Brief on COVID-19 Households and Jobs Tracker Wave 2

+233-303-932401 / +233-244-838054 info@statsghana.gov.gh
14-April-2021

Summary

1. In September 2020, GSS reapproached the households that participated in the first wave (June, 2020) of the Households and Jobs tracker and interviewed these households for a second time.
2. Most COVID-19 prevention behaviours have seen some decline between June and September 2020, but nine out 10 respondents still avoid handshaking and physical greetings.
3. Over 70 percent of Ghanaian Households benefitted from absorbed or discounted electricity bills and over 50 percent had their water bill paid by the government.
4. Nearly 90% of respondentsbelieve the Government is willing to provide healthcare and trustworthy in managing the coronavirus crisis.
5. Over 65% of households in September 2020 still experienced a reduction of household income compared to before COVID-19, down from 77% in June 2020.
6. About one fifth (21.8%) of principal respondents in households (most likely the head) did not work the seven days prior to being interviewed. out of this number, 45% had no work to return to.
7. 5.6% of households indicated that they went without eating for a whole day in the 30 days prior to the interview. In June this percentage was 8.9%.
8. For basic level education, the percentage of children who watched educational TV programs went from 23% in June to 28% in September 2020 and those listened to educational programs on the radio rose from 5% to 6%.
9. For secondary level education, the percentage of children who watched educational TV programs went from 30% in June to 36% in September 2020 and those listened to educational programs on the radio rose from 14% to 16%.
10. The majority of children are experiencing an emotional recovery, with households indicated that children are less frequently distressed (85%) and sad (71%) than in June.
11. Children helped in household chores less frequently in September than in June 2020, some of the seven percentage point reduction from wave 1 could be as a result of returning to school by JHS2 and SHS2 students.

Introduction

In September 2020, GSS collected data in the second wave of the Households and Jobs tracker. This is a nationally-representative, longitudinal telephone survey in which the same households are contacted more than once. The survey looks at the social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the population of Ghana. The first wave of the survey was conducted in June 2020 with 3,265 respondents and this second wave of the survey was conducted in September 2020 with 2,578 respondents. This brief summarises the results of the second wave of this survey and makes comparisons with the wave 1 results where possible. Some sections of the questionnaire for the second wave were adapted compared to the questionnaire from wave 1. This was done to keep the questionnaire pertinent to the changing COVID-19 situation in Ghana. The results from wave 1 can be found on the website of GSS.

Knowledge

In the first wave of this survey in June 2020, when asked spontaneously: *"What measures do you know of that can be adopted to reduce the risk of contracting the virus"*, 97.5% of principal respondents of households stated handwashing. Three months later, handwashing remained the most commonly stated preventative measure (98.4%). Households mentioned the use of masks and gloves more in September than in June (97.0% vs 71.0%) and awareness of the benefit of maintaining 1 meter distance also increased from 34.0% to 50.4% of households. However, other preventive measures such as avoiding travels or touching the face saw much decline which means people may have forgotten the important role these play.

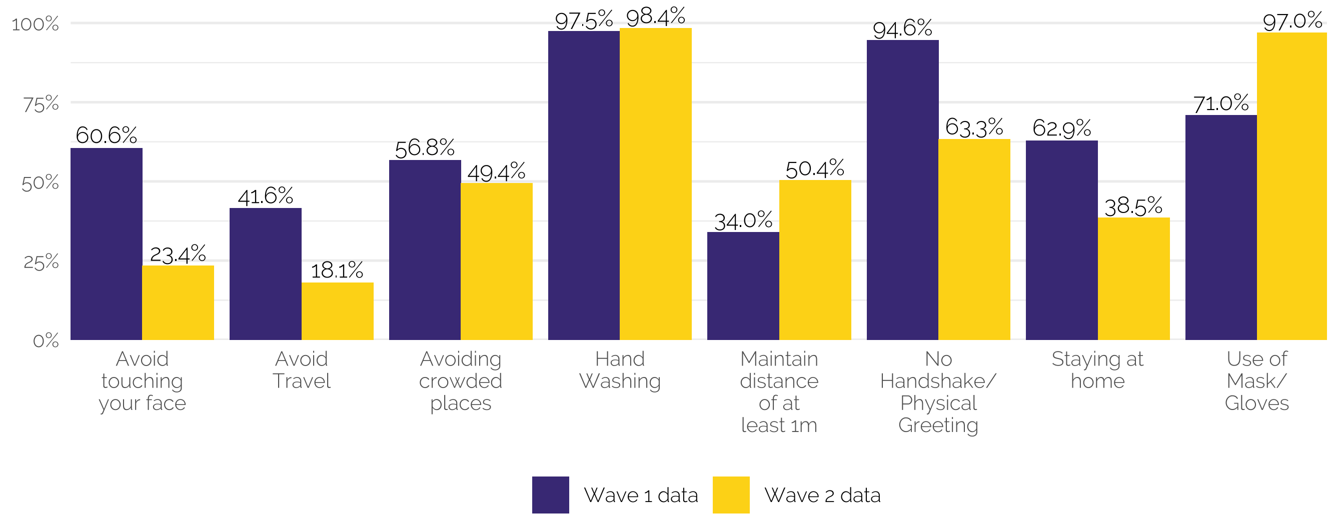


Figure 1: Precautions known by respondents. Multiple responses were possible and categories were not listed to respondents.

Government Assistance Programmes

Awareness of government assistance initiatives is high for the absorption of water bills (91.7%) and the absorption or discounting of electricity bills (95.3%), for which all households were eligible. Two-thirds of households were aware of the free water tankers being supplied to communities without water. Over 4.8 million households (72.4%) are estimated to have benefitted from absorbed or discounted electricity bills, whilst just under 3.4 million households had their water bills paid by the Government. An estimated 1.3 million eligible households also benefited from free water tanker services to their community. Of the households that benefitted, satisfaction with the government schemes was high with at least 94.4% of households satisfied with the intervention they received.

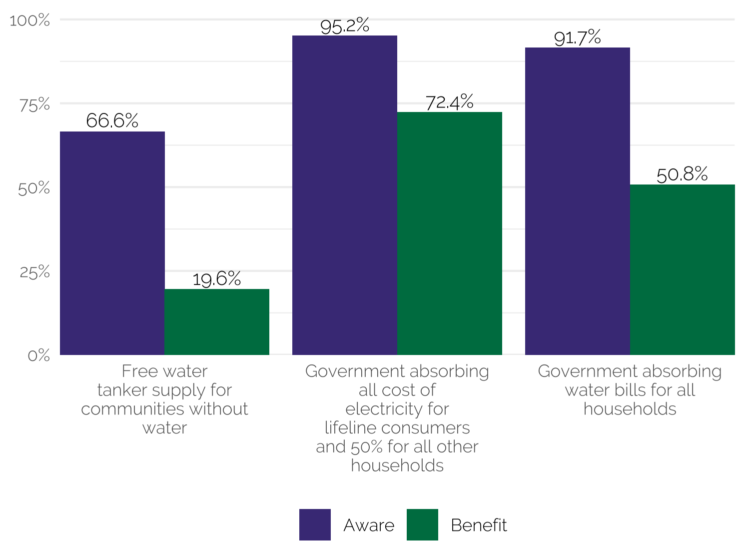


Figure 2: Government programmes Proportion of households who were aware of or benefitted from the Government Relief Programmes.

