

KINSHASA
DIGITAL



ITERATION N ° 4 OF THE SERIES OF SURVEYS ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON HOUSEHOLDS

14 October to 26 November 2020

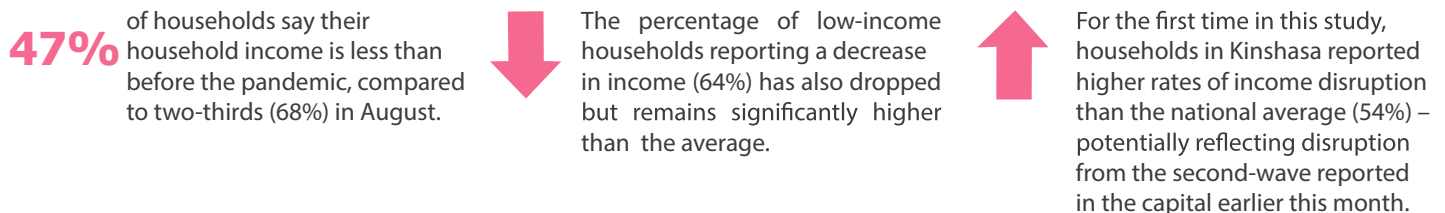
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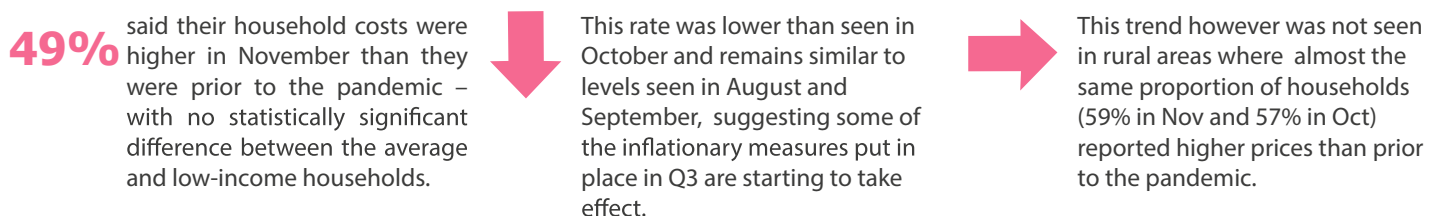
KEY FINDINGS

A fragile economic recovery is continuing however households remain extremely vulnerable to any potential new shocks such as a second wave of Covid-19 or worsening food security.

The economic outlook for many households remains difficult.



Though previously the rate of households reporting increased costs was growing on a monthly basis, in November that trend reversed, although the improvement was modest.



However this recovery remains fragile. Any second wave of Covid-19 or greater issues of food scarcity will still compound an already challenging situation.

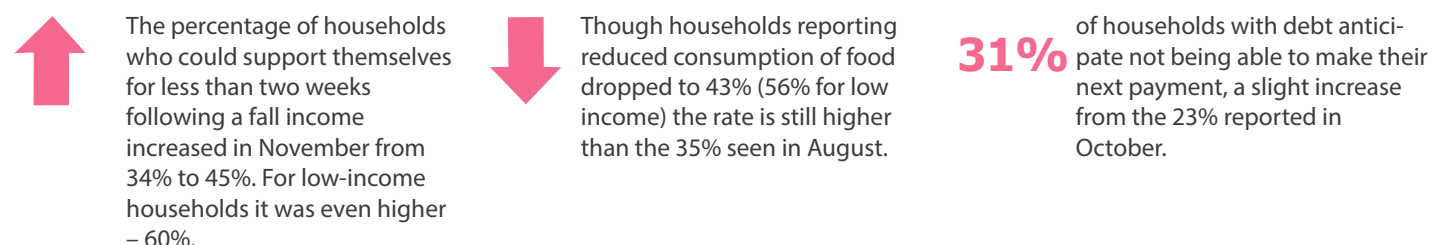


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ABOUT THE STUDY

The economic situation triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic is still creating a challenging environment for households in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Many households still need government support to minimize the negative effects of this crisis. The objective of this study is to provide analysis, developed through speaking directly to households, to support evidence-based decision-making processes throughout the crisis. Our aim is to support government policy-making and highlight the need for any additional measures that should be taken to address household needs.

The study is the result of a partnership between **Élan RDC** and **Kinshasa Digital**. The first three iterations of the survey on the impact of COVID-19 on households were well received and one more iteration is planned (for January 2021).

These surveys will provide further information on how households across the country are responding to the crisis and on the nature of the challenges they face and how they are changing. Results from each iteration of the survey are available to download

<http://covidhouseholdsurvey.opendatadrc.io/>

Complementary surveys launched by **Élan RDC** and **Fédérations des Entreprises du Congo (FEC)** focus on COVID-19 impact to businesses are also available to download

<https://rdccovidbusinesssurvey.com/english>

METHODOLOGY

This iteration of the survey was conducted on a sample of around 2,200 people between 14th of October and 26th of November 2020. They were contacted using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) method using a random approach for selecting telephone numbers. The sampling technique used was based on individuals (Sim card holders). It allows the results to be disaggregated by gender, income or other demographic variables.

