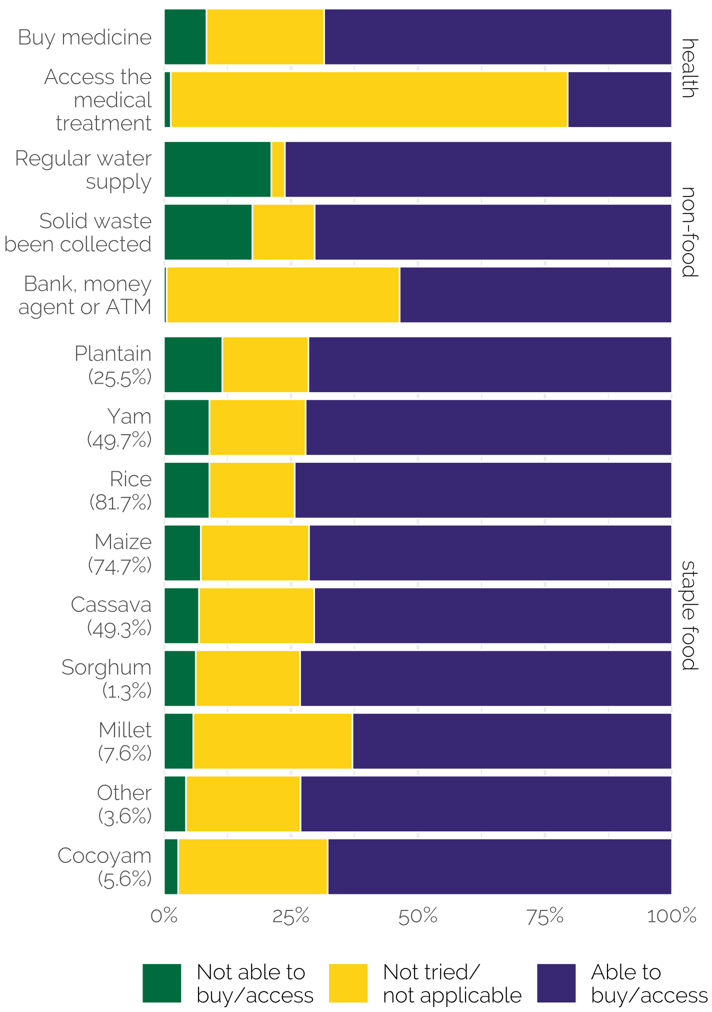
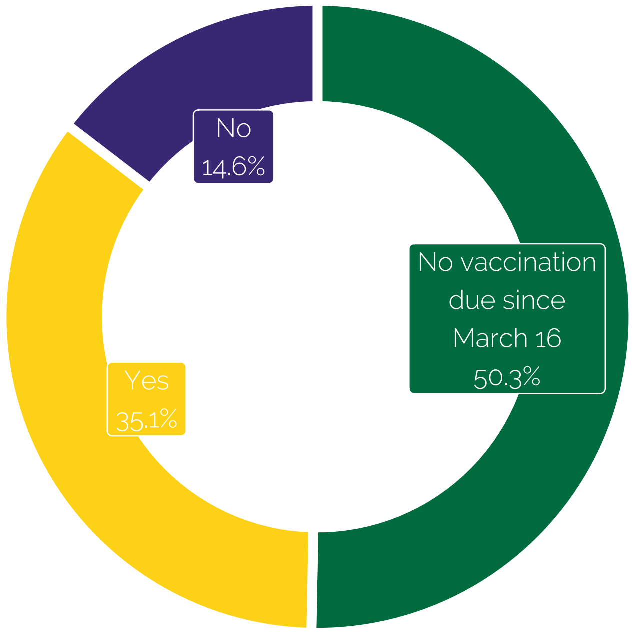


