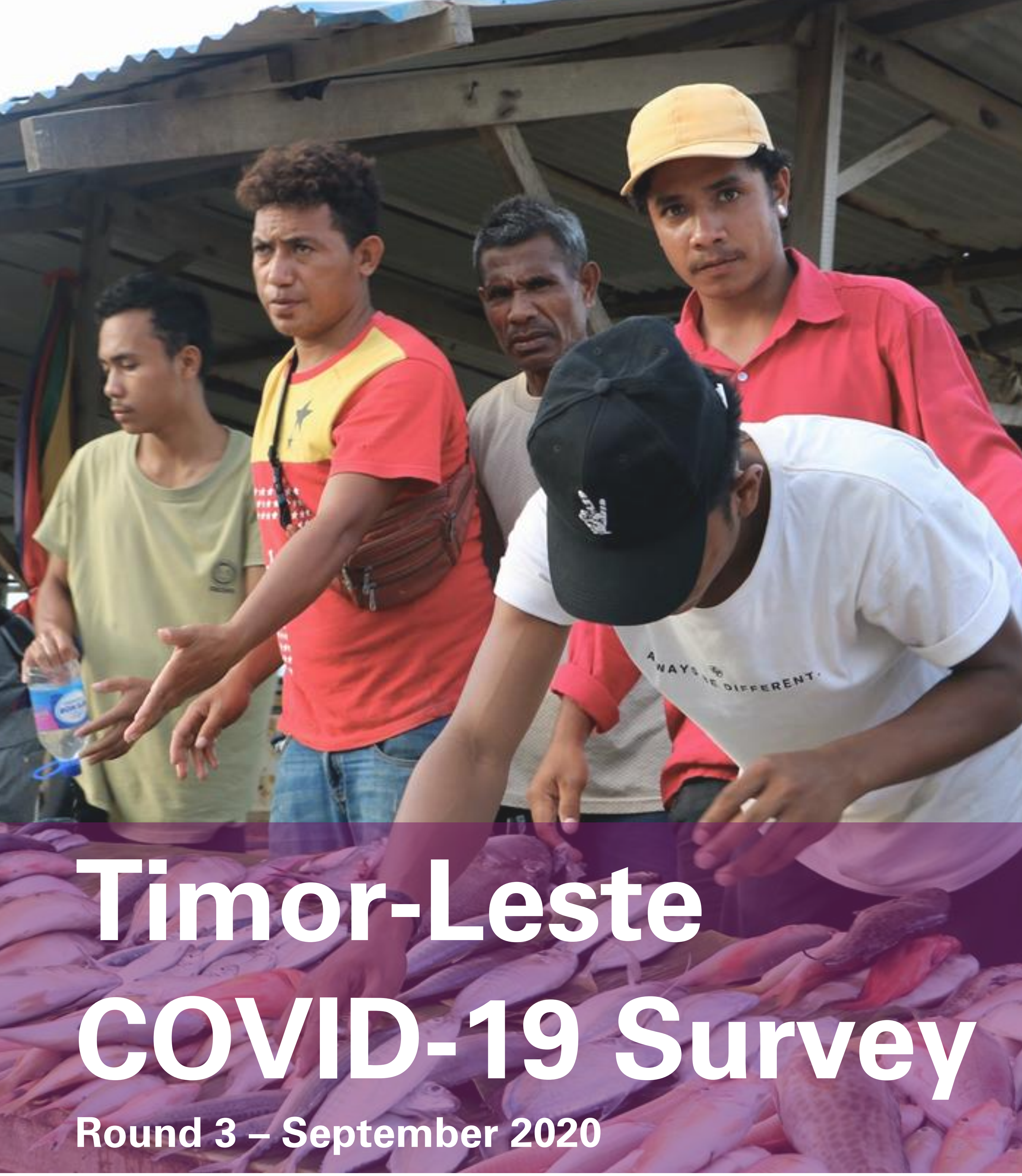

# Timor-Leste COVID-19 Survey

## Round 3 – September 2020

Supported by

Australian Aid

Implemented by

The Asia Foundation

Produced by

ORIMA RESEARCH

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# Timor-Leste COVID-19 Survey

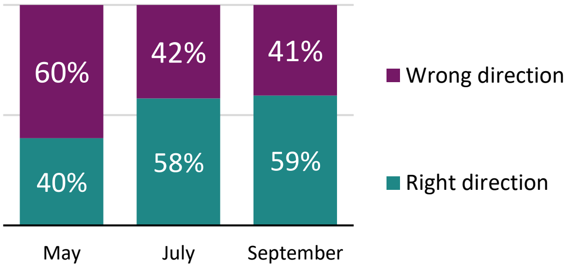
## September 2020 results

This factsheet presents the results of a **telephone survey** of 534 **Timor-Leste adults** conducted from **19 September to 3 October**. During September, there was **only one** active COVID-19 case in Timor-Leste, the state of emergency had ended, and government support payments had been distributed to most households. Results from **September** are compared with the May/July results.

### Biggest challenge

| May | July | Sept | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 62% | 53% | **72%** | COVID-19 |
| 18% | 19% | **10%** | Politics |
| 10% | 18% | **8%** | Economy |

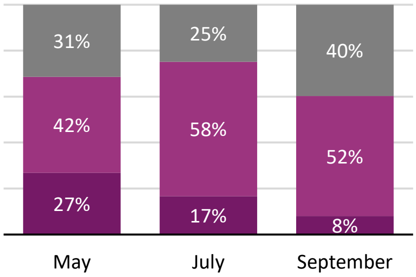
### Is Timor-Leste going in the right or wrong direction?