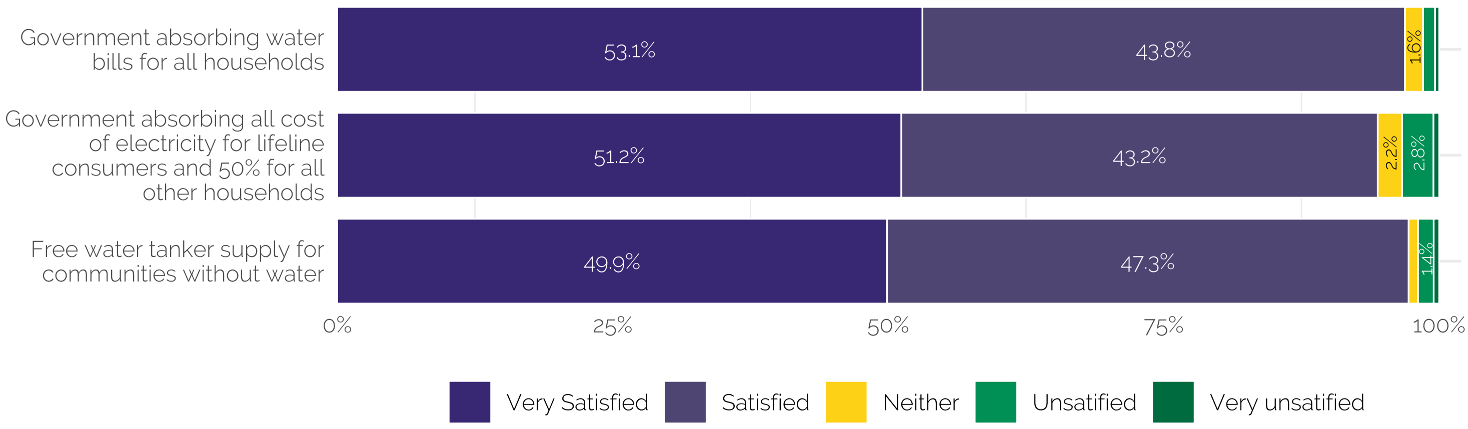


Figure 3: Satisfaction with government interventions Answers to the Question ``How satisfied are you with this intervention?" Answers reported only for households receiving the intervention.

Attitudes to the Government's Response to COVID-19

Overall, 93.0% of households are *"satisfied with the government's response to the coronavirus"*, this is a marginal increase from 89.6% of households in June. Of the remaining 7% of households who were dissatisfied, their main justifications were no financial assistance from the Government and the relaxing of the restrictions. The majority of households agree that the Government is willing (88.4%) and able (85.3%) to provide healthcare and trustworthy in managing the coronavirus (88.7%), mirroring the attitudes given in June 2020. In September, almost three-quarters of households (73.5%) believed *"the Government is able to provide enough assistance (cash and in-kind) to respond to the virus."* This is an increase from June 2020, when 67.4% of households agreed with this statement.

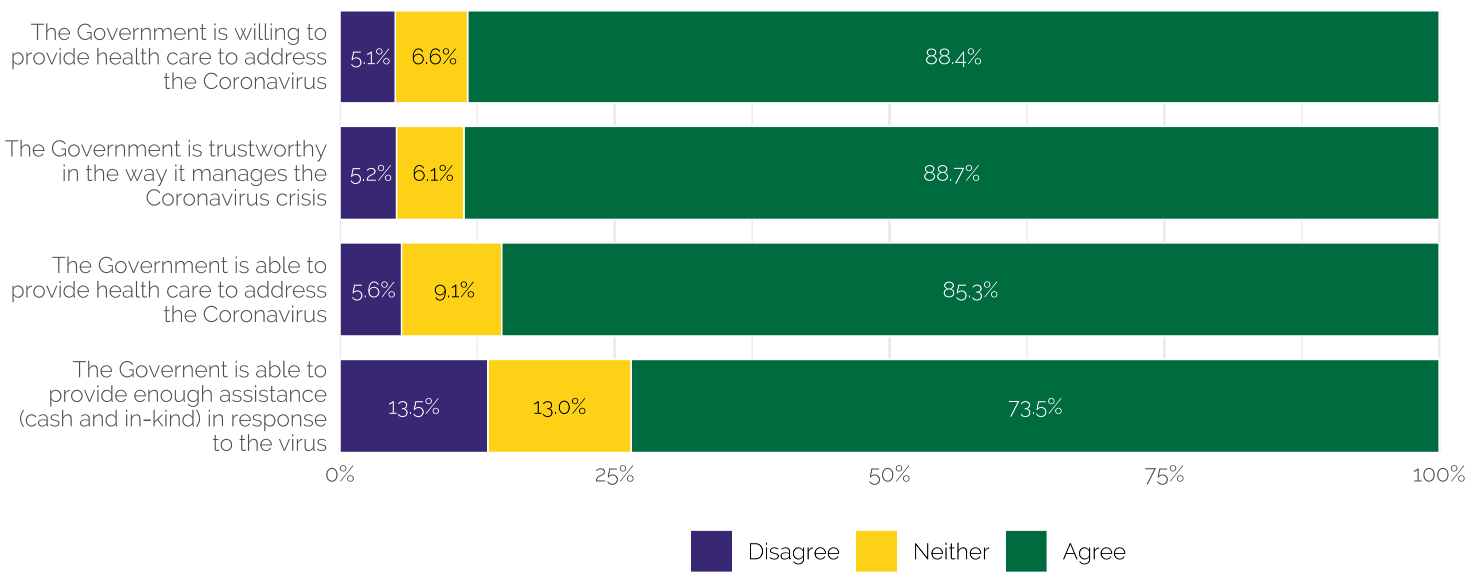


Figure 4: Attitudes towards the Government response to COVID-19

95.1% of households stated they *"intend to follow the Government's guidelines to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus"* which closely follows the intentions given in June (95.7%). Slightly higher urban households (96.5%) reported they intend to follow restrictions than rural households (93.1%).

Face Masks

Principal respondent (most likely the head) for each household was asked about face mask wearing. The results show that 83.8% of households principal respondents reported wearing a nose mask only, with a further 14.5% of households reporting to wear both nose mask and face shield. A minority reported they do not wear a mask (see Table 1).