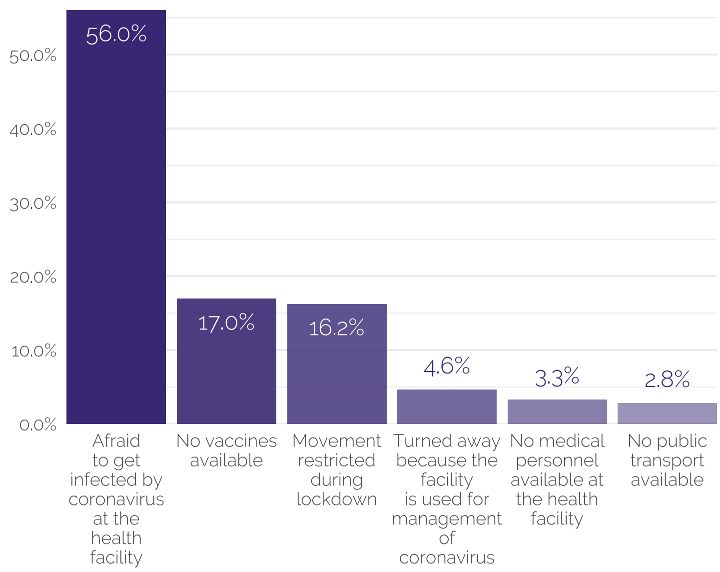
Figure 5: Percentage of households unable to buy or access certain goods and services. *(%) indicates which percentage of household indicated that is one staple foods they consume.*

A fifth (21.1%) of households reported not having regular access to water supply and 17.4% reported non collection of household solid waste. 8.6% of households could not buy medicine when they needed to. 6.1% of households that attempted to access medical treatment (1.3% of all households) were not able to do so (see Figure 5).

Half (49.7%) of households with at least one child below five years indicated that the child was due for a scheduled vaccination since March 16. While 7 out of 10 received their vaccinations, 3 in every 10 children under five missed their vaccinations (see Figure 6a). More than three-quarters (76.8%) of the children who missed their vaccinations, did so for COVID-19 related reasons (Figure 6b).



(a) Routine vaccination obtained for youngest child since March 16.



(b) Reasons children missed most recent routine vaccination.

Figure 6: Question related to vaccination of children in household.

Food Security

Of the households that were interviewed, 45.4% reported that, in the 30 days prior to the interview, they had only eaten a *'few kinds of foods*, whilst 44.6% indicated that they *'were worried about not having enough food to eat'* and 8.9% *'went without eating for a whole day'* (see Figure 7). Comparisons with previously observed levels of food insecurity will be explored in an upcoming thematic brief.

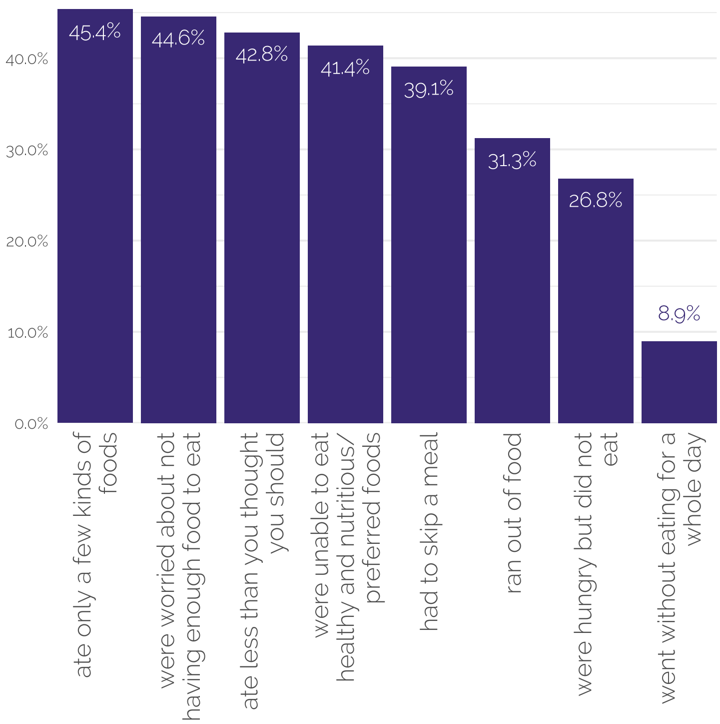


Figure 7: Household Food Insecurity Experiences. *Questions referenced the 30 days prior to the interview.*

For households with children under 15 years old, 21.4% of children have eaten fewer meals than usual in the past four weeks. Of these, 62.2% (13.4% of total interviewed) experienced this less than once per week against the 22.2% (4.8% of total interviewed) who experienced eating fewer meals 3 or more times per week. Normally, (before the school closure) 29.9% of children aged between 6 and 14 years received meals from government school feeding programmes. However over the previous four weeks (May-June) only 57.4% of these were still been receiving meals from such feeding programmes, either by delivery or at a collection station.

