

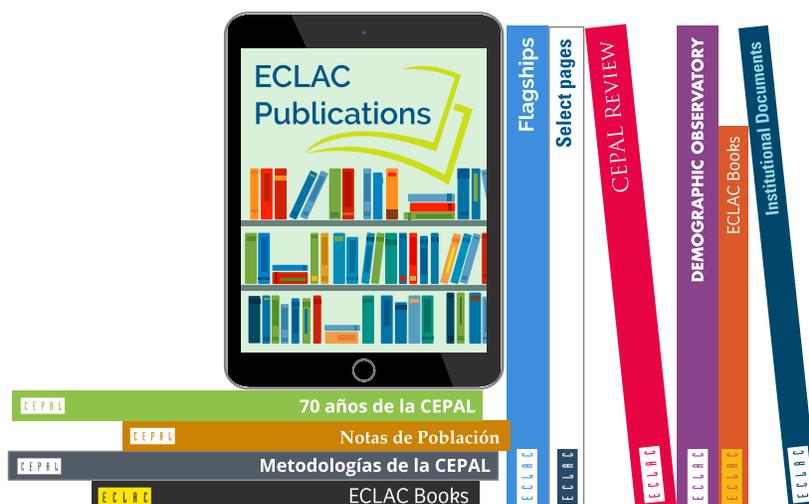
ECLAC SUBREGIONAL
HEADQUARTERS
FOR THE CARIBBEAN

The importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies

The gendered impact
of COVID-19 on paid
and unpaid work
in the Caribbean

Daniel Leon
Shirelle Floyd
Abdullahi Abdulkadri

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The gendered impact of COVID-19 on paid and unpaid work in the Caribbean

Daniel Leon
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Abstract

Recognizing the importance of unpaid work is critical to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which is Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Like most SDGs that are focused on the people dimension of the 2030 Agenda, the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed some of the gains made in gender equality and women's empowerment. Following the onset of COVID-19, many women have been forced to devote greater time to unpaid work activities, the extent of which has not been previously well-documented in the Caribbean. In this study, we evaluate how women and men allocated their time to different unpaid work in the household during the pandemic to gain a better understanding of the pattern of change in time-use in times of shocks and to inform the formulation of appropriate policy responses.

Using data from a Rapid Gender Assessment Survey of the impacts of COVID-19 in the Caribbean, we found that women, especially those who work in the services sector, were more impacted by job losses than men. Although already overburdened with unpaid work prior to the pandemic, women spent more time in unpaid work, particularly in caring for children, than men during the pandemic. Unfortunately, there is no established system of time-use surveys in the Caribbean to provide a robust data set that could be used to establish trends in pre-pandemic use of time by women and men. The findings of the current study point to the need to conduct time-use surveys on a regular basis. In addition to providing statistics on how women and men allocate their time for different purposes, such surveys will provide insights into factors impeding women's labour market participation in the Caribbean. Towards this end, important considerations for implementing time-use surveys are presented in this study for the consideration of National Statistical Offices of the Caribbean.

Introduction

Labour markets are gendered institutions due to socially constructed institutional norms that have assigned different roles to men and women in the social division of labour (Stuart, Gény and Abdulkadri, 2017). Social institutions have assigned women the role of “caregivers,” whose primary function is the upkeep of the household and raising children, while men are the “breadwinners” (Ferigra Stefanovi, 2022). The empowerment of women has steadily allowed them to join the labour market in ever more significant numbers, contributing to the advancement of women under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically Sustainable Development Goal number five (SDG5).¹ As is for all SDGs, monitoring progress towards the targets set under SDG5 requires critical data on gender statistics. However, the Caribbean is challenged in the quality and availability of these statistics. Specifically, most Caribbean countries are not sufficiently positioned to report on SDG target 5.4, which is to “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate” (Budlender, 2019). Therefore, measuring and recognizing the value of unpaid work, such as household and care activities, is crucial to empowering women and girls.

In the 21st century, the average labour market participation rate of women in Latin America and the Caribbean has been approximately 50 per cent, well below the 75 per cent rate of men. Although this gender gap in labour market participation is shrinking, the formal labour market representation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean is still significantly low. When they choose to participate, women tend to be more underemployed or unemployed than men. In 2019, 9.5 per cent of women were unemployed, compared to 6.8 per cent of men. However, the adverse socioeconomic shock of the pandemic, which affected women and men, appears to be widening the gender gap in unemployment rates, as this gap widened marginally from 2.7 per cent in 2019 to 3.7 per cent in 2021, even after they recovered from a substantial spike in 2020 (Ferigra Stefanovi, 2022). Hence, the early recovery from COVID-19, as the region’s economies started to ease the lockdown and social distancing

¹ Specifically, SDG5 is “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”

measures, produced a widening of the gender gap in unemployment rates to the detriment of women. Moreover, the early signs of the post-pandemic recovery point to a large share of women rejoining the workforce as informal labourers, such as undertaking paid and unpaid domestic work (ECLAC-ILO, 2022). Such a trend does not constitute decent job opportunities for women. Adding to this problem is that 54.3 per cent of women in the Caribbean work in sectors hit the hardest by the pandemic, such as tourism and other service industries, where the return of jobs and productivity to pre-pandemic levels will be challenging to achieve (ECLAC, 2021).

Achieving post-pandemic recovery will require thought-out policies and strategies that are informed by facts. Indicator 5.4.1 of the SDGs, “Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location,” is one such metric required to design gender-responsive policy measures for decent work opportunities. Knowing how women and men engage with different unpaid household and care work activities since the pandemic will provide helpful insights into whether and how the pandemic produced a gendered impact on unpaid work in the Caribbean. The burden of unpaid work, such as educating children at home due to temporary school closures, can make women’s labour market reintegration more difficult. In contributing to informing policies, including those related to unpaid care work, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in collaboration with the United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU), undertook a Rapid Gender Assessment Survey of the impacts of COVID-19 in the Caribbean from September 2021 to January 2022². This survey provided data on changes in time-use due to COVID-19, including for paid and unpaid care work.

In this study, we examine how the measures taken by governments to ensure public health and by employers and schools to safeguard people while ensuring business and learning continuity impacted the time-use of women and men. More specifically, we evaluate the proportion of women and men reporting time-use increases in unpaid household and care work. Understanding the pattern of change in time-use during shocks is fundamental to informing appropriate policy response, particularly regarding social support during shocks and recovery measures in the post-shock period.

Following this introduction, the next chapter reviews the literature on the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 on gender equality, particularly on labour market participation. We then present the results of the analysis of the Rapid Gender Assessment Survey, highlighting the gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on time-use by women and men. Based on the findings of the study, a case is made for the regular conduct of time-use surveys in the Caribbean in Chapter IV, including some critical propositions for the consideration of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) when designing and deploying time-use surveys. Chapter V provides a brief conclusion of the study.

² Details of the survey is provided in a separate report by ECLAC and UN-Women entitled “Report of the Rapid Assessment Surveys on the Impacts of COVID-19 in the Caribbean (ENERICOV-2020),” which is available at the following web link: https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/draft_report_of_rapid_gender_assessment_survey.pdf.