53.5% of principal respondents report always wearing a face mask when leaving the house. 33.5% report wearing a mask most of the time and 11.2% report using one sometimes. Whilst trends of mask-wearing at least *sometimes* is similar in urban and rural households (98.4% vs 98.0%); urban households tend to report *always* wearing a face mask more often (58.0% vs 47.6%) whereas in rural areas the response *most of the time* (37.4% vs 30.5%) and *sometimes* (12.9% vs 9.9%) are more common.

90.3% of principal respondents of households said they wore a mask the previous day or the last day they stepped out. 96.2% of principal respondents in households are aware of the law making it mandatory to wear a mask in public places. Urban households are marginally more aware than rural households.

Table 1: Responses around mask wearing

	Overall	Urban	Rural
Mask type			
Nose Mask	83.8%	83.6%	84.0%
Face shield	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%
Both	14.5%	14.8%	12.1%
Neither	0.7%	0.5%	1.0%
Frequency of use			
Always	53.5%	58.0%	47.6%
Most of the time	33.5%	30.5%	37.4%
Sometimes	11.2%	9.9%	12.9%
Rarely	1.8%	1.5%	2.1%
Never	0.1%	0.1%	-
Questions on mask wearing			
Wore a face mask last time stepped out	90.3%	92.1%	87.9%
Aware of the law mandating mask wearing	96.2%	97.2%	94.9%

Behaviour Change

From June to September 2020, there has been a drop in the proportion of principal respondents of households who report washing their hands more than thrice a day in the last seven days (87.4% down to 75.7%). However, there has been a corresponding increase in those reporting to wash their hands thrice a day (9.4% in June up to 15.6% in September). Whilst some households appear to be washing their hands less frequently, few have decreased to less than thrice a day.

The prevalence of other individual behaviours that reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 also decreased. The reported avoidance of handshakes and physical greetings remained high at 92.5% compared with 94.9% in June (see Figure 5). However, a sharp drop-off in the behaviours of avoiding groups of more than 25 people, cancelling travel plans and stocking up on more food than normal saw an almost halving of the prevalence of such behaviours in three months. Note that when the survey was administered, the government regulations allowed congregation in groups of up to 100 people.

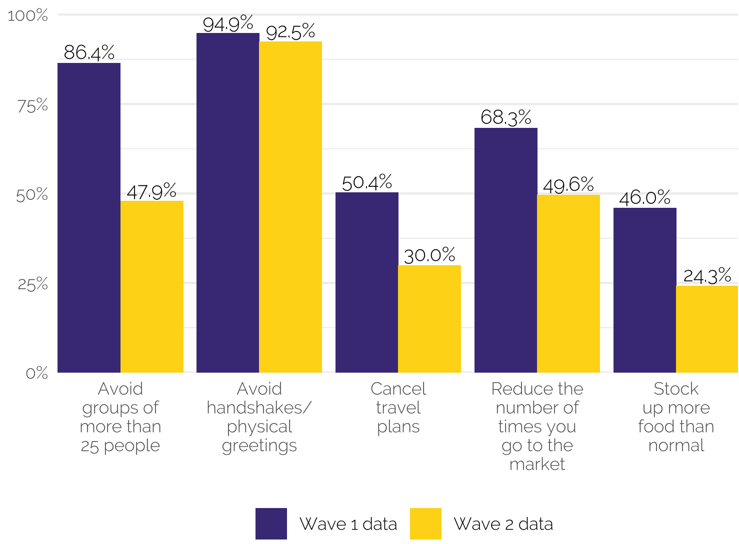


Figure 5: Behaviour change Answers to questions beginning ``In the last seven days, did you..." All answer categories were read.

Employment

Two out of ten (21.8%) respondents indicated that they had not worked in the previous seven days. Of these respondents, 9.3% did not work due to COVID-19 related safety concerns (see Table 2). A further 8.5%, mentioned COVID-19 work suspension as the reason for not working, while 1.1% attributed it to reduction in staff due to less business. The rest had other reasons for not working (retirement, seasonal workers, etc.). 45% of persons who had not worked in the last seven days did not have a job to return to.

Table 2: Reasons for not working in the last seven days.

Reason	percentage (%)
Business / government closed	6.3
COVID-19 related work suspension	8.5
COVID-19 safety concerns	9.3
Ill	10.1
Need to care for ill relative	3.8
Reduction in staff due to less business	1.1
Retired	20.1
Seasonal worker	25.2
Temporarily absent	15.6

More than half (55.5%) of households interviewed in wave 2 indicated the family-operated a family business. 54.7% of these family-operated businesses were in the service sector whiles 38.9% were within the agriculture sector. Only 6.4% of the family business are found in the industry sector.

Compared to May 2020, rwo-thirds (67.6%) of these family businesses indicated that income from normal operations were less than usual, while 20.7% had incomes being same as usual (see Table 3). Reasons given by respondents for the decrease in income from family operated businesses varied. Less customers (59.0%) was the main reason followed by place of business is closed because of COVID-19 (13.8%) and difficulty in getting inputs (4.6%).

Table 3: Income from family business compared to May, 2020

Income from family business	**percentage (%)**
Higher than usual.	5.5
Less than usual	67.6
No income	6.1
The same as usual	20.7

Nationally, 65.9% of households indicated that total household income has reduced since March 16 compared to 77.4% as recorded when the same question was asked in wave 1. Not all the income sources were affected equally (see Figure 6). Almost five out of every ten households that received income from Non-farm family business (49.0%) in the last 12 months. Of these households 70.8% indicated that this income has decreased. Households that indicated receiving financial assistance from family/friends constituted 10.1%. 43.2% of them indicated income from family/friends reduced but not to the level of pre-COVID. Most of the 4.1% of households who depend largely on pensions reported that their income remained the same (94.3%).