Education

The survey also sought to understand the effect of COVID-19, on the school-going population, especially how households have adapted or subscribed to nontraditional modes of education and the associated challenges were sought.

65.0% of basic school students and 72.0% of senior high school students were still engaged in different types of learning activities (See Table 1). The most common of these activities was watching educational TV programmes. The main difficulty in the learning process that was mentioned, for both basic and senior high school students, was *"lack of access to basic tools like computers or phones"*.

Household's willingness to have children to go back to school after mobility restrictions are lifted, was shown with more than ninety-five percent of households with bsaic school students and those with senior high school students indicating that their children will go back to school after the mobility restrictions are lifted.

Table 1: Education of children since March 16 by level of schooling.

	Primary /JHS	Senior High School
Likely that your children will go back to school after the mobility restrictions	96.1%	98.3%
Children engaged in any type of learning activity	65.0%	72.0%
In what types of education or learning activities have the children been engaged?		
Completed assignments from teacher	13.1%	10.6%
Used mobile learning apps	9.8%	20.3%
Watched educational TV programs	25.4%	31.7%
Listened to educational radio	4.3%	6.4%
Session/meeting with tutor	17.0%	13.6%
Session/meeting with sibling/parent	4.3%	0.6%
Self-learning	12.3%	9.7%
How many times during the last 7 days did the children participate in these activities?		
Once	6.4%	2.7%
Twice	14.7%	12.8%
Three times	21.2%	18.3%
Four times	14.2%	14.2%
Five times	15.6%	16.2%
More than five times	27.8%	35.8%
Learning difficulties faced by children at home in this period of school closures?		
Lack of access to internet	14.8%	18.4%
Poor Internet connectivity	12.2%	15.6%
Lack of access to basic tools like computers or phones	25.6%	32.7%
Children's lack of interest in taking learning lessons	18.3%	11.0%
Lack of learning materials including textbooks	21.6%	19.8%
Lack of guidance/supervision	0%	1.3%

Shocks and Safety Net

The increase in the price of major food items was experienced as the most common shock. 77.4% reported to be affected by that either very severely or severely. Interruption of schools was also widely experienced and affected households severely (74.7%) (see Figure 8). Conversely, the least experienced and least severe shocks related to households who were affected by the incapacitation or death of a contributor to household income.

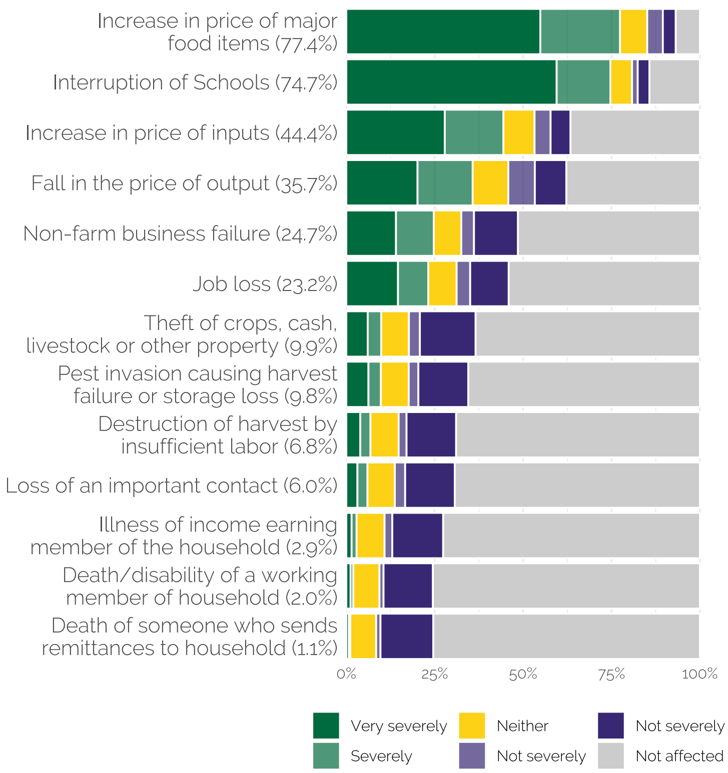


Figure 8: COVID-19 Related shocks to households. *(%) on the y-axis labels indicates the total number of households that is very severely or severely affected.*

