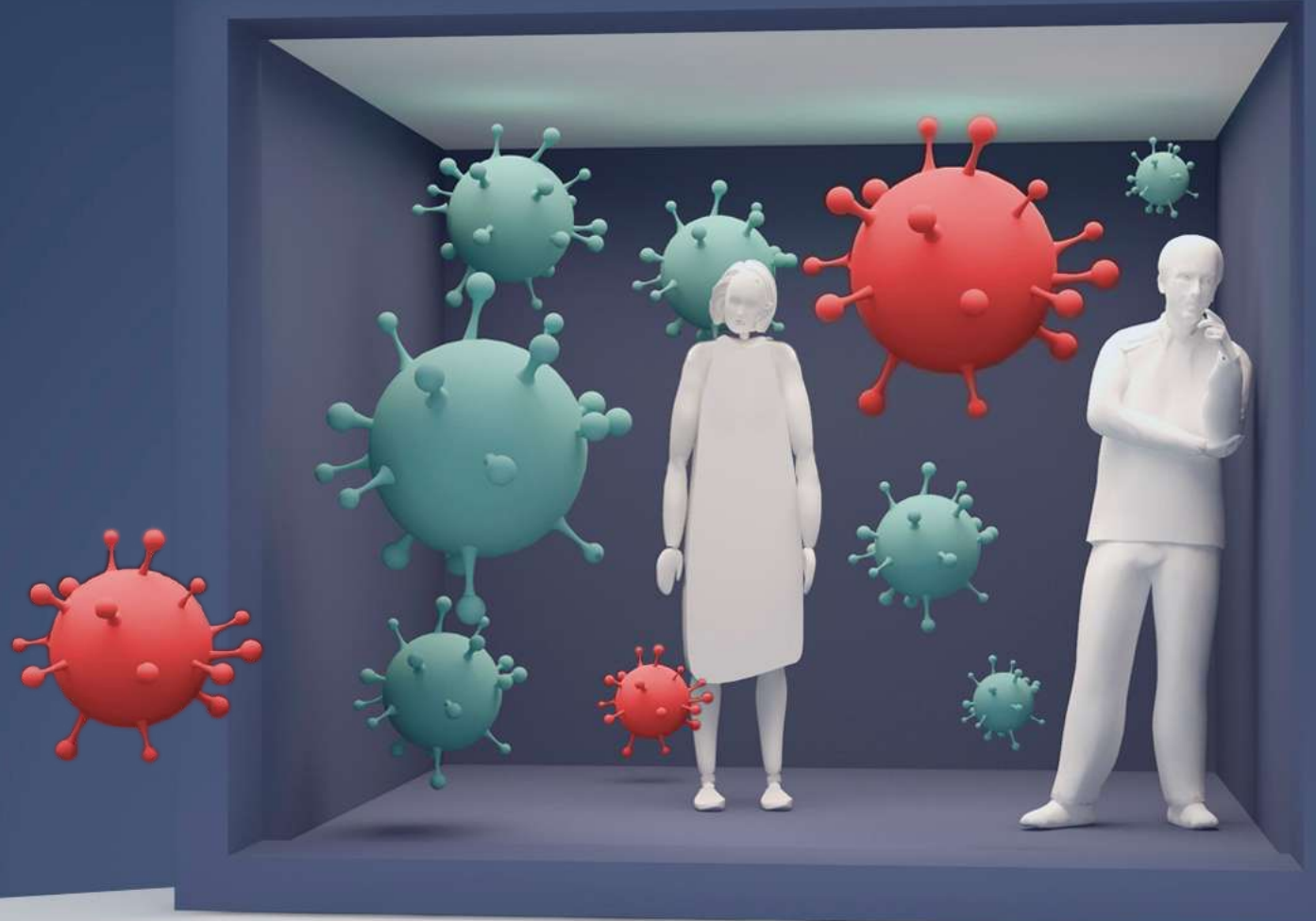


SECOND WAVE OF
THE RAPID GENDER
ASSESSMENT OF
THE **COVID-19**
SITUATION IN
GEORGIA



COVID-19

This publication was prepared by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers, Georgia (CRRC-Georgia) within the framework of the “Good Governance for Gender Equality in Georgia” implemented by UN Women and supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the “UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality”, implemented by UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women and supported by the Government of Sweden. The views expressed in this publication are of its authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the organisations and institutions listed above.

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Published in Georgia



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



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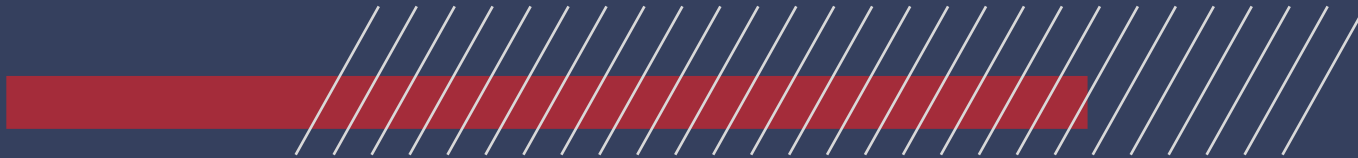
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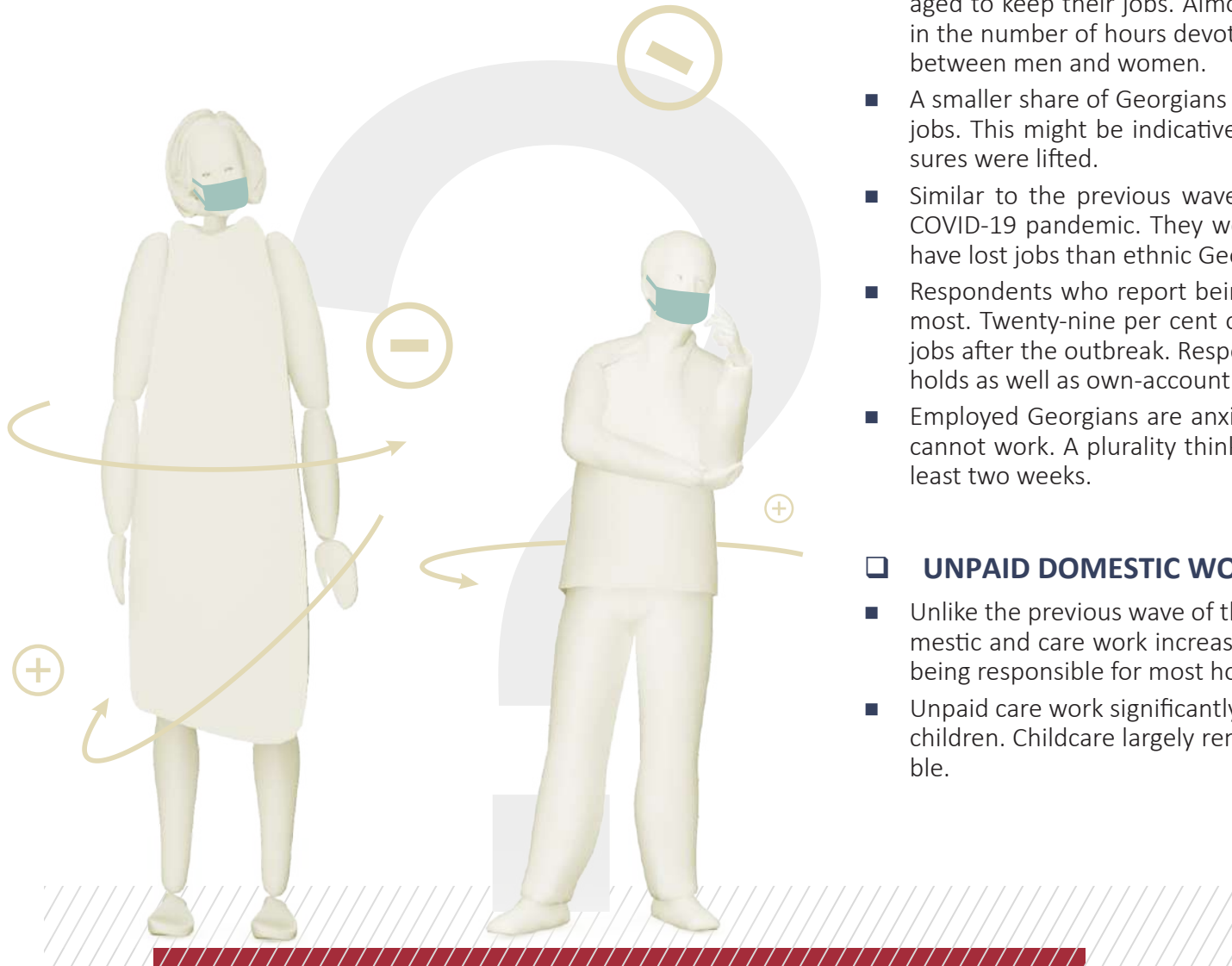
LIST OF ACRONYMS

COVID-19	novel coronavirus
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Centers
PwD	persons with disabilities
RGA	Rapid Gender Assessment
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





❑ ECONOMIC ISSUES AND LIVELIHOODS

- Seventeen per cent of women and men in the October 2020 survey reported that they had lost their jobs since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. Thirty-two per cent of Georgians said their working hours were reduced, although they still managed to keep their jobs. Almost half of Georgians (48 per cent) reported no change in the number of hours devoted to paid work. Notably, there has been no difference between men and women.
- A smaller share of Georgians compared to May 2020 report that they have lost their jobs. This might be indicative of a slow recovery in jobs after strict lockdown measures were lifted.
- Similar to the previous wave, ethnic minorities seem to be most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They were almost three times more likely to report that they have lost jobs than ethnic Georgians.
- Respondents who report being entrepreneurs of some sort have been affected the most. Twenty-nine per cent of those who employed others said that they lost their jobs after the outbreak. Respondents employed by companies, businesses or households as well as own-account workers were least affected.
- Employed Georgians are anxious about what would happen to their income if they cannot work. A plurality thinks that they will not get paid if they do not work for at least two weeks.

❑ UNPAID DOMESTIC WORK AND CARE WORK

- Unlike the previous wave of the Rapid Gender Assessment, the burden of unpaid domestic and care work increased similarly for women and men. While women report being responsible for most housework, those sharing this burden do so equally.
- Unpaid care work significantly increased for large households as well as families with children. Childcare largely remains the task for which women are primarily responsible.



❑ MENTAL HEALTH

- The COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on Georgians' mental health. More than half of Georgians (50 per cent) report that their psychological, emotional or mental state was affected as a result of the pandemic.
- More women (57 per cent) than men (40 per cent) report that they were affected psychologically by the pandemic. Respondents with children were more likely to experience stress, anxiety or deteriorated mental health.

❑ ACCESS TO SERVICES AND GOODS

- Compared to the May 2020 survey, fewer Georgians reported that they had trouble accessing essential services such as food, medical help or social assistance.
- Women and unemployed respondents were more likely to experience disruptions.

❑ SAFETY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- About 11 per cent of Georgians have heard of or felt increased discrimination after the outbreak of COVID-19.
- More women (23 per cent) than men (17 per cent) reported that they have felt or heard about the increase of domestic violence in Georgia since the spread of Coronavirus.
- Georgians are mostly aware of domestic violence relief services, although the knowledge is significantly lower among ethnic minorities and people with no higher education.

❑ ONLINE EDUCATION

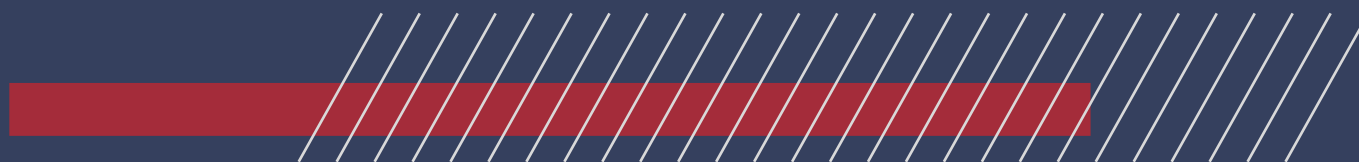
- About 96 per cent of households who report having school-age children are able to access learning materials online. About 60 per cent of these respondents name problems encountered during study including children being unable to focus, intermittent Internet connections, teachers unprepared for online teaching and so forth.

❑ SOCIALIZATION

- In the early weeks of October, about 26 per cent of Georgians had gone to other people's homes to socialize. Sixty-one per cent report seeing other people outside their homes.
- People who were more likely to go outside included those under the age of 54, men, those with jobs and those living in households with persons with disabilities.



INTRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered how societies operate. Since February 2020, when the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic, 59 million people worldwide have caught the virus, and 1.4 million have died. The virus decimated communities and disrupted global networks. Since 29 February, more than 100,000 Georgians have been infected, while the virus has taken more than one thousand lives nationwide. While the Georgian Government effectively curbed the first wave of the spread of COVID-19 in the country with effective government response and strict lockdown measures, cases have been growing exponentially since last summer.

Building on the results of the first wave of the Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) conducted in May 2020 by UN Women and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, this report aims at understanding the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Georgia. The study administered by CRRC-Georgia for the UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women plans to inform the Georgian Government's ongoing response to the outbreak and provide lessons learned for crisis management.



COVID-19

1 Johns Hopkins University Medicine, 'COVID-19 Dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE)', 2020, <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>.

2 National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health, 'Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in Georgia', 2020, <https://www.ncdc.ge/Pages/User/News.aspx?ID=137c9b94-0be5-4b2b-bfd4-135fa4ee00de>.

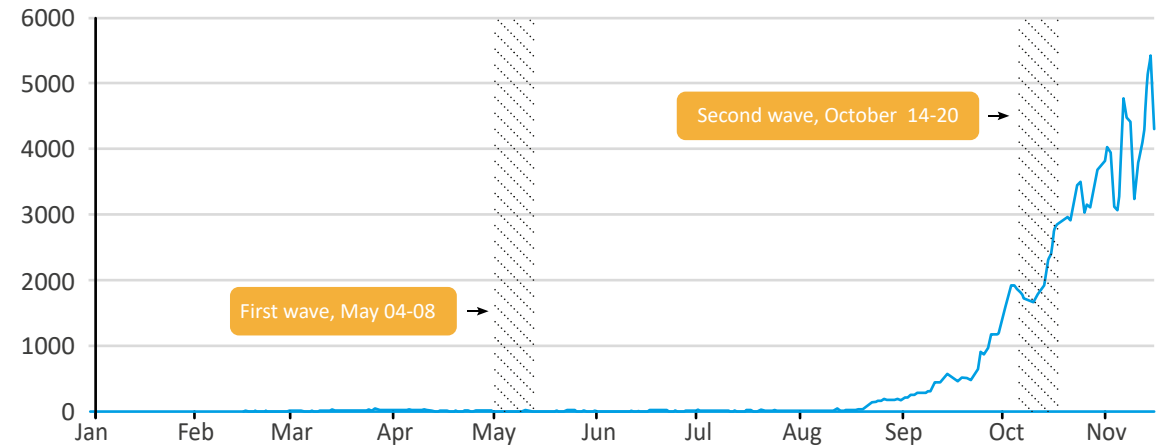
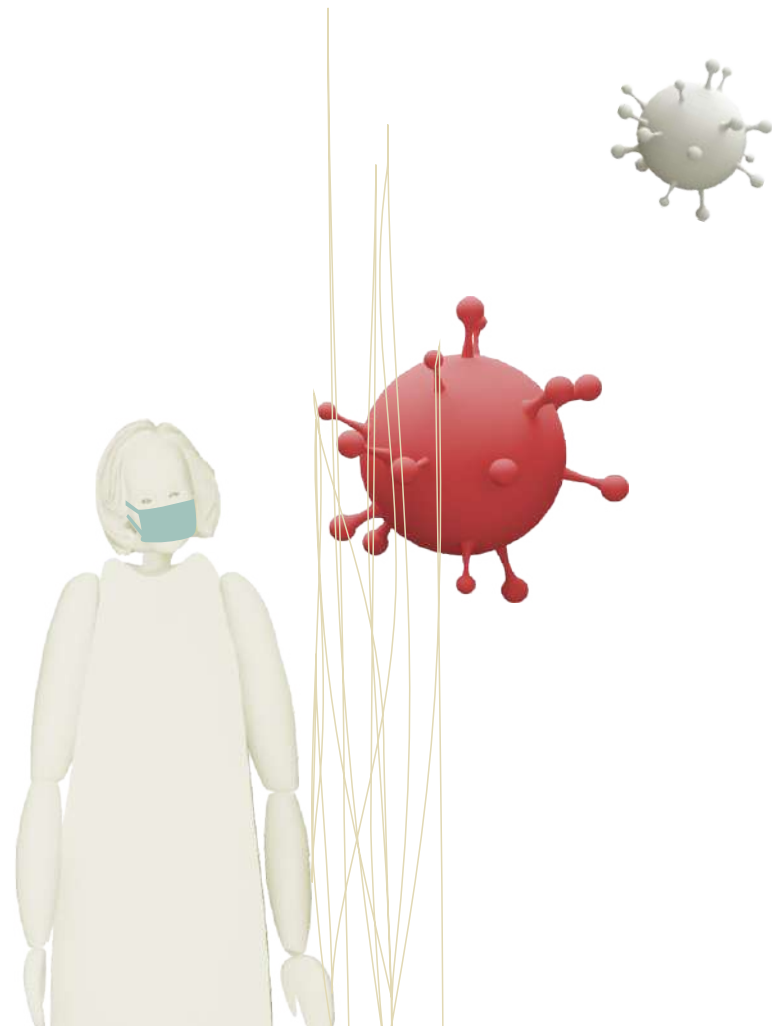
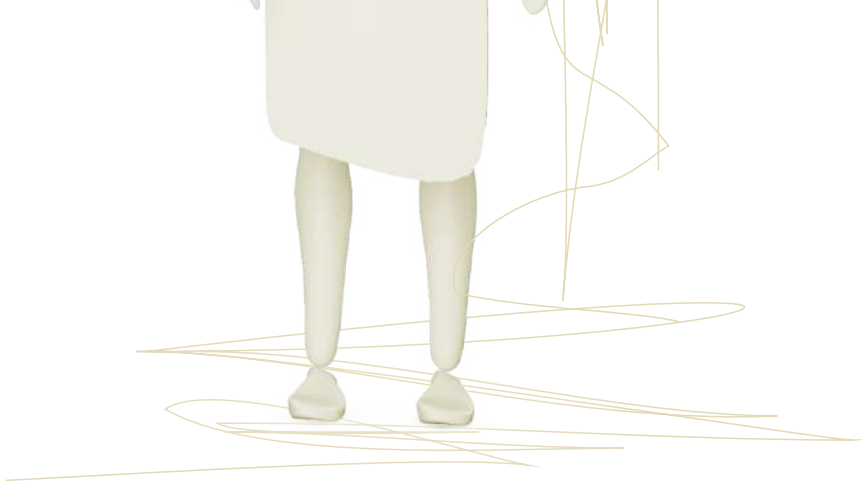


Figure 1

Fieldwork dates of the RGA and the number of daily cases of COVID-19 in Georgia

This report summarizes the key findings of a nationwide public opinion survey conducted between 14 and 20 October 2020. It presents evidence-based recommendations that might help design effective policies to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and men in Georgia. It is worth noting that the collected data reflect the situation before the start of the mass transmission of COVID-19 in late October/early November (figure 1).