I. Background

Regulatory responses implemented by governments to control rising cases of and death from COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021 impacted women's and men's participation in the Caribbean labour market differently. Some economic sectors and industries that could rapidly adapt to these measures—which included extended periods of business and school closures and social distancing guidelines—were better able to stabilize their workforce by adopting digital solutions. However, service sectors such as tourism experienced significant reductions in their business and revenues, leading to many workers being laid off. For many people, the pandemic brought about two socioeconomic repercussions: loss or reduced household income due to job losses and increased time spent on unpaid care work. Furthermore, the pandemic increased the burden of caregiving for children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities due to the increased cost of providing service by entities that care for these subpopulations. Moreover, income loss during the pandemic made outsourcing care work, such as elderly care, prohibitive for many households.

Regional and international organizations have conducted surveys on the effects of COVID-19 on women and men in the Caribbean, paying particular attention to unemployment rates and increases in time spent on unpaid work, such as household and care work. The surveys include the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)/Cornell University's COVID-19 socioeconomic survey in six Caribbean countries (Bottan, Hoffmann and Vera-Cossio, 2020). Arteaga Garavito and Alvarez (2020) detailed the pandemic's impact on unemployment rates and increased time-use on unpaid work activities. The COVID-19 Human and Economic Assessment of Impact (HEAT) reports of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and UN-Women, in eight Eastern Caribbean countries³ also detailed the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries and paid particular attention to the effects on the tourism sector, where women constitute the majority of the workforce (Giles Alvarez and Khadan, 2020). In addition, the World Food Programme's (WFP) Caribbean

³ The countries covered in the HEAT series are Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Surveys shed light on the pandemic's socioeconomic impacts, including the gendered implications for unpaid work.⁴ The WFP's coverage of 25 Caribbean countries in these surveys is particularly valuable for subregional representativeness.

As WFP reported in the fourth round of the Food Security and Livelihood survey in February 2022, 56 per cent of women and 50 per cent of men in the Caribbean either lost their job or experienced a reduction in income due to COVID-19. These results align with the conjecture that the pandemic is likely to increase women's unemployment rates more than men's because women are overrepresented in economic sectors most negatively affected by lockdown and other COVID-19 restrictions. These sectors are service industries centred around face-to-face operations, such as tourism and retail (Farré and others, 2022).

Regarding care work, the health measures put in place to control the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of schools and daycare facilities, significantly increasing the time spent by household members on childcare. Since women are predominantly responsible for childcare due to social norms, they experience an increase in this unpaid care activity, which might reduce their labour market participation or constitute a barrier to their regaining employment (Alon and others, 2020). Moreover, women commit more of their time to other unpaid work activities, such as caring for adult household members, including the elderly and persons with disabilities, which impedes their re-entry into the labour market. As reported in earlier studies, women consistently reported more time spent than men in care activities, such as taking care of the elderly and children, during the first year of the pandemic (Arteaga Garavito, Beuermann and Giles Álvarez, 2020), with 46 and 45 per cent of women reporting an increased time spent in unpaid household work and childcare, respectively, because of the pandemic. In contrast, only 41 and 37 per cent of men reported increased time spent in unpaid household work and childcare, respectively.⁵

The transition to telecommuting mode of work during COVID-19 highlights how the pandemic has increased women's unemployment rates and their time spent on unpaid care work (Lyttelton, Zang and Musick, 2022). Women who telecommute can balance paid employment with increased time-use in unpaid care activities such as childcare. However, such women tend to be employed in the knowledge economy. In contrast, those in economic sectors requiring less specialized skills, such as tourism and retail, tend to work exclusively on-site and mostly do not have the opportunity to telecommute and are, therefore, more vulnerable to job loss in times of economic downturns.

Women are not the only ones devoting more time to unpaid work in the aftermath of the pandemic. The pandemic also increased the participation of men in unpaid household activities and care work either because of the ability to telecommute or reduced employment hours. However, the distribution of unpaid work still reflects social norms that place women as households' primary caregivers (Farré and others, 2022). Nevertheless, the pandemic's reproduction of gender norms overburdening women more than men with unpaid work may differ depending on the type of unpaid household activity or care work (Chauhan, 2021).

⁴ See, <https://www.wfp.org/publications/caribbean-COVID-19-food-security-and-livelihoods-impact-survey> [accessed on September 7, 2022].

⁵ Ibid.

II. Gendered impacts of COVID-19 on paid and unpaid work

COVID-19 control measures have evolved since early 2020, resulting in several adverse impacts. One such impact is the reduction in household income which limits women's and men's ability to outsource unpaid work activities, thus increasing the time they spend on unpaid work, such as household and care activities. Considering this, examining how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the time-use of women and men compared to the time prior to the pandemic could help inform policies aimed at closing the gender gap that overburdens women with unpaid work and prevents their re-entry into the labour market.

A. Source of data for the study

Data for this study came from the Rapid Gender Assessment Survey conducted by UN-Women and ECLAC. The survey questionnaire,⁶ which sought information on the impacts of the pandemic on different aspects of individual and household lives, was administered and completed online by 2157 respondents (1592 women and 565 men)⁷ in 17 Caribbean countries and territories.⁸ Annex 1 presents the key gender-disaggregated demographic characteristics of the sample. The survey included stylized retrospective questions on the impact of the pandemic on the time-use of paid and unpaid work by respondents.

⁶ The questionnaire is available at https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/covid-19_rapid_gender_assessment_questionnaire.pdf.

⁷ An additional 85 survey respondents indicated their gender as "other." The other gender category was excluded from the analysis due to the low number of respondents in this category.

⁸ The respondents of the survey resided in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands. However, it is important to note that 90.4 per cent of the respondents resided in Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

B. The gendered impact of COVID-19 on time-use in paid work

Changes in income and employment status are two major labour market impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the Rapid Gender Assessment Survey respondents, more men (73.3 per cent) than women (65 per cent) reported having salaried employment,⁹ and women (9.2 per cent) were more likely to be inactive in the labour market than men (6.9 per cent). The highest rate of employment was reported by persons between 26 and 55 years of age (80.9 per cent for men and 73.6 per cent for women), while the highest rate of unemployment was reported by women between 18 and 25 years of age (16.4 per cent of this age group) and men between 26 and 35 years of age (11.6 per cent of this age group). As expected, the highest proportion of inactive persons was in those over 65 years of age (61.1 per cent for men and 57.9 per cent for women). Men (61.2 per cent) were more likely to have formal employment than women (54.4 per cent). Moreover, men (4.5 per cent) were more likely to own businesses that employed persons than women (2.7 per cent) (see table 1).

Table 1
Proportion of respondents answering in the affirmative to questions
on their pre-COVID-19 employment status by gender
(Percentages)

	Men	Women
I worked for a person/company/institution/household (for pay)	61.2	56.4
I had my own business/freelanced, and I employed other people	4.5	2.7
I had my own business/freelanced, but I did not employ other people	5.1	4.5
I helped (without pay) in a family business	2.5	1.4
I am retired; pensioner	3.6	3.4
I did not work (I was not looking for a job, and I was not available to work)	1.5	3.6
I did not work because I am studying full-time	5.1	4.3
I did not work as I have a long-term health condition, injury, disability	0.9	1.6
I did not work, but I was looking for a job, and I was available to start working	6.9	9.2
Other	4.0	6.4
Prefer not to answer	4.7	6.5

Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Note: The sum of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding to the first decimal.

