

The burden of unpaid care work on Caribbean women in the time of COVID19

SAINT LUCIA
September 29, 2021

Social and Economic Indicators

Social Indicators	Responses
Population (2019 est.)	181,889 [Central Statistics Office]
% living in poverty	25.0% [SLC-HBS, 2016]
% of female households living in poverty	42.3% [SLC-HBS, 2016]
% Elderly living in poverty	15.1 (M) 11.6 (F) [SLC-HBS, 2016]
Economic Indicators	
% of Debt to GDP	59.3% [IMF, 2019] 65.26% [World Bank, 2019]
GDP (2019)	2.12 billion USD [World Bank, 2019]
% Unemployed	20.71 [World Bank, 2019]; 44% [UNICEF, 2020]
Employment (Numbers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism ▪ Private Sector ▪ Public Sector 	20,000 pers. 44,580 pers. 9,387 pers.

Unpaid Care Work

- All unpaid services provided within a household for its members;
- Unpaid care work is both an important aspect of economic activity and an indispensable factor contributing to the well being of individuals, their families and societies (Stiglitz et al, 2007)

Direct - Care of persons

- ❖ PWDs
- ❖ Elderly
- ❖ Children

Indirect – chores, activities (cooking, gardening, cleaning etc.);

- unpaid care work – the missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

Data Source: Saint Lucia COVID-19 High Frequency Phone Survey sponsored by the World Bank Group

JOB LOSSES

Large income and job losses occurred. More than 33,000 persons in the hotel and tourism sectors were negatively impacted.

More than 70% HH reported income decline since COVID-19 outbreak.

The biggest job losses occurred in the wholesale, retail, restaurants, and hotel sector.

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

JOB RATIONALIZATION (working shift, reduced hours)

- Many employers chose to modify business activities to reduce face-to-face contact
 - work-from home arrangements permitted
 - teleconference and videoconference meetings (Zoom, Cisco Webex, Google Meet)
 - rotating shifts [staff rotations ideal from a business continuity perspective]
 - working hours reduced to half day e.g. GOSL changed office hours from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. rather than the normal 4:30 p.m.
 - Temporary Staff Layoffs and Location Closures (mainly hotels)
 - By September, most work schedules had normalized to pre-COVID conditions – *changed again in 4th wave.*

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

SCHOOL CLOSURES

- The Government of Saint Lucia ordered the closure of all educational institutions on the island from Monday, March 16, 2020, until April 13, 2020 in the first instance; subsequent closures followed
- Virtual learning commenced on April 20, 2020 for the third academic term for 2019/2020 school year — with students remaining at home and receiving instruction online
- Students from Grade 6 and Form 5 returned to the physical classroom on June 3 for about three weeks in preparation for the Common Entrance and Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate exams.

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

- Partial reopening of the physical school grounds from September 7, 2020 for the new academic year. Schools operate much differently with two options being utilized

- 1) Whole School Approach (used by 35 primary schools and 6 secondary schools with a small student population). Students attend school for four days per week (Monday to Thursday), with Friday serving as a planning day for teachers, and a General Sanitization Day for the school plant.

- 2) Alternate Instructional Days (used by 44 primary schools and 16 secondary schools). Students attend school on alternate days. Days at home are dedicated to doing work received from teachers virtually, activity sheets, project-based work.

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

NATIONAL PROTOCOLS (Physical Distancing, reduced social activities)

- Adoption of COVID-19 Hygiene, Sanitization and Distancing Protocols
- National State of Emergency declared (ended September 30, 2020)
- Closure of national borders,
- Curfew/lockdown
- Advised citizens to stay at home, use a mask, handwashing/hand sanitizers
- Zoning (Restricted travel within 2 main demarcated areas)
- Open clinics/testing locations for COVID-19
- Open three (3) national quarantine facilities

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

- Convert Victoria Hospital to a national Respiratory Hospital
- Closure of non-essential businesses e.g.
 - Barbers, hairdressers, law firms, appliances/electrical/hardware stores, clothing stores, hotels
- Prohibitions for mass crowd events, assemblies, meeting places e.g.
 - Closure of Cinemas, restaurants & bars, night clubs, rum shops, churches, schools
 - Prohibitions for parties, beach & river socials, picnics, camping, karaoke