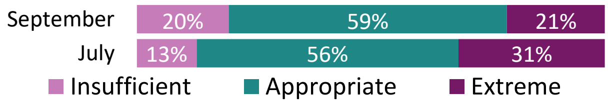

**82%** trust the government to take care of them during COVID-19

July: 64%
May: 49%

### Have currently or previously self-isolated




### Feeling about current government response:




### COVID-safe behaviors declined (2% - 13%)

(% of safe behaviors practiced)

**70%** Face mask

**67%** Wash hands

**55%** Work from home

**60%** Maintain 2m distance

**62%** Avoid public areas

But if they are sick **similar proportions** would:

**77%** Stay home

**62%** Avoid gatherings

**99%** Go to hospital if have symptoms

*75%* *Have **received Uma Kain***
*$100 per household payment*

*60%* think all households should receive the same amount of benefit

*33%* think the benefit should be adjusted for household size

*31%* said market prices **increased** after Uma Kain
Higher in Dili (45%)

**37%** Want the government to **end** the **State of Emergency**

July: 35%
May: 56%

**46%** Think the Government should **provide more cash** to households

July: 30%
May: 36%

In the past 30 days, about **half** have **cut meal size** or **skipped a meal** because there wasn't **enough money** for food
(down from three quarters in May)

Food security was less of an issue in September than in May



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## **82%** think COVID-19 has brought their community **closer together**

July: 83%
May: 72%

### **Community** relationships have become **stronger**

| | Sept (vs July) |
|---|---|
| Community relationships | 90% +2% |
| Provide help | 66% -3% |
| Receive help | 66% 0% |

### The proportion of those **negatively impacted** has **increased**

| | Sept | vs July |
|---|---|---|
| Time with family | 39% | +26% |
| Job | 58% | +24% |
| Household income | 58% | +23% |
| Part of community | 35% | +20% |
| Feeling safe | 37% | +20% |

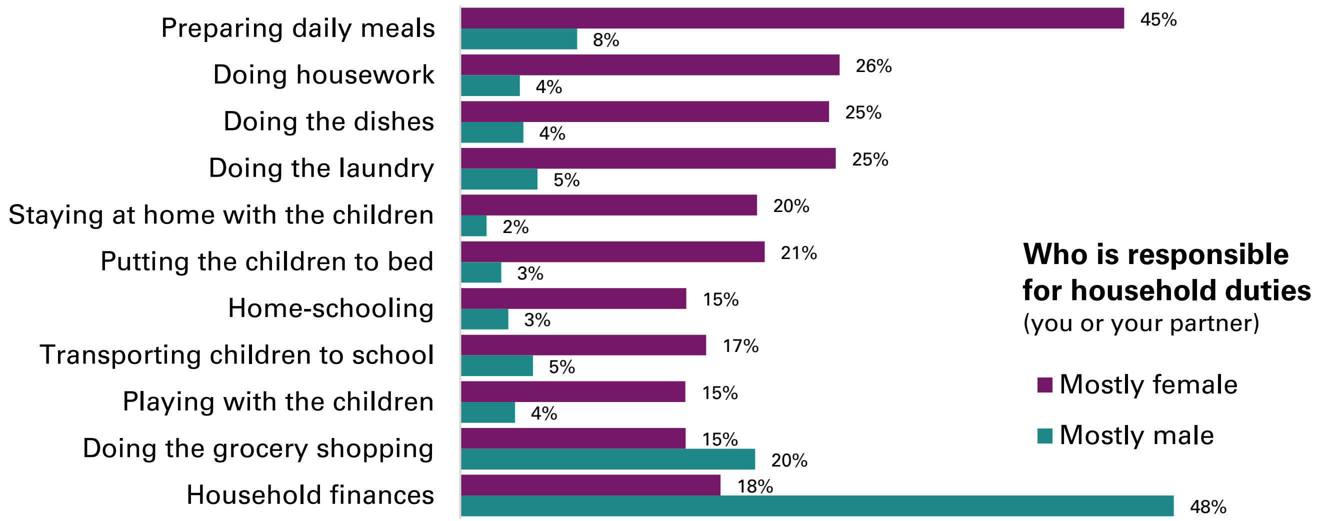
### However, **paranoia** has **increased**

| | Sept (vs July) |
|---|---|
| Intolerance to outsiders | 94% +13% |
| Fear of suspected COVID cases | 96% +4% |

**84%** were **satisfied** with division of household tasks

**29%** were **more satisfied** with task division than **before the pandemic**

Gender was **NOT** an indicator of satisfaction or change of satisfaction




**Television** is still most trusted for news about: **COVID-19 (77%)** July: 85%, May: 81% **Other news (78%)** July: 81%, May: 76%

More are watching: **GMN (86%)** July: 81% May: 67%

More moderate numbers trust **radio** for: **COVID-19 (12%)** July: 5%, May: 12% **Other news (8%)** July: 6%, May: 17%

More are listening to: **Community radio (42%)** July: 19% May: 13%

Those in Dili (compared to outside of Dili):

- Trust **television** for COVID news (91% vs 71%)
- Need less **information** about **accessing** government support (21% vs 27%)

We would like to thank the 534 respondents for their time and the 11 interviewers in Dili who conducted the July survey.