THE REPORT AIMS AT ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How were Georgians' financial security and sources of livelihood affected by the pandemic?
- What are the needs, coping mechanisms and capacities of Georgians to secure their livelihoods?
- How does the COVID-19 pandemic affect the distribution of unpaid domestic and care work between women and men?
- How do preventive measures affect the timely access to essential social and health-care services and education, and what specific barriers do Georgians face?
- What are the effects of lockdown measures on domestic violence experienced by women?
- How has the situation shifted compared to the first wave of COVID-19 in Georgia?

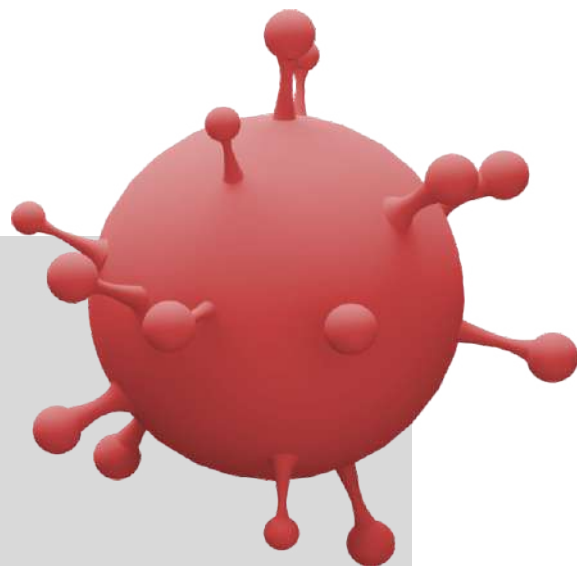
This document is structured as follows. First, a background review of the general situation regarding COVID-19 is reviewed, and an extensive summary of government measures is provided. Next, it outlines the methodology used for this study. The subsequent sections summarize the survey findings on information integrity, personal and household economic situations, access to assistance, distribution of domestic work and housework, access to health-care services, experiences of discrimination, challenges with online education and engagement in socialization. The report concludes with a summary of key findings.

BACKGROUND REVIEW

In February 2020, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic. Since then, 59 million people had been infected globally, and 1.4 million have died³. Since 29 February, when the first imported case of COVID-19 was detected in Georgia, more than 100,000 people have been infected, and more than one thousand Georgians have died due to the virus⁴.

The Government of Georgia introduced multiple measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. In early spring, education institutions and workplaces were closed, and a two-month nighttime curfew was introduced. Following the spread of the virus, the Government introduced targeted closures of select municipalities with the highest number of cases. As a result, the transmission of the virus was minimized by early summer.

While the country excelled at curbing the first wave of the virus⁵, it came at a cost. The first RGA showed that 32 per cent of Georgians reported losing their jobs, while a large majority saw declining incomes from productive activities⁶. Following a global pattern, GDP growth rates went negative⁷; vital sectors of the Georgian economy,



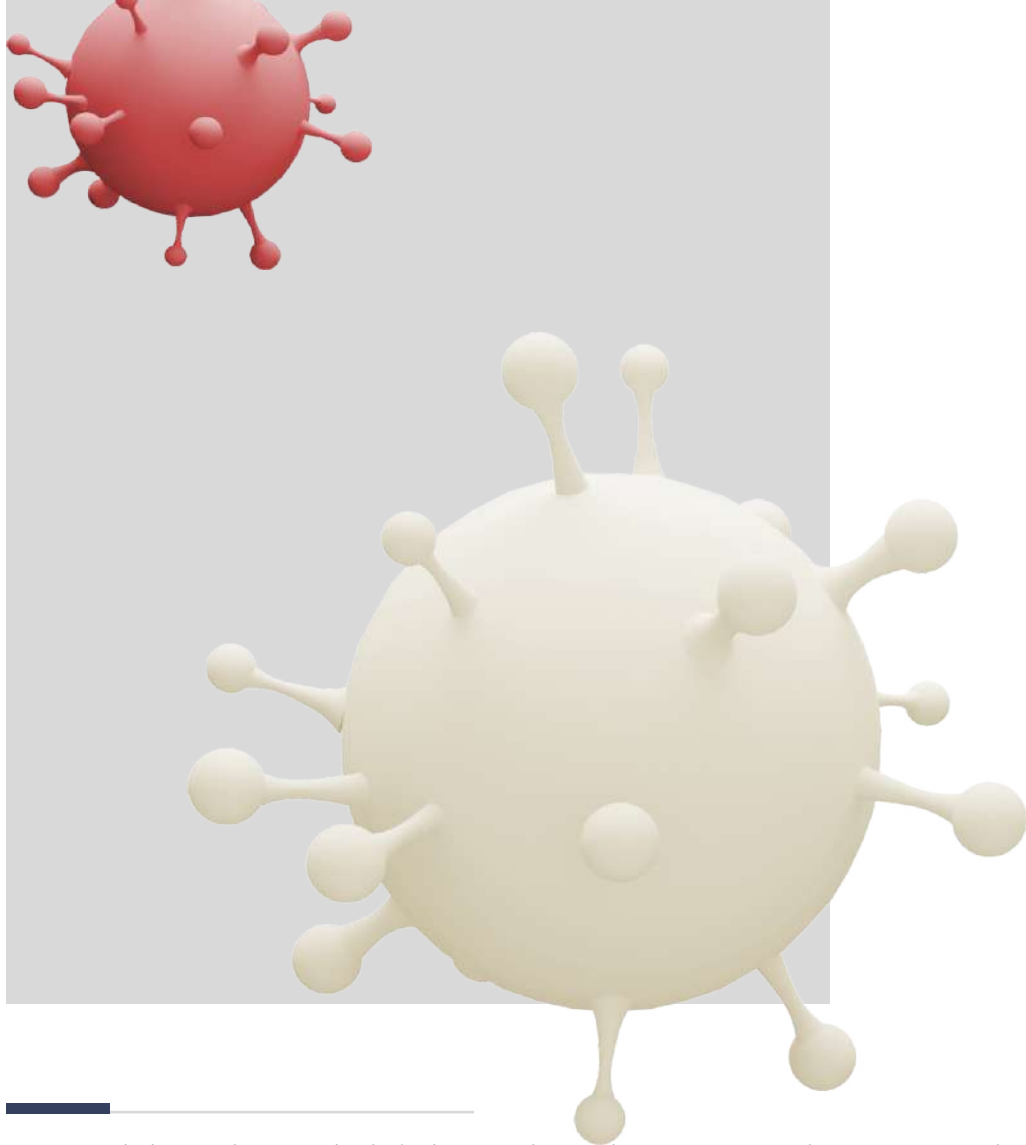
3 Johns Hopkins University Medicine, 'COVID-19 Dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE).'

4 National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health, 'Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in Georgia'

5 Isabelle Khurshudyan, 'In Georgia, Tourism's "new Reality" Includes Selective Guest List and Pitch as Healthy Haven', The Washington Post, 30 May 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/on-the-black-sea-georgia-rebrands-itself-as-a-holiday-haven-from-the-pandemic/2020/05/29/a41ffd0e-9f6d-11ea-be06-af5514ee0385_story.html.

6 CRRC-Georgia, 'Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 Situation in Georgia' (Tbilisi: UN Women, 2020), <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20georgia/attachments/publications/2020/rga%20unw-geo.pdf?la=ka&vs=0>.

7 National Statistics Office of Georgia, 'Gross Domestic Product (GDP)', 2020, <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/23/gross-domestic-product-gdp>.



such as tourism⁸, were impacted; and revenues to state coffers were diminished by GEL 1.8 billion⁹.

To respond to the economic challenges of the spread of COVID-19, the Government of Georgia introduced systemic measures through its Anti-Crisis Economic Plan¹⁰. Those who lost jobs received GEL 1,200 in cash payments. Workers in informal sectors were reimbursed with GEL 300 in cash benefits, while employers were given various income tax exemptions. Social assistance programmes were also expanded to cover larger population groups.

The Government introduced massive measures to mitigate the effect of closing the economy on businesses. Companies took advantage of a programme on returning value-added tax revenues. The Georgian Government temporarily exempted companies from paying income and property taxes. Various funding schemes for businesses were also introduced.

Still, pressure to reopen the economy was looming. As many Georgian businesses are directly or indirectly linked with the tourism industry, there was a push to reopen the economy. The restrictions were gradually lifted for the summer tourism season. When the number of cases started to grow in early September, the Government decided not to introduce strict lockdown measures due to legitimate economic and political considerations. As a result, the number of cases increased exponentially. The country swiftly overtook neighbouring Azerbaijan in the number of cases and now leads world rankings in per capita cases¹¹.

8 Davit Keshelava and Yasya Babych, 'Riding Out the Pandemic Storm: Trends, Projections and Uncertainties' (Tbilisi: International School of Economics, 2020).

9 Government of Georgia, 'Anti-Crisis Economic Plan', 2020, <https://stopcov.ge/ka/Gegma>.

10 Ibid.

11 The New York Times, 'Covid World Map: Tracking the Global Outbreak', The New York Times, 28 January 2020, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/world/coronavirus-maps.html>.

METHODOLOGY

This survey is a follow-up study of UN Women's RGA of the COVID-19 situation in Georgia¹². The survey instrument that was used for the second wave of the survey generally followed the one used for the first wave, which was developed by UN Women's flagship programme Making Every Woman and Girl Count to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls. With very few amendments, the instrument was left intact for the second wave.

Fieldwork was conducted between 14 and 20 October 2020. Respondents were selected using the random-digit dialing method and interviewed over cell phones. Data are nationally representative of government-controlled territories except the conflict-affected territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region.

CRRC-Georgia interviewed 1,076 respondents, with a response rate of 27 per cent (AAPOR Response Rate 1, out of 7,994 cases). Interviews were conducted in Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani and Rus-

sian. On average, each interview lasted about 14 minutes.

Results of this survey are weighted. Data can be disaggregated by gender, age group, geographic area and settlement type. Results of the 2014 National Census of Georgia were used to calculate weighting adjustments. An average margin of error does not exceed between 3 per cent and 5 per cent, depending on the estimated proportions.

Before fieldwork, CRRC-Georgia conducted a pilot survey, and the instrument was adjusted accordingly. Interviewers received in-depth training in the theory of the questionnaire as well as fieldwork and ethics procedures.

CRRC-Georgia strictly adheres to the highest ethical standards in its data collection projects. The organization follows the rules established by the Georgian legislature (e.g. the Law on Personal Data Protection and the Law on Official Statistics) as well as ethics norms recognized by international professional organizations such as the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and ESOMAR. CRRC-Georgia is a founding member of the Georgian Association for Public Opinion and Market Research (GAPOMR) and a signatory of its Charter of Ethics.

12 CRRC-Georgia, 'Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 Situation in Georgia'.



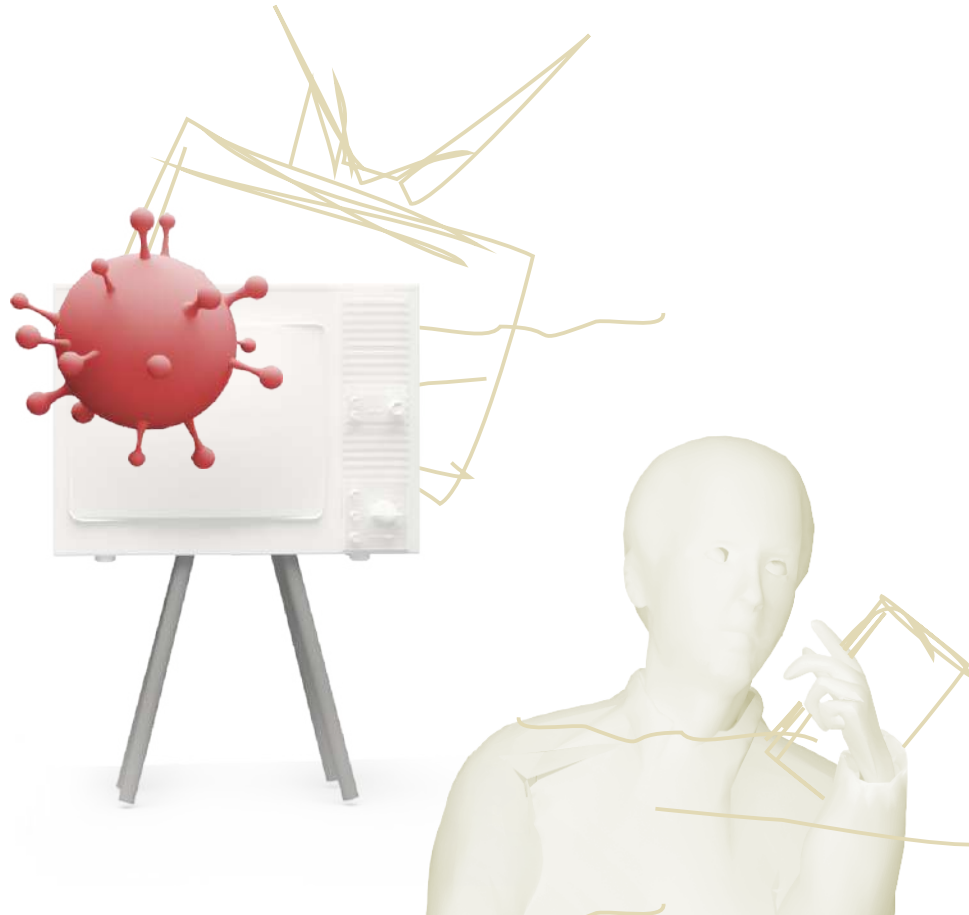
SURVEY FINDINGS



INFORMATION ON COVID-19

This section maps sources of information for Georgians on the COVID-19 pandemic. It describes key sources of information and respondents' perceptions of its quality and timeliness.

Sources of information



Georgians are well engaged when it comes to receiving information on COVID-19. All but 2 per cent of Georgians said that they receive information regarding the pandemic. Among those who do so, 67 per cent named TV as the primary source for news, followed by social media (25 per cent) and other sources such as government websites, radio and newspaper announcements, community members and so forth (8 per cent).

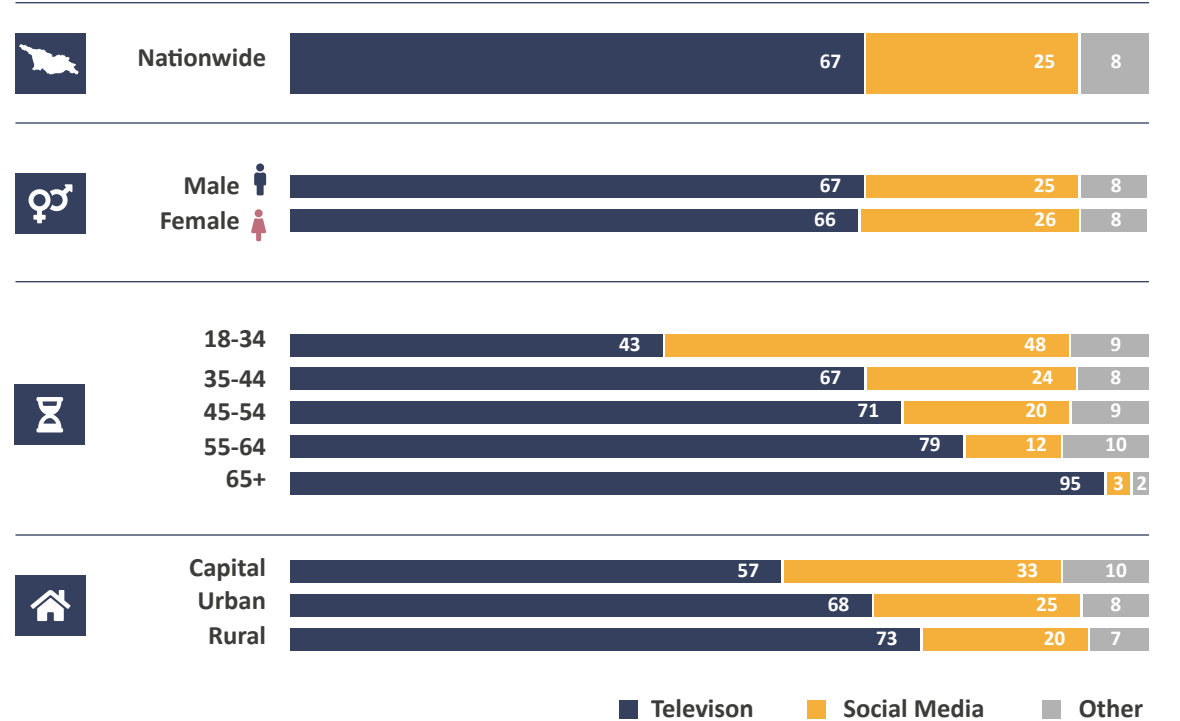


Figure 2
 What is your main source of information regarding COVID-19 (risks, recommended preventive measures)? (Percentage)



An almost identical proportion of women and men used TV, social networks and other sources to receive information on COVID-19. Sixty-six per cent of women and 67 per cent of men preferred TV; a quarter of men and 26 per cent of women used social networks; and an equal share of women and men (8 per cent) received COVID-19-related information from other sources.

Georgians differ across age groups in terms of what sources of information they consume. Younger Georgians under the age of 34 are more likely to consume social networks (48 per cent) than TV (43 per cent). In older cohorts, TV consumption increases while the usage of social networks shrinks. For instance, 67 per cent of Georgians aged 35-44 consume TV, while 24 per cent use social media to receive news on COVID-19. At the same time, TV usage expands to almost 95 per cent in the oldest group (aged 65 or older). In this group, social media consumption is reduced to a mere 3 per cent.

Residents of Tbilisi, other urban areas and rural Georgia have different media consumption habits. While most Tbilisians still depend on TV to get information on COVID-19 (57 per cent), TV consumption is even higher by 11 percentage points in other urban areas and by 16 percentage points among Georgia's rural residents. Social media consumption follows the opposite pattern. One third of the Tbilisi population uses social media for their news on COVID-19, while only a quarter of urban and one fifth of rural residents do so.

How did these patterns change relative to the May 2020 wave of this study? Fewer Georgians receive their news on COVID-19 from TV, as the share of TV consumers dropped by almost 10 percentage points. Instead, the use of social networks has increased, as its consumption grew by 4 percentage points. The share of Georgians who use other sources increased by 5 percentage points. Notably, very similar patterns hold across geographic and demographic groups.