About one-third of all respondents worked in the tourism, hotel, food services; education; and health services sectors. The tourism, hotel, and food services sector is particularly important for Caribbean economies. More than one in ten respondents was employed in this sector (13.5 per cent of women and 10.4 per cent of men). Due to their higher representation in this sector, women had greater exposure to job losses or reduced working hours due to the pandemic. In addition, more women than men reported that they were employed in the education and health service sectors, but the gender gap in the shares of employment was smaller than in the service sector. About 13.8 and 12.6 per cent of female respondents were employed in the education and health service sectors, compared to 7.8 and 7.3 per cent of male respondents, respectively.

Analysis of changes in respondents' employment status over five quarters since the onset of the pandemic in April 2020 revealed COVID-19's gendered impact on paid work. Nearly half the respondents reported changes to their employment status during COVID-19. More women reported job losses than men during the pandemic, and this held firm across all five quarters (see table 2). The women who lost their jobs were mainly younger, between the age groups of 18 and 25 years of age (9 per cent) and between 26 and 35 years of age (8.4 per cent). However, more men between the age groups of 46 and

⁹ This includes paid work in formal and informal settings.

55 years of age and between 26 and 35 years of age lost their jobs (8.1 and 7.9 per cent, respectively). Across all periods, average job loss was 7.9 per cent for women and 6.2 per cent for men. Notably, for four in 10 respondents across all periods, the pandemic did not result in changes in their employment status. This was the case for about 46 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women. Over time, men were more likely to be affected by the loss of hours worked with reduced pay. On average, 13.2 per cent of men reported decreased hours with reduced income compared to 11.9 per cent of women (see figure 1).

Table 2
Proportion of respondents reporting a change in employment time from April 2020 to June 2021 by gender
(Percentages)

		Apr–Jun 2020	July–Sept 2020	Oct–Dec 2020	Jan–Mar 2021	Apr–Jun 2021
No change, It remained the same	Men	46.2	45.0	45.4	45.7	46.1
	Women	45.0	43.0	42.4	42.3	41.8
Increased, with additional compensation	Men	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.7
	Women	3.5	4.1	4.4	4.4	5.2
Increased, with no additional compensation	Men	14.5	16.0	15.5	16.0	15.7
	Women	14.5	15.4	16.8	16.7	16.6
Decreased, with reduced compensation	Men	14.5	13.3	13.9	12.5	11.9
	Women	12.8	13.3	11.7	11.0	10.9
Decreased, with no reduction in compensation	Men	8.6	9.2	8.2	6.8	7.6
	Women	9.8	9.0	7.8	8.2	7.5
I lost my job	Men	6.5	5.7	6.5	6.3	6.0
	Women	7.4	7.6	7.9	8.5	8.1
I got a new job	Men	0.8	1.6	1.9	3.3	2.7
	Women	1.5	2.4	2.7	2.4	3.5

Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

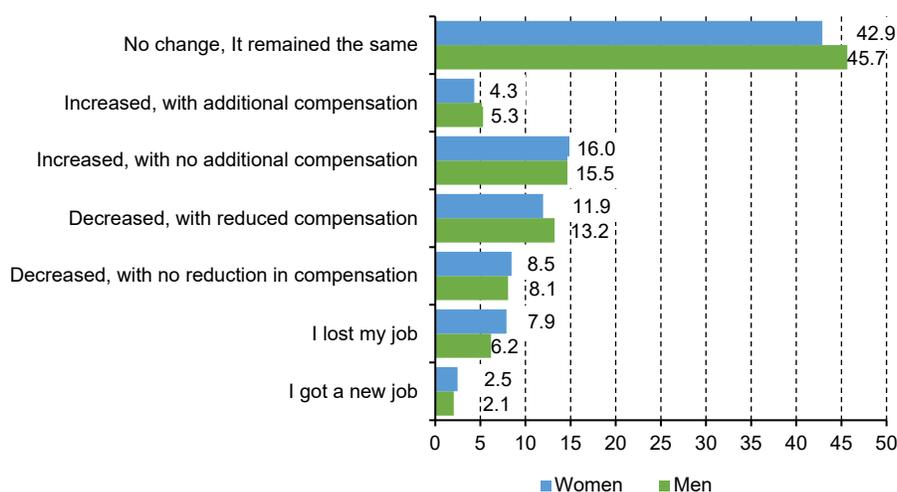
Note: The sum of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding to the first decimal.

Disaggregating survey responses by sector of employment reveals the crucial gendered impacts of COVID-19. The adverse socioeconomic effects of the pandemic particularly impacted those employed in the tourism sector. Figure 2 shows the different aspects of the impact of COVID-19 across employment sectors. Figure 2A reveals that almost a quarter of women (23 per cent) reported losing their job in the tourism sector compared to 15.2 per cent of men in the same sector. However, in the health sector, loss of jobs was reported by 9.3 per cent of men compared to 3.5 per cent of women. Furthermore, figure 2B shows that the tourism, hotel, and food services sector was more adversely affected by decreased working hours with reduced compensation. Substantial shares of respondents employed in this sector (24.1 per cent of women and 21.8 per cent of men) saw reduced working hours with reduced compensation.

Figure 2C shows that women in the education sector were more likely to experience reductions in working hours with no reduction in compensation, as 13.5 per cent of women fell under this category, compared to 3.8 per cent of men. As shown in figure 2D, employees of the tourism, hotel, and food

services sector were the least to report no change in their working hours. While men (53.6 per cent) in the health services sector were the most likely to have no change in their working hours, women in the tourism, hotel, and food services sector (26.4 per cent) were the least likely to experience no change in hours worked due to the pandemic.

Figure 1
Proportion of respondents reporting a change in the number of hours worked during COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)



