

December 2020 | Laura M. Sellers

# Spotlight on Food Insecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean

*Food insecurity is elevated in many places in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region*

## In the countries surveyed on this topic in 2018/19, an average of one in three are food insecure

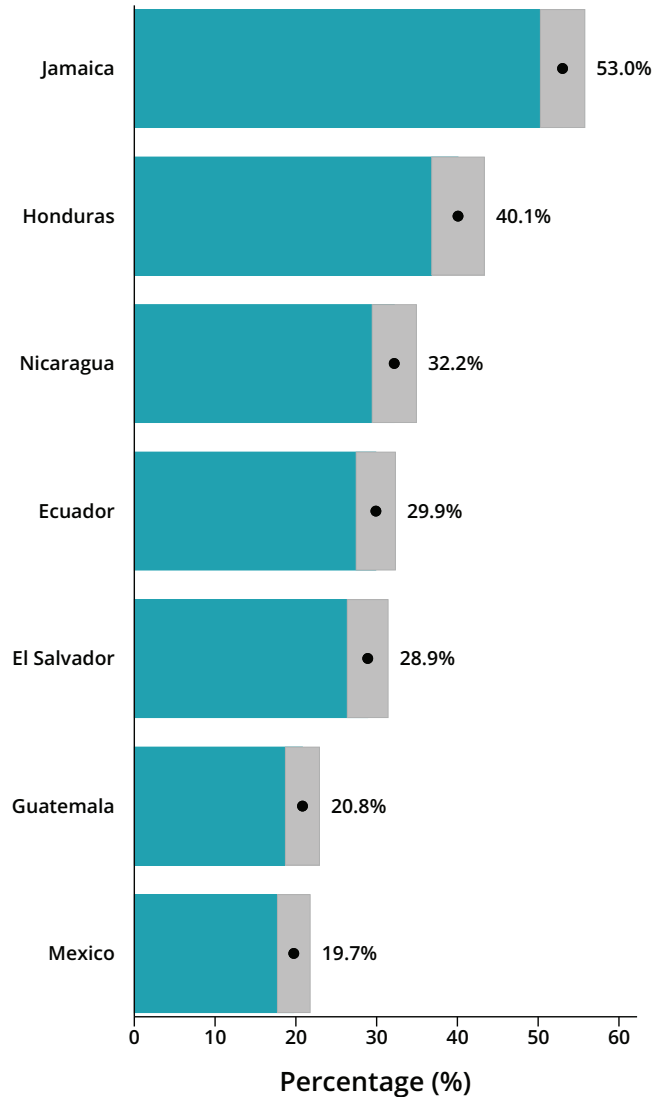
Since 2004, LAPOP’s AmericasBarometer project measured reported food insecurity in 2012 and most recently in the 2018/19 round by using the following question:

**FS2. In the past three months, because of a lack of money or other resources, did your household ever run out of food?**

In the 2018/19 round,<sup>1</sup> the question was asked in seven countries. Responses were coded as either “yes” or “no.” Here we report on the percentage of people who responded affirmatively.

Jamaica has the highest level of food insecurity, with over half (53.0%) reporting their household ran out of food in the three months prior to the survey. The gap between Jamaica and the second most food insecure country, Honduras, is 13 percentage points. Mexico ranks at the bottom with the lowest percentage of people who report experiencing food insecurity (19.7%). On average across the countries in which this question was asked, nearly a third of adults (32.1%) report running out of food because of lack of money or other resources.