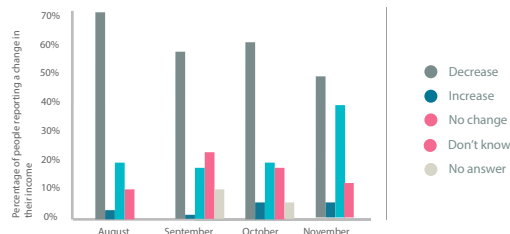


OVERVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS

Households reporting falls in income continues to steadily decline

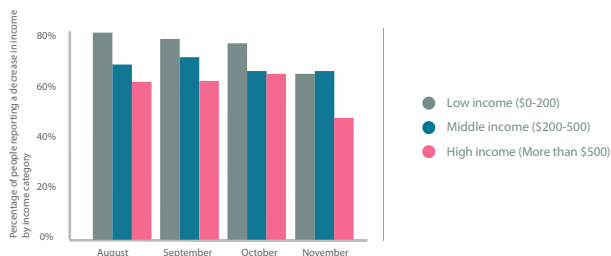
Income recovery is steady

Household income



The percentage of households reporting falls in their income (compared to before the pandemic) continues to steadily decline. In November, the number of households reporting a decline in their income compared to before the pandemic fell below half (48%). This was the lowest recorded level seen in the study period (since August). Though this fall does indicate an improvement in the economic conditions in DRC - it is clear a full recovery for incomes remains far off.

Decrease in household income by income category

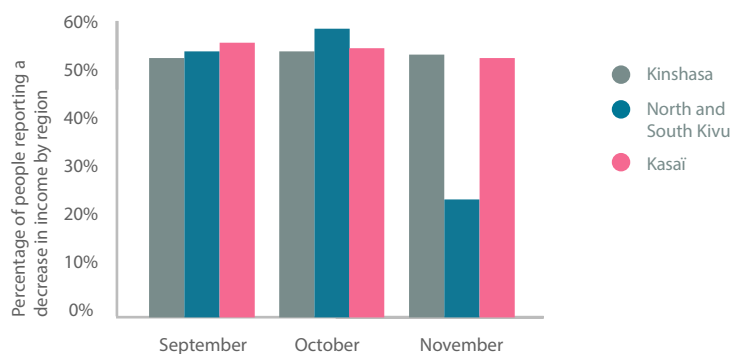


The percentage of low-income households reporting a fall in income has also decreased by 16% between August and November. However, the overall level (64%) remains higher than the average (48%). Moreover, for the first time in November, we observed a stagnation in the income recovery for middle-income households.

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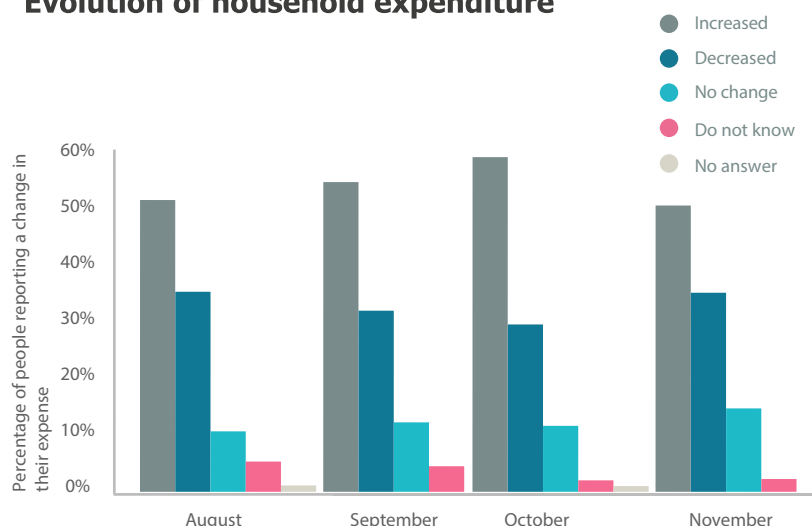
Decrease in household income by region



While the percentage of households facing a fall in incomes is going down in North and South Kivu and, though to a lesser extent, in Kasai, there were no reported improvements in Kinshasa in the last month. For the first time in this study, more households from Kinshasa reported a decrease in income compared to other regions. This disparity may reflect the early effects of a reported second-wave in the capital, released by the government in November.

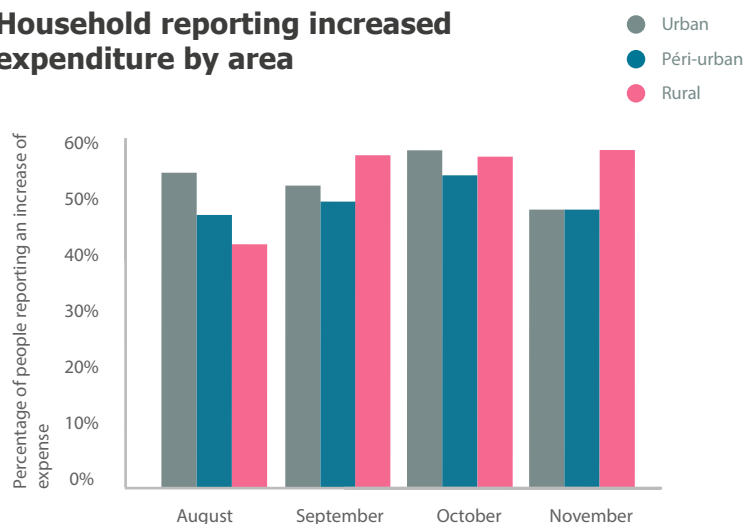
Modest reverse trend in cost increase

Evolution of household expenditure



In November, the percentage of households reporting an increase in their cost was also under 50% for the first time in this study.