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# Background

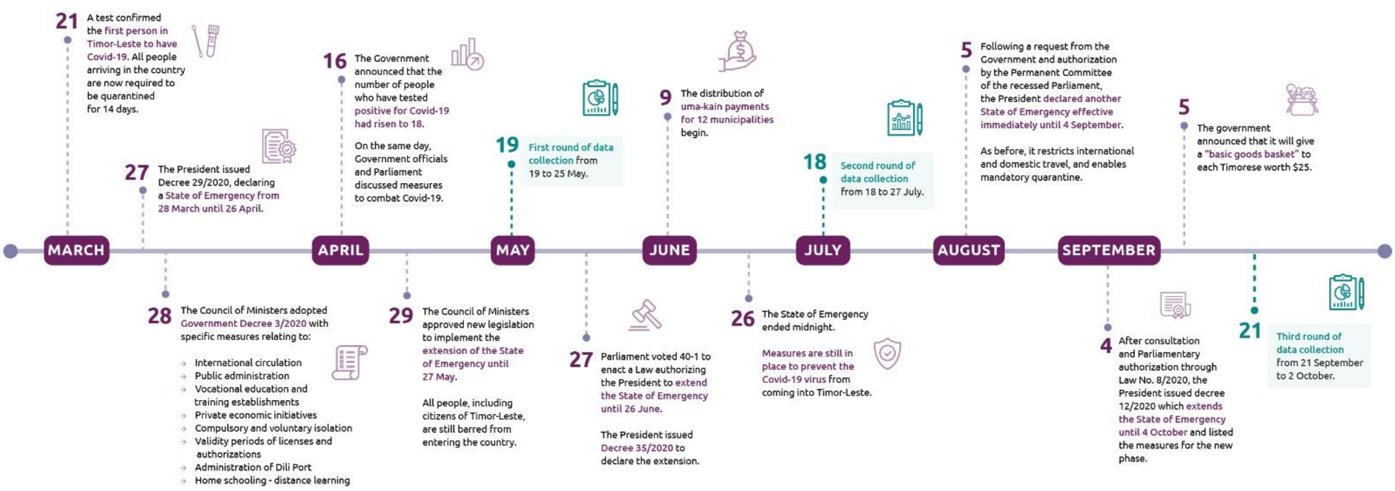
## What is this research about?

The COVID-19, or coronavirus global pandemic, has required huge responses from governments all over the world. Timor-Leste has its own unique requirements when addressing an event of this magnitude.

This research aims to understand:

- The concerns of the people of Timor-Leste
- How well people are adopting prevention measures and taking care of their health
- The level of trust in government
- The use and satisfaction of government programs
- The social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
- How household tasks have been distributed during the pandemic
- The resilience of individuals and their communities, and
- The sources of news and information the people of Timor-Leste are relying on to stay informed about the pandemic.

## Timor-Leste context




Fortunately, Timor-Leste continues to avoid the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to many other countries, with a low number of cases and no community transmission. At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the Government of Timor-Leste (GOTL) responded by declaring a State of Emergency (SoE), which closed schools, suspended public transport and large gatherings, instituted border closures and established requirements for social distancing. These strict precautions were in place during the May data collection. Parts of the State of Emergency were lifted before July fieldwork, returning most freedoms to residents of Timor-Leste but still restricting international travel. In early August, the GOTL reinstituted the State of Emergency primarily aimed at restricting international travel and enabling mandatory quarantine. This decree was reconfirmed in early September and continued throughout the September data collection period.

Following on the success of the Apoiu Monetáriu ba COVID-19, or *Uma Kain* household cash payment which started distributing payments in June, in September the government announced a new program *Cesta Basica* (basic food basket) program. The new program would provide $25 worth of food or a voucher for every Timorese person for a period of two months. This is a shift from the *Uma Kain* payment which was targeted at the household and not adjusted based on the size of the household. Other research indicated that single people or those not living with their family, for example students, women in crisis shelters and LBGTQI people, generally did not receive the *Uma Kain* payment. While students were specifically mentioned for the new *Cesta Basica* program it is unclear if other people who missed out on the Uma Kain payments will qualify for the *Cesta Basica* program. While *Cesta Basica* program was announced in September, distribution of food baskets/vouchers was not intended to start until November.

Other support programs previously announced include an electricity subsidy of $15 per month, a 60% wage subsidy and a $36 monthly payment for self-employed and informal workers provided they register for Social Security.

In the background to the above measures, the Parliament was debating the 2020 Government which was eventually approved on October 19. It appropriated $322 million for COVID-19 relief and $109 million for *Cesta Basica* in November and December 2020.

## Who is the research being conducted for?

The Asia Foundation has been working with the people of Timor-Leste for nearly 30 years on issues such as employment, women's rights, and community policing, and commissioned this research. The results will be used for advocacy with the Timor-Leste Government and donors on issues relating to COVID-19. This research is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

## How was the research conducted?

Between 19 September and 3 October, a Dili-based call center conducted 534 interviews with Timor-Leste adults, using a sample list of previous respondents to The Asia Foundation Tatoli and Community Policing surveys. This followed up from near-identical surveys conducted in May and July, which will be used to compare change over time. ORIMA Research (Australia) worked with The Asia Foundation on the questionnaire and data collection methodology, performed data quality checks, and conducted the analysis and reporting. More detail is available in the methodology section of this report. The full survey results are also available on the Q2i Visualization platform: [surveys.asiafoundation.org/Dashboard?SurveyCode=TLCV](surveys.asiafoundation.org/Dashboard?SurveyCode=TLCV)

## The future

The survey is expected to run at a 2-month interval until June 2021 to see how the community changes over time. This report and the Q2i visualization platform will be subsequently updated to reflect this data.

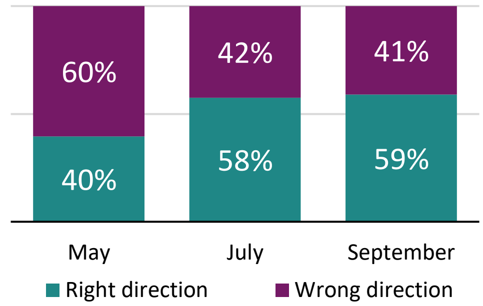
# Results

## Biggest concerns

In **September 2020**, more respondents felt that Timor-Leste was going in the **right** direction (59%) than the wrong direction (41%) – giving a net score of +18%. This is similar to the July results, and a substantial positive change from May.