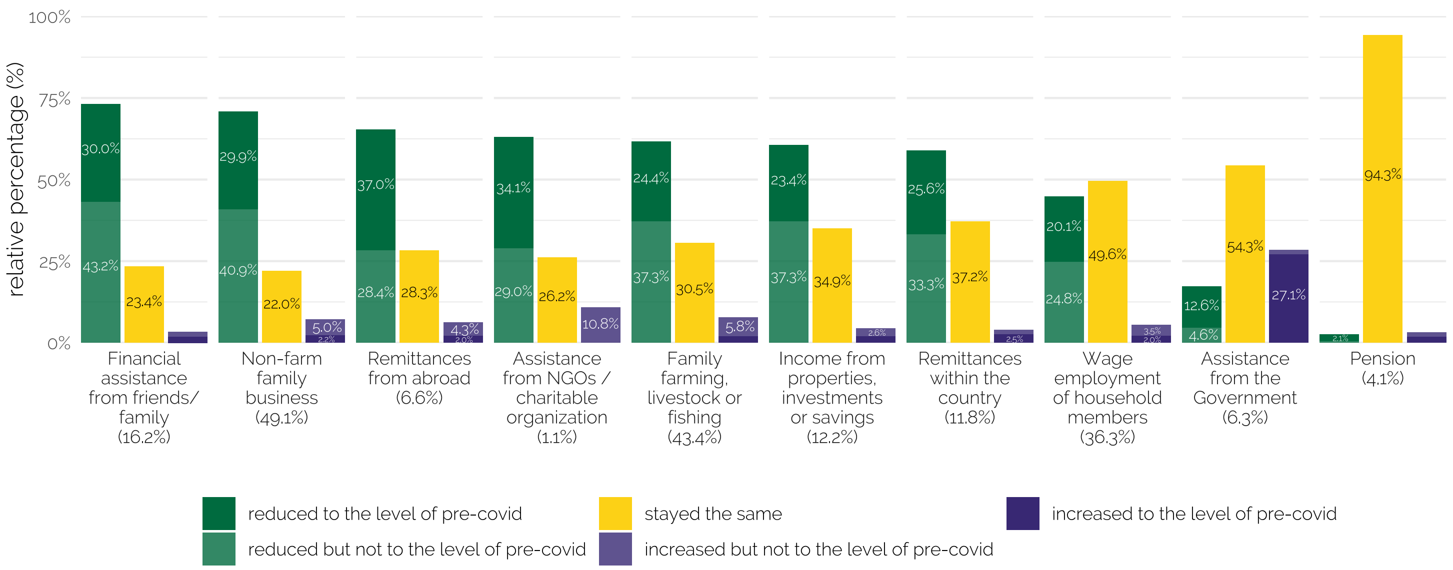
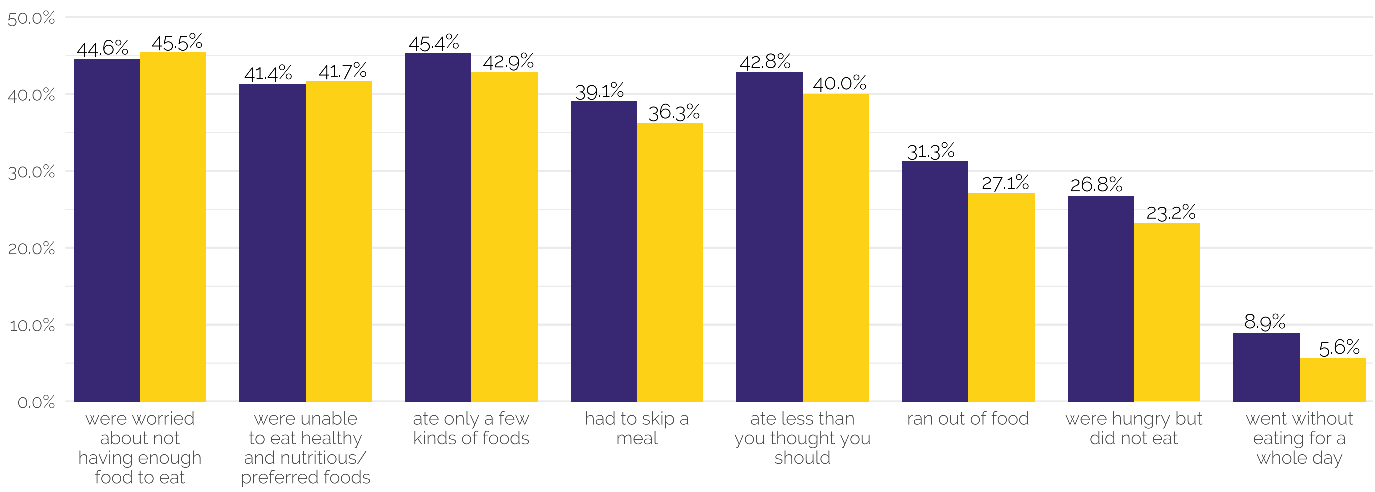


Figure 6: Change in household income by sources since March 16, 2020. (%) on x-axis indicates which percentage of households indicated receiving this source of livelihood in the last 12 months.

Food Security

Both waves of the Households and Jobs tracker included the eight questions from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). A separate release on the FIES is published along side this release, but this brief does summarize the responses to the eight food insecurity questions. Overall, questions on the topic of food security seem to indicate that food insecurity declined between wave 1 and wave 2. The percentage of households in Ghana that *'were worried about not having enough food to eat'*, in the 30 days prior to the interview, went up slightly from 44.6% to 45.4%, as did the percentage of households that indicated they *'were unable to eat healthy and nutritious/preferred food.'* However, the percentage of households that indicated they *'were hungry but did not eat'*, in the 30 days prior to the interview, went down from 26.8% to 23.2% and those who *'went without eating for a whole day'* decreased from 8.9% to 5.6% (see Figure 7).

From the households that participated in both wave 1 and wave 2 of the tracker, it is clear that food insecurity was not stable between the two waves. For the first seven questions, around 40% of households changed their answers on experiencing food insecurity from wave 1 to wave 2 (see the table in Figure 7). For for the last question this was 12.5%. Slightly more households answered *'yes'* in wave 1 than in wave 2, for questions three to eight.



	were worried about not having enough food to eat	were unable to eat healthy and nutritious/ preferred foods	ate only a few kinds of foods	had to skip a meal	ate less than you thought you should	ran out of food	were hungry but did not eat	went without eating for a whole day
Yes in Wave 1 No in Wave 2	20.3%	21.5%	22.6%	20.8%	21.5%	19.4%	19.0%	7.7%
No in Wave 1 Yes in Wave 2	21.1%	21.3%	19.6%	17.2%	18.5%	14.9%	14.7%	4.8%
No difference between waves	58.6%	57.2%	57.9%	62.0%	60.0%	65.6%	66.3%	87.5%

Wave 1 data Wave 2 data

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

For households with children under 15 years old, 17.7% of children have eaten fewer meals than usual in the past four weeks. Of these, 42.9% (7.6% of total interviewed with children) experienced this more than once per week. In the first wave of this tracker in June 2020, 21.4% of households indicated children had eaten fewer meals. During wave 1, 8.1% of households with children experienced eating fewer meals than usual *more than once per week*.

Access to Basic Needs

The survey sought to understand household's access to basic necessities, such as food, healthcare and basic services in the seven days before the interview. 26.4% of households indicated they needed healthcare in the past seven days in wave 2 compared to 21.9% in wave 1 (see Figure 8). Of those, 95.7% of households in wave 2 were able to access it, compared to 93.9% in wave 1. The percentage of people being able to buy medicine remained stable at 89.1% for both waves. Similarly, only small differences between waves were observed for regular water supply and solid waste collection. For staple foods, the biggest differences were observed for cocoyam (96.0% to 89.0%), plantain (86.1% to 92.2%) and sorghum (92.1% to 84.8%). None of these three staple foods are among the most mentioned staple foods. Rice, maize, yam and cassava were reported to be the most important staple foods for households across the country. 13.4% of households reported not being able to buy at least one staple food in the seven days prior to being interviewed compared to 15.9% in wave 1.