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

CHILD PROTECTION AND VARIOUS ABUSES

- Despite some school closures, over 90 percent of households with children in school reported uninterrupted engagement in learning activities
- In the few households (4.5 percent) where children did not engage in any learning activity, the main reasons were lack of access to virtual classrooms, lack of take-home teaching aids and learning materials, and/or lack of knowledge on appropriate responses to school closures
- During lockdown previously working parents, unused to spending weekday time at home, had to switch from full-time work to full-time childcare

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

- Potential risk, especially in the early stages of the lockdown, of increased frustration and tensions between parents and children.
- Risk of increased violent disciplining of children (including physical and psychological aggression) and, at worst, apparent child neglect.
- These issues would be exacerbated by increasing unemployment and poverty.

COVID-19: Understanding How the Local Context has changed

FOOD INSECURITY

- Households became more food insecure post-COVID, with poor households twice as likely to run out of food compared to non-poor households
- Many households, particularly poor, suffered severe food insecurity.
- Nearly 30% of households ran out of food once or more during the 30 days prior to the survey.
- Situation more serious for poor households, with nearly 50% experiencing a time when they ran out of food.

COVID-19: What emerging needs have surfaced

- Students need access to smart devices, Wi-Fi/Internet to facilitate virtual learning.
- More flexible Social Protection System to accommodate rapid scaling up for “new” vulnerable groups. For example, single-parent heads of households temporarily laid off will not qualify as poor/indigent under SLNET v3.0; however such groups will require special consideration for income support.
- Review of the social protection system for the entire OECS region (legislative and institutional framework)

COVID-19: What emerging needs have surfaced

- The establishment of robust Data Management Systems – Social Registry
- Integrate technology into Social Protection Systems/Platforms for greater efficiency in the delivery of services.
- Greater coordination/collaboration on planning and preparedness for mitigation, response and resilience building.

Government, Private Sector, Donor and Community Support through the pandemic



Social Stabilization Plan

- NIC Economic Relief Programme
- Non NIC Contributors Income Support Programme
- Suspension of rental fees to MSMEs renting from Government; and
- Fuel Rebate to Bus Drivers

\$119.7m



Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan

- Electricity Assistance Programme;
- Expansion of Public Assistance Programme
- Provision of grants/loans to MSMEs; and
- Fast tracking Capital Investment Projects

\$548.4m

Government, Private Sector, Donor and Community Support through the pandemic

GOVERNMENT

- - Housing Support (SSDF & MoEQ)
- - National Meals Programme
- - SME Micro-Credit
- Duty Free Concessions on vehicles for front-line staff and taxi operators
- Strengthening Food Security - through an injection of \$7.2m to support farmers and fishers through provision of inputs and fuel subsidy
- Provision of psychosocial support to persons in need

Government, Private Sector, Donor and Community Support through the pandemic

- **Non-Labor Income Support [Government Social Programmes]**

Child Protection

- Increase in the Child Disability Grant from \$200 to \$300 per month for 3 months (UNICEF)
- Increase in the Foster Care Allowance from \$300 to \$400 per month for 3 months (UNICEF)
- Education Assistance Programme (St. Lucia Social Development Fund)
- Education Assistance Stimulus Programme
- 6,000 Hygiene Care Packages for households with children

Government, Private Sector, Donor and Community Support through the pandemic

DONOR COMMUNITY

- UNDP launched a \$15 million EnGenDER Project to include support for Saint Lucia
- World Food Programme & *Partners* [USD \$229, 610.74] – Support to Persons Living with HIV (increase in food voucher value from 100 to 200 per month for 6 months) as well as support to the PAP Recertification and Expansion Programme
- IMF - Rapid Credit Facility [US\$ 29.2 million]
- OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project
- India/UN Fund [USD\$ 500,000] – Support to PAP Expansion Programme
- UNICEF – 500 Care Packages for PAP Households with children; Additional packages for Foster Care Households.
- The World Bank – Human Capital Resilience Project (Social Protection Reform Project)
- UN Partners - SDG Joint Fund Programme (Social Protection Reform Project)
- CDB Exogenous Shock Response (ESR) Policy-Based Loan (PBL) [negotiating] – Social Assistance & Labour Market interventions

COVID 19 RESPONSES

Building on the existing initiative by the UNDP Joint SDG Fund – Assessment of the impact of COVID19 on Vulnerable Groups and Social Protection in Saint Lucia: *Towards a Gender Responsive and Adaptive Social Protection*