To mitigate the expected impact of such shocks, various interventions were established to offer assistance. Since March 16, less than 10 percent (8.9%) of households interviewed had received at least one form of assistance from an institution (e.g. government and religious organisations), with 5.3% receiving free food. The median value of these gifts of free food was 50Gh₵. The predominant sources of free food are religious bodies (33.3%) and the government (28.6%). 3.9% of respondents indicated to have received direct cash transfers, with a median value of 200Gh₵. Social networks most commonly provided direct cash transfers (82.6%). Other in-kind contributions were received by 1.7% of the respondents, with a median value of 30Gh₵ and 44.8% received from the government (see Figure 9).

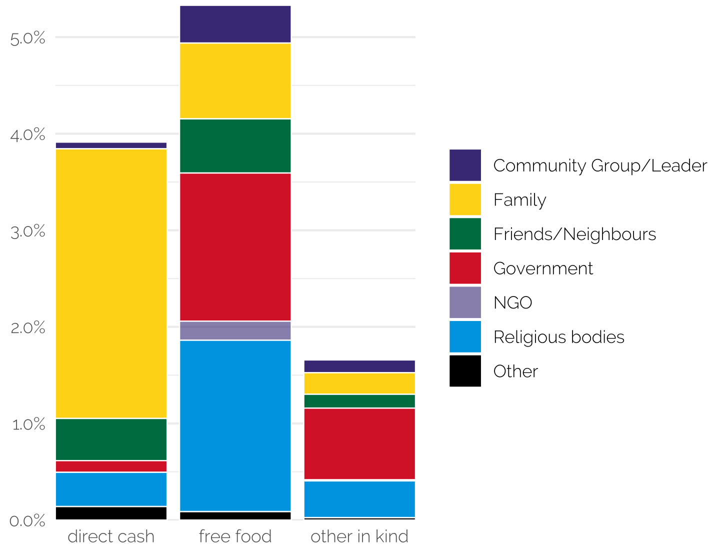


Figure 9: Social support systems to households.

The most common actions to cope with the effects of COVID-19 taken by the households interviewed were to reduce food consumption (52.1%); to reduce non-food consumption (47.7%) and rely on savings (47.4%) . The least common mechanisms were to receive support from an NGO (1.3%) or to take salary advance from an employer (1.7%) (see Figure 10).

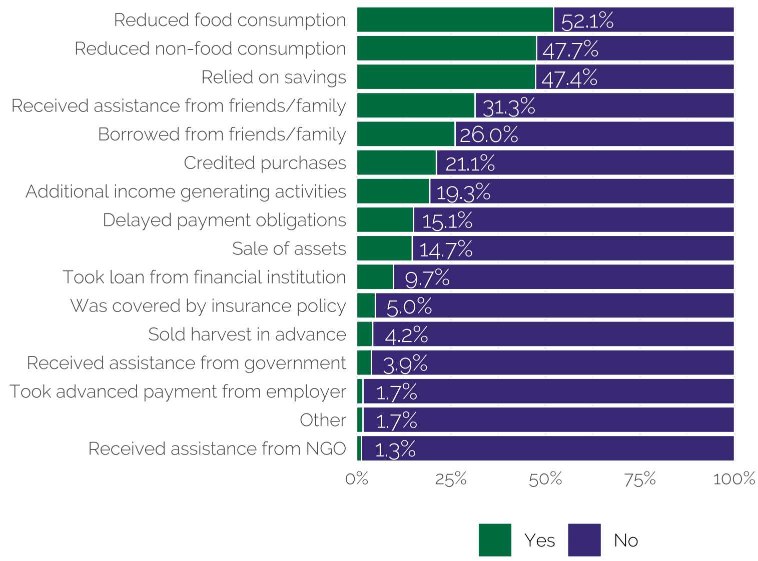


Figure 10: COVID-19 related household coping mechanisms

Looking to the future, more respondents (48.6%) believe that in the *'next 12 months they and their household will be'* somewhat or much better or somewhat better whereas 14.2% believe their life will be somewhat or much worse. 5.6% think nothing will change, while 31.6% say they cannot predict.