Information received

Those who report receiving information on COVID-19 were probed on the content of this news. Respondents were asked whether they learned more about the epidemiological situation, preventive measures, health facilities, risk groups, education programmes or the State's Anti-Crisis Economic Plan. Notably, the majority of respondents reported receiving information on all topics listed above. Ninety-five per cent received information on the epidemiological situation, 94 per cent learned about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and 91 per cent received news on risk groups such as pregnant women, elderly persons and persons with disabilities (PwD). Eighty-four per cent received information on health facilities providing COVID-19-re-

lated services, while 82 per cent were interested in distance-education programmes for schoolchildren. Relatively fewer Georgians (77 per cent) received information on the State's Anti-Crisis Economic Plan.

Women and men did not differ statistically in terms of the type of received information. The sole exception was news on distance-education programmes for schoolchildren, as this was reported by 84 per cent of women and 79 per cent of men. No meaningfully interpretable differences occurred between respondents living in Tbilisi, urban areas and rural settlements.

The type of reported information somewhat varied across age groups. While a relatively smaller share of the youngest respondents (aged 18-34) reported receiving information on the epidemiological situation (94 per cent), almost everyone over the age of 55 reported doing so. Respondents aged 18-34 were more likely to report receiving information on distance-education programmes for schoolchildren (87 per cent), followed by those aged 35-44 (83%), aged 45-54 (76 per cent), aged 55-64 (77 per cent) and aged 65 or older (79 per cent).

As the question has changed relative to the May wave of the RGA, only three out of six items are comparable to the previous study results. The proportion of those who received information about the epidemiological situation shrunk by 3 percentage points to 95 per cent; and the share of Georgians who received information about prevention measures decreased by 4 percentage points. The proportion of Georgians receiving updates on health facilities decreased by 2 percentage points. While these figures show a shift in absolute numbers, differences are small and fall well within the survey's margin of error. Thus, discrepancies should be interpreted carefully.

Perceptions of information quality

In general, Georgians positively assess the received information on COVID-19. The majority of respondents (79 per cent) in the October wave of the RGA perceived the received information as precise and helpful (figure 3). Fewer Georgians perceived it as clear but too late to be of any use (8 per cent). About 9 per cent of respondents found it confusing or contradictory.

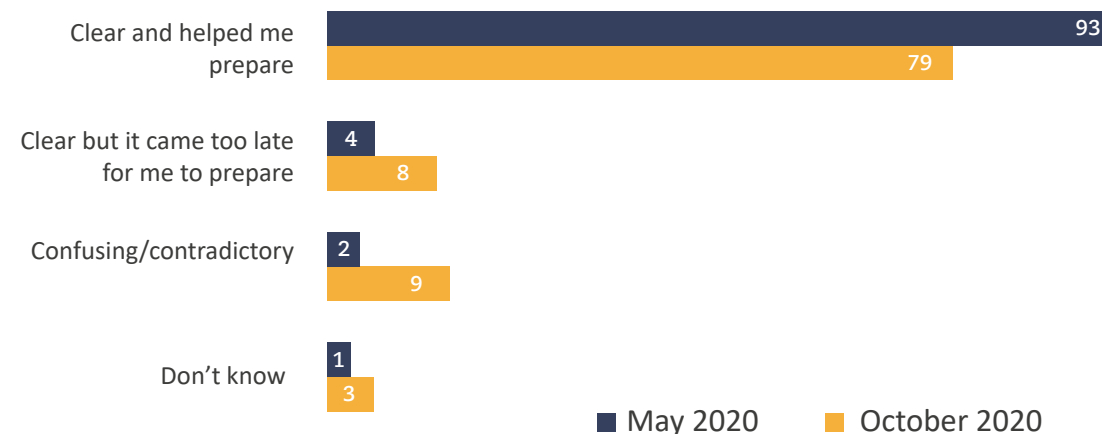
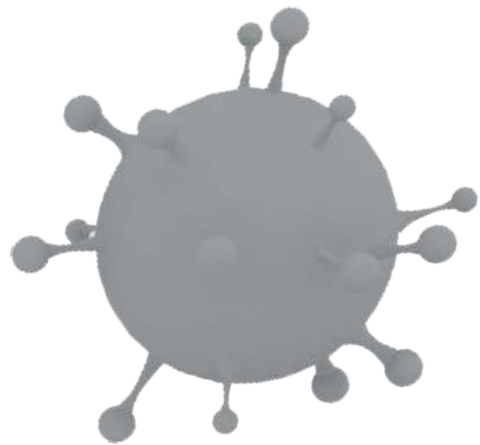


Figure 3

How would you rate the information you received? (Percentage; first and second waves of the RGA)

Demographic characteristics were not significant predictors of the perception of received information. Nonetheless, those who used TV as their primary source of information on COVID-19 were more likely to find it clear and helpful (83 per cent). Among



Internet users, relatively few (77 per cent) assessed the information as timely and useful, while those who used other sources, slightly more than half, perceived this information as precise and helpful (55 per cent).

While most Georgians still perceive the information provided on COVID-19 as clear and helpful, this is a 14-point decrease since May 2020. The proportion of those who see these reports as too late has increased by 4 percentage points. Notably, more Georgians find the information on COVID-19 confusing or contradictory (9 per cent) than those who did in May 2020 (2 per cent).







EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND SOURCES OF LIVELIHOOD

This section summarizes how the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic affected women and men in Georgia. Where possible, a comparison with the first wave of the RGA study is provided.



EMPLOYMENT

Employment, income and
sources of livelihood

Employment before the pandemic

PRE-OUTBREAK EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND STRUCTURE

In the October 2020 wave of the study, 55 per cent of Georgians mentioned that they worked prior to the March 2020 outbreak of COVID-19. About 11 per cent would consider themselves unemployed, while 34 per cent were economically inactive. These figures are mainly in line with the information provided in the May 2020 wave considering survey error.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, most women were either economically inactive (50 per cent) or unemployed (8 per cent). In contrast, the majority of men were employed (69 per cent). Less than a third of male respondents considered themselves economically inactive (16 per cent) or unemployed (15 per cent).

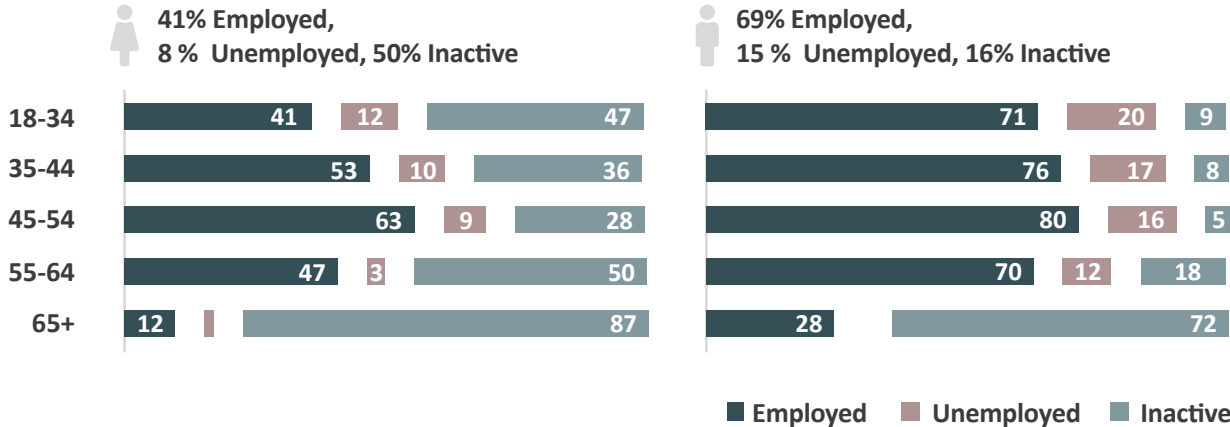


Figure 4

Employment status, by gender and age group (Percentage)



Working-age women in all age cohorts are less likely to be employed than men in similar cohorts

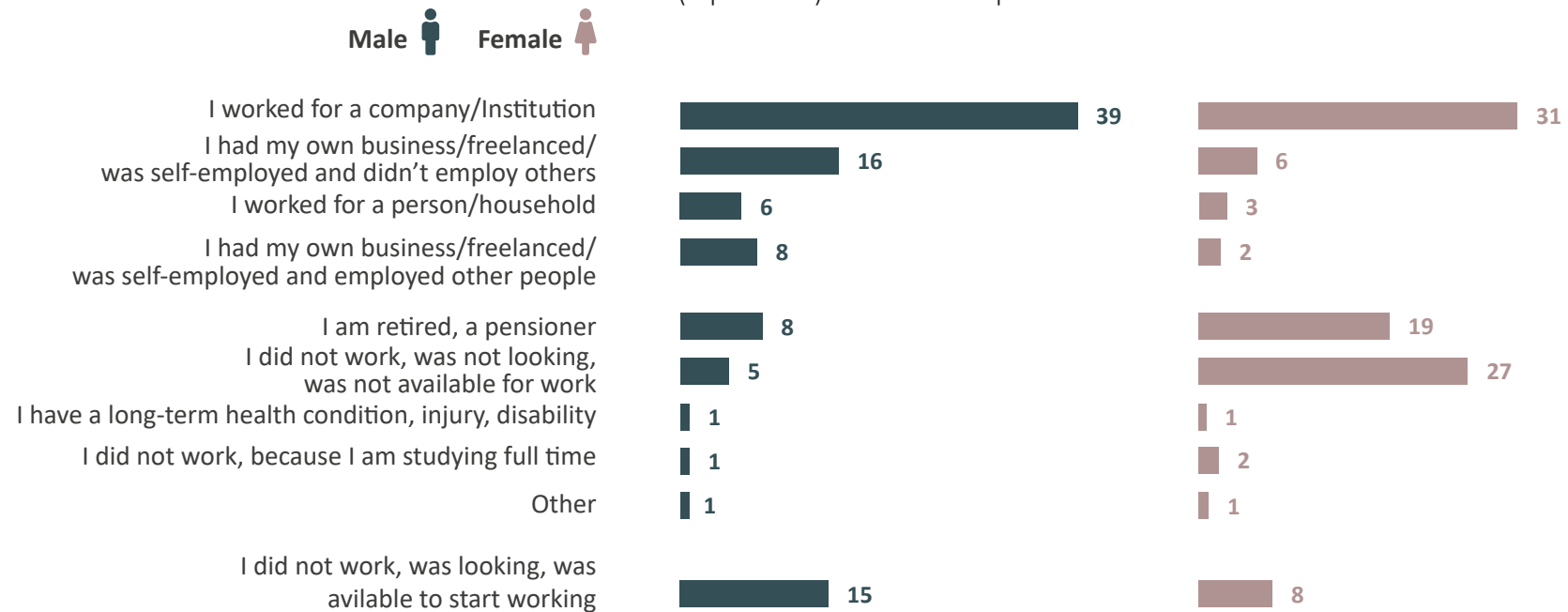
Figure 4 shows the distribution of respondents' employment situation by gender and age group. Notably, working-age women in all age cohorts are less likely to be employed than men in similar cohorts. More women than men in all age groups are economically inactive. For instance, 71 per cent of men in the 18-34 age group are employed, while only 41 per cent of women of a similar age consider themselves employed. Almost half of women in this cohort (47 per cent) are economically inactive, in contrast to only 9 per cent of men. The latter is also more likely to report that they are unemployed (20 per cent) than women (12 per cent).

The situation is similar in older age groups. For those aged 55-64, 47 per cent of women are employed, while 70 per cent of men report working. Over the age of 65, 12 per cent of women and 28 per cent of men are employed. The share of those who are economically inactive is also higher for older women than men.

Georgians who live in Tbilisi are more likely to be employed. Nearly two thirds (64 per cent) of Tbilisi residents are employed, as opposed to those living in other urban areas (55 per cent) and villages (47 per cent). More rural Georgians are economically inactive than respondents from Tbilisi and other urban areas. Forty per cent of the country's rural population, as well as around 30 per cent of Tbilisians and urbanites, consider themselves idle.

The economic inactivity of rural women and ethnic minorities stands out. Sixty-five per cent of rural women consider themselves inactive, compared to 15 per cent of men. A regression model that predicts respondents' employment status shows that minorities are significantly less likely to be employed¹³.

¹³ Multinomial logistic regression with survey settings controlling for respondents' demographic characteristics.



Two thirds (64 per cent) of employed Georgians said they worked for a company or an institution before the outbreak. About 19 per cent owned a business without employees, while 9 per cent employed other people. Eight per cent of Georgians worked for some other individual or a household.

Women were more likely to work as employees. Three quarters of working women reported that they worked for a company or an organization, compared to 57 per cent of working men who reported the same. Fewer women than men were entrepreneurs of some sort. Twenty-three per cent of employed men and 14 per cent of women owned a business without employees, while only 11 per cent of men and 5 per cent of women were employers. An almost equal proportion of women (7 per cent) and men (9 per cent) worked for a person or a household.

Figure 5

How would you best describe your employment status during a typical week before the spread of COVID-19? (Percentage)

Changes to salaried work

POST-OUTBREAK EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING HOURS

Seventeen per cent of women and men in the October 2020 survey reported that they had lost their jobs since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. Thirty-two per cent of Georgians said their working hours were reduced, although they still managed to keep their jobs. Almost half of Georgians (48 per cent) reported no change in the number of hours devoted to paid work.

Notably, there had been no statistically significant difference between women and men in terms of changes in working hours. Fifty per cent of women and 47 per cent of men reported no changes in the number of hours dedicated to salaried work. Fifteen per cent of men and 20 per cent of women said that they had lost their jobs. Twenty-six per cent of employed women and 36 per cent of employed men reported reduced working hours, while 3 per cent of men and four per cent of women reported increased working hours.

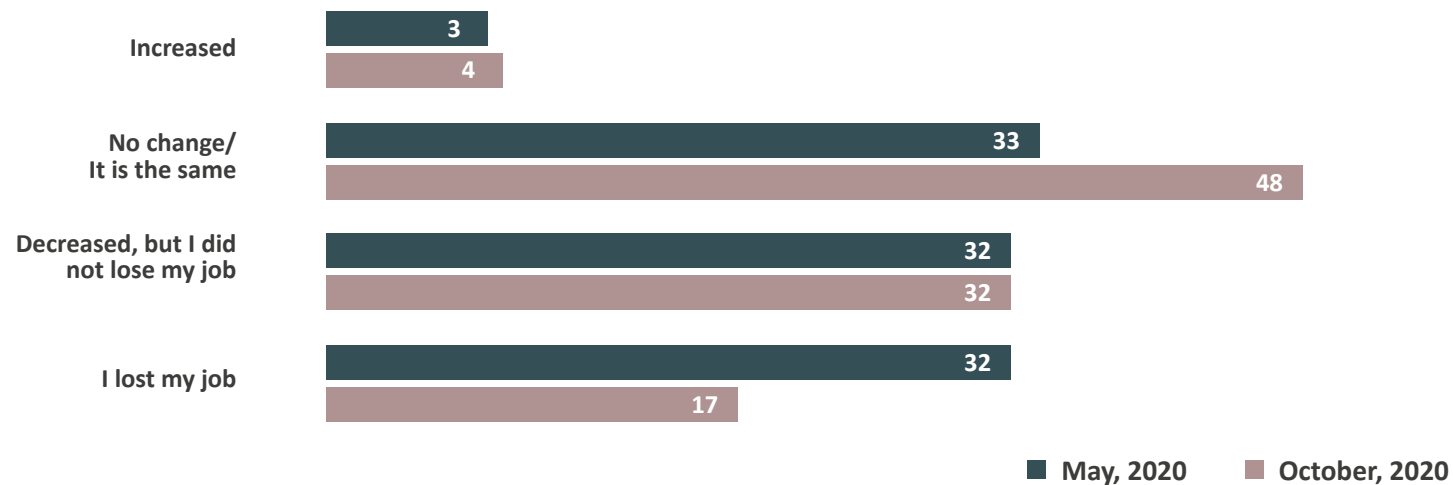


Figure 6

Since the spread of COVID-19, has the number of hours devoted to paid work changed?
(Percentage; first and second waves of the RGA)



These findings contrast those of the previous wave (figure 6). In the May 2020 survey, almost one third of Georgians reported having lost their jobs, 15 percentage points higher than the figure reported in October. The proportion of those who reported no change in working hours since the spread of COVID-19 increased by 15 percentage points when comparing the May results to the October results. The above pattern might indicate a slow recovery of jobs after the strict lockdown rules imposed in spring 2020.

Similar to the previous wave, ethnic minorities seem to be most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They were almost three times more likely to report that they have lost their jobs than ethnic Georgians¹⁴. While exact estimates for the differences might be unreliable due to the small proportion of minorities in the sample (approximately 8 per cent) and higher survey error, statistically significant differences still hold.

Did the COVID-19 pandemic have a differentiated effect by employment type? Data show that respondents who report being entrepreneurs of some sort have been affected the most. Twenty-nine per cent of those who employed others said that they lost their jobs after the outbreak. Respondents employed by companies, businesses or households were least affected: 15 per cent of this cohort reported having lost their jobs. Nineteen per cent of own-account workers lost their jobs after the outbreak.

Freelancers and own-account workers saw their working hours reduced. Fifty-five per cent of own-account workers and 38 per cent of employers reported reduced hours. In contrast, a reduction in the hours of paid work occurred for only one quarter of employees¹⁵.

14 Probabilities estimated using a multinomial logistic regression model that controls for respondents' demographic characteristics.

15 There were no statistically significant differences between women and men.

Compared to the May 2020 wave, fewer people say they have lost their jobs (figure 7). More employees reported no change in their working hours in October than in May. In the spring wave of the RGA study, 44 per cent of employers and 46 per cent of own-account workers reported losing their jobs, relative to 29 per cent for employers and 19 per cent for own-account workers in the October wave. Nonetheless, more own-account workers (55 per cent) in the fall wave said they saw a decrease in the number of hours dedicated to paid work than in the study's spring wave (28 per cent).