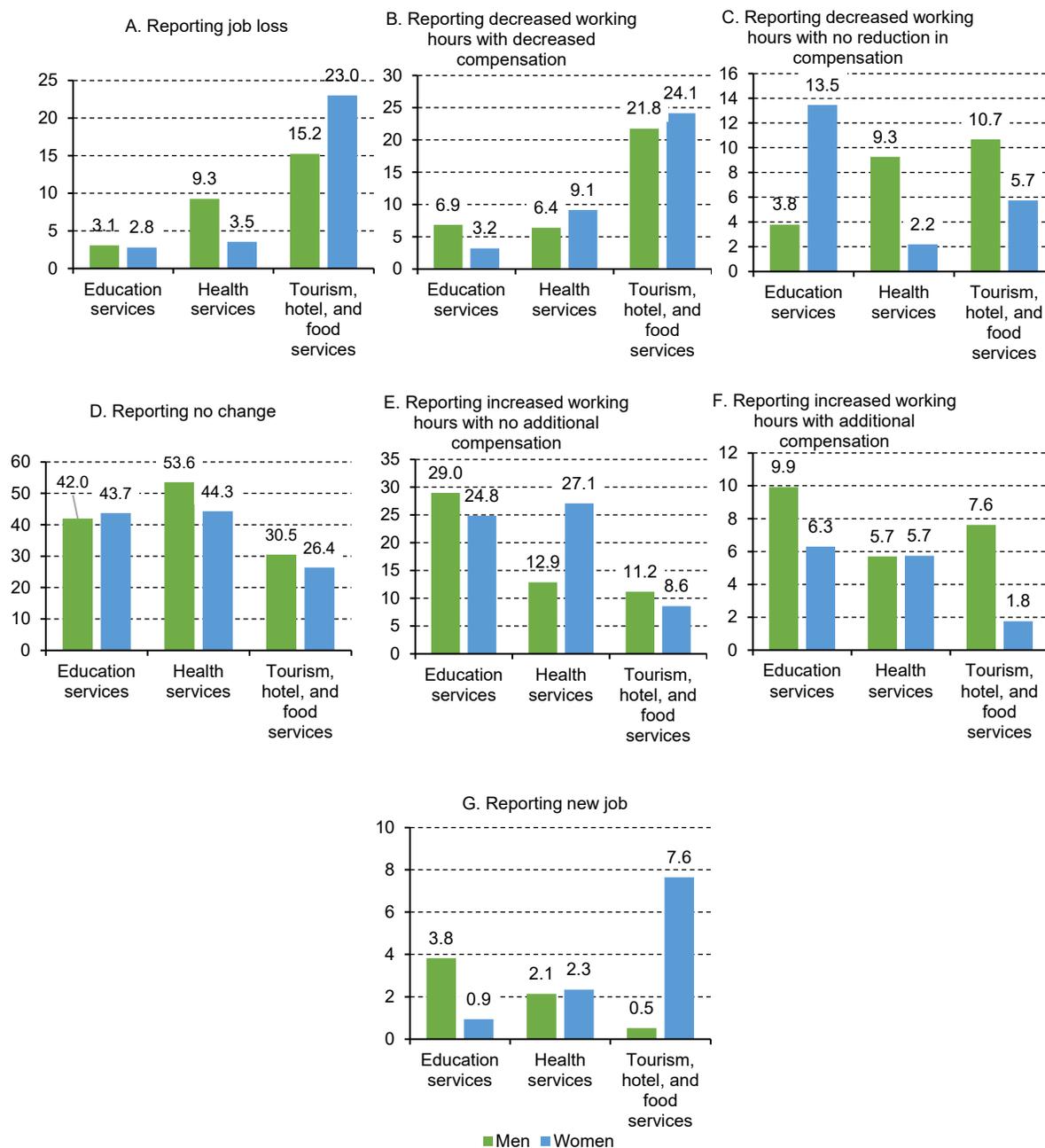
Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Note: The sum of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding to the first decimal.

Furthermore, figure 2E indicates that women in the health sector were particularly overburdened by increased working hours without additional compensation, as 27.1 per cent of women working in this sector reported falling into this category, compared to 12.9 per cent of men. A greater proportion of men (29 per cent) working in the education sector reported an increase in working hours without additional compensation, but women (24.8 per cent) were not far behind. Figure 2F shows that men were more likely to receive compensation for the additional hours worked during the pandemic. The figure shows a substantive gender difference for the education (9.9 per cent of men compared to 6.3 per cent of women) and the tourism, hotel, and food service sectors (7.6 per cent of men compared to 1.8 per cent of women). Figures 2E and 2F show that women were more likely than men to experience increased working hours without compensation, which points to the prevalence of indecent working conditions during COVID-19, where a quarter or more of women working in the health services sector and women and men working in the education services sector reported increased working hours without additional compensation. When additional compensation was paid for the increased hours worked, men working in the education services and tourism, hotel, and food services sectors benefitted more than women working in the same sectors.

On the other hand, women (7.6 per cent) working in the tourism, hotel and food services sector were more likely to regain jobs than men (0.5 per cent) (see figure 2G). Almost every female respondent that regained employment in this sector did so around the second quarter of 2021, as the Caribbean economies slowly rebounded. The trend in changes to hours worked by respondents over the five quarters covered in this analysis is presented in annex 2.

Figure 2
Proportions of respondents reporting changes in working hours within sector by gender
(Percentages)



Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

C. The gendered impact of COVID-19 on time-use in unpaid work

The pandemic impacted most people’s time-use in paid and unpaid work. The survey results revealed that men and women increased their time-use in unpaid work by about one-third compared to pre-pandemic times. Engagement in household activities increased during the pandemic. In addition,

the closure of schools and the overwhelming of adult care facilities increased people's time spent caring for family and other household members.

Table 3 presents the distribution of responses to questions on 14 analysed unpaid household and care activities by gender, respectively. The results show that more than half of the surveyed women indicated that they performed household activities and care work prior to COVID-19, except in the case of home improvements, decorations, and repairs; assisting the elderly, sick or disabled adults with administration and accounts; and taking care of pets. On the contrary, less than half of men surveyed reported doing household activities or care work before the pandemic, except in paying bills (in person or online) and collecting water, firewood, or fuel.

Table 3
Proportion of household members undertaking unpaid household and care activities before COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)

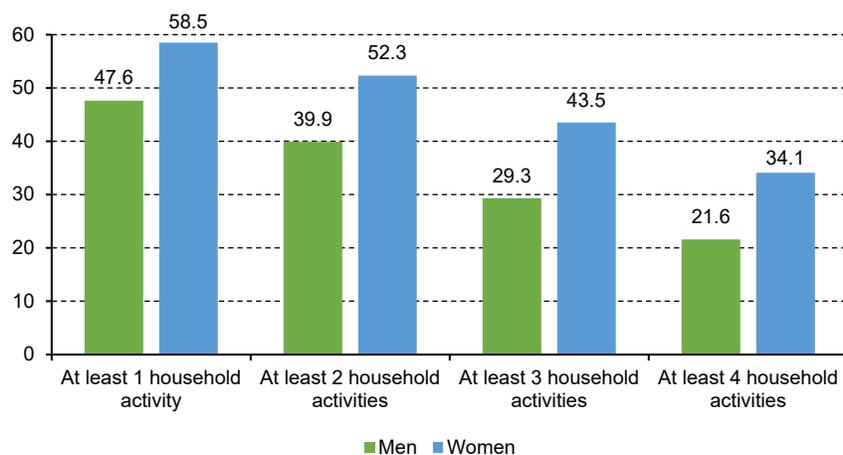
	Respondent		My spouse/ partner		Equal		Someone else		Prefer not to answer	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Household activities										
Food and meal management and preparation (i.e., Cooking)	36.7	66.0	22.3	5.8	19.3	12.3	15.9	12.3	5.8	3.5
Cleaning (e.g. clothes, household)	38.7	68.7	18.0	4.7	27.9	14.1	10.2	9.2	5.1	3.3
Paying bills in person	54.4	53.1	8.1	14.9	15.5	12.7	15.5	15.1	6.5	4.1
Paying bills online	56.9	61.0	7.8	10.6	11.4	9.7	13.3	10.8	10.6	7.9
Home improvements (e.g., decorations and repairs)	46.4	44.6	9.2	17.2	22.9	14.8	14.0	17.6	7.5	5.8
Shopping for own household	42.4	63.7	16.8	6.9	22.6	16.7	12.2	8.5	6.1	4.1
Collecting water/fuel	51.8	42.3	8.1	19.4	16.8	16.8	10.7	12.5	12.7	8.9
Care work										
Playing with children	32.6	61.9	16.1	3.6	37.1	22.0	4.5	5.3	9.8	7.1
Instructing children (e.g., helping with schoolwork)	37.0	67.3	18.7	3.5	27.4	15.8	8.3	6.2	8.7	7.2
Caring for children (including feeding, cleaning, and physical care)	25.4	61.9	19.8	3.8	34.5	21.6	10.8	6.1	9.5	6.6
Caring for adults (assisting elderly/sick/disabled with medical care, feeding, cleaning, physical care)	32.3	54.0	12.9	4.4	25.2	19.2	12.3	8.1	17.4	14.3
Care-related administration (assisting elderly/sick/disabled adults with administration and accounts)	37.8	49.2	10.5	6.5	21.7	16.5	9.8	9.5	20.3	18.4
Emotional support for adult family members	34.7	59.5	10.7	3.4	33.3	23.0	8.4	4.0	12.9	10.1
Pet care	41.2	43.3	8.3	10.4	27.9	22.3	9.8	13.3	12.7	10.7

Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Figures 3 and 4 show that women were more likely to perform multiple household and care activities before the onset of the pandemic. The gender gap in the number of household activities performed before COVID-19 is between 10 and 15 percentage points. The gap increases as the number of tasks performed increases, as represented in figure 3. However, the gender gap is even more pronounced when considering the proportion of women and men performing care activities, except for

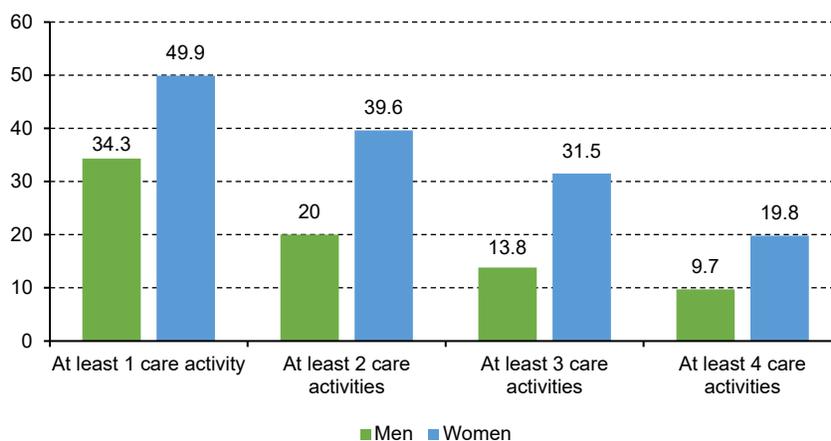
people performing at least four care activities (see figure 4). These figures complement the evidence in tables 3 and 4, which show that women carried higher burdens of unpaid work activities before the pandemic.

Figure 3
Proportion of respondents reporting that they performed household activities before COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)



Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Figure 4
Proportion of respondents reporting that they performed care activities before COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)



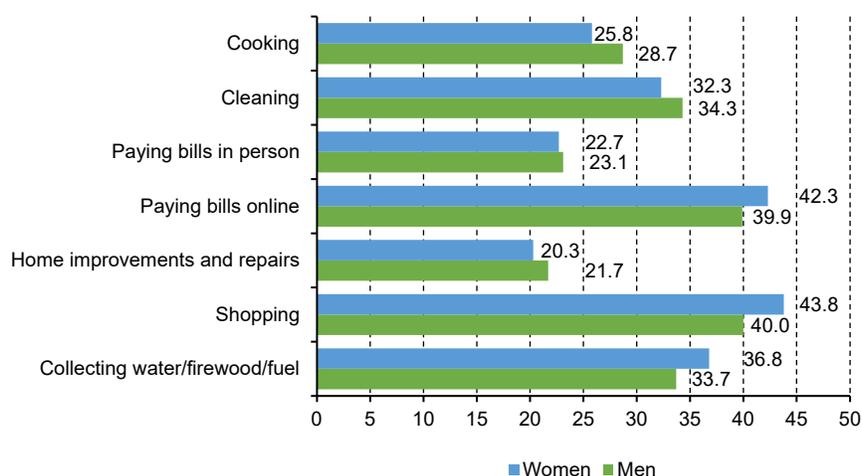
Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

The UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey generated useful information to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the gendered distribution of increased time-use in unpaid work in the Caribbean. One-third of the respondents indicated that the volume of household activities and care work they performed increased because of the pandemic. Tellingly, a greater proportion of men (54.8 per cent) than women (46.6 per cent) reported increased participation of their partners, since the start of the pandemic, in unpaid household and care work activities (see annex 3). The results of the

survey also show that more married men (63.1 per cent) compared to married women (52.4 per cent) reported increased participation from their partners with household and care activities.¹⁰

Regarding unpaid household activities, between 20 to 43 per cent of respondents reported increased time-use in household activities (see figure 5). The household activities with the lowest proportion of respondents reporting increased time-use were paying bills in person and home improvement, each resulting in time-use increases of about 20 per cent compared to pre-pandemic times. The data also show that the greatest proportion of time-use increase reported by respondents (over 40 per cent) was in shopping for household or family members, as this was an essential household task that became more demanding during the pandemic due to social distancing rules. Additionally, 42.3 per cent of women reported increased online bill payments (42.3) compared to men (39.9 per cent).

Figure 5
Proportion of respondents reporting increased time-use in household activities because of COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)

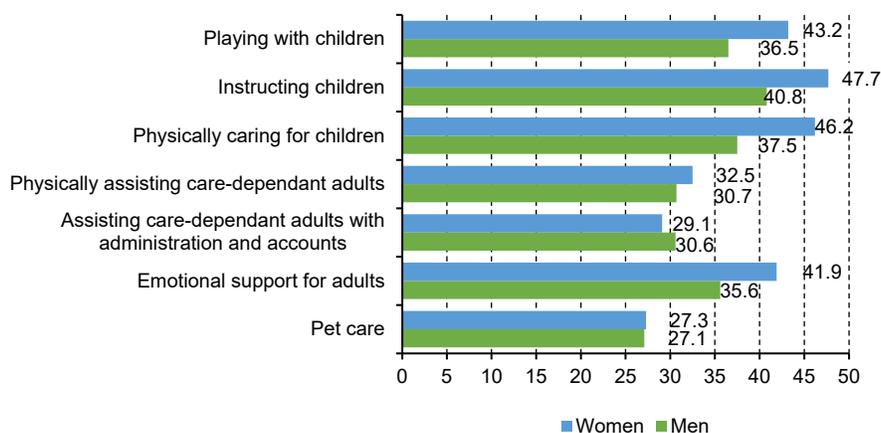


Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Figure 6 shows that respondents reported substantially more time spent on care activities than household activities, as the proportion of respondents reporting time-use increases ranged from 27 to 47 per cent. Respondents reported the highest proportion of increases in time-use around activities relating to the care of children. The burden of unpaid work fell more on women, with a gender gap of at least seven percentage points in all activities related to the care of children. The gender gap narrowed for other care activities, such as those associated with the care of adults, apart from providing emotional support for family members. About 42 per cent of women reported time-use increases in such activity, compared to 35.6 per cent of men.

¹⁰ Unsurprisingly, the survey results also show that the larger the households the greater the participation rate from household members, as these households have greater resources to distribute unpaid work tasks.

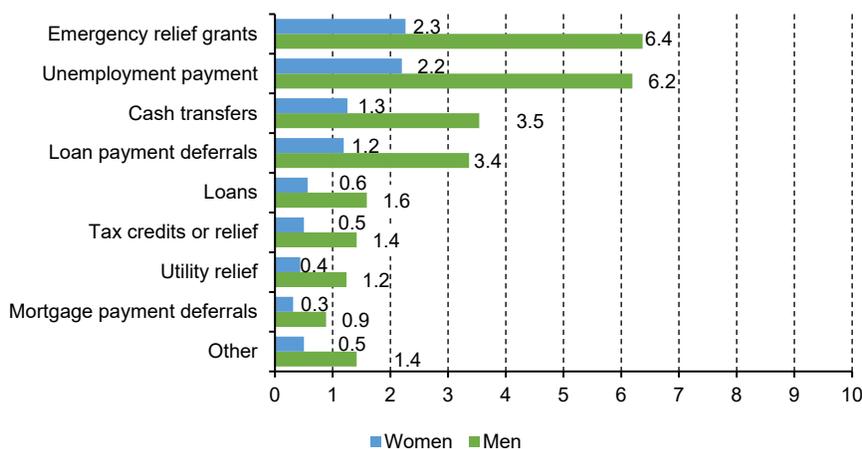
Figure 6
Proportion of respondents reporting increased time-use to care activities because of COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)



Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Lastly, social support and other relief measures during periods of extended lockdowns and social distancing can provide households with the financial resources to outsource some household and care tasks, thus reducing time-use burdens, especially for women who are more likely to experience job losses. The analysis of the survey data shows that men (31.3 per cent) were, generally, more likely to report benefitting from these relief and social support measures than women (26.3 per cent). The proportions of respondents receiving financial support from the government indicate that men were more likely than women to receive cash transfers, loans, loan payment deferrals, and tax credits (see figure 7).¹¹

Figure 7
Proportion of respondents reporting receiving financial support from the government by gender
(Percentages)



Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

¹¹ The sector of employment does not seem to play a role in the gender difference in the public assistance received by study respondents. About 80 per cent of women and men worked in non-service sectors. Moreover, only about 1.4 per cent of women and men worked in government, an employer more likely to provide assistance for reduced employment than other sectors.

D. Implications of the findings

Policies enacted to measure the extent of unpaid work and prevent overburdening women and girls with unpaid activities directly contribute to their empowerment in the public and private sphere (ECLAC, 2022). The overburdening of women with unpaid work due to the socially constructed norm that ascribes them the role of society's "caregivers" hinders their labour market integration. With women and girls reportedly less active in the labour market and more likely to be unemployed when they do participate in the formal labour market, social policies aimed at addressing unemployment and fostering decent work must include a gender perspective. However, gender statistics are not sufficiently produced in the Caribbean to inform such policies. Our findings of the gendered impact of COVID-19 in the Caribbean point to the need to conduct time-use surveys to unearth the factors impeding women's labour market participation in general, which may hinder their reintegration into the workforce after COVID-19.

This study has revealed that women in the health sector were particularly overburdened by increased working hours without additional compensation. This reflects the direct impact of the pandemic forcing female healthcare providers, typically overrepresented in nursing, to work extra hours without commensurate compensation, to manage the increased hospitalization rates. Although men were more likely to see time-use decreases in paid employment, the findings of this study indicate that women were adversely affected in key industries that predominantly employ women, such as tourism, hotel, and food services. Given that men's labour market participation is higher than women's, their unemployment rates in the subregion are also lower than women's. There is also evidence that women are still overburdened by unpaid work, even if the reported shares of time-use increase in household activities seemed similar for women and men. A noteworthy result was that women were twice more likely than men to be mainly responsible for care activities before the pandemic. Therefore, women's increased time-use in the care of children, and even the equal distribution of time-use increases in some care activities, provide evidence that women are significantly overburdened by unpaid work, particularly concerning care activities. As such, policymakers should pay closer attention to strategies that can reduce the gender gaps in time-use for unpaid work activities since addressing this will significantly help increase the labour market participation of women and their opportunities for decent work.

The study also suggests the existence of a gender gap in many policy measures intended to provide relief to the most vulnerable persons and households during the COVID-19 pandemic. While Caribbean governments implemented various financial assistance measures during the pandemic, these emergency public assistance measures disproportionately benefitted men more than women. Hence, there is a need to consider the gender impact of policy measures as governments plan for and implement recovery measures after the pandemic.

III. Considerations for the design of time-use surveys

The gender analysis of the impacts of COVID-19 conducted in this study shows that women face more significant burdens than men in specific categories of care work, particularly those activities related to the care of children. The analysis also points to the positive outcome of men becoming more engaged in household activities and care work since the pandemic began. These findings highlight how increased time spent on unpaid care activities could constitute obstacles for women in rejoining the labour market after the COVID-19 pandemic, as they allocate less time to finding decent employment (ECLAC-ILO, 2022). Moreover, the study findings offer evidence of the need for NSOs to conduct periodic time-use surveys, which are important statistical tools for ascertaining the barriers that individuals, particularly women, face in engaging in decent work.

Time-use surveys elicit information on how women and men allocate their time to paid and unpaid work activities, usually in a day or a week, while accounting for other factors, such as place of residence and employment type (Budlender, 2019). Hence, time-use surveys provide information on factors that burden individuals' participation in the labour market, which socioeconomic indicators such as unemployment rates do not capture (ECLAC, 2022). Understanding the factors that may obstruct individuals' labour market participation, such as the adverse socioeconomic shocks produced by the pandemic, is critical to constructing social and economic policies that are designed to reduce gender inequality in employment and labour market participation.

Governments have commissioned time-use surveys to ascertain the factors impeding labour market participation since the early 20th century, mainly in Europe and North America. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba was the first country to conduct a time-use survey in 1985, followed by the Dominican Republic in 1995 (ECLAC, 2022). In recent times, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay have commissioned time-use surveys to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Frigra Stefanovi, 2022). In the Caribbean, the establishment of time-use surveys has been limited but encouraging. Dominica, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago have incorporated time-use modules in their population and housing censuses (Budlender, 2019). Yet, the implementation of systematic time-use surveys that inform social policies has not been institutionalized in most Caribbean countries. More

recently, Grenada, in cooperation with UN-Women, pilot-tested the inclusion of three retrospective time-use questions on unpaid household and care work in their 2021 Labour Force Survey (LFS) to generate regular data for SDG indicator 5.4.1 (Nicholson and Budlender, 2021).

Our analysis of the UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey presents an opportunity to further policy discussions on the need for governments to implement time-use surveys. Insights from such surveys are crucial to developing and implementing effective policy measures that close the gender gap in labour market participation. NSOs can deploy time-use surveys as either stand-alone or multi-purpose surveys to collect gender-disaggregated data to inform social policies, such as those designed to promote women's labour outcomes. Multi-purpose surveys can combine time-use questionnaires with other aspects of social policies, such as the coverage of welfare measures, to evaluate their effectiveness (ECLAC, 2022). Time-use surveys deployed two to three times between censuses can provide vital data for targeted policies to address the employment gender gap. However, NSOs should take into consideration some factors when designing time-use surveys.

One consideration that impacts the validity and costs of a time-use survey is the method adopted. Two such methods established in practice are the stylized and diary approaches. Stylized surveys present respondents with a structured questionnaire. Each question asks about a specific paid or unpaid work and can also include questions about leisure or rest time. This type of survey presents answers in one of two ways. One option is to allow respondents to provide the hours and minutes spent on each activity for which information is sought. The other option is to offer respondents multiple choices with different time quantities, from which they would choose the option closest to their time-use for the identified activity. The stylized survey includes questions about work time, commuting time, rest time, and unpaid household or care work time. Hence, all hours and minutes of the day must sum up to 24 hours if the survey examines time-use for a typical day or 168 hours for a typical week. Logical restrictions can be added to surveys conducted online to make sure that respondents account for their time-use throughout the 24- or 168-hour period used in the survey. Retrospective questions should inquire about the most recent past to reduce recall errors by the respondents. Table 5 provides examples of the two stylized types of time-use questions. The pilot of time-use questions in the Grenada LFS was based on the stylized type that combined the open and closed question variants depicted in table 4 (Nicholson and Budlender, 2021).

Table 4
Examples of stylized time-use questions

Open question variant	Closed version variant
<p>Q: How much time do you spend feeding, bathing, changing diapers, dressing, putting to bed, talking to, minding, or playing with a child (0 and 5 years) in your household on a typical day during the last week?</p> <p>[] hours, [] minutes</p>	<p>Q: Last week, how many hours did you spend providing unpaid care or assistance to one or more seniors?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • Less than 5 hours • 5 to 14 hours • 15 to 29 hours • 30 to 59 hours • 60 hours or more

Source: ECLAC based on ECLAC (2022) and Budlender (2019).

In the diary time-use survey style, respondents are asked to log their activities throughout different time slots of a typical day. This approach also has two main types (see diagrams 1 and 2 for examples of both types). The first type is a structured questionnaire containing pre-selected activities and timeslots for respondents. The second one is a semi-structured questionnaire where respondents describe the type of activity they performed during selected timeslots. This second type captures richer data on time-use, although costlier and more challenging to conduct, as it requires a greater level of

cooperation from respondents. Additionally, data generated using this approach take much more time and effort to analyse, but well-programmed online survey tools can reduce the time and effort required to analyse the data collected from such surveys. For in-person surveys, the adequacy of the skill level of the interviewers contributes to the efficient analysis of survey data, which speaks to the need to invest in the training of the NSO staff tasked with conducting time-use surveys.

Diagram 1
An example of structured time-use questions in a diary survey

Activity categories	15:00–16:00	16:00–17:00	17:00–18:00	19:00–20:00
Sleeping and resting				
Cooking and eating				
Employed work				
Caring for children				
Commuting				

Source: ECLAC based on examples presented in Budlender (2019).

Diagram 2
An example of semi-structured time-use questions in a diary survey

Time period	Description of activities (up to 3 activities per time period)	Same time? (yes or no)	Location 1	Location 2
15:00–16:00	<i>Working</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>Work</i>	
16:00–17:00	<i>Working, driving home</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>On the road</i>
17:00–18:00	<i>Helping children with homework, cleaning</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>Home</i>	
18:00–19:00	<i>Cooking, eating</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>Home</i>	

Source: ECLAC based on examples presented in Budlender (2019).

A further consideration for choosing stylized or diary time-use questionnaires surrounds the issues of validity and reliability of their outputs. Stylized questionnaires require quicker estimations of time-use by respondents, possibly reducing the validity and reliability of outputs. On the positive side, they are less costly and have higher response rates. In contrast, diary surveys provide greater validity and reliability of outputs, as the survey provides respondents with an overview of the period of reference, whether a day or week, to provide a more reliable estimation of the time spent on each activity. Nevertheless, the diary survey, especially the semi-structured version, requires greater respondent cooperation and time to conduct (Budlender, 2019). One way to overcome the challenges of diary surveys is to offer respondents a moderate monetary compensation for their time and effort in completing the diary survey.

Despite the challenges, semi-structured diary surveys conducted following sound survey methodologies would produce reliable time-use data. Moreover, semi-structured diary questionnaires can serve as pilot tests for time-use questions. In conducting a time-use survey, consideration should be given to the inclusion of questions capturing the different dimensions of unpaid work, such as other household and care work categories, the latter sometimes taking place outside the household or involving non-household members. Furthermore, researchers designing survey instruments for time-use surveys should consider that the types of unpaid work categories may vary in different social contexts. Therefore, in the Caribbean context, inductive time-use studies, such as through the deployment of semi-structured diary questionnaires, can inform the design of questions covering the unpaid work

activities performed. Thus, NSOs considering future large-scale surveys can benefit from the outcomes of such studies.

The sustainability of periodic time-use surveys in the Caribbean requires regional cooperation, which greatly benefits the development of time-use surveys between national censuses to collect crucial information for the design or evaluation of social policies, especially those designed to close the gender gap in unemployment and labour market participation rates. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)'s Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) calls for harmonizing statistical standards and practices. The RSDS provides a valuable framework for Caribbean countries to develop standardized time-use questionnaires and methods to gather representative data to design and evaluate social policies at the national and regional levels (Budlender, 2019). Moreover, a regional approach to the development and regular deployment of time-use surveys can efficiently enhance the technical capacities of Caribbean NSOs. This capacity building will assist countries of the subregion in effectively measuring and reporting on SDG target 5.4.

IV. Conclusion

In this study, we evaluated the impacts of COVID-19 on women's and men's time-use in paid and unpaid work. Using data from the UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey of the impacts of COVID-19 in the Caribbean, we found that women were more affected by job losses during the pandemic. This impact of the pandemic was particularly substantial for women working in the service sector, such as hotel, tourism, and food services. Women were also more likely than men to have experienced indecent working conditions, such as working increased hours without commensurate compensation. This was particularly prevalent in the health services sector. In addition, women who tended to perform more unpaid work than men before the pandemic experienced greater time-use in care activities than men. The gender gap in time-use increases was most pronounced around the care of children, which included activities such as providing educational instructions to children during the pandemic.

The findings of this study illustrate the benefits of National Statistical Offices conducting periodic time-use surveys. These surveys shed light on the barriers for individuals to rejoin the labour market. Policy measures can lessen women's increased unpaid workload created by the pandemic, particularly care activities, such as caring for children and adult household members. This study also underscores the importance of time-use surveys in informing social policies. Our results show that time-use surveys are critical tools for analysing the distribution of work in societies, which could provide useful information on the obstacles that household and care activities place on women's and men's integration into the labour market. Gender-disaggregated data are essential input for empirical analyses of paid and unpaid work time, which are crucial for informing policies, such as child and adult care policies.

Childcare policies are a critical example of the policy measures that data from time-use surveys help to guide. Such policies include subsidizing childcare institutions or providing parents with financial assistance to send their children to childcare, thus allowing parents to outsource this care work. Another crucial policy measure is government-funded maternity and paternity leaves, which make employers more willing to hire women of childbearing age, as they would not have to cover the costs of women going on maternity leave (Del Boca and others, 2020). Encouraging the sharing of early-age childcare between women and men also reduces the burden of care work on women. In the Caribbean, Barbados,

Belize, Guyana, Saint Kitts & Nevis, and Saint Lucia are the only countries that offer maternity leave entirely or primarily funded by the government.¹² Furthermore, government-funded parental leave schemes would protect self-employed women, such as those working in the service sector, who are particularly vulnerable to adverse shocks. In addition, public policies encouraging and protecting flexible work arrangements for parents can help alleviate the time-use burdens of childcare, as telecommuting helps balance the time-spent in caring for children and paid employment.

Adult care is another critical unpaid work that burdens women and men. This type of care encompasses caregiving to the elderly and persons with disabilities. This category of unpaid care work is bound to create even greater burdens for individuals in the Caribbean as the subregion's population is increasingly ageing. Governments can subsidize services that provide care for adults or enact policy measures supporting residual caregiving schemes through informal care, usually provided by families. Unlike early childhood care measures, caregiving to adults requires long-term care measures, making residual caregiving schemes less demanding on state budgets as they tap into the care receiver's family network (Dykstra and Djundeva, 2020). However, public policies are crucial to ensure that residual caregiving measures do not become unpaid work tasks burdening individuals.

Supportive childcare and adult care policies help ameliorate the burden of increased time-use on unpaid work by women, as they encourage the sharing of care giving with their male partners, facilitate the outsourcing of care to other institutions, and protect women's right to return to work after childbearing and childcaring (Del Boca and others, 2020). As such, time-use analyses provide policymakers with critical statistics that enable them to evaluate labour market participation. These analyses form the basis of targeted and efficient policy measures for tackling social deficits, such as the gender gap in labour market participation, thereby ensuring a gender-responsive and sustainable post-pandemic socioeconomic recovery in the Caribbean.

¹² However, none of the countries mentioned above provide the social protection of paid paternity leave. See: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opedata/unequal-burden-new-mothers-caribbean> [accessed August 23, 2022].

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Annexes

Annex 1

Table A1
Distribution of respondents by key demographic characteristics by gender
(Percentages)

Variables	Categories	Total (n=2157)	Men (n=565)	Women (n=1592)
Age group	18–25	20.8	22.2	20.0
	26–35	31.9	31.4	31.9
	36–45	23.6	22.2	24.5
	46–55	14.4	14.9	14.6
	56–65	6.3	6.0	6.5
	65+ years old	2.7	3.4	2.5
Marital status	Single (never been married)	48.5	48.9	48.3
	Married	21.9	23.4	21.7
	Living with a partner/Cohabiting	16.0	15.1	16.3
	Married but separated	3.3	4.1	3.1
	Divorced	4.8	4.3	5.2
	Widowed	1.6	0.7	1.9
	Prefer not to answer	3.9	3.5	3.3
Level of education	None	0.2	0.2	0.1
	Some Primary	0.9	0.5	0.8
	Completed Primary	1.4	1.2	1.3
	Some Secondary	7.8	10.1	7.0
	Completed Secondary	32.9	35.6	32.2
	Some University	15.3	15.2	15.3
	Completed University	15.7	12.9	16.9
	Postgraduate Education	11.3	10.1	12.0
	Some Vocational/Technical Training	4.1	4.3	3.8
	Completed Vocational/Technical Training	7.3	8.0	7.2
	I do not know /Cannot Recall/ Prefer not to answer	3.1	1.8	3.3
Sexual orientation	Bisexual	3.2	2.0	3.6
	Gay or Lesbian	1.3	1.4	1.2
	Heterosexual or straight	78.8	84.0	80.7
	Other	0.3	0.6	0.2
	Prefer not to answer	14.7	12.1	14.2
Ethnicity	African	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Afro-descendant or black	59.8	58.3	60.8
	Asian	0.7	0.9	0.6
	European-descendant or white	1.3	2.1	1.1
	Indigenous	1.9	2.1	1.6
	Indo-descendent or Indian-Caribbean	6.0	7.6	5.4
	Mixed race	22.7	22.5	22.9
	Prefer not to answer	6.2	5.7	6.2
	Other	1.2	0.7	1.4
Countries of residence	Barbados	20.2	19.8	20.5
	Dominica	9.5	10.8	9.1
	Guyana	18.4	15.8	19.2
	Jamaica	20.2	22.3	19.1
	Saint Lucia	8.1	5.8	9.2
	Trinidad and Tobago	13.9	15.6	13.3
	Other Countries	9.6	9.9	9.6

Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Note: The sum of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding to the first decimal.

Annex 2

Table A2
Proportion of respondents reporting changes to work hours by main sectors and gender within periods
(Percentages)

	Apr–Jun 2020		July–Sept 2020		Oct–Dec 2020		Jan–Mar 2021		Apr–Jun 2021	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No change, it remained the same										
Education services	40.7	45.5	42.3	45.0	42.3	44.2	42.3	44.2	42.3	39.7
Health services	60.7	47.5	53.6	42.4	50.0	43.1	50.0	44.9	53.6	43.7
Tourism, hotel, and food services	30.0	26.6	25.0	28.0	33.3	25.6	30.8	25.6	33.3	26.2
Increased, with additional compensation										
Education services	11.1	4.5	7.7	6.1	15.4	7.0	7.7	7.0	7.7	6.9
Health services	3.6	2.5	7.1	4.2	7.1	6.0	7.1	5.9	3.6	10.1
Tourism, hotel, and food services	7.5	0.8	7.5	0.8	7.7	2.4	5.1	2.4	10.3	2.4
Increased, with no additional compensation										
Education services	33.3	22.7	30.8	22.9	26.9	24.8	26.9	25.6	26.9	28.2
Health services	14.3	26.7	14.3	28.8	10.7	28.4	10.7	27.1	14.3	24.4
Tourism, hotel, and food services	10.0	7.0	17.5	5.6	7.7	8.8	10.3	12.0	10.3	9.5
Decreased, with reduced compensation										
Education services	7.4	3.0	7.7	3.8	3.8	2.3	7.7	2.3	7.7	4.6
Health services	7.1	9.2	3.6	10.2	7.1	8.6	7.1	9.3	7.1	8.4
Tourism, hotel, and food services	30.0	28.9	22.5	27.2	17.9	24.8	20.5	20.0	17.9	19.8
Decreased, with no reduction in compensation										
Education services	3.7	17.4	3.8	14.5	3.8	11.6	3.8	11.6	3.8	12.2
Health services	7.1	2.5	10.7	2.5	10.7	2.6	7.1	0.8	10.7	2.5
Tourism, hotel, and food services	7.5	5.5	12.5	6.4	12.8	6.4	10.3	5.6	10.3	4.8
I lost my job										
Education services	0.0	3.1	0.0	3.1	3.8	2.3	7.7	3.1	3.8	2.3
Health services	10.7	3.4	10.7	3.4	10.7	3.4	7.1	2.5	7.1	5.0
Tourism, hotel, and food services	12.5	23.2	12.5	23.2	17.9	23.2	17.9	22.4	15.4	23.0
I got a new job										
Education services	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	3.8	1.6	3.8	0.8	7.7	2.3
Health services	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	1.7	7.1	2.5	3.6	5.0
Tourism, hotel, and food services	0.0	1.6	0.0	4.0	0.0	4.0	2.6	5.6	0.0	23.0

Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Annex 3

Table A3
Proportion of household members undertaking unpaid household and care activities
since the spread of COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)

	Men			Women		
	Yes	No	Prefer not to answer	Yes	No	Prefer not to answer
My partner participates more in household chores and caring for family	54.8	31.2	13.9	46.6	43.8	9.6
My daughter(s) participate(s) more in household chores and caring for family	47.4	36.3	16.3	50.3	37.5	12.2
My son(s) participate(s) more with household chores and caring for family	44.5	38.8	16.7	46.9	40.0	13.1
Other family/household members participate more in household chores and caring for family	49.4	36.3	14.3	49.8	40.9	9.3
We hired a new domestic worker/babysitter/nurse	10.6	74.1	15.3	11.5	76.5	12.1
Our domestic worker/babysitter/nurse now works longer hours	13.4	67.0	19.6	11.3	70.8	17.9
Our old domestic worker/babysitter/nurse no longer works for us	17.8	58.1	24.1	18.6	60.0	21.3

Source: ECLAC and UN-Women based on results of UN-Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Note: The sum of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding to the first decimal.



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