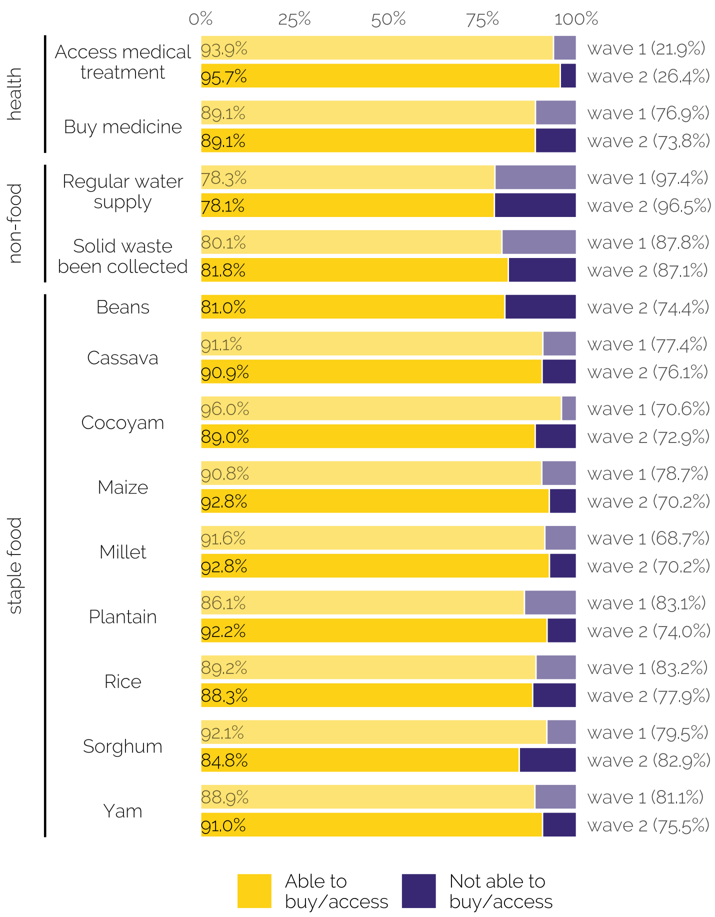


Figure 8: Percentage of households unable to buy or access certain goods and services in the seven days before the interview. (%) next to the label of the wave indicates the percentage of households that attempted to buy or access a given service.

The main reasons for not being able to buy staple foods were the increase in the price of food (88.3%). Other reasons such as no transportation (6.5%), closure of local markets (0.6%) and shops not having stock (4.7%) were given a lot less frequently. It is not possible to make a direct comparison with the wave 1 answers to this question because different answer categories were used in wave 1. During wave 1, increase in the price of food (62.7%) and financial constraints (19.2%) were mentioned most often, followed by shops not having stock (8.0%), restrictions to go outside (3.2%), no transportation (1.7%), local markets being closed (1.6%) and other reasons (3.7%).

Coping

The most common mechanisms to cope with the effects of COVID-19 taken by the households interviewed since March 16, were to reduce food consumption (55.7%); to reduce non-food consumption (51.8%) and to rely on savings (46.4%) (see Figure 9). Overall, only small differences are observed between different age categories for the different coping mechanisms. However, fewer older respondents (60 years or older) indicated that their households reduced food (49.1%) and non-food consumption (42.0%), but a higher percentage of these households received assistance from friend or family (42.3%) compared to the overall (30.6%).

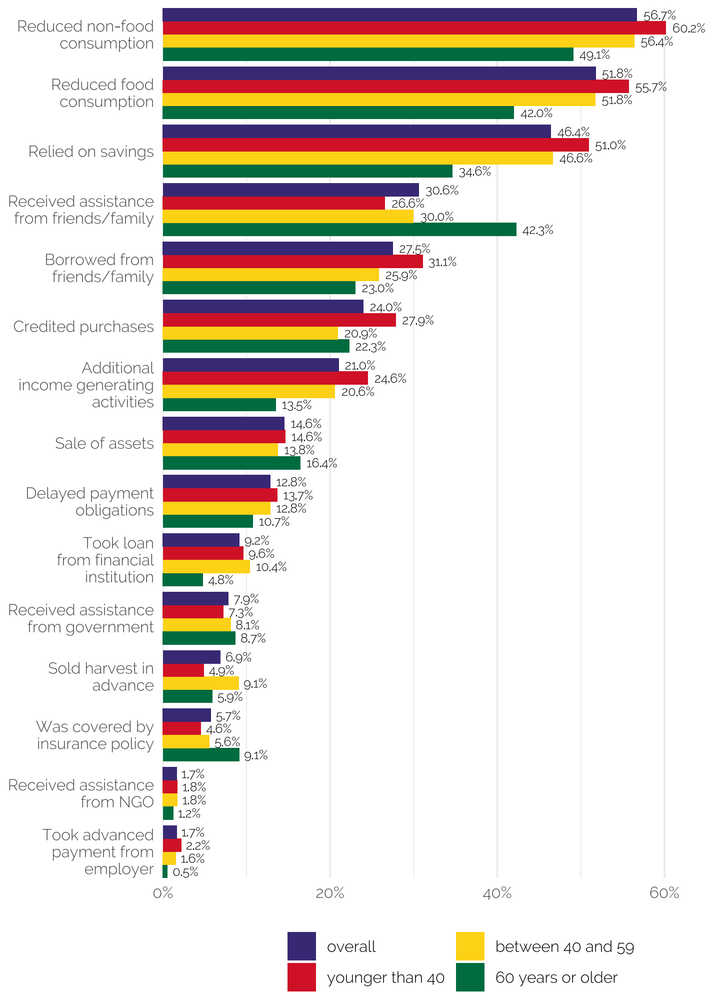


Figure 9: COVID-19 related household coping mechanisms since March 16 by overall and by age of principal respondent.

Education

In the second wave of the survey, households were asked to identify who looked after the children when the schools were closed. Parents (90.6%), siblings (12.2%), and grandparents (11.2%), were named most commonly (more than one answer possible). 3.6% of households indicated that children looked after themselves.