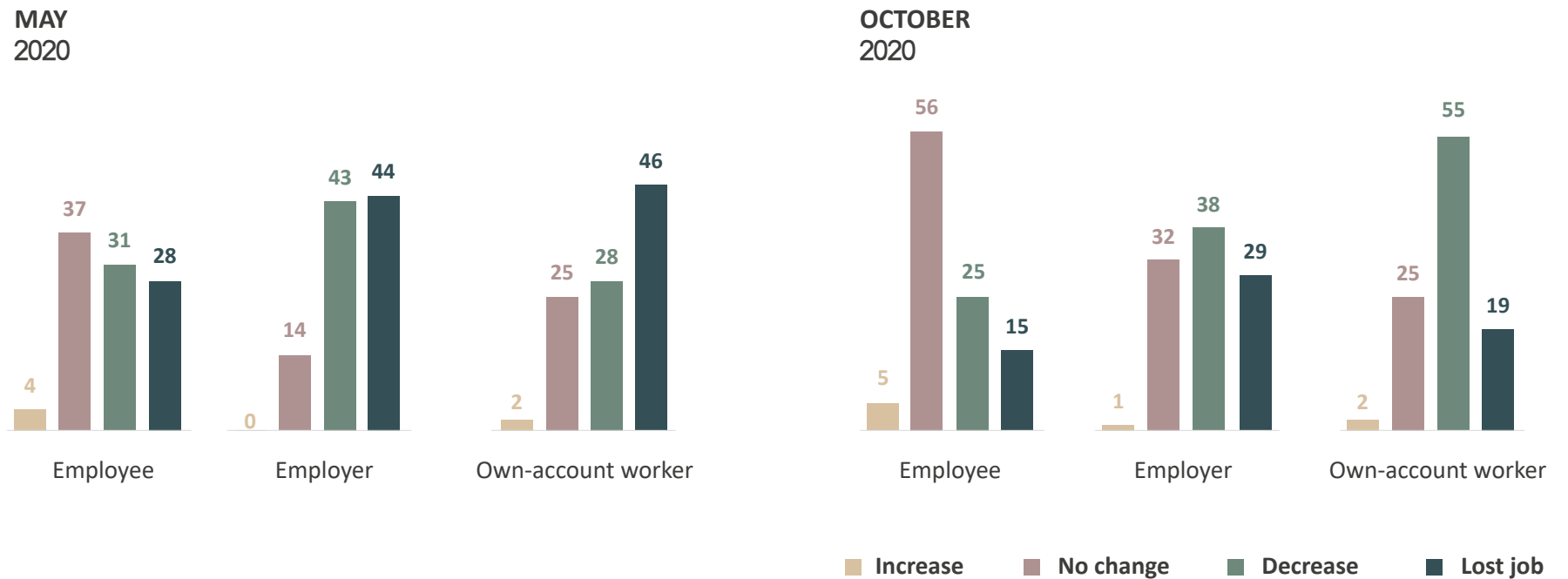


Figure 7

Did the number of hours dedicated to paid work change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? (Percentage; by employment status; first and second waves of the RGA)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some were forced to take leave from work. Seventy-eight per cent of Georgians, including 80 per cent of men and 77 per cent of women, did not take leave. Sixty-five per cent of women and 54 per cent of men did not take leave, while a quarter of men and 13 per cent of working women were not entitled to take a break from their jobs.

Ten per cent of Georgians took leave from work and received full or partial reimbursement. Interestingly, women were more likely to take full or partially reimbursed leave (16 per cent) than men (10 per cent). Eight per cent of working men and 6 per cent of working women took unpaid leave due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These findings are broadly in line with the previous wave, considering survey error. Slightly more women in October (16 per cent) said that they took reimbursed leave than in May (10 per cent). The proportion of working men who did not take leave decreased by 9 percentage points compared to late spring.

Employed Georgians are anxious about what would happen to their income if they cannot work. A plurality (39 per cent) is convinced that they will not get paid if they do not work for at least two weeks. Thirty-four per cent think that they will still receive full salaries if they cannot go to work. Six per cent expect to get at least partial compensation, while 22 per cent do not have a clear idea of what happens to their income if they cannot go to work.

Women perceive that they are more likely to retain their salaries if they cannot work for two weeks, according to 43 per cent of women and 28 per cent of men. Six per cent of men and 5 per cent of women expect to get at least a partial salary. Women are also less likely

(30 per cent) than men (45 per cent) to expect that they will not get paid if they are unable to go to work.

While nationally, Georgians are as anxious about their incomes as they were in May 2020, women seem to be relatively optimistic. There is now a seven-point increase relative to the spring in the share of women who believe that they will be reimbursed if they cannot work for two weeks.

WORKING FROM HOME

Unlike the first wave of the pandemic, in October, employed Georgians were mostly back to their workplaces. Seventy per cent of those employed before the pandemic reported that they have not stopped going to their workplaces and still appear there in person. Eleven per cent say that they had stopped going to work during the outbreak but now work from their workplaces full-time. Five per cent report going to their workspace part-time. About 9 per cent report switching to teleworking, while 6 per cent work from home as before the outbreak.

Significantly, none of the demographic factors were associated with whether one had to start working from home. Sixty-five per cent of women and 73 per cent of men report never stopping from going to their workplaces. Twelve per cent of women and 10 per cent of men returned to full-time work. Seven per cent of female respondents and 3 per cent of men go to their workplaces at least once a week. Only 11 per cent of women and 8 per cent of men continue working remotely.

Notable changes have occurred relative to the previous wave of this study. In May, half of the workforce worked remotely, while only 15 per cent of employed Georgians reported working from home during the lockdown. Currently, 85 per cent of those employed go to their workplaces at least part-time, as opposed to 49 per cent in May.

Changes to self-employment and business activities

Fourteen per cent of employed Georgians worked for their enterprises or helped with their households' business without payment. Women were less likely to be self-employed (7 per cent) than men (23 per cent). A higher proportion of ethnic minorities was self-employed than ethnic Georgians¹⁶. Significantly, almost half of the self-employed Georgians worked in enterprises that are not formally registered.

The COVID-19 pandemic was perceived to have a mostly negative effect on business owners. Fifty per cent of business owners perceived being negatively affected by the pandemic. An additional 10 per cent reported closing down their business altogether¹⁷. Results are primarily in line with the situation in May 2020.

Livelihoods

The majority of respondents reported depending on salaried income (55 per cent) – more men (60 per cent) than women (51 per cent) earned their income from salaried jobs. Approximately 62 per cent to 66 per cent of respondents under the age of 54 reported having salaried jobs compared to older respondents (22 per cent to 50 per cent). About 66 per cent of Tbilisi residents depended on salaried jobs as their primary income source. Those who live outside the capital, about 59 per cent of urban residents and 44 per cent of rural Georgians, reported depending on salaried jobs.

Forty-three per cent of Georgians currently depend on government social benefits such as pensions and social transfers. Women (49 per cent) were more likely to rely on state social transfers than men (37 per cent). Almost the same proportion (45 per cent) earned their income from farming. Fewer women (38 per cent) than men (54 per cent) depended on income from agriculture.

¹⁶ Differences were identified using a binary logistic regression model with survey settings.

¹⁷ Considering the small sample size, these estimates might not be reliable.

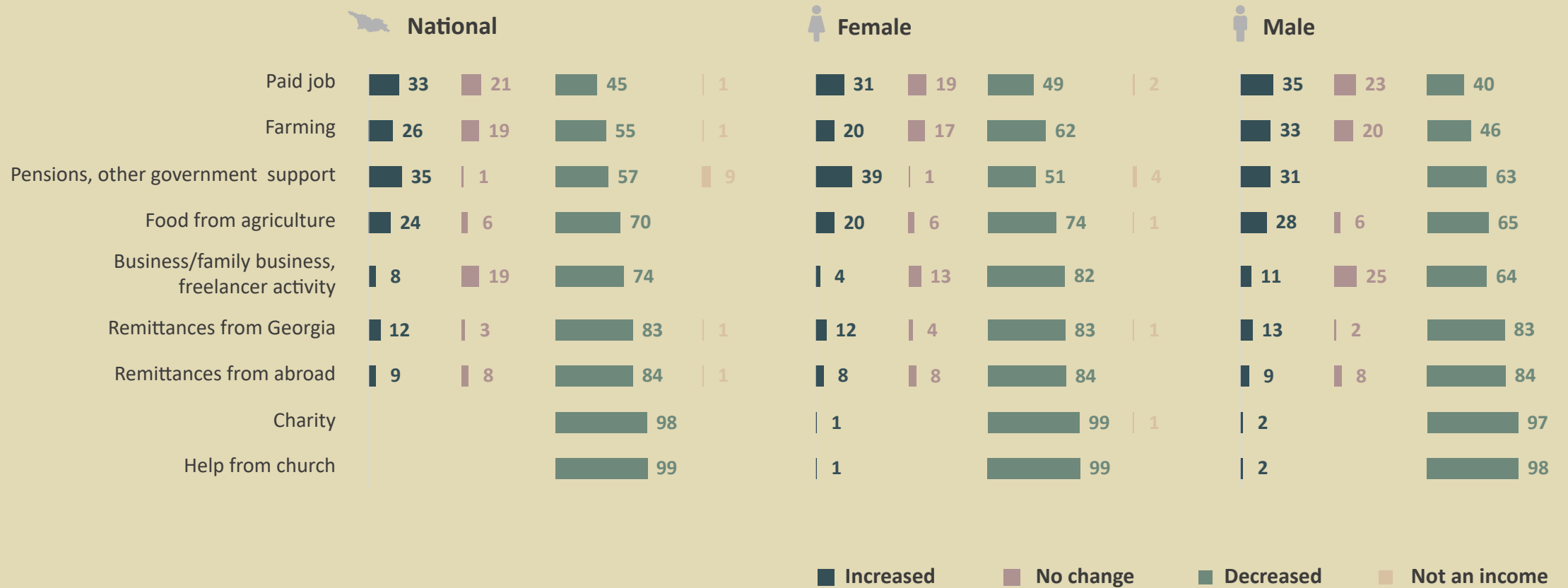


Figure 8

As a result of the coronavirus, how have the following personal resources been affected?

A significant share of Georgians (30 per cent) depends on subsistence farming: growing foodstuffs, raising animals or fishing. While more men (35 per cent) than women (26 per cent) rely on subsistence farming, these differences are not statistically significant. Nonetheless, most rural populations (57 per cent) and more than one fifth (22 per cent) of urbanites report engaging in subsistence farming.

Twenty-six per cent report entrepreneurial activities as their sources of income, with a higher share of men (36 per cent) than women (18 per cent) saying so. Respondents aged 45-54 were more likely to be entrepreneurs of some sort (41 per cent), while the proportion of those reporting incomes from this source was significantly lower in other age groups.

Remittances constitute a source of income for at least 29 per cent of Georgians who depend on others' help either living within the country or abroad. Seventeen per cent report receiving money or other support from people residing in Georgia. The same share of women and men (17 per cent) receive assistance from within Georgia. As for remittances from abroad, 16 per cent reported receiving it in one form or another, with equal proportions of women and men. Fewer Georgians report receiving help from NGOs/charities (2 per cent) or a church (1 per cent).

Notably, there were no changes in terms of the personal resources that were discussed in the May 2020 wave of the RGA study. There was a five-point increase in the proportion of those who report subsistence farming and a two-point rise in the proportion of respondents naming NGOs/charities as their resource. That said, differences are instead associated with survey error rather than genuine shifts in sources of livelihood.

IMPACT OF THE OUTBREAK ON PERSONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The COVID-19 pandemic has most affected income that stems from productive activities (e.g. salaried jobs, entrepreneurship, selling agricultural goods) (figure 8). One fifth (21 per cent) of Georgians report a decrease in income from paid positions. Slightly more men (23 per cent) than women (19 per cent) say that they were affected. Nineteen per cent of Georgians reported decreased income from selling agricultural products, with similar proportions of women (17 per cent) and men (20 per cent) experiencing a decline in such revenue. As for entrepreneurial activities, 19 per cent complained about a decrease nationally. A quarter of men and 13 per cent of women report a reduction in income stemming from business activities.

About one fifth of Georgians who depend on subsistence farming report a decline in this resource (6 per cent nationally).

Remittances from abroad seem to be affected the most. Eight per cent of Georgians nationally report decreased incomes from this source. Importantly, this affects about half of those who depend on remittances as a source of livelihood. Help from within Georgia seems to be less affected, as only 3 per cent nationally saw a decrease in domestic remittances.

Government payments such as pensions and social transfers were left mostly unaffected. A mere 1 per cent nationally reported a decrease in such incomes. Thirty-five per cent said that these payments have not changed, while 7 per cent reported an increase.

How do these findings compare with the previous wave? Overall, relatively fewer Georgians report a decrease in productive incomes in the October study. The proportion of those whose income from paid jobs has reduced decreased by 13 percentage points. The share of Georgians who reported a fall in revenues from entrepreneurial ac-

tivities shrunk by six points. The share of Georgians who reported decreased incomes from agricultural activities had not been shifted.

More Georgians report an increase in pensions and government social transfers relative to May 2020. In October, 7 per cent reported increased incomes from social transfers, against 1 per cent in May 2020. Notably, the share of Georgians who experienced a decline in remittances has not changed.

How did Georgians deal with the deterioration of their income due to economic hardships associated with the pandemic? Respondents were asked what measures they undertook to plan for or adjust to a loss of income. Thirty per cent said they had done nothing. Forty-one per cent spent their savings, 36 per cent started buying less preferred or cheaper food, and 33 per cent considered spending less on health care. Twenty-one per cent had to borrow money from family members, friends or acquaintances, while 19 per cent resorted to taking out a loan from financial institutions. Fifteen per cent started spending less on education, while 7 per cent reported selling household durables.

In general, women and men took similar steps to tackle diminishing income. More women (38 per cent) than men (27 per cent) reported that they had to spend less on health care, while a higher share of men (9 per cent) than women (5 per cent) reported selling durable household goods.

Which groups were forced to search for alternative sources to compensate for their income? A binary variable was constructed to measure this, indicating whether a respondent reported borrowing money, buying cheaper food, spending less on education and health care, spending their savings or selling durable goods. Next, a binary regression model was constructed that predicted the propensity of searching for alternative sources¹⁸. Overall, gender, education and children's presence within the household indicated whether the respondent had to pursue alternatives to compensate their incomes.

18 The model controlled for respondents' gender, age, education, ethnicity, employment status and household size, as well as the presence of children and PwD within the household.

Women, respondents without higher education, and those residing in households with children were more likely to resort to alternative sources to compensate for their income (figure 9). Women had about a 75 per cent chance to have looked for or used alternatives for their declining income. Those who have obtained higher education had a 64 per cent probability of resorting to alternative sources than those without higher education (74 per cent). Households with children were more likely to need alternative sources than those without children.

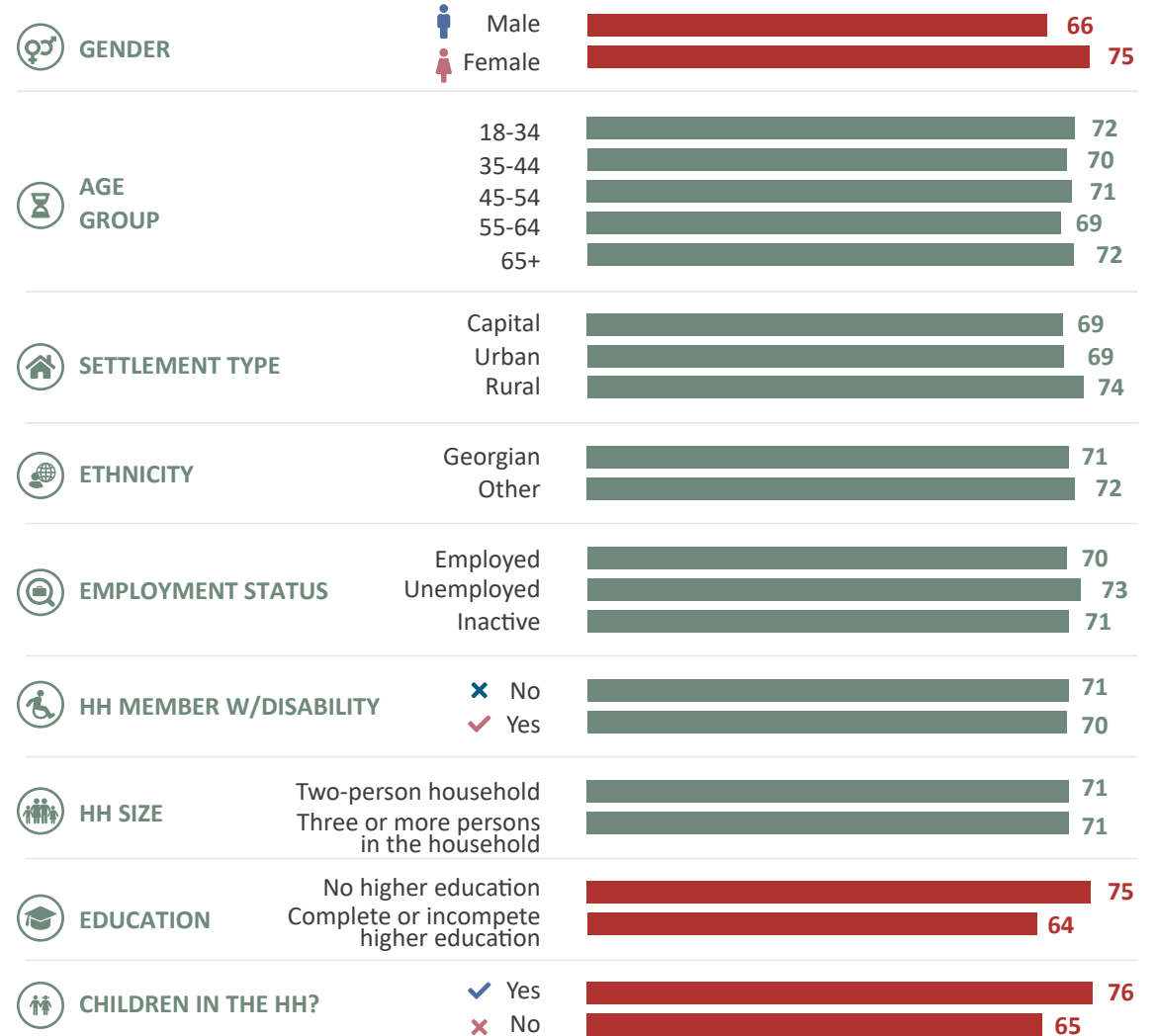


Figure 9

Probability of using alternative sources to compensate for declined income (Percentage). Note: Red bars denote statistically significant differences.

OVERALL IMPACT ON PRODUCTIVE INCOME

About 43 per cent of Georgians reported declined income from productive activities such as salaried jobs, the sale of agricultural products and entrepreneurial activities. Compared to the previous wave, fewer report a decline in productive activities. While 89 per cent of men and 75 per cent of women had experienced reduced incomes in May 2020, only 49 per cent of men and 39 per cent of women reported a decline in the study's October wave.

A binary variable measuring a decline in one or more productive activities was constructed to identify which groups were affected. Associations with demographic variables and household characteristics were examined using a binary logistic regression model (figure 10)¹⁹.

Respondents' ethnicity, employment status and education, as well as the presence of children in their household, are factors predicting their reduced incomes from productive activities. Data show that minorities, those with jobs, those with no higher education and those with no children have experienced a decline in revenues from salaried jobs, agriculture and entrepreneurial activities. Ethnic minorities had a 63 per cent chance of having reduced income from productive activities, while ethnic Georgians had a 42 per cent chance of experiencing the same. Not surprisingly, those with reported jobs also had higher chances of having reduced incomes (56 per cent) than those who reported being economically inactive (32 per cent) or unemployed (22 per cent). Respondents with no higher education had a 10-point higher probability of having reduced incomes than those with higher education. Respondents living in households with no children had a 38 per cent chance of experiencing reduced revenues, while those without children had a 47 per cent chance of reporting reduced incomes from productive activities.