Food Insecurity, 2018/19



95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

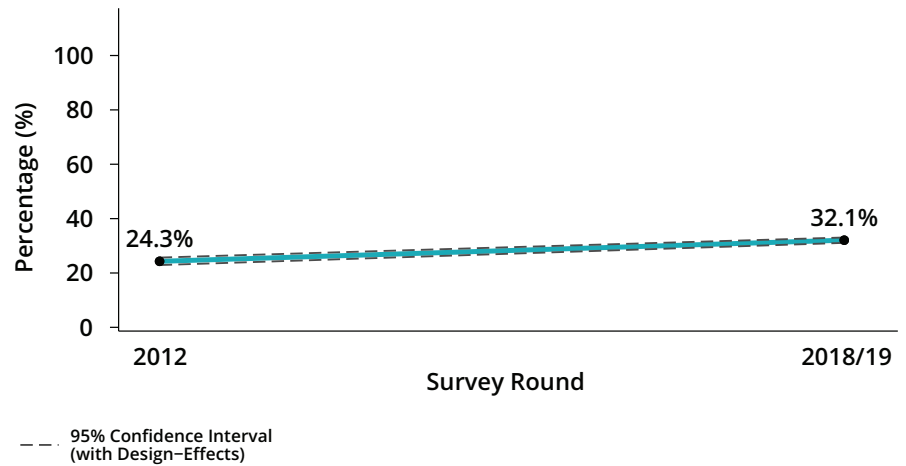
Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; GM1.0

<sup>1</sup> In 2012, this question was asked in 24 countries in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. In 2018, it was asked in seven countries, as shown in Figure 1.

## Food insecurity has increased in the countries surveyed on this topic

In the seven countries where the question was asked, average food insecurity increased by about eight percentage points from 24.3% in 2012 to 32.1% in 2018/19.<sup>2</sup>

### Food Insecurity in the LAC Region, 2012–2018/19

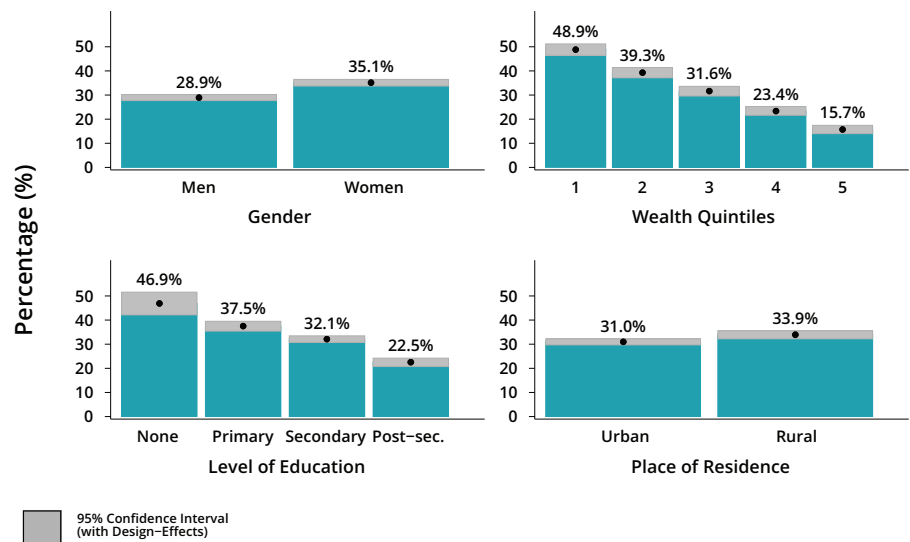


Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2012–2018/19; GM1.0

## Food insecurity is higher among the poor, women, the less educated, and rural residents

What characteristics of individuals predict food insecurity? In the average country (among those surveyed), women are more likely to experience food insecurity than men (35.1% and 28.9%, respectively). Those in lower wealth quintiles experience significantly more food insecurity than those in higher wealth quintiles. Nearly half of individuals in the lowest quintile experienced food insecurity, compared to only 15.7% of those in the highest quintile. Education is also related to food insecurity. While 46.9% of individuals with no education reported food insecurity, only 22.5% of individuals with post-secondary education reported the same—a difference of 24.4 percentage points. Finally, living in a rural area (33.9%) is associated with a slightly higher rate of food insecurity than living in an urban area (31.0%).

### Food Insecurity in the LAC Region, 2018/19



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; GM1.0



**Interested in knowing more about the LAPOP Lab's AmericasBarometer study?**  
 Consult the data and our reports at  
[www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop)

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<sup>2</sup> Figure 2 displays over time data for the seven countries where food insecurity was asked in 2018/19.

As a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative, the LAPOP Lab is committed to routine disclosure of our data collection and reporting processes. More information about the AmericasBarometer sample designs can be found at [www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/core-surveys.php](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/core-surveys.php)

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