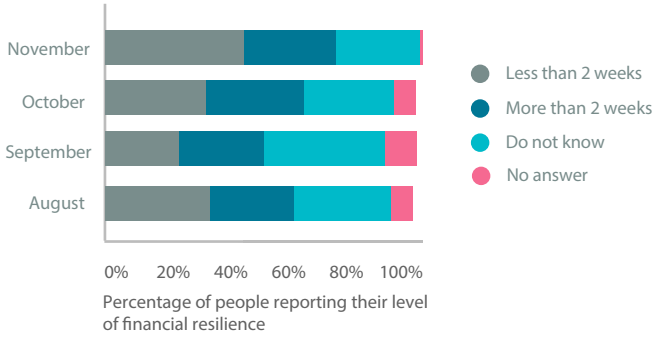
Household reporting increased expenditure by area



However this improvement was not reported in rural areas. Instead in November, 59% of people living in these areas reported higher prices than prior to the pandemic. This was the highest percentage so far seen in this study.

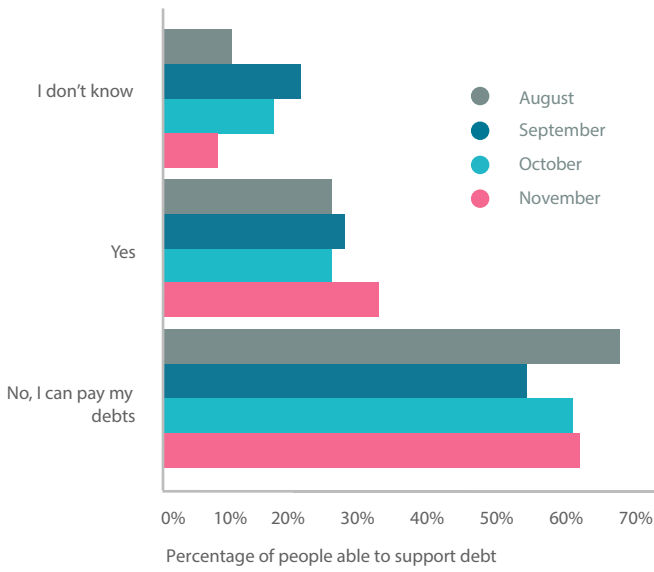
Households will face major challenges in the face of a potential second wave

Household financial resilience



The percentage of households who could support themselves for less than two weeks following a fall income increased in November from 34% to 45%. For low-income households it was even higher – 60%.

Household ability to repay debts



31% of households with debt anticipate not being able to make their next payment, a slight increase from the 23% reported in October.



FOOD SECURITY

Alongside the survey programme, the ELAN team is also collecting data on the prices of basic foodstuffs in Kinshasa, Congo-Central and Kwilu. This data highlights continuing volatility in both prices and stocks in all three markets. Such volatility is increasingly important to tackle as more people run out of their own-grown food sources in the months towards the end of the year and rely more on market purchases (<https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/southern-africa-food-security-outlook-update-november-2020-may-2021>)

Data is collected from each market every three days. The below table shows the percentage of three day periods, since August, where prices changed by a significant amount (more than 5%) between each data collection. The findings show that price volatility is common in all three markets and across foodstuffs, with higher levels in Congo-Central and Kwilu.

Percentage of three day periods where the price of a given foodstuff changed by more than 5%				
	Kinshasa	Congo-Central	Kwilu	<i>Average (Foodstuff)</i>
Cassava	29%	42%	52%	41%
Maize	48%	39%	32%	40%
Beans	10%	48%	45%	34%
Average (Market)	29%	43%	43%	

This volatility is contributing to a worsening situation for food security across the DRC. Data from the Household survey shows that 43% of households overall and 56% of low-income households are consuming less food today than they did before the pandemic. This is supported by recent reports from the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), part of the UN, which indicated 6 million more people in the DRC are food insecure today than at the end of 2019 (FAO, 2020). This increase has made the DRC the country with the largest food crisis in the world.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the general recovery continues, there needs to be a particular focus from the government and international donors on averting a famine in the DRC.

Any restrictions imposed to deal with the second wave need to also include relief and support for the people who will be adversely affected economically.

Populations across the DRC remain extremely fragile and more help is needed to ensure the recovery translates into real humanitarian benefits.



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If you wish to contribute to this study, please contact Mr Thomas Strouvens:

E-mail : thomas@kinshasadigital.com



COVID-19 : - ☐ + ☒