¹⁹ The model controlled for respondents' gender, age, education, ethnicity, employment status and household size, as well as the presence of children and PwD within the household.

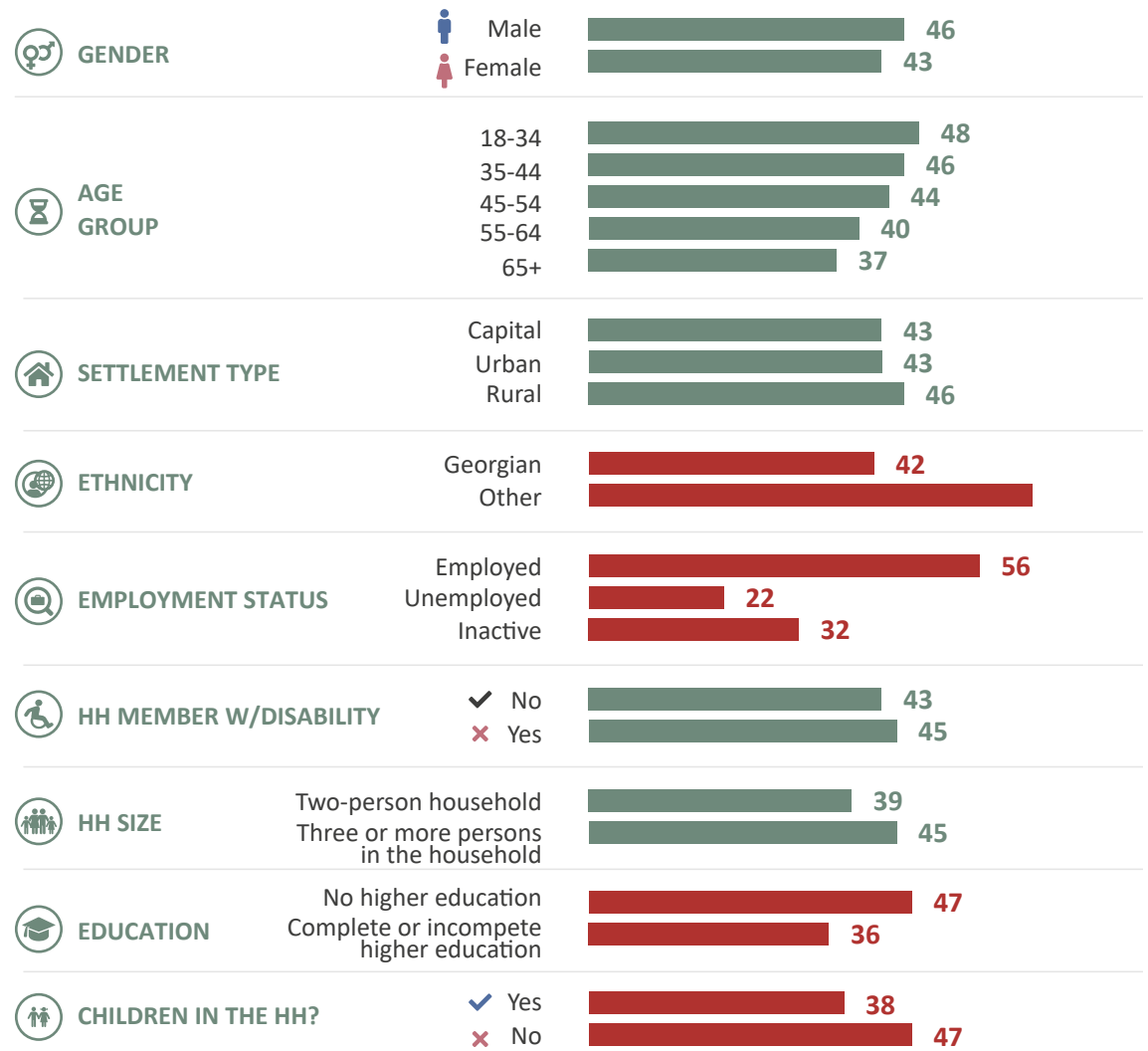


Figure 10

Probability of reduced income from productive activities (Percentage).
 Note: Red bars denote statistically significant differences.

Financial aid and other types of assistance

To cope with the effects of COVID-19, some Georgians applied for state financial assistance. Overall, 17 per cent of respondents report having done so. While differences by gender are not statistically significant, 15 per cent of men and 19 per cent of women applied for some type of state assistance. Ethnic minorities were almost twice as likely to have used government financial support than ethnic Georgians²⁰.

The Government of Georgia has introduced multiple programmes to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The State's Anti-Crisis Economic Plan included cash transfers to those who lost their jobs, self-employed citizens and those who already relied on state social benefits. Overall, about 42 per cent of Georgians reported receiving financial assistance from central or regional governments. This is a 25-percentage-point increase from May, when about 7 per cent reported having access to monetary aid.

When it comes to non-monetary assistance, 13 per cent of Georgians reported having received one such form from the Government. Eleven per cent reported receiving foodstuffs, and 3 per cent mentioned personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks and sanitizer, while less than 1 per cent reported receiving personal hygiene supplies (menstrual pads, diapers, etc.).

Less than 2 per cent of respondents mentioned assistance from non-governmental organizations or civil society groups.

²⁰ Predicted probabilities are calculated using a binary logistic regression model with survey settings.





DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed huge inequalities that exist between women and men in terms of unpaid housework. This section summarizes the findings on how domestic work is divided between women and men and unveils factors associated with the existing disparities.



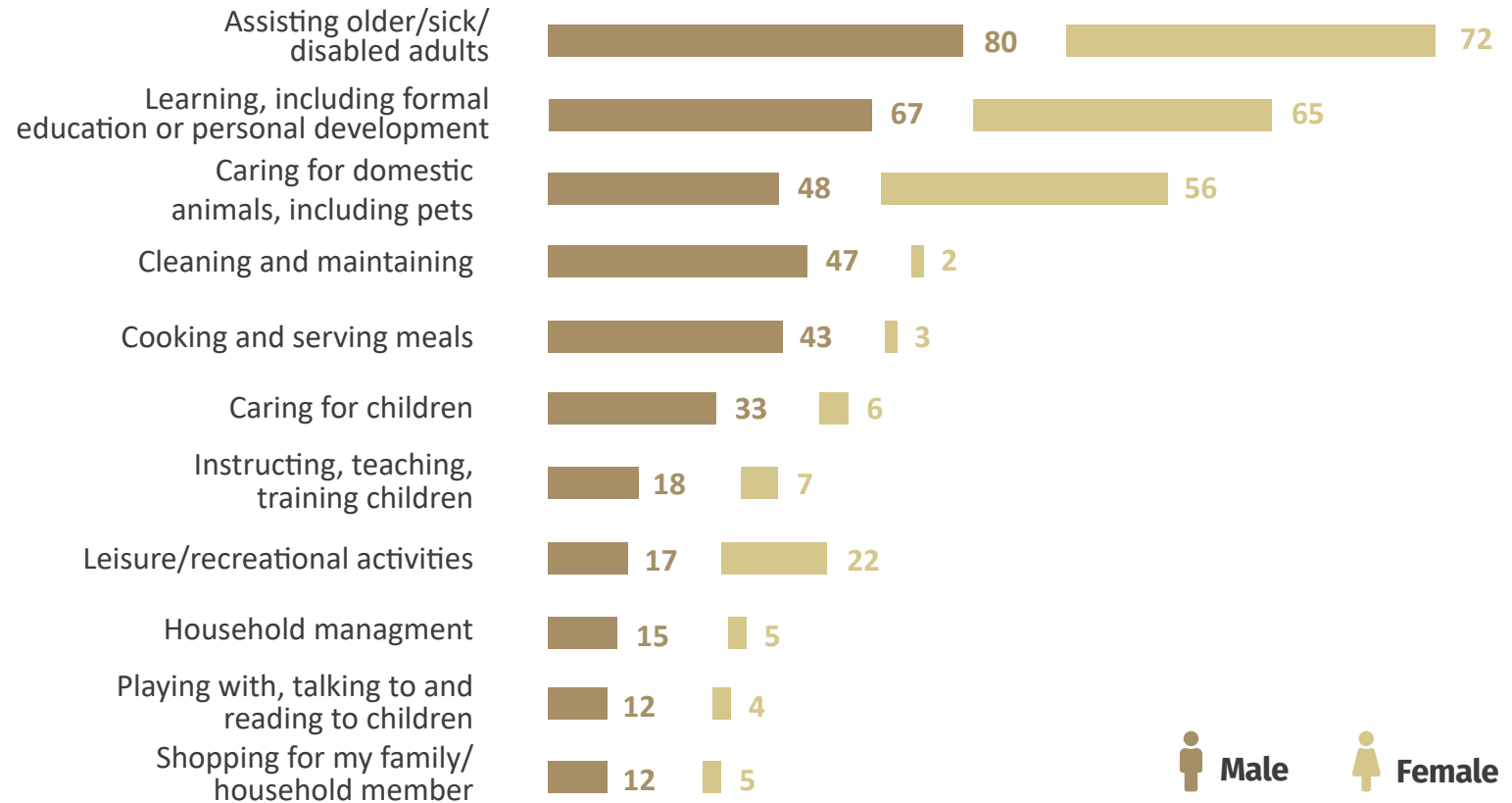
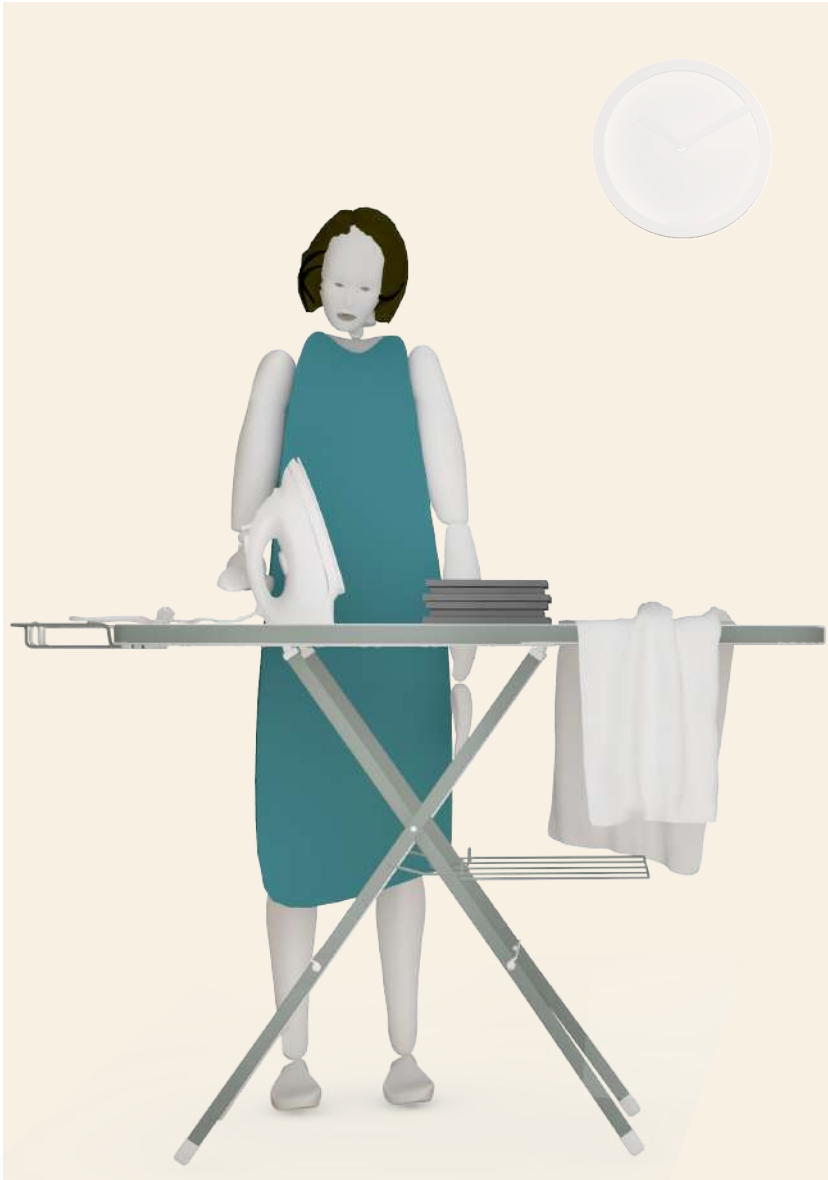


Figure 11

Has your time dedicated to the following activities changed as compared to before the spread of the coronavirus? (Percentage of those who said that they never do this task)



Women are more involved than men in almost every domestic chore, the sole exception being caring for domestic animals. Forty-seven per cent of men are never involved in cleaning; 43 per cent said they never cook, while one third are never involved in childcare. On the contrary, only a few women report not doing domestic chores. Two per cent of women said that they never clean, while 3 per cent reported not cooking. As for other tasks where there are less stark gender differences, men are still less involved. Fewer women report that they are not involved in unpaid care work. For instance, 72 per cent of female respondents reported never needing to care for older or sick household members, compared to 80 per cent of men. Twelve per cent of men say that they never shop for others, while only 5 per cent of women report not doing this task.

Childcare appears to be women's burden primarily. Only 6 per cent of female respondents in households with children said they never took care of the children. At the same time, one third of men in similar conditions reported that they never engage in childcare. Eighteen per cent of men said that they never instruct or teach children, compared to only 7 per cent of women who do not do this task. Four per cent of women never play with the children, while 12 per cent of men report never playing with the kids living in their households.

Fewer men (17 per cent) report that they do not engage in leisure activities, compared to almost one fifth of women (22 per cent).

Sharing the responsibility of domestic work

Respondents were asked which members of the household spent the most time on specific chores (figure 12). Women reported that they were solely responsible for the majority of household tasks such as unpaid care and domestic work. Sixty-nine per cent of women reported being responsible for cleaning; 54 per cent of women with children were the household members who played with the children; 64% reported being responsible for childcare; and 44 per cent were responsible for household management. In contrast, fewer men reported being responsible for cleaning (12 per cent), playing with the children (4 per cent), childcare (5 per cent) or household management (35 per cent).

The responsibilities of shopping, caring for domestic animals, teaching children and cooking were shared by all household members. Forty per cent of women and 53 per cent of men reported that shopping tasks were shared equally in the household. Fifty per cent of men and 30 per cent of women mentioned that all household members were equally involved in instructing the children. Twenty-one per cent of women and 11 per cent of men said that all household members contribute equally to cooking.

Respondents were asked whether they are getting more help from their partners or other household members. About 38 per cent of Georgians said that they are receiving more help from them. Importantly, more men (43 per cent) than women (34 per cent) report that their partners lend a hand when dealing with household chores. Although fewer women say that they receive help from partners than did so in the May 2020 survey (39 per cent), the shift can still be attributed to survey error.

An almost equal proportion of women (46 per cent) and men (45 per cent) report that they receive help from other household members. Fewer men (7 per cent) and women (11 per cent) live alone, without any outside assistance.

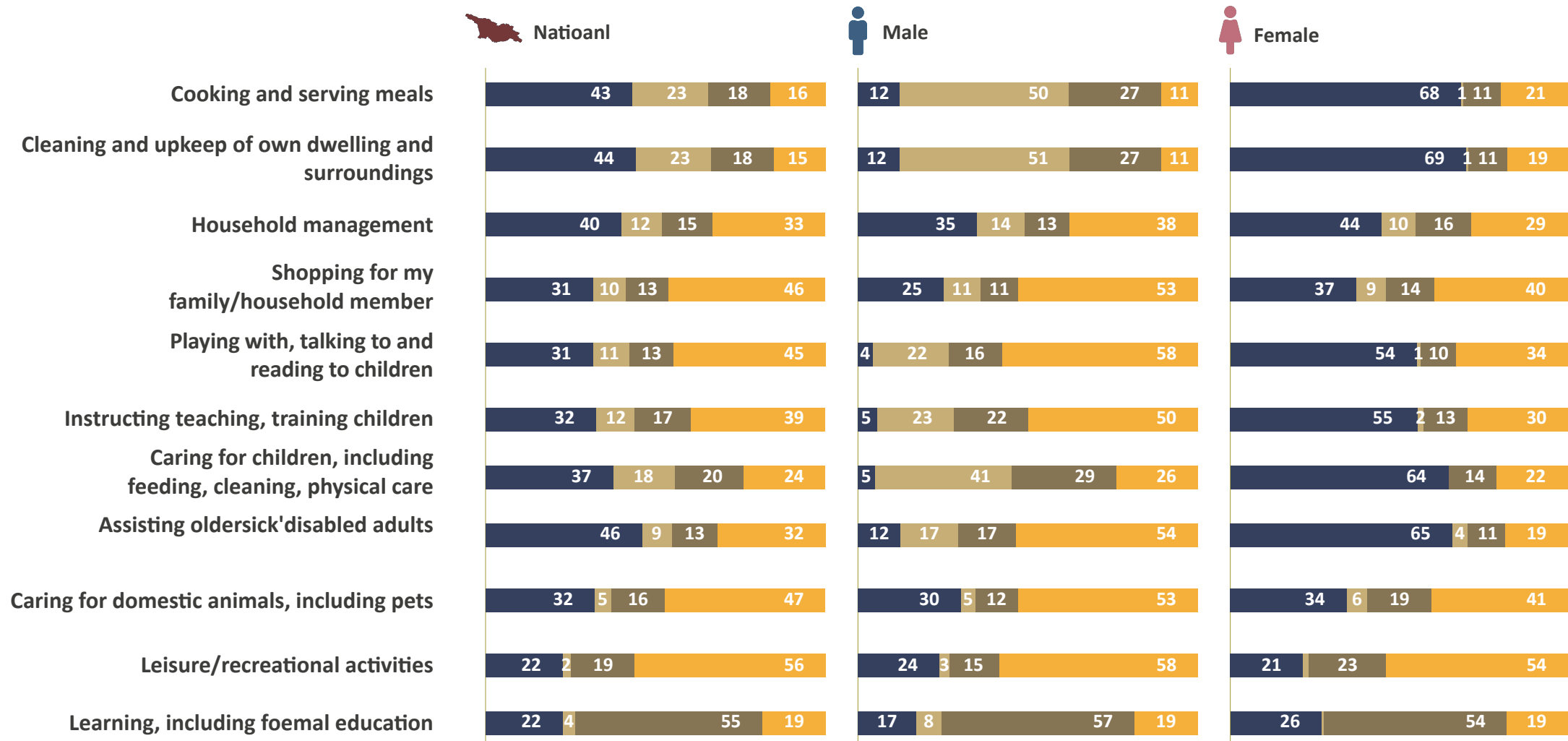


Figure 12:

Thinking about the last few months, relative to other household members, who spent the most time on the following? (Percentage)
 Note: Included here are only those respondents who indicated that someone in the household is involved in the named activity.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on time dedicated to household chores

In the October 2020 wave of the RGA, respondents were asked to compare time dedicated to household activities before the COVID-19 pandemic (figure 13). Notably, the analysis below excludes those respondents who said that they usually do not do these tasks.