Household Situation

28.7% of households indicated that parents were more commonly irritated with their children in the last 30 days than they were prior to March 16 (11.7% indicated the opposite and the rest did not report a difference). 18.1% of households indicated an increase in physical punishment for children compared to a 8.3% decrease. 31.1% indicated an increase in support with household chores by children compared to a 6.4% decrease. 10.0% indicated an increase in children in the household working or selling things compared to a 3.5% decrease. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is very often and 5 not often), on average there has been an increase in these four categories of child discipline and support (see Figure 11 and Table 2).

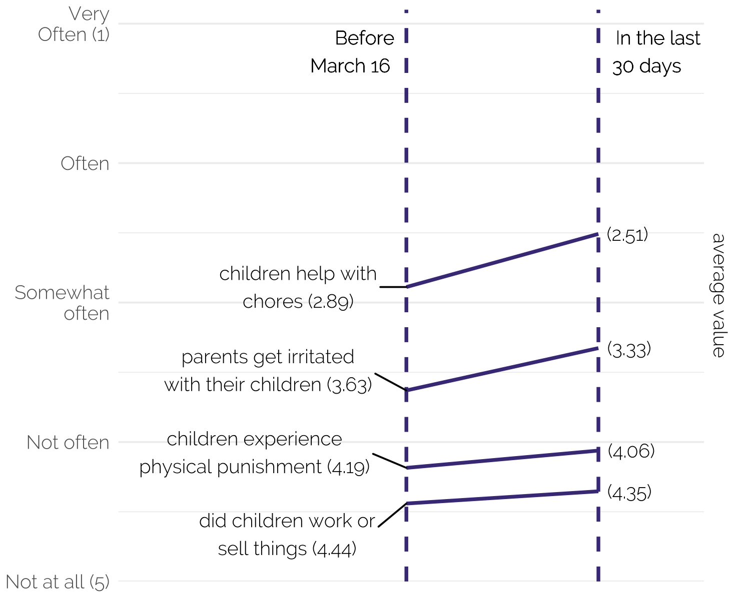


Figure 11: Child discipline and time use. *Comparing situation prior to March 16 to situation in 30 days prior to interview.*

The survey sought to understand the level of violence and crime experienced by households since the mobility restrictions were instituted. Generally, a fifth (20.1%) of households agree that their community has seen an increase in serious crimes (including theft, assault, harassment) with 5.0% of households indicating that a member of the household experienced at least one serious crime since March 16. Regards to violence within households, 12.9% of households agreed that their community has seen an increase in violence between members of the same household and 4.7% of households indicating that at least a member of their household experienced some type of violence with another household member since March 16.

Notes on Methodology

- This is the first of multiple waves of this survey.
- The survey consisted of two modules. Module A focussed on the (economic) impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on households and Module B on the impact on children and family situations. Households were only asked to complete module B if they completed module A and if there were children (0-17 years) in that household.
- Total final sample size of this survey was 3,265 households for Module A of which 2,063 also completed module B.
- Phone numbers of respondents were collected through the contact details of an earlier nationally representative survey (Ghana Living Standards Survey Round Seven, GLSS7).
- A total of 7,999 households were sampled from the GLSS7 respondents with phone numbers yielding 3,265 completed interviews.
- The results in this brief have been weighted using propensity weights.
- Households from all 16 regions were included and interviews were conducted in local languages from June 10-25, 2020.
- A detailed methodology will soon be published by GSS.

Table 2: Child discipline and time use in %.

	Very often	Often	Somewhat often	Not often	Not at all
Before March 16, 2020					
parents get irritated with their children	7.3	13.2	14.3	39.4	25.7
children experience physical punishment	1.8	4.8	9.7	40.5	43.2
children help with chores	20.1	25.6	15.6	22.7	16.0
did children work or sell things	3.7	6.6	4.9	11.7	73.2
In the last 30 days (May - June, 2020)					
parents get irritated with their children	11.1	20.8	13.2	33.9	20.9
children experience physical punishment	2.8	8.0	12.3	34.3	42.7
children help with chores	32.9	26.5	12.1	14.0	14.5
did children work or sell things	5.8	7.0	4.9	10.6	71.7

Partners

This project comes from a continuous cooperation between GSS, UNICEF and The World Bank with technical support from Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA).