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The importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies

COVID-19's gendered impact on paid and unpaid work in the Caribbean

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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 response.

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 on 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.

I. 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 (SDG) number five.¹ As is for all SDGs, monitoring progress towards the targets set under SDG-5 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 measures advised by the World Health Organization (WHO), produced a widening of the gender gap in

¹ Goal five of the SDGs is specifically, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”

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 women and men concerning their time-use. More specifically, we evaluate how women and men allocated their time to different unpaid work in the household. 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.

² Details of the survey is provided in a separate report by ECLAC and UN Women “Report of the Rapid Assessment Surveys on the Impacts of COVID-19 in the Caribbean (ENERICOV-2020).”

II. Background

Regulatory responses, such as the strict measures 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 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. Moreover, the COVID-19 Human and Economic Assessment of Impact (HEAT) reports of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in eight Eastern Caribbean countries³ 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 industry, where women constitute the majority of the

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

workforce (Giles Alvarez and Khadan, 2020). In addition, the World Food Programme's (WFP) Caribbean 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 their surveys is particularly valuable for subregional representativeness.

As WFP reported in their fourth round of their 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, 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 because of the pandemic, respectively. 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.

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

COVID-19 control measures have evolved since early 2020, and these changes have significantly impacted labour markets. Specifically, the pandemic affected the time women and men spent in paid work, either because control measures forced businesses to reduce their operating hours or because some people lost their employment. These adverse impacts reduce household incomes, affecting the time women and men spend in unpaid household and care activities. Adverse impacts on household incomes limit 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 before 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 between September 2021 and January 2022. The survey questionnaire, which sought information on the impacts of the pandemic on different aspects of individual and household lives, was distributed and completed online by 2242 respondents (1592 women and 565 men) in 17 Caribbean countries and territories⁶. Annex 1 presents the key sex-disaggregated demographic characteristics of the sample. The survey included stylized retrospective questions on the impact produced by the pandemic on the time-use of paid and unpaid work of respondents.

⁶ 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. COVID-19's gendered impact 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,⁷ and women (9.2 per cent) were more likely to be inactive in the labour market than men (6.9 per cent). The highest rates of employment were 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) and men between 26 and 35 years of age (11.6 per cent). 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).

Furthermore, about one-third of all respondents worked in the sectors of tourism, hotel, food services, education, and health services, making them the main source of employment. The hotel, tourism, and food services sector is particularly important for Caribbean economies. More than one in ten respondents were 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, given that this sector was particularly susceptible to business disruptions during 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.

Table 1
Employment status before COVID-19 by gender

	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.

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

⁷ This includes paid work in formal and informal settings

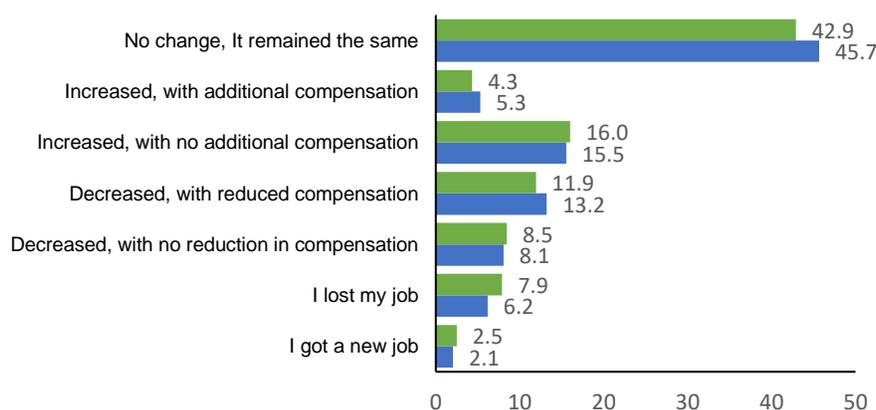
men during the pandemic and this held firm across all five quarters. The women who lost their jobs were mainly younger, between 18 and 25 years of age (9 per cent) and between 26 and 35 years of age (8.4 per cent). However, more men between 46 and 55 years of age and between 26 and 35 years of age lost their jobs (8.1 and 7.9 per cent, respectively) (see table 2). 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. Loss of hours with reduced pay was more likely to affect men than women over time. 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
The proportion of respondents reporting a change in employment time from April 2020 to June 2021 by gender