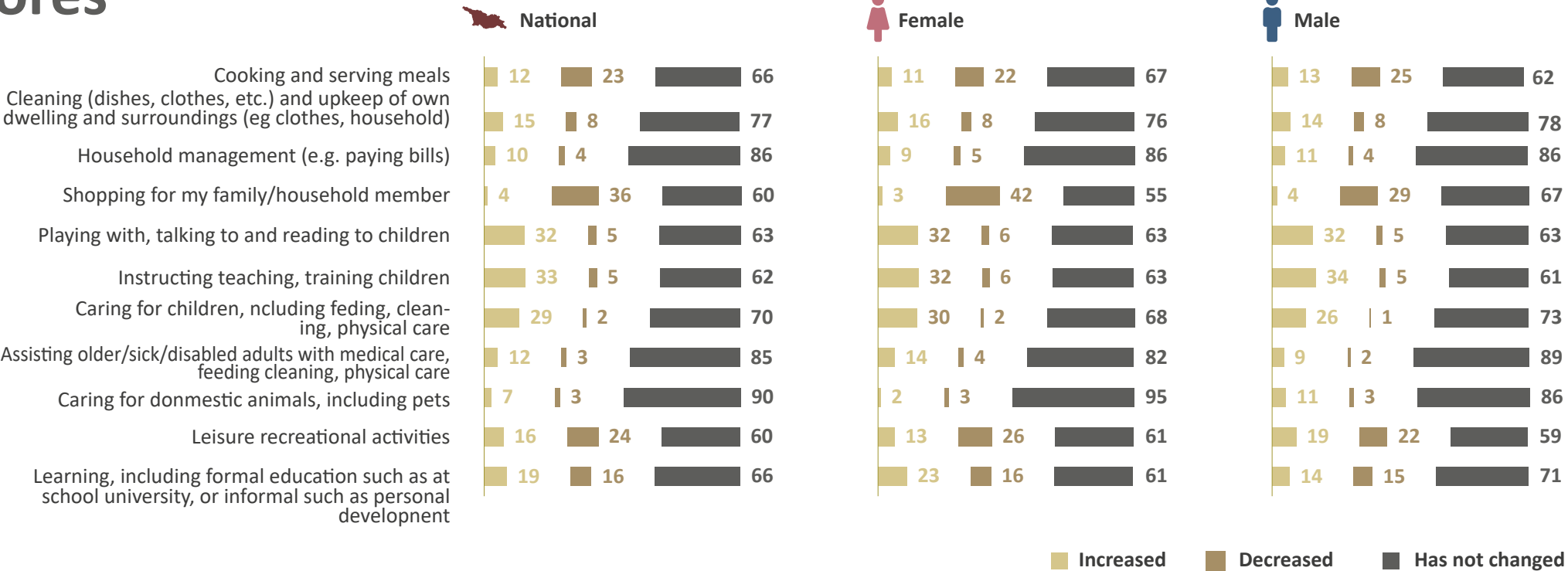


Figure 13

As a result of COVID-19, has your time dedicated to the following activities changed? (Percentage)

Overall, those women and men involved in household chores report that they are spending more time than they would normally do in pre-pandemic situations. Importantly, those women and men who already share housework report spending almost equal time on it. When compared to the situation in May 2020, fewer respondents report increased time on household tasks.

Respondents spend increased time on childcare. The equal proportion of women and men (32 per cent) involved in childcare reports spending more time playing with, talking to and reading to the children. Nationally, twenty-nine per cent of those involved in childcare report spending more time feeding, cleaning and physically caring for the children. Twenty-six per cent of men and 30 per cent of women report the same. Two thirds of women and men report spending more time instructing and teaching the children.

Compared to the previous wave of the RGA, fewer respondents report increased time spent on childcare. Those who said that they spend more time playing with their children declined by roughly 30 percentage points. Thirty per cent fewer Georgians, both women and

men, spend time instructing their children.

A similar share of women and men involved in household chores say that their time is dedicated to cooking, cleaning, shopping and household management. Nationally, 12 per cent report increased time on cooking, while 13 per cent of men and 11 per cent of women report the same. Fifteen per cent of Georgians, including 16 per cent of women and 15 per cent of men, report increased time cleaning homes and household items. Roughly one tenth of women and men spend more time on household management, while around 3 per cent to 4 per cent of women and men report increased shopping time. As for childcare, fewer respondents report increased time dedicated to these activities relative to what was found in the May 2020 RGA.

Fewer Georgians (12 per cent) report increased time on assisting sick or disabled household members. Nine per cent of men and 14 per cent of women reported the same. A considerable proportion of men report increased time spent on animal care (11 per cent) than women (2 per cent).

More women (23 per cent) than men (14 per cent) report increased time on learning, while men spend relatively more time on leisure activities (19 per cent) compared to women (13 per cent). Interestingly, compared to the previous wave of the study, fewer women and men report spending more time on these activities.

A cumulative index of household burden was constructed to measure which groups were most likely to see increased time on household chores. The index would count the number of tasks that the respondents mentioned spending more time doing relative to pre-pandemic situations. The index takes values from 0 (no increased burden) and 10 (increased load on all potential chores).

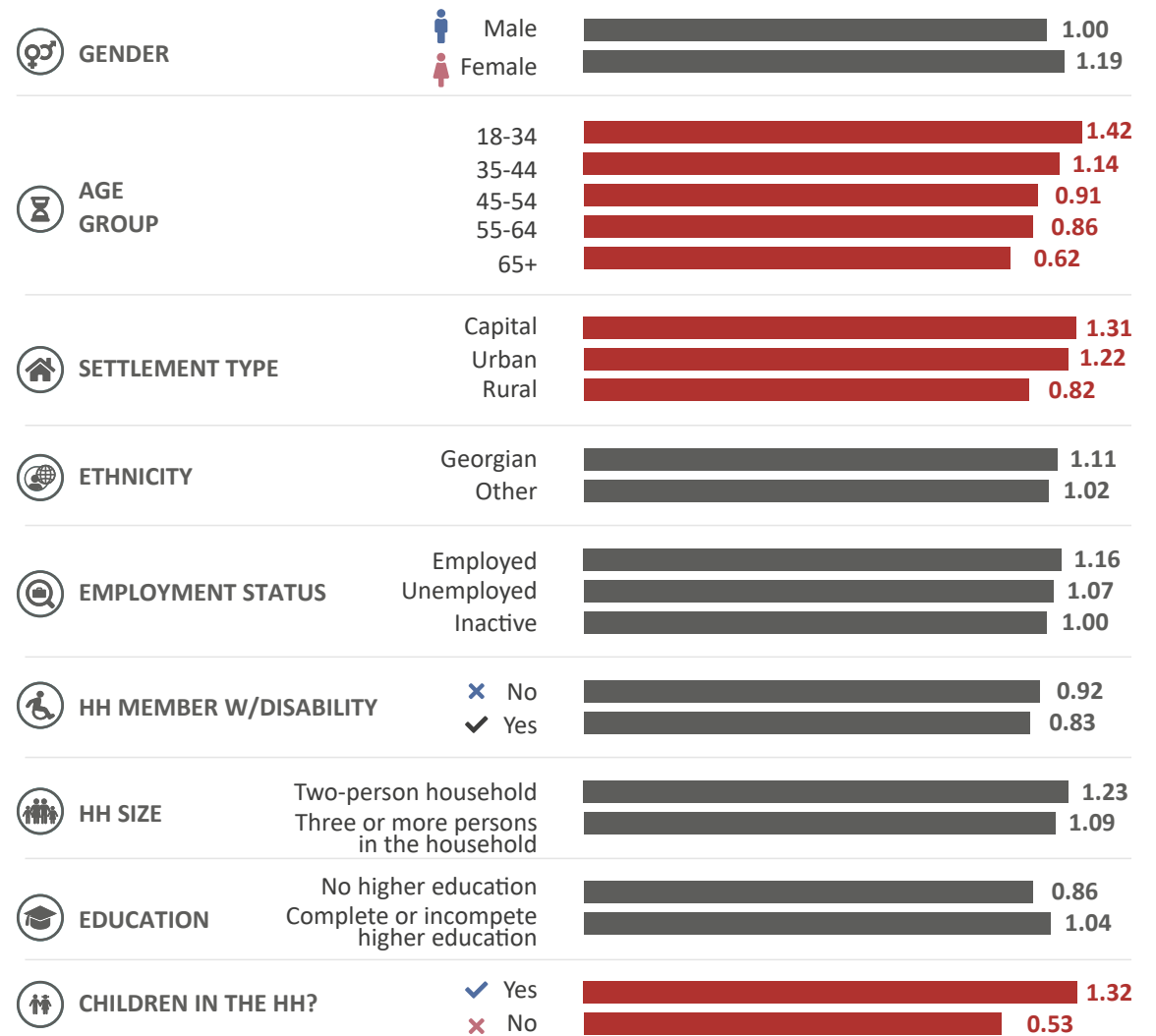
Overall, 62 per cent of Georgians report that they spend a similar amount of time on household tasks compared to before the pandemic. Compared to the May 2020 wave, the proportion of those who reported spending increased, dedicated time on at least one task has halved.

Younger respondents, those residing in urban settlements and in Tbilisi, and respondents in households with children were more likely to report increased time on household tasks (figure 14). Respondents aged 18-34 reported increased time on 1.42 tasks, while older age groups reported a significantly lower number. Respondents in Tbilisi (1.31 tasks) and other urban localities (1.22 tasks) reported a larger number of tasks than those residing in villages (0.82 tasks). On average, respondents with children reported increased time on 1.32 tasks, while those without children reported an increase by 0.53 tasks.

Figure 14

Increase in household burden index

Note: Red bars indicate statistically significant differences.



Changes to the structure of unpaid domestic work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

A separate set of analyses was conducted to identify which population suffers disproportionately from unpaid domestic work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities such as cooking, cleaning, household management, shopping for household members and caring for domestic animals were considered unpaid care work. An index was constructed that measured how many domestic work items on which a respondent reported spending increased time.

Overall, about 20 per cent of Georgians reported spending increased time on domestic work. Compared to the previous wave, this is an almost 20-point decrease in the share of Georgians who were spending more time on unpaid domestic work. Georgians were spending time on 0.38 tasks, which was less than half of that in May 2020 (0.86 tasks)²¹.

Women and men reported a similar increase in the number of domestic work items. On average, female respondents spent more time on 0.43 tasks while men were doing the same for 0.33 tasks. This was a substantial change compared to May, when women reported spending time on 1.11 more tasks than before the pandemic while men spent more time on 0.59 tasks.

Younger respondents aged 18-34 reported an increase in 0.5 tasks. The number of tasks was significantly lower in older age groups.

²¹ Here and below, the analysis uses poisson regression models controlling for respondents' demographic characteristics. To maintain comparability between the two waves, the option "collecting firewood" was excluded from the analysis of the May 2020 wave data.

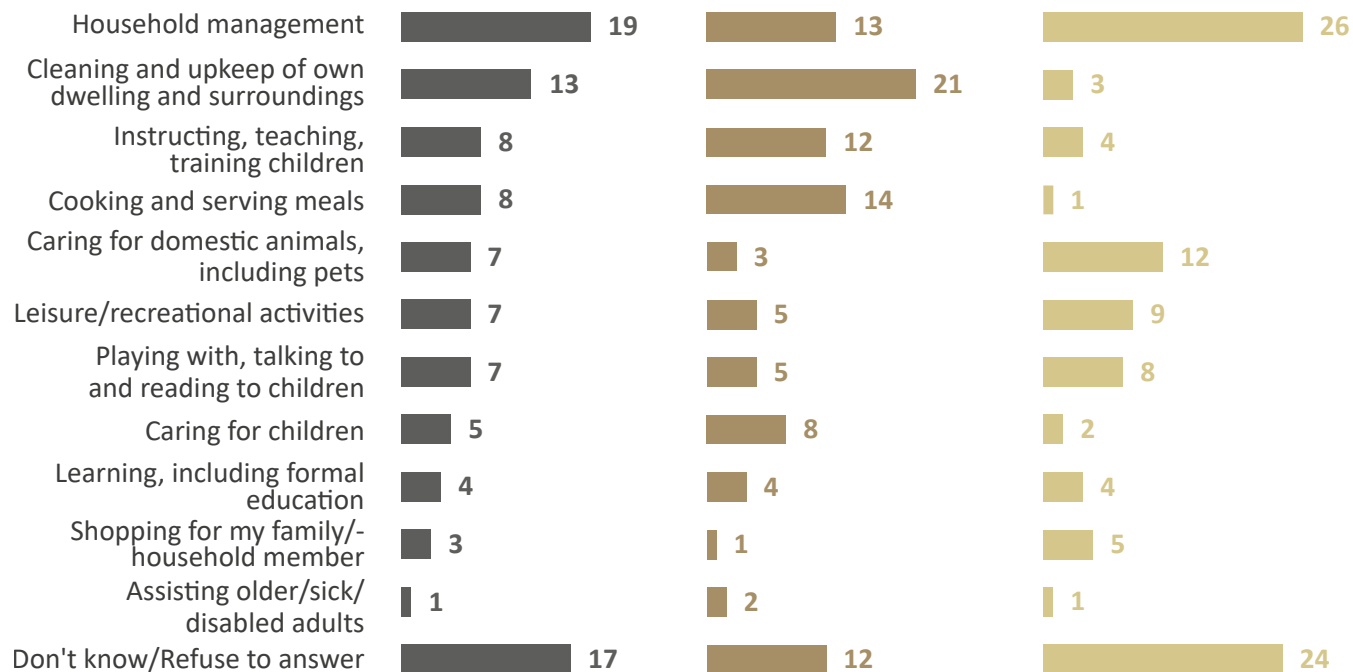
Changes to the structure of unpaid care work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

Similar to domestic work, unpaid care work²² seems to be increased similarly for both women and men. On average, 20 per cent of Georgians report that the number of care tasks has increased compared to pre-pandemic times. This is a 40-percentage-point decrease compared to May's situation, when about 60 per cent of respondents reported an increase in at least one item of unpaid care work.

The number of unpaid care tasks has increased equally for women and men. On average, women report spending time on 0.58 tasks while men do the same for 0.45 tasks. Notably, this is a significant change compared to May, when women mentioned 0.87 extra items of unpaid work and men reported the same for about one additional task. Ethnicity, household size and children's presence were significant predictors of the increased burden of unpaid care work. On average, ethnic Georgians reported an increase of 0.54 items compared to 0.28 items for minorities. Households with two or more members reported a rise in 1.21 tasks.

Seemingly, the increase in unpaid care work is mainly driven by childcare. Respondents who did not have children saw an increase in a mere 0.02 tasks, while those living with children reported a rise in spending time on 0.82 more tasks than before the global outbreak of COVID-19.

²² This includes playing with, talking and reading to, instructing, teaching, training and caring for children; and assisting older and sick household members.



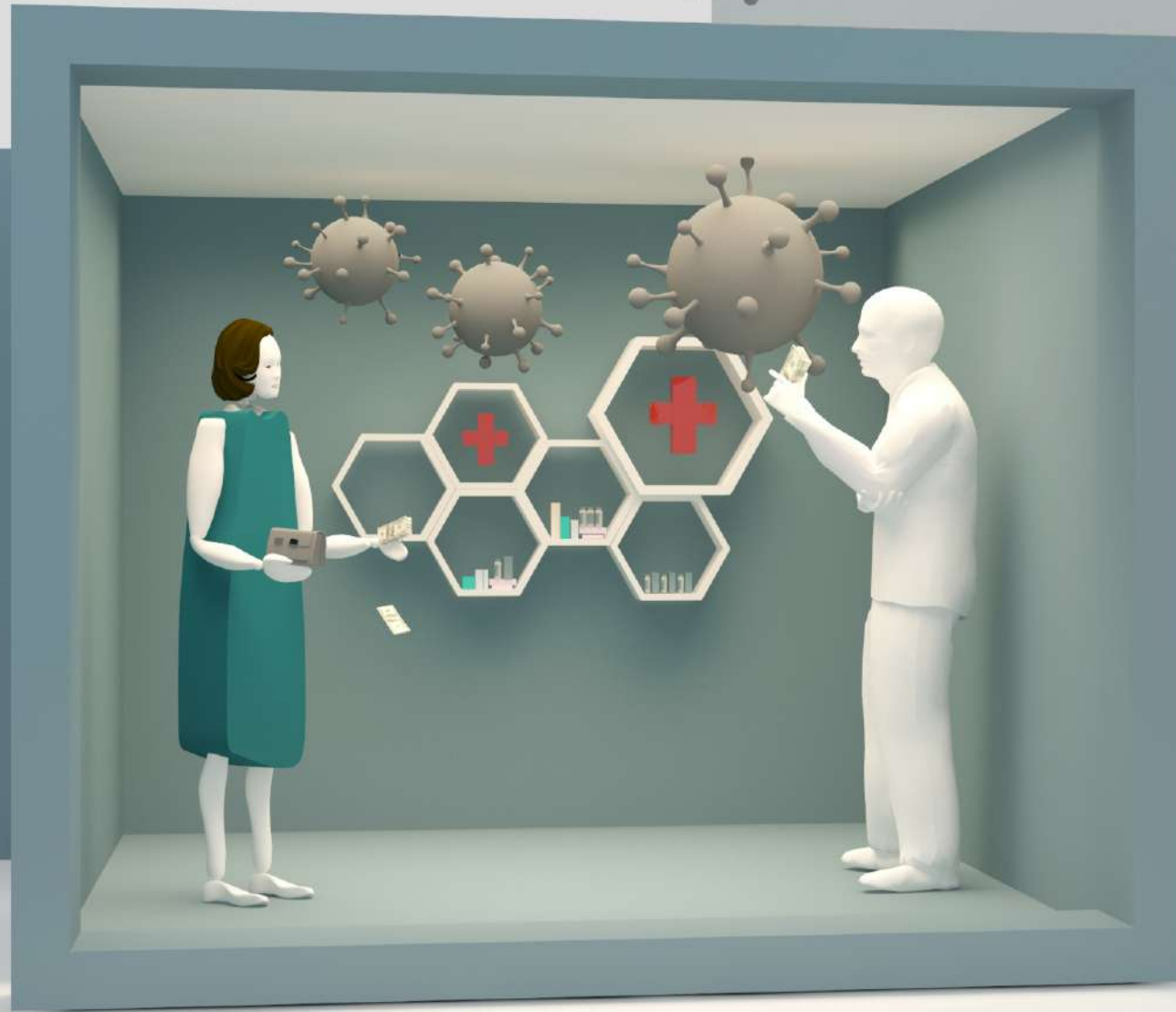
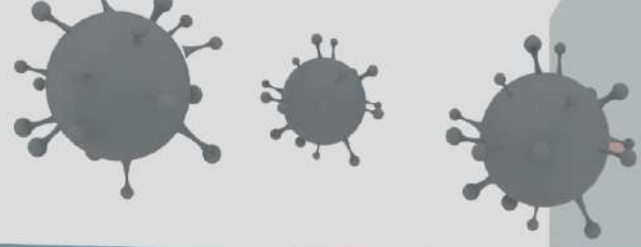
Respondents were also asked about the most time-consuming tasks. About 19 per cent of Georgians mentioned household management (figure 15), followed by cleaning and upkeep (13 per cent) and various childcare activities.

Notably, more women than men reported domestic work and childcare as their most time-consuming activities. More women (21 per cent) than men (3 per cent) named cleaning the most time-consuming activity. Fewer men (4 per cent) than women (12 per cent) considered instructing their children as the most time-consuming task. Notably, about a quarter of men could not name any time-consuming tasks.

■ Nationwide ■ Female ■ male

Figure 15

Since the spread of the coronavirus, on which activity do you spend the most time? (Percentage)



HEALTH AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

This section describes how the COVID-19 pandemic affected Georgians' health and their access to essential services. First, psychological and physical effects of the pandemic are explored. Next, access to essential items and services are summarized.



HEALTH

Health and access to
services

Psychological and physical effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

Almost half of Georgians (49 per cent) report that their psychological, emotional or mental state was affected as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. More women (57 per cent) than men (40 per cent) report that they were affected psychologically by the pandemic.

A binary logistic regression was constructed to understand which groups report being affected the most (figure 16). Significantly, except for gender and the presence of PwD in households, none of the other variables predicted whether a respondent would report deteriorated mental health. Respondents living with disabled household members had a significantly higher probability (63 per cent) of experiencing

stress and anxiety than those in households with no disabled members (49 per cent). Those respondents who had children were asked whether they experienced mental health issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic. About 19 per cent of respondents with children answered affirmatively. Eighty-one per cent said no, while fewer than 1 per cent did not know. More women (22 per cent) than men (15 per cent) reported such issues. Parents in Tbilisi were more likely to say that their children were affected mentally or emotionally (26 per cent) than residents of other urban localities (17 per cent) or rural areas (15 per cent).

Compared to the previous wave of the RGA, minor shifts could be attributed to survey error. Nationally, the proportion of those reporting effects on mental health has increased by 4 percentage points. The share of men reporting deteriorated mental health remained similar, while a 6-percentage-point increase in women said the same in October 2020.

The survey also asked respondents whether they or their household members experienced illness due to COVID-19. Notably, this question measures whether respondents believed that they became ill due to the pandemic, while it does not ask whether a respondent has knowingly experienced the virus. Overall, 13 per cent of Georgians believed that their household members got sick due to the pandemic, about a nine-point increase from May 2020²³. There have been no differences across population groups.

In the October 2020 survey, fewer than 3 per cent of Georgians reported having moved to other places within the country. Only 1 per cent reported that they have returned from abroad as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

23 In the May 2020 wave of the RGA, the survey asked separate questions about personal and household members' experience of illness. Thus, a compound variable was used for comparison.

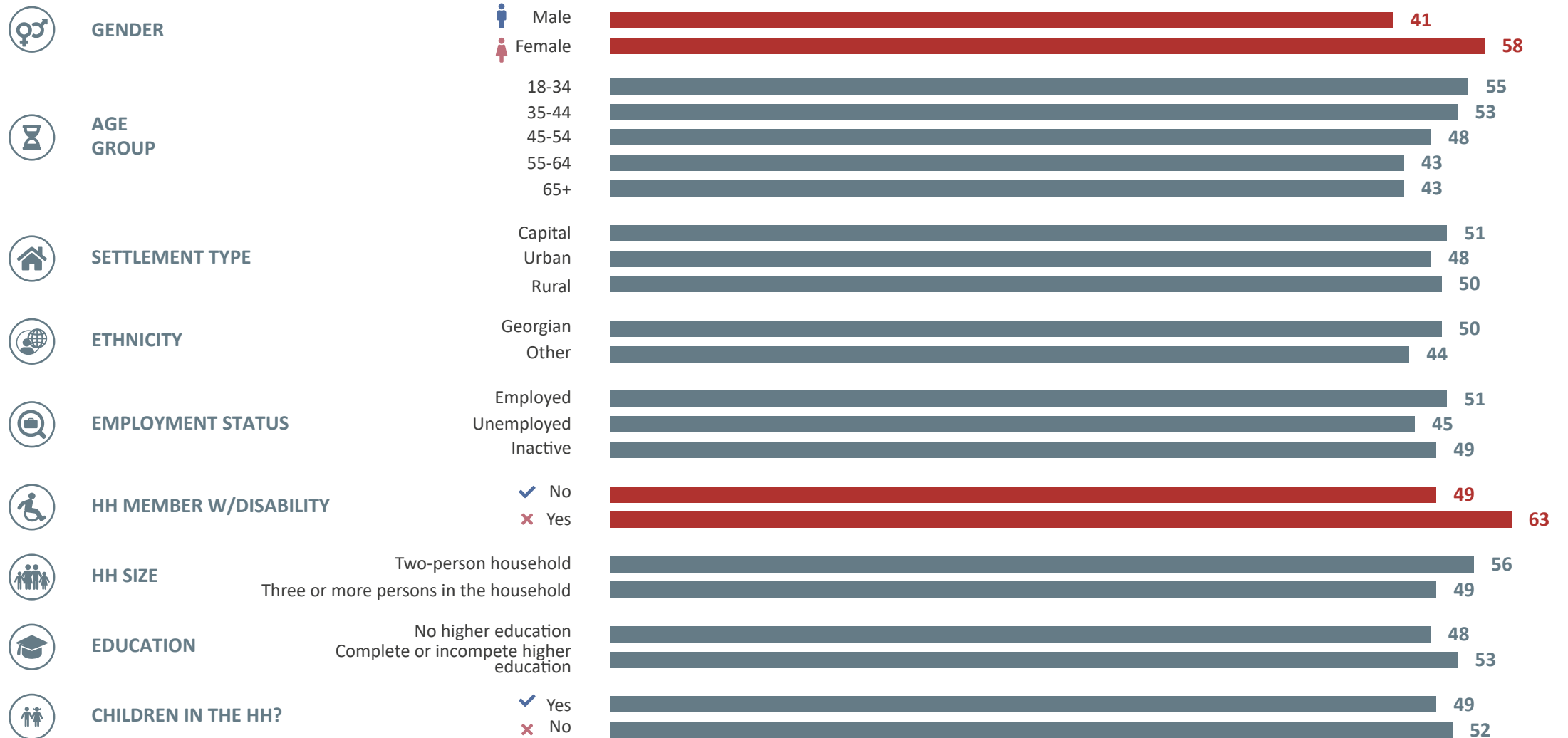


Figure 16

Predicted probability of one's psychological/mental/emotional health being affected (Percentage)

Note: Red bars denote statistically significant differences.



Essential services

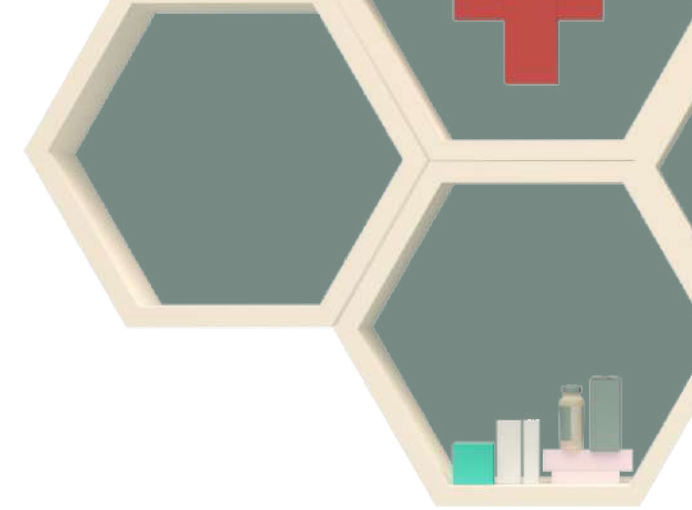
Respondents were asked whether they have experienced difficulties with accessing essential items and services such as water, food, medical and social services, hygiene and sanitary products, and education. Compared to the May 2020 survey, on average, more people reported that they had experienced no problems with accessing essential services. Almost no one mentioned disruptions in the water supply (94 per cent). The proportion of those who have experienced some significant difficulties with accessing foodstuffs has declined from 40 per cent in May to 19 per cent. Fewer people (12 per cent) relative to May (24 per cent) report that they had problems accessing hygiene products. Seemingly the situation has improved concerning access to personal protective equipment: while almost 50 per cent of Georgians reported some or significant difficulties with obtaining such supplies in May, 23 per cent reported the same in October. Forty-one per cent of Georgians reported that they needed health services for themselves or their family members. In the spring of 2020, less than a third of the country's population reported that they

needed some medical assistance. The proportion of those who found it difficult to obtain medical help has declined. In October, 30 per cent said that they experienced difficulties, a 10-point decrease since May 2020.

Twelve per cent of Georgians received social services or assistance without any obstacles. Only 5 per cent reported disruptions in accessing these services.

Respondents were also asked whether they have experienced difficulties accessing educational resources for themselves or their household members. Forty-two per cent of Georgians reported that they needed such services. While three quarters of these groups reported no problems accessing education services, 24 per cent of those who needed such services reported some or significant disruptions when trying to access such services.

There were some gender differences when it came to accessing various essential services. More women (25 per cent) than men (20 per cent) reported that they had experienced difficulties accessing personal protective equipment. In addition, more women (45 per cent) than men (36 per cent) needed health services, and one third of women who required such services experienced difficulty with access. Only 26 per cent of men in a similar position reported a disruption.



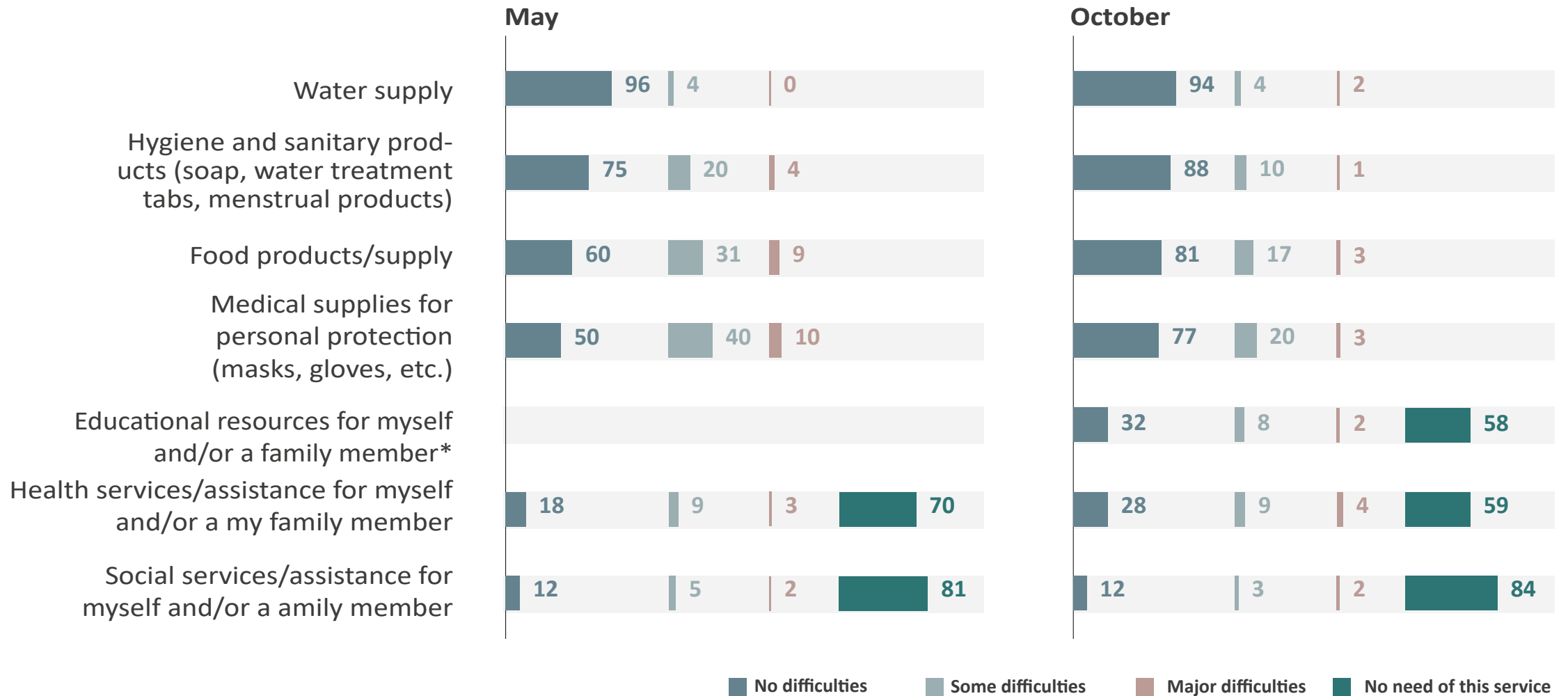


Figure 17

As a result of COVID-19, have you personally experienced difficulties with accessing essential services? (Percentage; first and second waves of the RGA)

* Option "Educational resources for myself and/or a family member" was not present in May 2020 wave.

An additive index was constructed to check which population groups reported having difficulties with accessing essential services. The option “major difficulties” was coded as 2, “some difficulties” was coded as 1, and “no difficulties” and “no need of this service” were coded as 0. The index ranges from 0 (no obstacles) to 9 (highest degree of difficulty with accessing services).

Overall, 59 per cent of Georgians reported no problems with accessing essential services. This is a 24-point increase since May 2020, when only 38 per cent said they experienced no obstacles. Nonetheless, women and unemployed respondents were more likely to experience disruptions in accessing essential services. The predicted score for women amounted to 1.19, while the score for men was equal to 0.88. Unemployed respondents experienced more problems than Georgians with jobs or those who are economically inactive. An unemployed respondent was predicted to score 1.38, employed respondents scored a total of 0.9, and inactive respondents had a score of 1.15 on the service access index.





SAFETY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION

As more people have been confined to their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has exposed vulnerable people, especially women, to increased threats of domestic violence and discrimination. This section tracks Georgians' perceptions regarding the increase of discrimination²⁴ and violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

²⁴ Brad Boserup, Mark McKenney, and Adel Elkbuli, 'Alarming Trends in US Domestic Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic', *The American Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 2020; Caroline Bradbury-Jones and Louise Isham, 'The Pandemic Paradox: The Consequences of COVID-19 on Domestic Violence', *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 2020.



EXPERIENCE

Safety and the experience of
discrimination

Discrimination

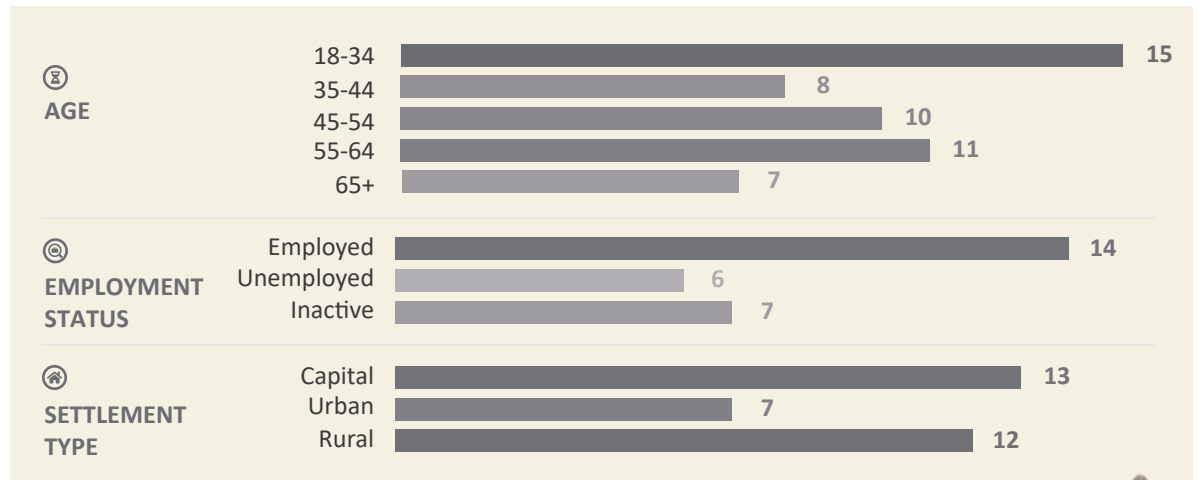


Figure 18

Have you felt an increase in any form of discrimination or prejudice in Georgia since the spread of COVID-19? (Percentage)

Respondents were probed whether they have heard of or experienced any forms of discrimination or prejudice in Georgia. About 11 per cent responded affirmatively, while the majority (86 per cent) had not felt any. Three per cent said that they do not know. Compared to the previous wave of the RGA, the absolute number increased by 2 percentage points, although this shift is well within survey error.

How did various population groups experience discrimination? While there have been fewer differences across demographic groups, residents of Tbilisi as well as younger and employed respondents were slightly more likely to have heard of or experienced discrimination (figure 18). Fifteen per cent of respondents under the age of 34 report exposure to discrimination, while the proportion is 10 per cent or less in other age cohorts. Residents of Tbilisi and rural areas were twice as likely to be exposed to discrimination than those residing in urban localities. Twice as many employed respondents said they heard of or experienced discrimination (14 per cent) than those who are unemployed or inactive (6 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively).





Domestic violence

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to loom, people are spending more time at home, confined with other family members. Thus, some are at a greater risk of domestic violence. Respondents were asked whether they have felt or heard of the increase in domestic violence since the spread of COVID-19. One fifth (20 per cent) of respondents mentioned that they have heard of it. While this is a four-point increase since the May 2020 wave of this study, differences can be attributed to estimation error.

