



10 Things to Know About the Impact of the Pandemic on Poor Communities in Jamaica

1



COVID-19 exacerbated the pre-existing problems of low, uncertain incomes in vulnerable communities, with the added risk of residents contracting the virus and falling ill.

2



The government's efforts to support people with cash transfers were not widely accessed by approximately 20% of people in inner city and poor rural communities due to reasons such as documentation.

3



Unemployment doubled, almost 20 percent of respondents identified themselves as unemployed pre-COVID-19, while 39 percent reported they were unemployed since the pandemic.

4



The pandemic's income effects were different for men and women. More men compared to women indicated that their income was reduced since the onset of COVID-19: one in four men (26 percent) compared to one in five women (20 percent). More men also indicated a reduction in business when compared to women, 23 percent compared to 20 percent.

5



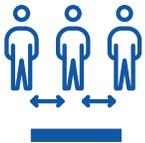
The government's efforts to communicate information about the pandemic were most effective via television, radio, and social media. Newspapers, for people in low-income communities, are largely irrelevant. One percent of person got their information solely from newspapers.

6



The closing of schools had the effect of increasing household spending on food and utilities, with a third of respondents reporting such increases; and children left unattended at home and in the community. One-fifth of respondents indicated that their child's education had been halted since schools closed.

7



The movement restrictions were difficult to obey, given the prevalence of multi-family dwellings that are almost within touching distance of each other, as is typical of inner city urban communities in particular, and how densely occupied these dwellings tend to be. The cramped conditions made it more difficult for people to obey stay-at-home and quarantine orders.

8



Despite having internet access, online banking is hardly used. Of the 62 percent of respondents who indicated that they have an active bank account, only one in ten bank online. Yet four out of five in this group indicated that they had internet access.

9



The general understanding of the terms "quarantine", "lockdown", and "curfew" was confusing to the respondents in the survey as the terms were used interchangeably by the respondents as well as by government agencies, the media, and the public in general. Communities were affected differently according to what restrictive measure was enacted, and there was confusion with the distribution of the government social welfare food and sanitization packages in the communities under different types of restrictions.

10



One-fifth of the respondents did not trust the COVID-19 related information that they received, with doubt and scepticism increasing with age. However, a perception that the news does not always reveal the whole story was strongest among the younger age groups and non-existent in the 65-and-over group. Some respondents stated their belief that COVID-19 was not real.

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