		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

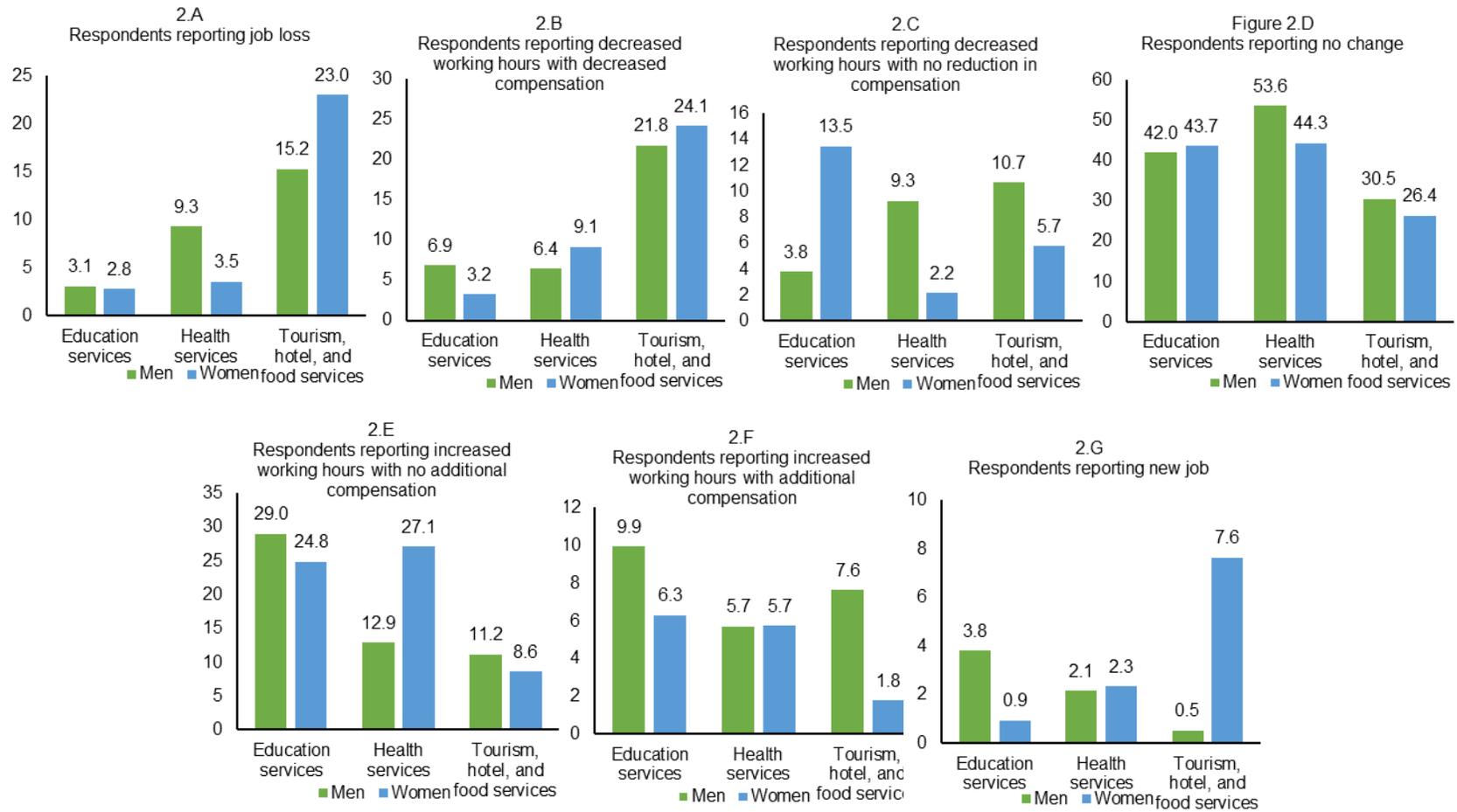
Source: ECLAC and UN Women based on results of UN Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

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.

Figure 2
Proportions of respondents reporting changes in working hours by sex within sectors
(Percentages)



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

Disaggregating survey responses by sector of employment reveals the crucial gendered impacts of COVID-19. The adverse socioeconomic effects of the pandemic particularly affected those engaged in the tourism sector. Figure 2 shows the different aspects of the impact of COVID-19 across employment sectors. Panel 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, panel 2B shows that the tourism, hotel, and food services sector were more adversely affected by COVID-19. Substantial shares of respondents employed in this sector saw reduced working time with reduced compensation.

Panel 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 panel 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.

Furthermore, panel 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. Panel 2F indicates that men were more likely to receive compensation for the additional hours worked during the pandemic. The panel shows a substantive gender difference for the hotel and food services sector, whereas 7.6 per cent of male respondents got compensated for additional hours worked compared to 1.8 per cent of female respondents in a similar circumstance. Comparing the results of panels 2E and 2F shows that women were more likely than men to experience increased working hours without compensation, which indicates they were likely to enjoy decent work conditions because of the pandemic.

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

C. COVID-19's gendered impact on time-use in unpaid work

The pandemic impacted most people's time-use in paid and unpaid work, such as household and care activities. 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 14 analysed unpaid household and care activities by gender. 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.

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 about 10 to 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 table 3, which shows that women carried higher burdens of unpaid work activities before the pandemic.

Table 3
Distribution of 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

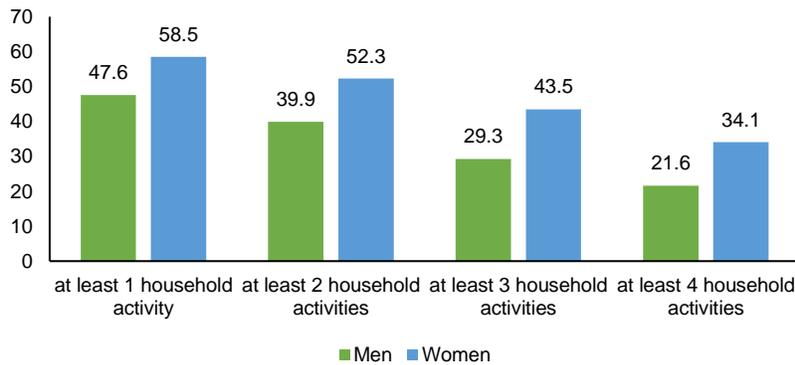
Source ECLAC and UN Women based on results of UN Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

The UN Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey generated important information to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the distribution of increased time-use in unpaid work between genders in the Caribbean. Between 20 to 43 per cent of respondents reported increased time-use in household activities (see figure 5). The household activities with the lowest reported increase in 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 show that, regarding household activities, respondents reported the greatest time-use increase (over 40 per cent) 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.

As a result of the pandemic, one-third of the respondents indicated that the volume of household activities and care work they performed increased. This was the case for women and men, as they both

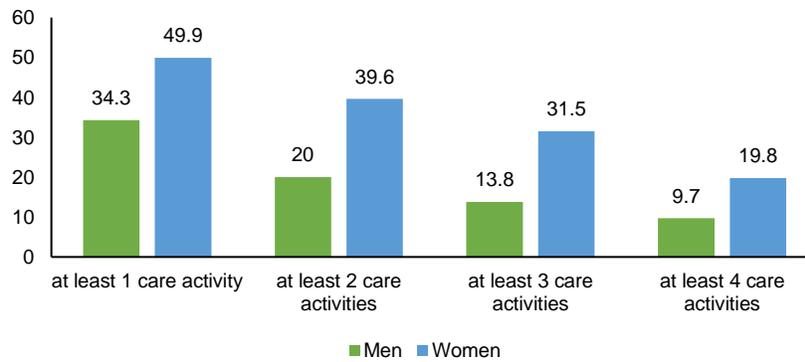
reported devoting significantly more time to household activities and care work because of the pandemic. Specifically, for household activities, 4 in 10 respondents reported increases in shopping for their own household or family members and paying bills online (see figure 5). Almost 44 per cent of women reported increased shopping for household or family members compared to 40 per cent of men. Additionally, 42.3 per cent of women reported increased online bill payments (42.3) compared to men (39.9 per cent). 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).⁸

Figure 3
Household activities performed before COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)



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

Figure 4
Care activities performed before COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)



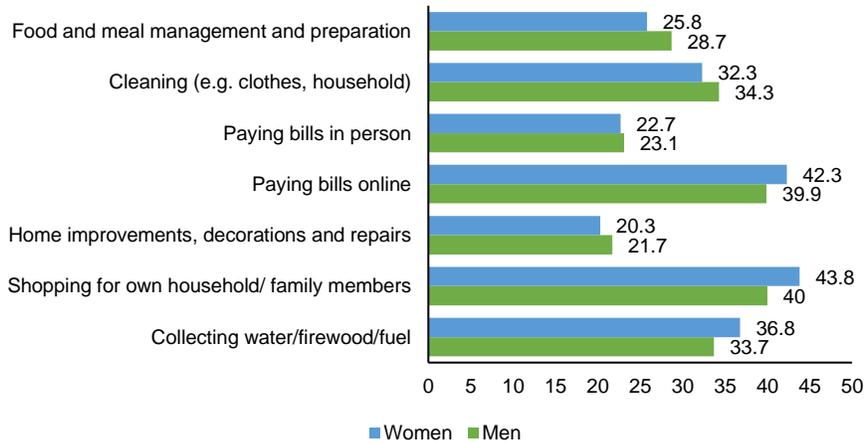
Source: ECLAC and UN Women based on results of UN Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey.

Figure 6 shows that respondents reported substantially more time spent on care activities than household activities, as the time-use increases ranged from 27 to 47 per cent. Respondents reported the highest increases in time-use around activities relating to the care of children. The burden of unpaid

⁸ The survey's results 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. Unsurprisingly, the 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.

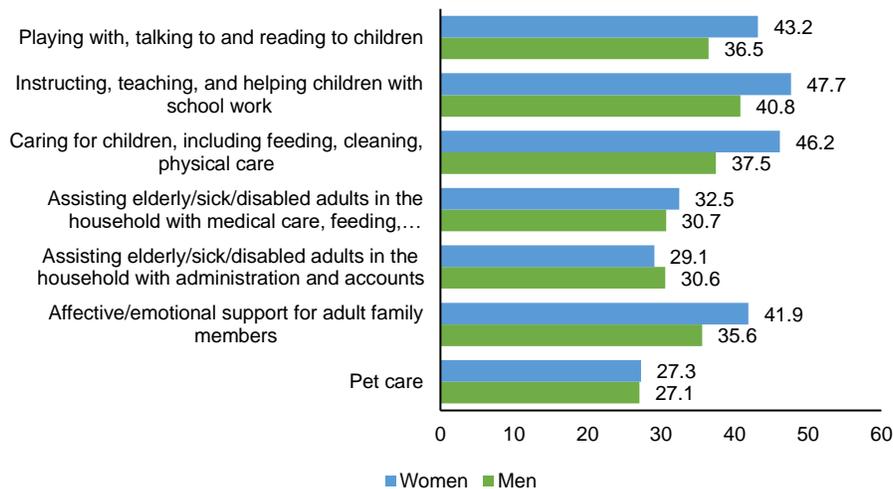
work fell more on women, with a gender gap of approximately seven per cent or more in all activities related to the care of children. The gender gap narrowed for other care activities, such as those associated with the care of adults, apart from providing emotional support for family members. About 42 per cent of women reported time-use increases in such activity, compared to 35.6 per cent of men.

Figure 5
Proportion of respondents who reported 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.

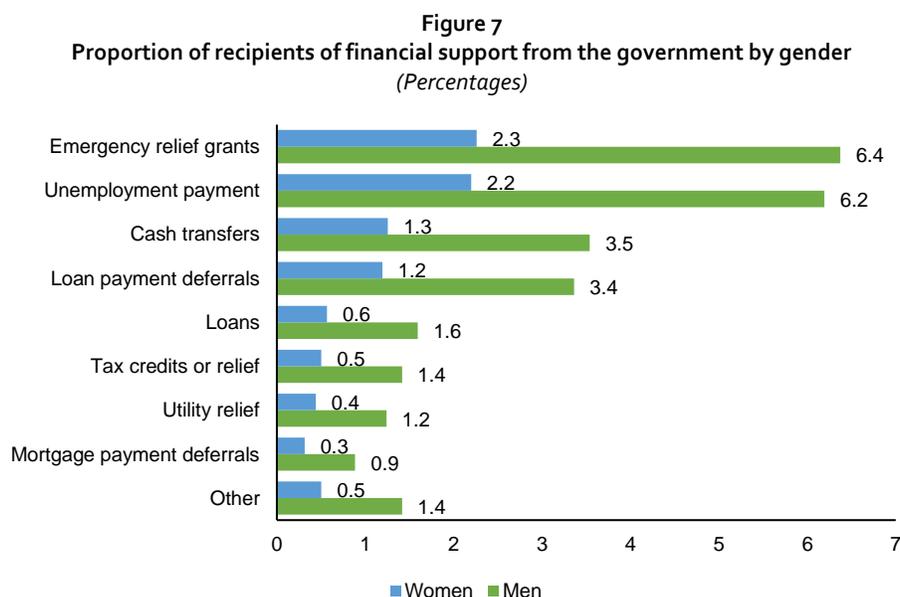
Figure 6
Proportion of respondents who reported increased time-use to care activities because of COVID-19 by gender
(Percentages)



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. As the analysis of the UN Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey data shows, men (31.3 per

cent) were more likely to generally benefit from these relief and social support measures than women (26.3 per cent). The proportion of respondents receiving financial support from the government indicates that men were more likely than women to receive cash transfers, loan payment deferrals, loans, and tax credits (see figure 7).⁹



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

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 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.

Findings of this study indicate 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, 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

⁹ The gender difference in public assistance due to COVID-19 does not seem to be a product of the economic sectors where women and men primarily worked. According to the UN Women Rapid Gender Assessment Survey, about 80 per cent of women and men worked in non-service sectors. Moreover, approximately 1.4 per cent of women and men worked in government, an employer more likely to provide assistance measures for reduced employment than other sectors.

subregion are also lower than women's. There is also evidence to establish the fact that women are still overburdened by unpaid work, even if the reported shares of time-use increase in household activities seemed relatively similar across genders. 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 findings also suggest 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 recovery measures after the pandemic.

IV. 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 powerful statistical methods to shed light on the barriers for individuals, particularly women, to engage 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 shed light 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 more 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, the NSO of Grenada in cooperation with UN Women piloted the inclusion of three retrospective time-use questions on unpaid household and care work in the Grenada 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 possibility is to allow respondents to provide the hours and minutes spent on each activity for which information is sought. A second variant 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, adding all hours and minutes must approximate 24 hours if the survey examines time-use for a typical day or 168 hours for a typical week. Table 4 provides examples of the two stylized types of time-use questions. The pilot use of time-use questions in the Grenada GLS used stylized questions that combined the open and close question variants depicted in table 4 (Nicholson and Budlender, 2021).

Table 4
Example of stylized time-use questions

<u>Open question variant</u>	<u>Closed version variant</u>
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? [] hours, [] minutes	Q: Last week, how many hours did you spend providing unpaid care or assistance to one or more seniors? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Less than 5 hours <input type="radio"/> 5 to 14 hours <input type="radio"/> 15 to 29 hours <input type="radio"/> 30 to 59 hours <input type="radio"/> 60 hours or more

Source: Authors' compilation, adapted from examples presented in ECLAC (2022) and Budlender (2019).

The diary time-use survey asks respondents to log their activities throughout different time slots of a typical day. This approach also has two main 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 takes much more time and effort to analyse. Diagram 1 provides examples of both types of diary time-use questions.

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 compared to the stylized approach, 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 requires greater respondent cooperation and time to conduct, especially the semi-structured version of such surveys (Budlender, 2019).

Diagram 1
Example of diary time-use questions

Diagram 1.A
Structured 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				

Diagram 1.B
Semi-structured 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				
16:00–17:00				
17:00–18:00				
19:00–20:00				

Source: Authors' compilation, adapted from examples presented in Budlender (2019).

However, semi-structured diary questionnaires conducted following sound survey methodologies can 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, 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 in the Caribbean context, which NSOs can incorporate in future large-scale surveys.

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. 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.

V. Conclusion

In this study, we evaluated the impacts of COVID-19 on women's and men's time-use in unpaid work since the onset of the pandemic. 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, with women working in service sectors, such as hotel, tourism, and food services, being most affected. 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 that constitute obstacles for individuals, particularly women caring for children, to rejoin the labour market without public support. 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 shed light on the obstacles that household and care activities place on women's and men's integration into the labour market. Sex-disaggregated data are essential input for empirical analyses of paid and unpaid work time, which are crucial for informing policies, such as parental leave, childcare, and adult care measures. These policies help remove the obstacles of increased time-use by women, as they encourage the sharing of care burdens 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). Time-use analyses provide policymakers with the necessary tools to evaluate labour market participation beyond other socioeconomic measurements, such as unemployment rates. 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 post-pandemic socioeconomic recovery in the Caribbean.

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Annexes

Annex 1

Distribution of respondents by key demographic characteristics by sex
(Percentages)

Variables	Categories	Total (n=2242)	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

Variables	Categories	Total (n=2242)	Men (n=565)	Women (n=1592)
	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	0.3	0.2	0.3
	Prefer not to answer	2.8	1.6	3.1
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual	3.2	2.0	3.6
	Gay	0.4	1.4	0.1
	Heterosexual or straight	78.8	84.0	80.7
	Lesbian	0.9	0.0	1.2
	Other	0.2	0.4	0.1
	Pansexual	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Prefer not to answer	14.7	12.1	14.2
	Queer	0.0	0.2	0.0
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
	Other	1.2	0.7	1.3
	Prefer not to answer	6.2	5.7	6.2
	South American	0.0	0.0	0.1
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.

Annex 2

The proportion of respondents reporting changes to work hours by main sectors and sex 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

Changes in participation in household and care activities since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic by sex (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.