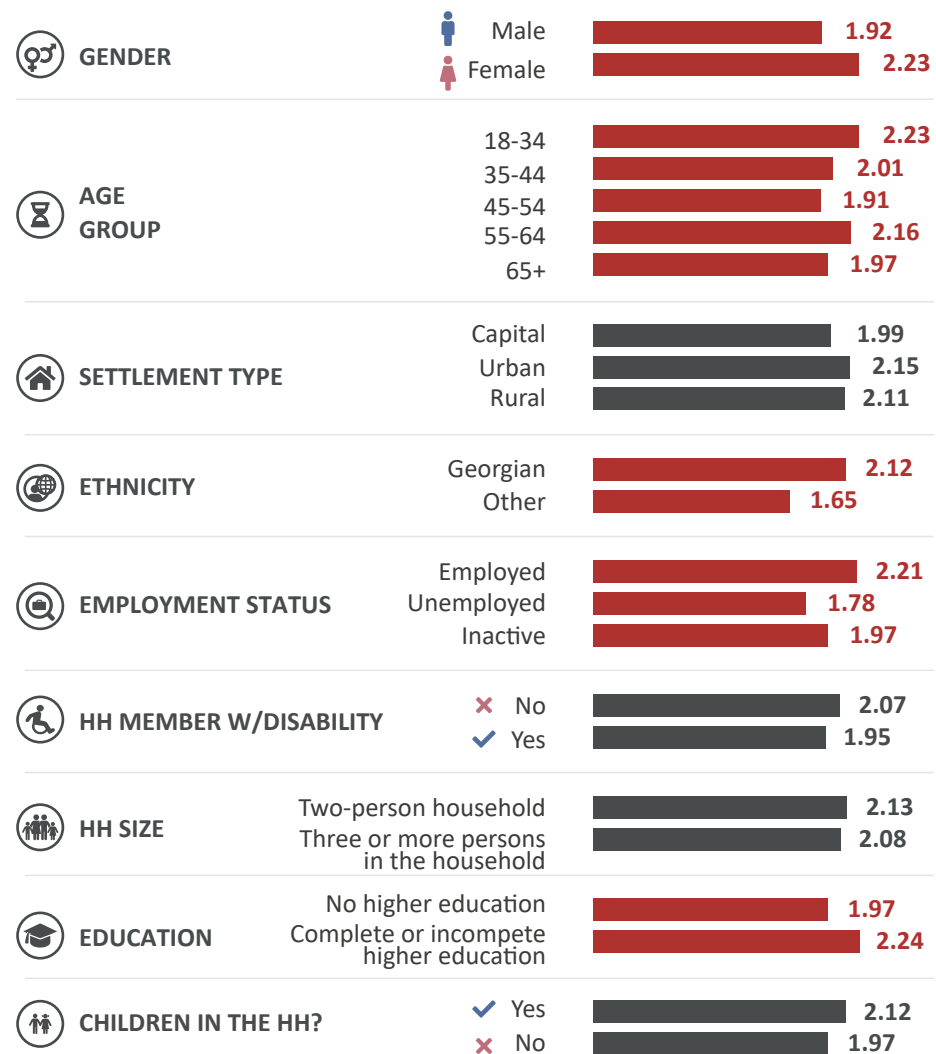
Notably, more women have felt or heard of domestic violence. Twenty-three per cent of women and 17 per cent of men reported that they have felt or heard of increase in domestic violence since the spread of COVID-19.

When it comes to other population groups, only respondents with higher education were more likely to have heard about an increase in domestic violence. Twenty-eight per cent of those with higher education degrees responded affirmatively to the question. Only 16 per cent of respondents with secondary and vocational education reported that they had felt or heard of domestic violence.

Awareness of relief services for the victims of domestic violence

Are Georgians aware of services that are offered to the victims of domestic violence? Respondents were asked whether they know how to access the police, psychological support, the hotline or shelters if they experienced or witnessed domestic violence. The majority (88 per cent) is aware of police services, while 57 per cent of respondents know how to access hotline services. Fewer Georgians are aware of psychological support services (38 per cent) and crisis centres (30 per cent). Importantly, no notable shifts have occurred relative to the previous wave of the study.

There are fewer differences between women and men regarding the knowledge of services provided to the victims of domestic violence. A slightly higher share of wom-



en is aware of psychological services (40 per cent) than men (36 per cent). Fewer men (27 per cent) than women (32 per cent) know how to access shelters and crisis centres for domestic violence victims.

A cumulative index was constructed to measure which groups are more aware of relief services. The index counts how many benefits were known to the respondent. Values range from 0 (no knowledge) to 4 (complete knowledge).

Overall, 14 per cent of Georgians scored 0 on the awareness scale and did not know about relief services, while one quarter reported complete knowledge. Men, ethnic minorities, those with no higher education, and respondents aged 45-54 were least likely to be aware of relief services. On average, women were aware of 2.23 services, while men knew how to access 1.92 services. Ethnic Georgians knew about 2.12 services, while minorities were aware of only 1.65 services. Respondents with higher education knew about 2.24 relief services, while those without higher education knew about 1.97 services.

Figure 19

Predicted scores of the awareness index

Note: Red bars denote statistically significant differences.

Online education



The COVID-19 pandemic took a massive toll on Georgia's educational system. In the spring of 2020, all schools and universities went online. As for the fall semester, schools in large cities and higher education institutions were ordered to offer distance teaching. While Internet penetration has grown, and currently, about 89 per cent of Georgians have access to either Ethernet or mobile services, the quality of the connections remains problematic.

Three quarters of Georgians live in households with schoolchildren. When asked whether they were able to access classes or learning materials online, 96 per cent said yes. Although there was a small sample size with which to analyse the groups that could not access online education, children from rural households were still least likely to access online classes.

What do Georgians perceive as challenges to online education? Respondents living in households with schoolchildren were asked what problems did pupils encounter. Thirty-one per cent of Georgians reported that children could not stay focused during online classes (figure 20), and 16 per cent named issues with the Internet connection. In addition, 11 per cent complained that teachers were not prepared for distance teaching. Others named the lack of necessary devices (9 per cent), unwillingness to use online materials (5 per cent) and unfamiliarity with technical equipment (2 per cent).

About one third of these respondents (34 per cent) mentioned that they had not encountered any problems with online teaching, while 6 per cent could not name any issues. Men were more likely to say that they do not know what problems are encountered by the children in their households during online learning.



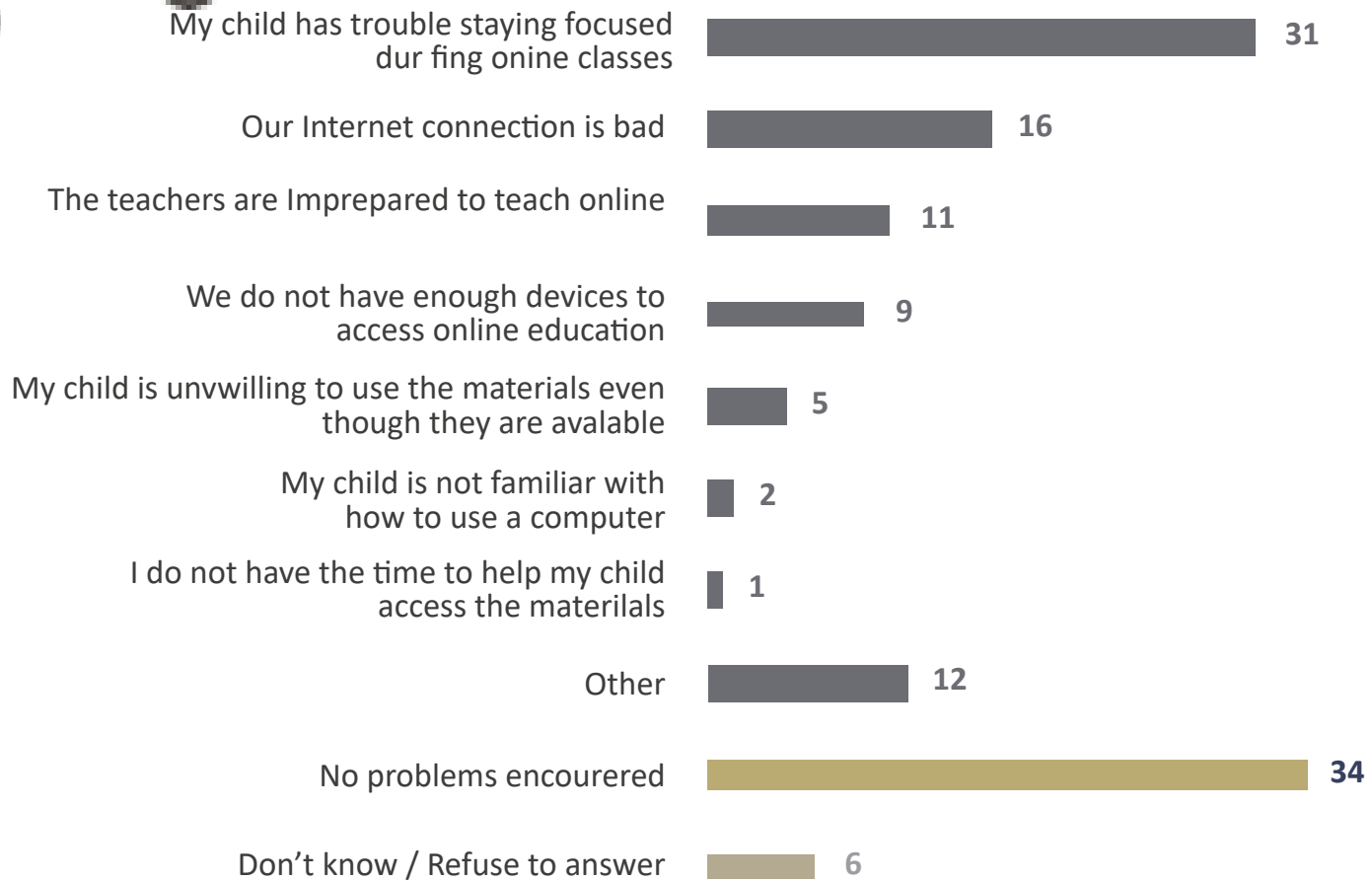


Figure 20
What have been the biggest challenges with online education for the children in your household? (Percentage)

Socialization

Respondents were asked whether they have been socializing during the past week. In the week before the fieldwork (5-11 October), about 26 per cent of Georgians visited someone else's house, while 61 per cent had spent time outside their homes. Overall, 61 per cent reported having socialized with someone else outside their homes.

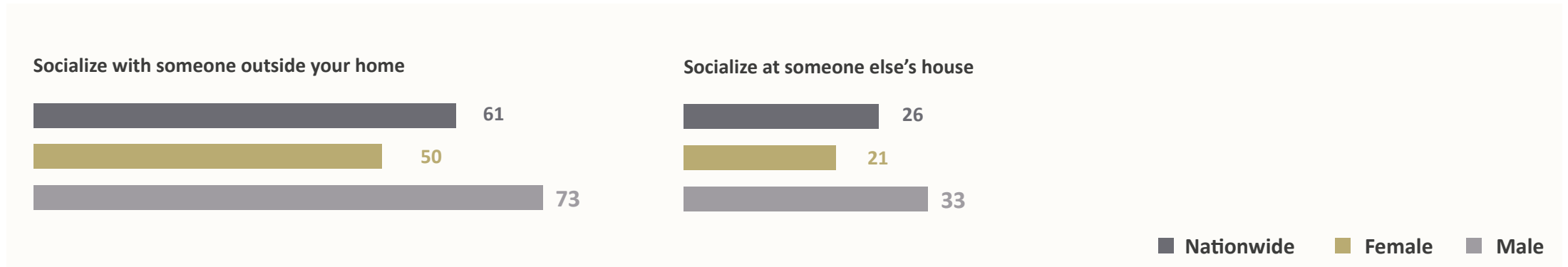
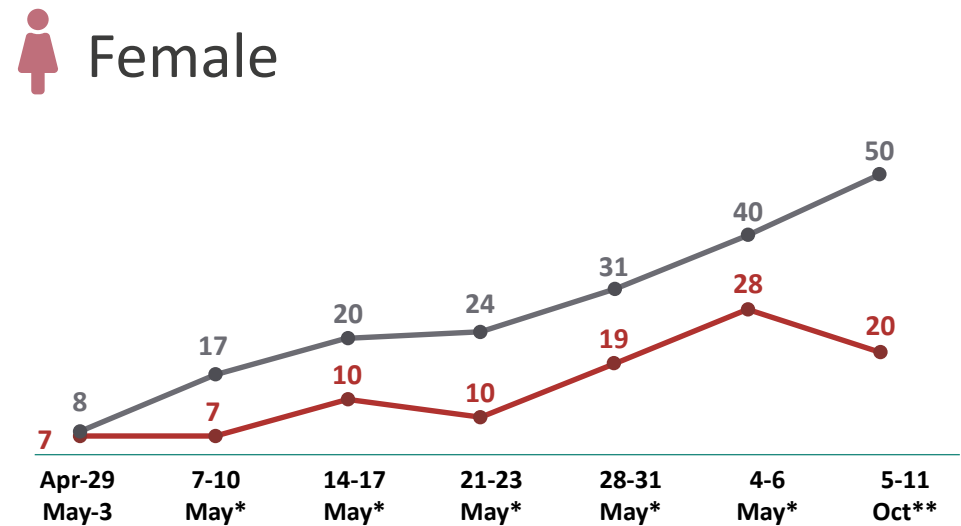
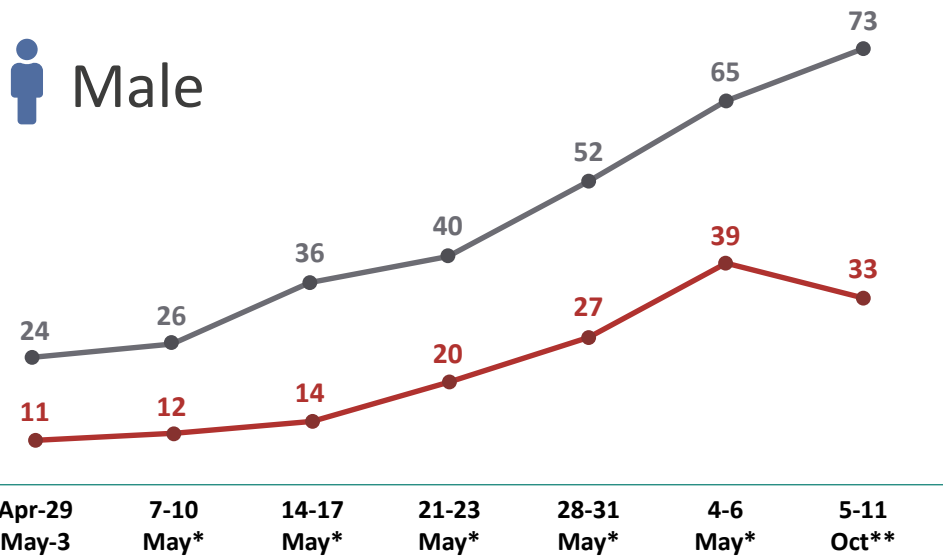


Figure 21

In the past week, did you... (Percentage)

Men were more likely to socialize than women. One third of male respondents reported that they had gone to someone else's house, while only a fifth (21 per cent) of women did so. Three quarters (73 per cent) of men socialized with others outside their homes, while half of the women did so.

To understand which groups were more likely to socialize, a binary variable was constructed that measures whether a person has spent time at someone else's house or had congregated outside of their own home. Overall, people under the age of 54, men, those with jobs, and those living in households with PwD were more likely to go outside. Nonetheless, these figures should not necessarily be interpreted as people socializing for leisure. As the majority of employed Georgians returned to their workplaces, travel outside the house was essential.



- Socialized at someone else's house
- Socialized at someone outside of his/her home

Figure 22

Proportion of those who socialized with others, by gender (Percentage)
 * Data point is from the CRRC COVID-19 Monitor.
 ** Data point is from the October wave of the RGA.

While the previous wave of the RGA did not include questions on socialization, CRRC-Georgia's COVID-19 Monitor asked whether respondents socialized with others at someone else's house or socialized with someone outside the home²⁵. The last wave of the COVID-10 Monitor was conducted in early June (figure 22). Data show that while the proportion of those who socialized with someone outside the home has increased by 9 percentage points, the share of those who spent time with others at someone else's house has decreased by seven points. Men were more likely to go out and socialize than women.

²⁵ Dustin Gilbreath and Rati Shubladze, Understanding Public Opinion on Coronavirus in Georgia (Tbilisi, CRRC-Georgia, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis above leads to a number of conclusions. When it comes to Georgians' **economic situation and livelihoods**:



- Seventeen per cent of women and men in the October 2020 survey reported that they had lost their jobs since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. Thirty-two per cent of Georgians said their working hours were reduced, although they still managed to keep their jobs. Almost half of Georgians (48 per cent) reported no change in the number of hours devoted to paid work. Notably, there has been no

difference between men and women.

- Fewer Georgians compared to May 2020 report that they have lost their jobs. This might be indicative of a slow recovery in jobs after strict lockdown measures were lifted.
- Similar to the previous wave, ethnic minorities seem to be most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They were almost three times more likely to report that they have lost their jobs than ethnic Georgians.
- Respondents who report being entrepreneurs of some sort have been affected the most. Twenty-nine per cent of those who employed others said that they lost their jobs after the outbreak. Respondents employed by companies, businesses or households as well as own-account workers were least affected.
- Women, respondents without higher education, and those residing in households with children were more likely to resort to alternative sources to compensate for their income.
- Employed Georgians are anxious about what would happen to their income if they cannot work. A plurality thinks that they will not get paid if they do not work for at least two weeks.

As for housework and domestic chores:

- Unlike the previous wave of the RGA, the burden of unpaid domestic and care work increased similarly for women and men. While women report being responsible for most housework, those sharing this burden do so equally.
- Unpaid care work significantly increased for large households as well as families with children. Childcare primarily remains the task that women do.

Similar to the findings from other contexts, stress associated with the pandemic has been detrimental to mental health and psychological well-being:

- The COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on Georgians' mental health. Almost half of Georgians (49 per cent) report that their psychological, emotional or mental state was affected as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- More women (57 per cent) than men (40 per cent) report that they were affected

psychologically by the pandemic. Respondents with children were more likely to experience stress, anxiety or deteriorated mental health. Parents in Tbilisi were more likely to say that their children were affected mentally or emotionally than residents of other localities.

Essential services have become more accessible to Georgians:

- Compared to the May 2020 survey, fewer Georgians reported that they had trouble accessing essential services such as food, medical help or social assistance.
- Women and unemployed respondents were more likely to experience disruptions.

Some Georgians have reported about increased discrimination and domestic violence since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- About 11 per cent of Georgians have heard of or experienced discrimination after the outbreak of COVID-19.
- More women (23 per cent) than men (17 per cent) reported that they have felt or heard of increased domestic violence.
- Georgians are mostly aware of domestic violence relief services, although the knowledge is significantly lower among ethnic minorities and people with no higher education.

With regard to online education:

- About 96 per cent of households who report having school-age children are able to access learning materials online. About 60 per cent of these respondents name problems encountered during study including children being unable to focus, intermittent Internet connections, teachers unprepared for online teaching and so forth.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and measures to curb the spread of the virus limited opportunities for socialization, more respondents than in previous months report seeing other people:

- In the early weeks of October, about 26 per cent of Georgians had gone to other people's homes to socialize. Sixty-one per cent report seeing other people outside their homes.
- People who were more likely to go outside included those under the age of 54, men, those with jobs and those living in households with PwD.

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