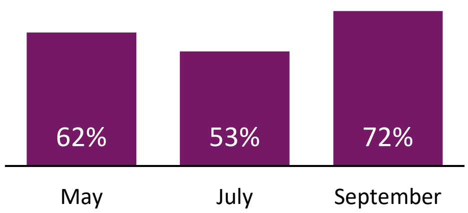
Younger age groups tended to be more positive, with 57% of those aged 17-24 considering that Timor-Leste is going in the right direction, compared to 51% amongst those aged 45+. Males were more positive than females (with 60% considering that Timor-Leste is going in the right direction, compared to 48%), as were those located in Dili (68%), compared to 49% outside Dili.

**Generally speaking, Timor-Leste is going in the…**




**The biggest challenge facing Timor-Leste:**

**COVID-19**




**Other challenges:**

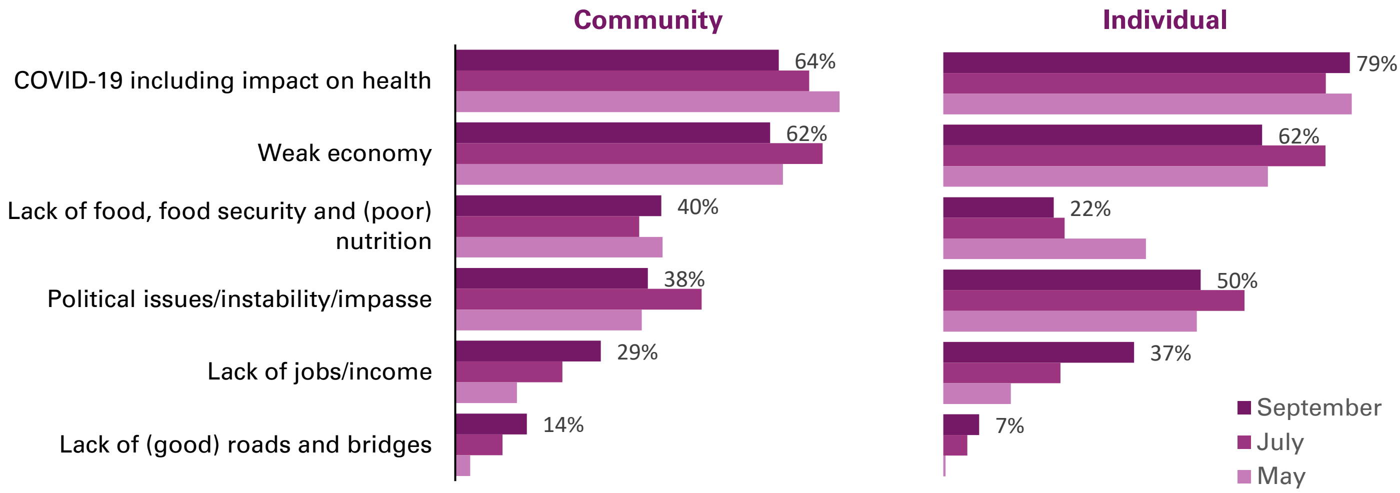
**Political issues 10%**
**Weak economy 8%**

The majority of respondents still said the biggest challenge facing Timor-Leste was COVID-19, including the impact on health (72%, and higher than May and July). Political issues (10%) remained a significantly lower secondary challenge. A weak economy (8%) was considered less of a challenge than in May and in July as well.

Younger age groups tended to be more concerned about COVID-19, with 79% of those aged 17-24 identifying this as the biggest challenge facing Timor-Leste, compared to 66% of those aged 45+. People who had not received any government payments also tended to be more concerned about COVID-19, with 89% of these indicating COVID-19 was the biggest challenge facing Timor-Leste, compared to 66% amongst those who had received at least one government payment.

In September, COVID-19 remained a predominant issue for individuals (79%, similar to May/July) and the community (64%, although less than 70% in July and 74% in May). Other common community issues identified in September were a weak economy (62%), lack of food (40%) and political issues (38%). A weak economy (62%) and political issues (50%) were also identified as common issues, while the issue around lack of jobs has increased (37%, compared to 23% in July and 13% in May), and remains a more significant issue than identified for the community (29%). Conversely, there was a slightly lower concern around lack of food, food security and nutrition at the individual level, with 22% identifying this, compared to 24% in July and 39% in May.

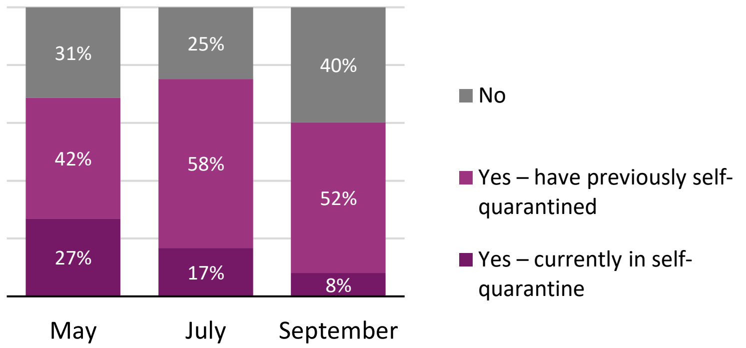
**Top 3 problems as an individual and in your community (Multiple response, six most common problems shown)**