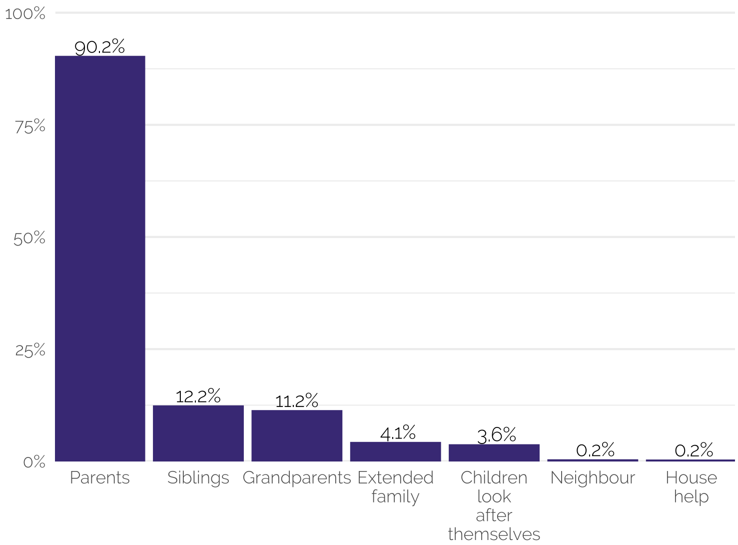


Figure 10: Answers to ``While the schools are closed who looks mainly after the children'?' Multiple responses allowed.

The survey was keen on capturing whether households with students at the primary to secondary levels were involved in any learning activities during the period of the lockdown (when schools were also closed) and also gained insight as to the modes of learning activities commonly sought among those cohorts. In general, participation in non-traditional modes of learning (e.g. via the radio or internet) increased among students in the first and second cycle. Particularly among households with primary/junior secondary students, the proportion engaged in any type of learning appreciated to 71.3% in wave 2, after registering 62.2% in wave 1 (see Table 4). While these proportions were higher among the senior secondary cohort, there was similarly an increase in participation from 72.0% in wave 1 to 79.8% in wave 2. Wave 2 included two additional options to capture eight main response categories to the modes of learning/educational activities. As such wave 2 reveal that many primary/junior secondary (40%) and senior secondary (49%) students engaged in private lessons.

However, educational TV programs continue to remain one of the most common modes of learning among both cohorts. For instance, among households with primary/junior secondary, the proportion increased from 23.1% in wave 1 to 27.9% in wave 2 and similarly increased from 29.5% to 35.8% for those with senior secondary. Moreover, teachers' involvement in students' studies continued to emerge as another common mode of learning with a significant increase in participation among both primary/junior secondary (21.0% against 16.1%) and senior secondary (15.6% against 13.5%). While subscription to different non-traditional modes of learning was paramount to this research, the frequency of patronage was equally important in assessing its equivalence to the five days of traditional face-to-face tuition.

Generally, compared with wave 1, there was a decline in the proportion of households for almost all the frequency of patronage in the preferred mode of learning activity. Though more than one-quarter (27.8%) of primary/junior secondary students patronized learning activities for more than five times in a week in wave 1, this proportion was less than one-quarter (23.2%) in wave 2. However, among senior secondary student households, the proportion was steady (35.8% versus 34.9% respectively). It is worth noting also that the proportions of primary/junior secondary students using their mode of learning 5-times and 3-times increased from 15.6% to 22.6% and 21.2% to 26.9% respectively.

Further insight into educational activities in relation to the difficulties associated with the modes of learning adopted by these two cohorts was necessary for future improvement to non-traditional educational activities. Again, Table 4 provides learning difficulties faced by primary/junior secondary and senior secondary students for both wave 1 and 2. In general, the findings revealed lack of access to basic tools (such as computers or phones) and lack of learning materials (including textbooks) still remain as the two main challenges impeding the subscription to the preferred mode of learning activity among the two cohorts. In wave 1, while a lack of access to basic tools like computers/phones (24.0%) emerged as the most common challenge associated with learning activities among the primary/junior secondary student households, it declines in favour of lack of textbooks (26.4%) being the most common challenge in wave 2. With senior secondary student households, both challenges are relatively more pronounced, slightly more than one-third indicated a lack of access to basic tools like computers/phones which was an increase from 31.4% recorded in wave 1. Similarly, lack of learning materials including textbooks being the second most common challenge recorded an increase in proportion from 21.9% in wave 1 to 29.3% in wave 2.

One of the common effects of the pandemic is the fear generated among households as a result of the rising COVID-19 infection cases in the country, so as part of the objectives of the survey it was deemed necessary to assess household's willingness to have their children go back to school after mobility restrictions are lifted. Findings from wave 2 revealed that a great majority (more than 9 out of every 10) of caregivers cohorts maintained their intention to have their children return to school after mobility restrictions are lifted.

Table 4: Education related indicators

Question	Primary/Junior Secondary		Senior Secondary	
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 1	Wave 2
likely that your children will go back to school after mobility restrictions are lifted	96.0	97.1	98.0	98.6
children engaged in any type of learning activity	62.2	71.3	72.0	79.8
Number of times children engaged per week				
Once	6.4	3.7	2.7	0.9
Twice	14.7	10.4	12.8	11.3
Three times	21.2	26.9	18.3	16.9
Four times	14.2	9.9	14.2	9.4
Five times	15.6	22.6	16.2	20.2
More than five times	27.8	23.2	35.8	34.9
No response	-	3.4	-	6.4
Learning activities				
Completed assignments provided by the teacher	12.3	12.1	11.1	8.6
Used mobile learning apps	8.2	6.9	18.2	14.1
Watched educational TV programs	23.1	27.9	29.5	35.8
Listened to educational programs on radio	5.3	6.3	7.4	11.5
Session/meeting with Lesson Teacher (tutor)	16.1	21.0	13.5	15.6
Session/meeting with Lesson with sibling/parent	4.2	-	0.7	-
self learning	11.5	-	10.8	-
Elearning	-	3.6	-	5.8
private lessons	-	39.9	-	48.5
Difficulties				
Lack of access to internet	12.8	12.2	17.2	18.2
Poor Internet connectivity	10.9	9.6	17.0	10.2
Lack of access to basic tools like computers or phones	24.0	21.8	31.4	33.4
Children's lack of interest in taking learning lessons	16.8	20.3	12.3	14.5
Lack of learning materials including textbooks	22.5	26.4	21.9	29.3
Other, Specify	6.7	-	1.5	-
Home not conducive to learning	-	29.0	-	31.5

Children's Health

This survey, sought to investigate the effect of COVID-19 on vaccination rates. According to UNICEF and WHO guidelines, a child should receive a BCG vaccination to protect against tuberculosis, three doses of DPT to protect against diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus, three doses of polio vaccine, and a measles vaccination by the age of 12 months. 37.3% of households indicated not having a vaccination due since March 16. Out of the remaining 62.7%, 20.6% indicated that the youngest child of the household did not receive a vaccination despite a vaccine being due. When first asked this question during wave 1, this proportion was 29.4% (see Figure 11).