- Microsimulation and Microsimulation model
- UNDP Joint SDG Fund – UNWOMEN Gender Response Pilot Programme (25 Women from the Public Assistance Programme –PAP) – skills training, psychosocial support, day care services

COVID 19 RESPONSES

- UNICEF - Estimating the Impact of COVID-19 on Monetary and Multidimensional Poverty in St Lucia using a Microsimulation Model: October 19, 2020;
- The study aimed to provide estimates on the impact of COVID-19 on household and child monetary poverty as well as non-monetary poverty in Saint Lucia, through various channels;
- COVID-19 pandemic, apart from the health-related challenges, has serious socio-economic impact on the households.
- investigating the possible impact of cash transfers on monetary poverty. The study is accompanied by an interactive microsimulation model which can be viewed at this link:
<https://developmentanalytics.shinyapps.io/saintlucia-covid19/>

COVID 19 RESPONSES

- The modeled shocks leads to significant increases in monetary (expenditure-based) poverty rates.
- When applied all together, the labour demand, labour supply, and health expenditures shocks lead to a 6.8 percent reduction in per capita expenditures in the occurrence of a mild shock and 13.4 percent when the shock is severe, decreasing average per capita expenditures to 1092.4 ECD and 1015.5 ECD respectively from a baseline level of 1172.4 ECD.
- When all 3 shocks are considered together, the population monetary poverty increases to 29.3 percent in the occurrence of a mild shock and to 35.1 percent in the occurrence of a severe shock, from a baseline poverty rate of 25.0 percent.
- Multidimensional poverty
- The largest effect on multidimensional poverty incidence is caused by additional deprivations in job quality for employees. A severe shock (where 83.6% of workers are deprived in job quality as per the SLC-HBS definition), can rise the poverty incidence from 85.3% to 90.2%
- In a severe shock, 26.6% of people would be living in a household where at least one primary school-aged child is out of school. If they are unable to go back to school (for instance due to increased child labour and /or deteriorated income), poverty incidence can rise from 83.6% to 85.2%. This is definitive lower bound that does not take into account potential hindrances to human capital acquisition in the later stages of life.

COVID 19 RESPONSES

Summary Findings:

- Cash transfers are helpful in alleviating poverty but they need to be at a considerable level to achieve a meaningful impact:
- After a mild shock, with the highest transfer level (transfer level 3), most of the scenarios achieve a return back to the baseline poverty rate (or getting very close to it) while with lower transfer levels only Scenario 4 which targets all the households in the bottom 40% achieves getting closest to the baseline poverty rate.
- After a severe shock, none of the scenarios can achieve a return back to the baseline poverty rate. Scenario 4 – targeting all households in bottom 40% - with the highest transfer level (400 ECD per household) achieves the highest poverty reduction.
- Scenario 4 has the highest poverty reduction impact in all transfer levels. But depending on the transfer and shock level, there are other scenarios with a similar reduction in poverty and also more cost effective and less costly.
- Universal child grant scenario (Scenario 7) is the most costly scenario but has a considerable poverty reduction impact.
- Targeting households that are already receiving social assistance (Scenario 1) creates a very low poverty reduction impact due to low coverage while targeting eligible households under SL-NET 3.0 leads to better results (Scenario 1a) in terms of poverty reduction impact. After a mild shock targeting these households achieves an almost return back to the baseline poverty with a high level of transfer (400 ECD per household) however after a severe shock a higher coverage of the bottom 40% becomes necessary to achieve a similar impact. And even this higher coverage leaves the poverty rate at 26.1 percent while the baseline rate is 25.0 percent.

Care Work Within a Social Protection Context

- Measuring unpaid work – calculating the amount of time spent on unpaid work
- Calculating the opportunity costs/replacement costs;
- Measuring the labour inputs that go into unpaid work;
- The same level of income does not mean the same standard of living
- Widespread inequalities (more specifically amongst PWDs)
- Barriers – education, employment
- Labour income loss

Care Work Within a Social Protection Context

- Ensuring that persons contribution is worthwhile and recognized;
- Ensuring that the unpaid contributions are accurately and adequately represented within national surveys and budgets;
- Ensuring that within the SP framework that provision is made and services are adequately and equitably rewarded ;
- Ensuring that the support services reflect and reduce the burden of care and provide opportunities for Carers/ Cartakers.