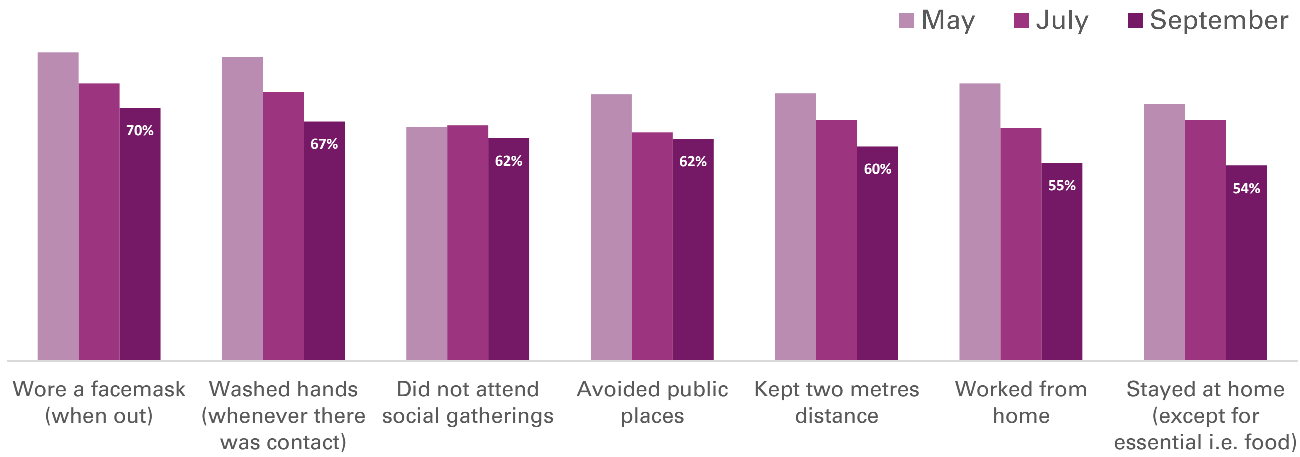
## Prevention measures and healthcare behavior

Respondents were asked whether they had been in self-quarantine, defined as when an individual or family stays at home except for essential tasks such as purchasing food or seeking medical care. When asked in September, 60% of respondents had at some stage been in self-quarantine, including 8% *currently* in self-quarantine (down from 27% currently in self-quarantine in May).

**Have you and your family self-quarantined during COVID-19?**




**COVID-19 safe behaviors (applies very much) in past week**




The majority of respondents were still ‘very much’ following COVID-19 prevention behaviors in September, from wearing facemasks (70%) to staying at home except for essential excursions outside (54%). However, most behaviors were less likely to be ‘very much’ followed than in May and June (apart from not attending social gatherings, with similar results across all three survey rounds). Largest declines were in working from home (55% doing so ‘very much’ in September, down from 77% in May), washing hands after any contact (67%, down from 85%) and staying at home unless it’s essential to venture out (54%, down from 72%).

**If you had symptoms, would you:**

| May | July | September | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 94% | 95% | 99% | Go to a hospital or health clinic |
| 92% | 79% | 79% | Inform people around me |
| 85% | 79% | 77% | Stay home |
| - | - | 63% | Take traditional medicine |
| - | - | 80% | Carry on as usual |

In September, nearly all respondents (99%) reported they would go to a hospital or health clinic if they found themselves having symptoms of sickness, with a high proportion reporting they would inform the people around them (79%) and stay home (77%). A further 63% reported that they would take traditional medicine (not asked in previous rounds).

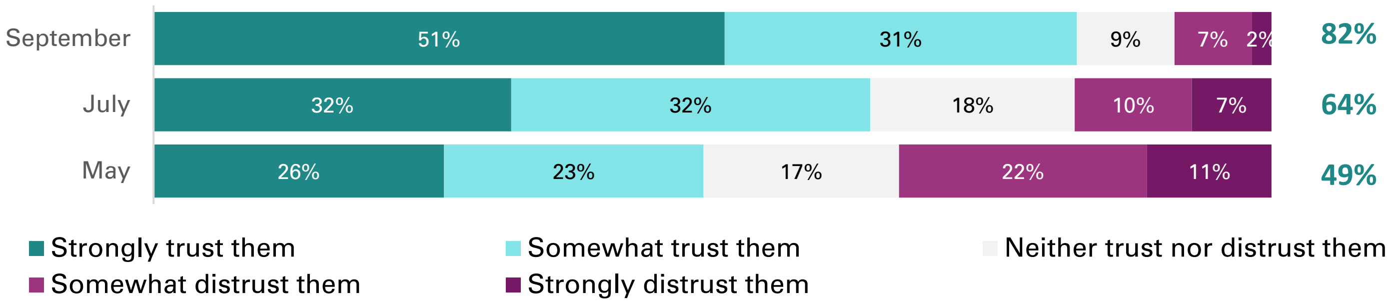
Concerningly, though, 80% of respondents also reported that they would carry on as usual if they showed symptoms. Respondents more likely to carry on as usual were those located in Dili (84%, compared to 79% outside Dili), older respondents (80-83% for those aged 35+, compared to 77% of those younger), and those with at least one dependent child in the household (77-87%, compared to 68% of those with no dependent children).