Despite free maternal health care services in Ghana, skilled birth attendance continues to be a public health issue for the country. It has been observed that unskilled birth attendance is a major cause of maternal and child mortality and morbidity in developing countries including Ghana. This survey included questions on who assisted with the birth of children. The number of births in the sample was quite limited, but those that were included indicate that most births were assisted by a medical professional (see Figure 12).

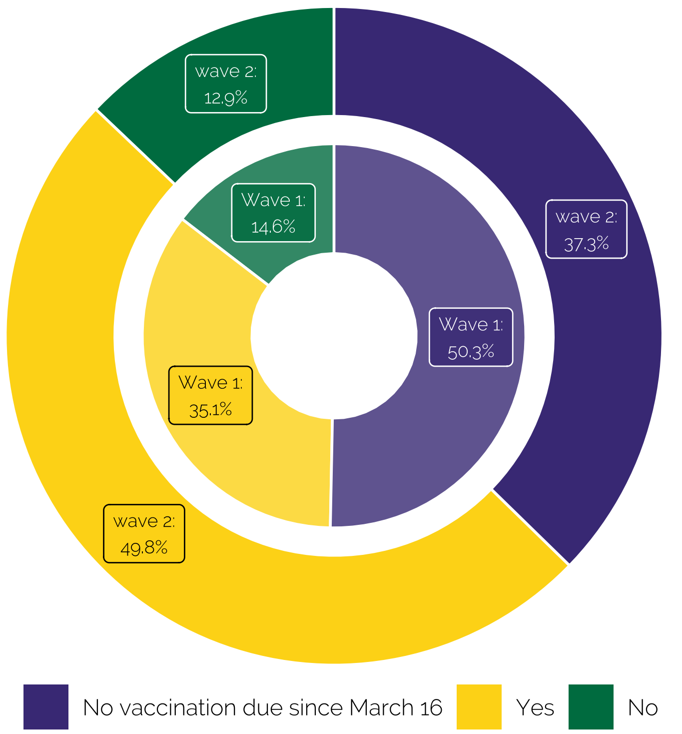


Figure 11: Routine vaccination obtained for youngest child since March 16 for both waves.

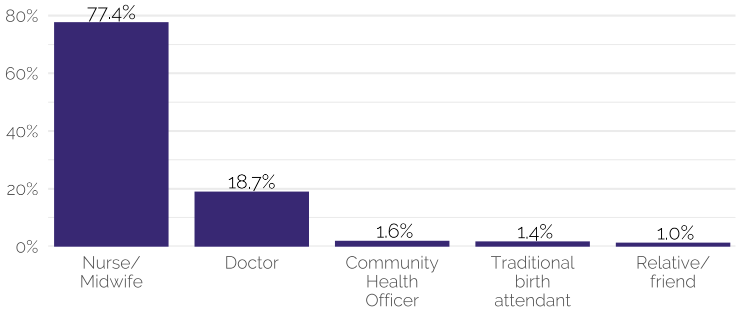


Figure 12: Who assisted during birth of child

The survey also took an interest in the emotional health of children. Overall, the survey observed a clear decline in negative emotions between June and September. 85.3% of households indicated that children are much less often or less often distressed, while only 6.5% indicate that children are more often or much more often distressed. 17.5% of households indicated that children were more often or much more often feeling sad, as opposed to 70.7% of households indicating that children are much less often or less often feeling sad (see Figure 13).

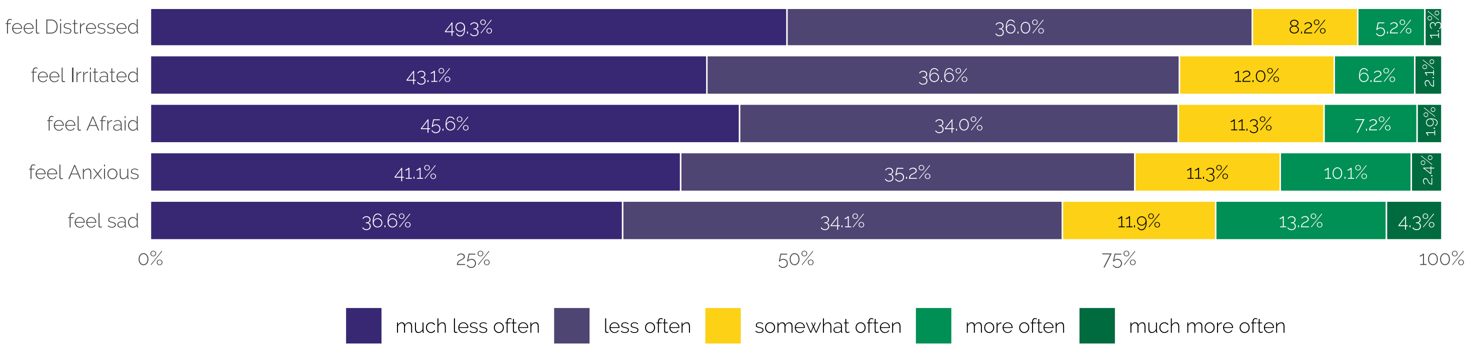


Figure 13: Emotions experienced by children. Compared to our last call in June 2020, how often would you say your children.

Household Situation

To quantify changes in the household situation for children, the survey asked different questions on

1. how often children work or sell things
2. how often children help with chores
3. how often children experience physical punishment
4. how often parents get irritated with their children

Compared to Wave 1, the survey observed a decrease in the percentage of households that indicated children *"often"* or *"very often"* participated or experienced the four different household situations this survey distinguished (see Figure 14). Compared to the baseline situation prior to March 16, there still is an increase in frequency, with the exception of households indicating that children work or sell things. Before the lockdown 45.7% of households indicated that children *"often"* or *"very often"* helped with chores. In the 30 days prior to the second wave interview, this went up to 51.7%.