## Government trust

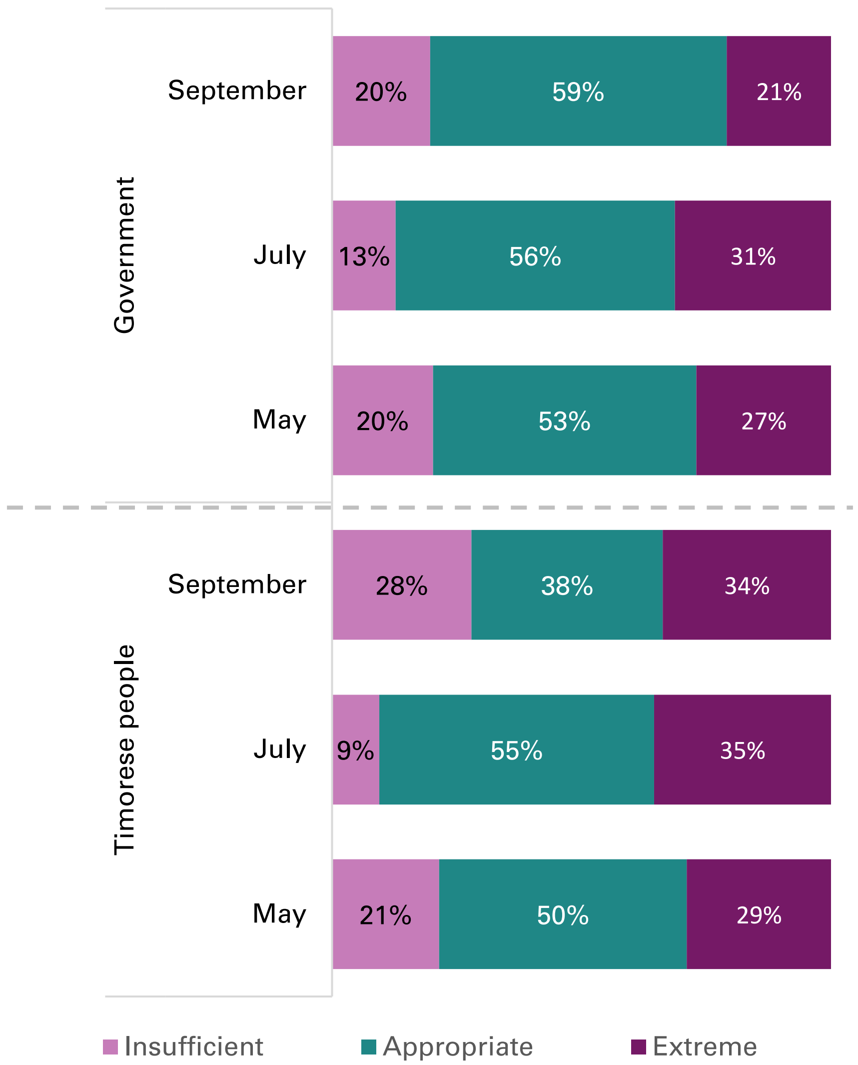
Trust in the government of Timor-Leste to take care of its citizens during COVID-19 has risen substantially in September to a record high, with 82% at least trusting the government, compared to 64% in July and 49% in May. Similarly, the proportion who distrust the government has continued to decline (9% in September, 17% in July, 33% in May).

Trust was marginally higher for households in Dili (86%) than those outside Dili (82%). Trust tended to decline with age, with 88% for those aged 17-24 trusting the government, compared to 79% amongst those 45+. There was no significant difference between females and males.

**How much do you trust the government to take care of its citizens during COVID-19?**




**What do you think of the reaction of…**




Respondents continue to consider that the **government reaction to COVID-19** has been more appropriate over time (59% in September, compared to 56% in July and 53% in May). In contrast, the **reaction of the Timorese people to COVID-19** was considered to be significantly less appropriate in September (38%, compared to 50-55% in May/July). Instead, a more polarized viewpoint has arisen whereby 34% consider their reaction to be too extreme and 28% consider it to be insufficient.

Dili households were more likely to consider the **government reaction** to be insufficient, as were younger respondents.

A significant majority of respondents (90%) think the government should end the current state of emergency, which restricts people from coming into Timor-Leste and requires mandatory quarantine for people who return. Younger respondents aged 17-24 were more likely to think this (94%, compared to 86-90% of those aged 25+), as were females (93%, compared to 87% of males) and those with dependent children in the household (89-93%, compared to 65% of those without dependent children).

## Use of and satisfaction with government programs

One of the first programs announced by the government was the **Uma Kain household payment**, also known as Apoiu Monetáriu ba COVID-19, which was received by 95% of all households.

Nearly one in three respondents indicated that the cost of basic goods such as rice and cooking oils had increased in the past month—31% overall, slightly more in Dili (34%) than outside of Dili (29%).

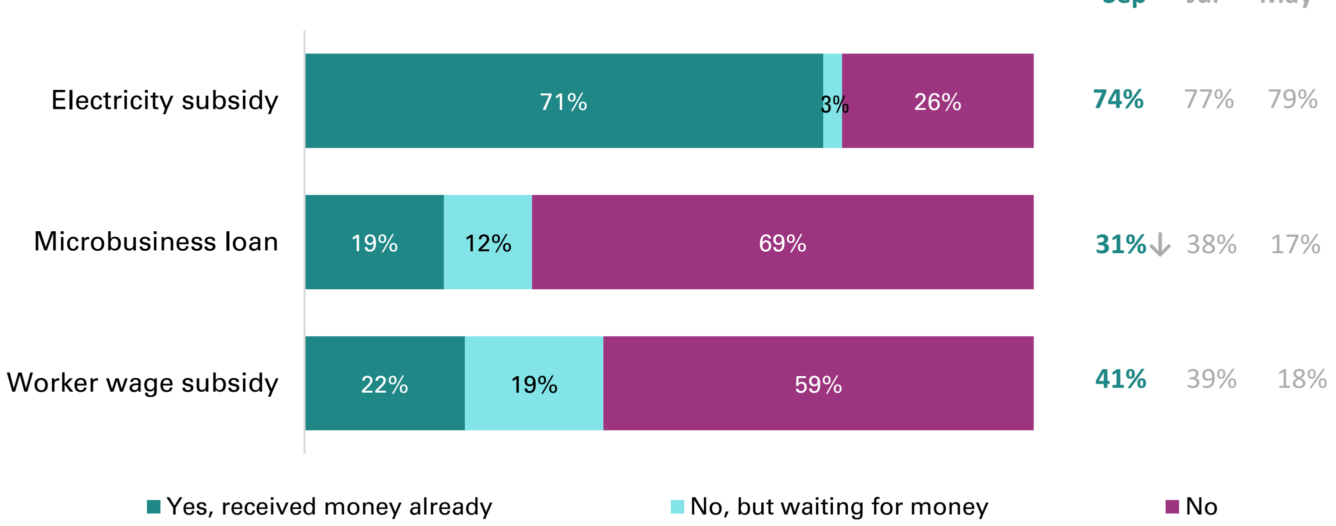
**In the past month, did the cost of things like rice or cooking oil change in your local markets?**


At the time of the survey, government was considering distributing food vouchers, or baskets, as a possible alternative to cash payments. Two thirds of respondents indicated they would be satisfied with either option, although those with a preference for the voucher or basket system (19%) slightly outnumbered those preferring the current cash payments (13%). Those outside Dili were more likely to prefer a cash payment (15%), compared to those in Dili (7%).

Younger age groups (particularly 17-24) had a more pronounced net preference for vouchers over cash, as did households with two or more children. Nonetheless, across all age groups and household types, a majority of respondents indicated either option was acceptable.

Seventy-four percent of respondents indicated their household had either received (71%) or were waiting for money (3%) from the **electricity subsidy**, as part of the government's support program (excluding respondents who could not recall or for whom the subsidy did not apply). Substantial minorities of respondents had received or were waiting on a **worker wage subsidy** (41%, similar to 39% in July) or a **microbusiness loan** (31%, down from 38% in July).

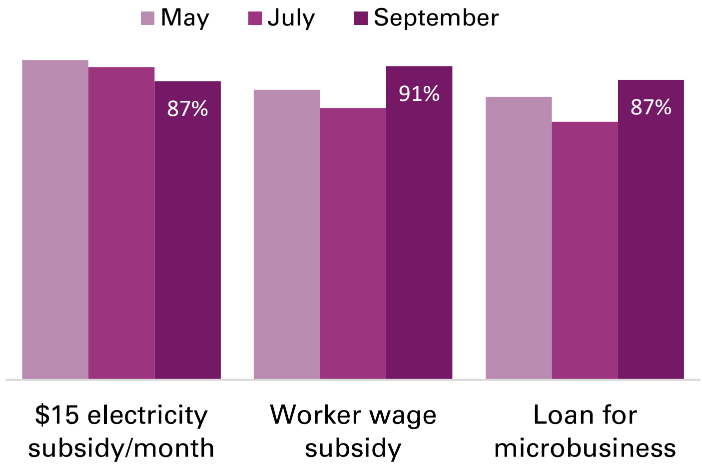
**Does anyone in this household receive any other support as part of the government's social-economic package/stimulus/recovery program?**



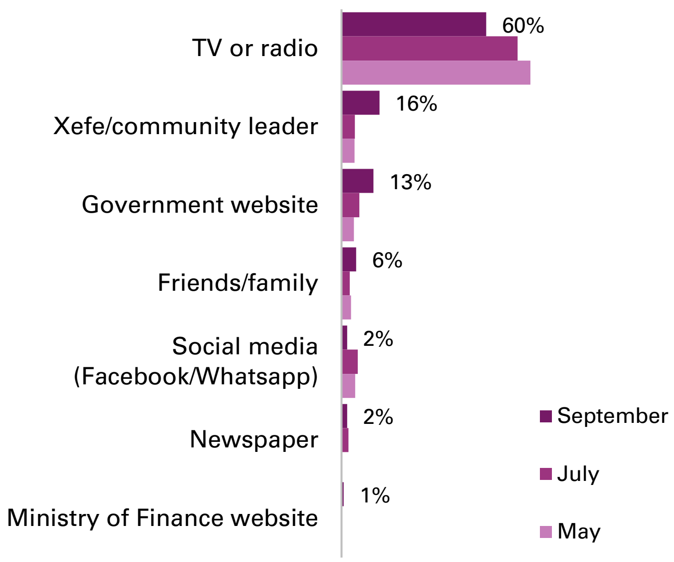
Respondents were asked to rate each subsidy they received. Around nine in ten recipients were satisfied with each subsidy. Satisfaction with the $15 electricity subsidy has declined slightly over time (from 93% providing a positive rating in May, down to 87% in September), while satisfaction with the other two subsidies were at their highest recorded levels (91% for the worker wage subsidy, 87% for microbusiness loans).

Satisfaction with subsidies was in general marginally higher in Dili than elsewhere, with the biggest difference relating to the electricity subsidy (95% rated this positively in Dili, 83% outside Dili).

**Level of satisfaction with government support / subsidies** (For those eligible, at least good)




**Where did you find the information to get the government support?**




Television or radio remained the most common source of information about government support, although its prevalence has declined over time (60% found information about government support this way in September, down from 72% in July and 78% in May). The importance of Xefe/community leaders as a source of information has correspondingly increased (16%, up from 5%), as have government websites (13%, up from 7% and 5%).