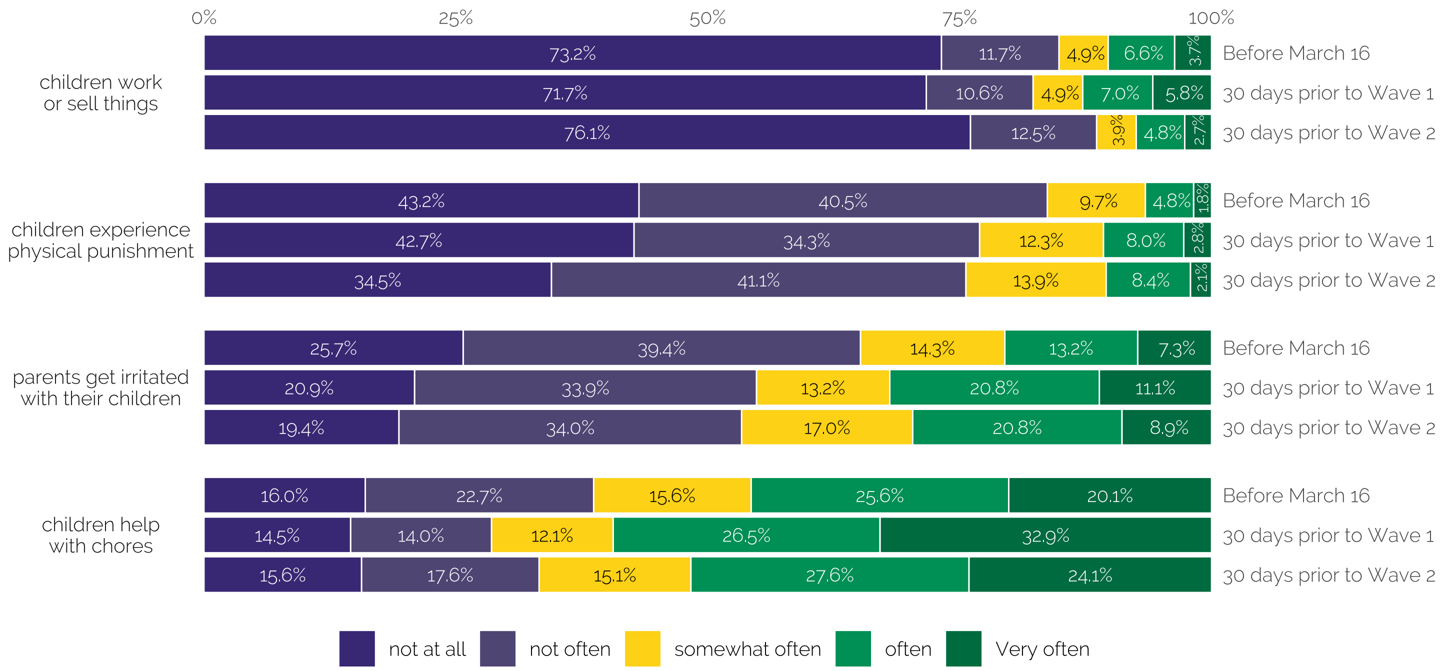


Figure 14: Child discipline and time use. Comparing situation prior to March 16 to situation in 30 days prior to wave 1 and wave 2.

In addition to emotions, the survey also took interest in the manifested behaviour of children. There has been a slight decline in the proportion of children between 4 and 17 years who reportedly had certain (negative) behaviours and feelings from June to September. The proportion of children who reportedly missed their friends and school dropped from 65.7% up to 64.3%. The proportion of children who reportedly felt bored at home dropped from 61.3% in June to 55.7% in September. In September, it was reported that 35.0% of children reportedly fight/argue with each other as against 36.6% in June. The proportion of children who often cry increased from 26.8% in June to 28.3% in September. The proportion of children who reportedly fight/argue with caregivers increased from 10.7% in June to 13.8% in September (see Figure 15).

Crime

The survey sought to understand the level of violence and crime experienced by households. Generally, 21.3% of households agree that their community has seen an increase in serious crimes (including theft, assault, harassment) between the first two waves of this survey. When asked the same question during the first wave, with as reference-period March 16 to June, that percentage was 20.1%. 9.4% of households agreed that their community has seen an increase in violence between members of the same household. In the first wave that percentage was 12.9% (see Figure 16).

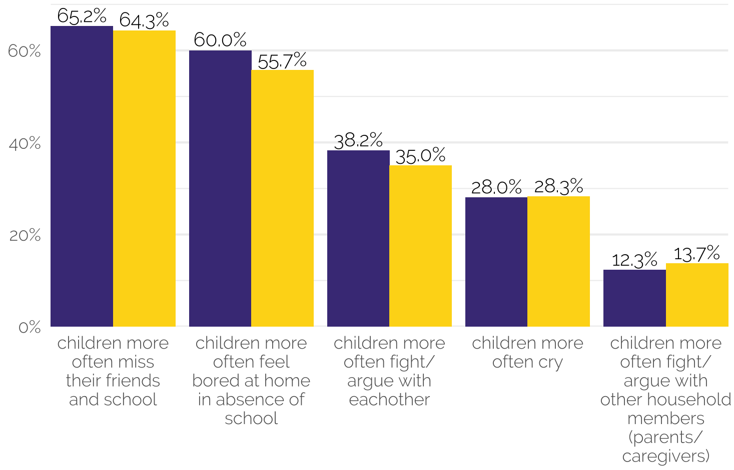


Figure 15: Behavioural changes of children. wave 1: ``Have you noticed that since March 16th – when schools were closed down – children have..." / wave 2: ``Have you noticed that since our last call in June 2020 children have ..."

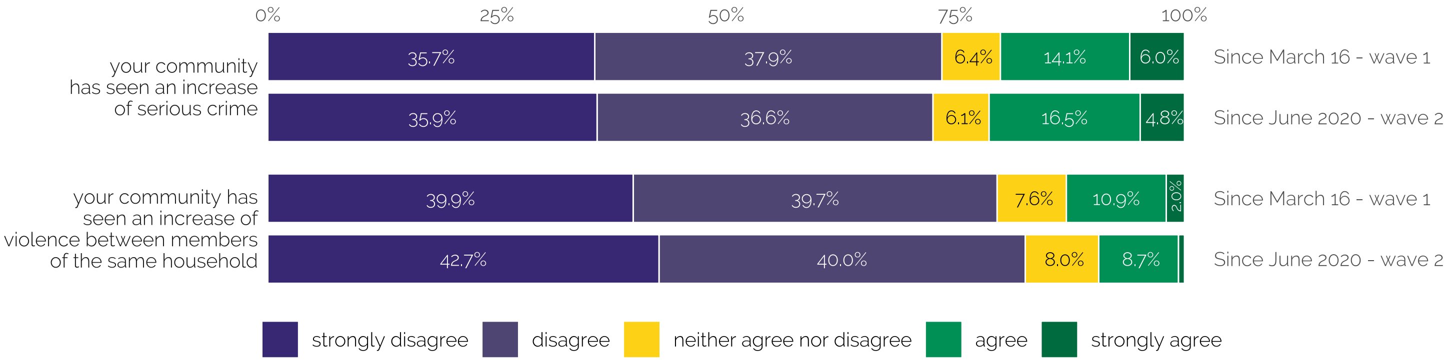


Figure 16: Self reported experience of crime, both within the community and within households in the same community

Notes on Methodology

- This is the second of multiple waves of this survey.
- The survey consisted of two modules. Module A focused 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.
- 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 and contacted during wave 1.
- During this wave of the survey the sample size totalled 2,578 households for Module A, of which 1,848 also completed module B.
- For the first wave of the survey, this was 3,265 households for Module A of which 2,063 also completed module B.
- 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 August 31 to September 22, 2020.

Partners

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