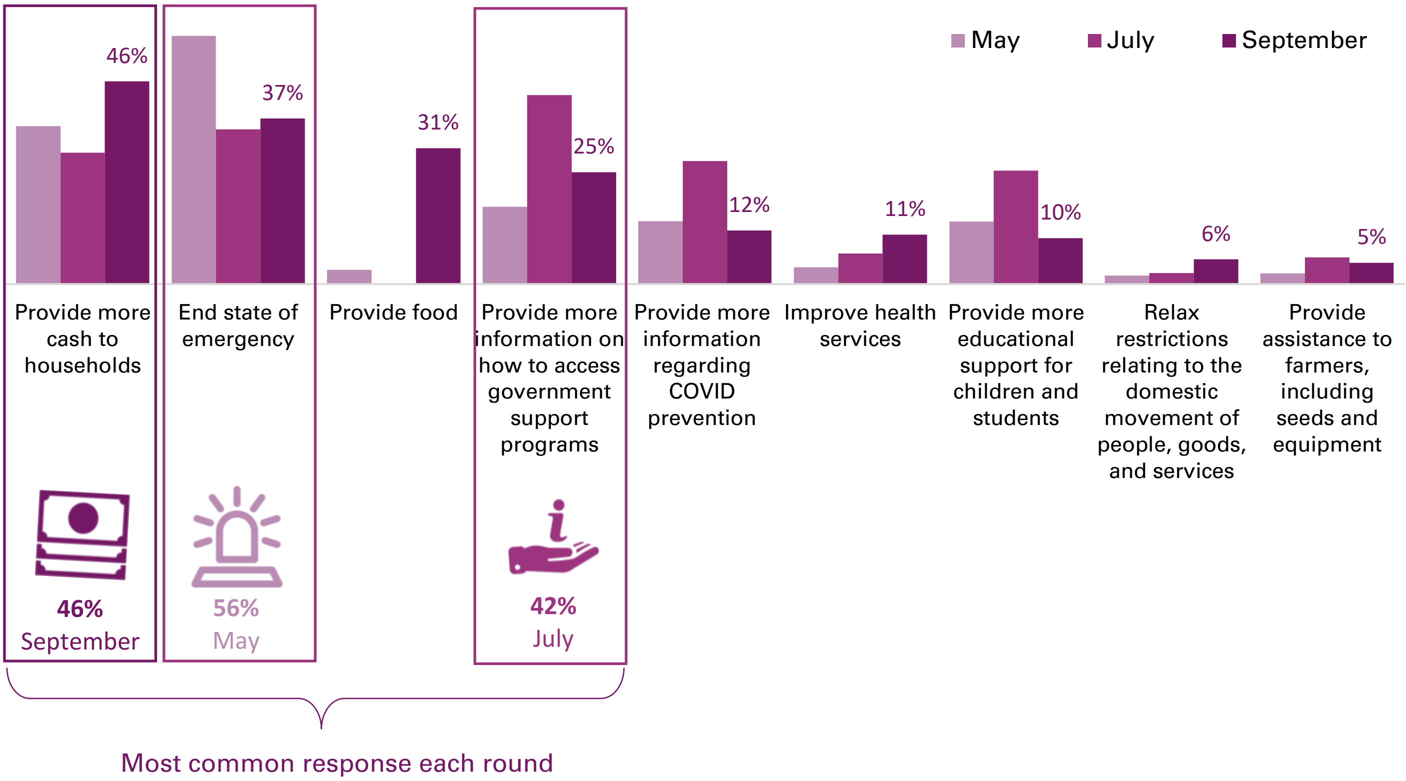
Dili residents were more likely than people outside Dili to get their information from TV or radio (68%, compared to 54%) or a government website (18%, compared to 10%), but less likely to rely on Xefe/community leaders (6%, compared to 22%).

Respondents aged under 35 were more likely to get information online from a government website (16-20%, compared to 9% of those older).

## Additional government support

In all three survey rounds respondents have been asked what the government could do to more support its citizens. In September, the leading priority was seen to be providing more cash to households (46%)—a course of action seen as important, to a lesser extent, in all three rounds (30% in July, 36% in May). Over one third of respondents suggested ending the state of emergency (37%, similar to 35% in July, but down from 56% in May), and 31% suggested providing food (not offered as an option in July, and only selected by 3% when offered in May).

**During this time, what could the government do more to support its citizens? (Multiple response allowed)**




Respondents outside Dili were more likely to request for the state of emergency to be ended (40%, compared to 29% in Dili), as were younger respondents aged 17-34 (41-42%, compared to 31-35% of those older). Respondents aged 35+ were more likely to request more cash for households (53-56%, compared to 34-40% of younger age groups).

The survey outlined that the government is planning to make three monthly payments of $36 each to support self-employed and informal sector workers from October 2020, provided they register for Social Security. Around two-thirds of respondents were either aware of this scheme (35%) or had heard about the program but didn't have any details (28%). Of respondents who would be eligible for the scheme, 64% would be willing to register for Social Security in order to receive the payment and 54% know how to gain access to the scheme. Respondents from Dili were significantly more aware of the scheme, willing to register and confident in how to access the scheme.

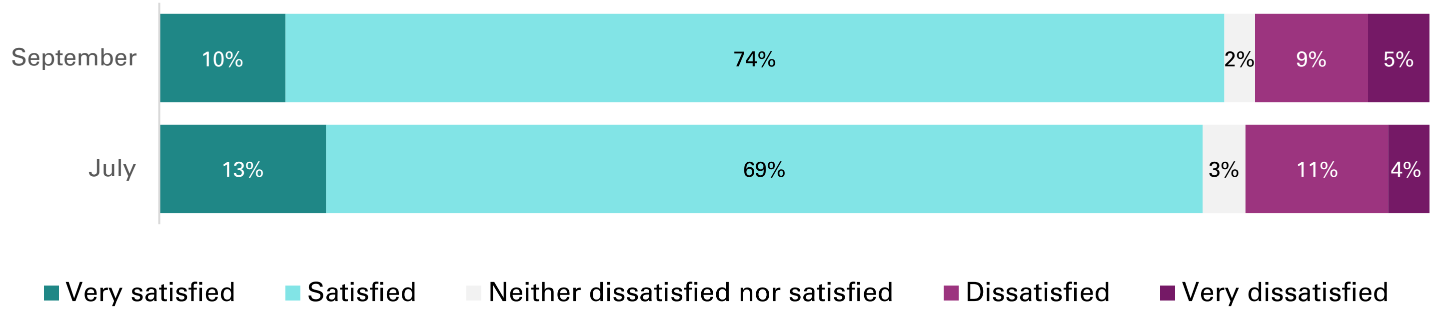
## Household duties

Forty-three percent of respondents indicated their household workload has increased since the start of the pandemic. Over one third of respondents who perceived an increase in workload attributed this primarily to more people in the household (36%); another third attributed it to the fact there was more work to be done (34%) and just under one third attributed it to less help from others (29%).

Eighty-four percent of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the way household tasks are divided up between them and their spouse or partner, with 14% dissatisfied—broadly in line with the July results (82% satisfied, 15% dissatisfied).

Despite very uneven distributions of male and female labor across household tasks (described below), similar proportions of men (85%) and women (82%) indicated they were satisfied with the division of work between them and their spouse or partner. Both men and women tended to be more satisfied with household chore division in households with no children (96% for men, 100% for women within these households).

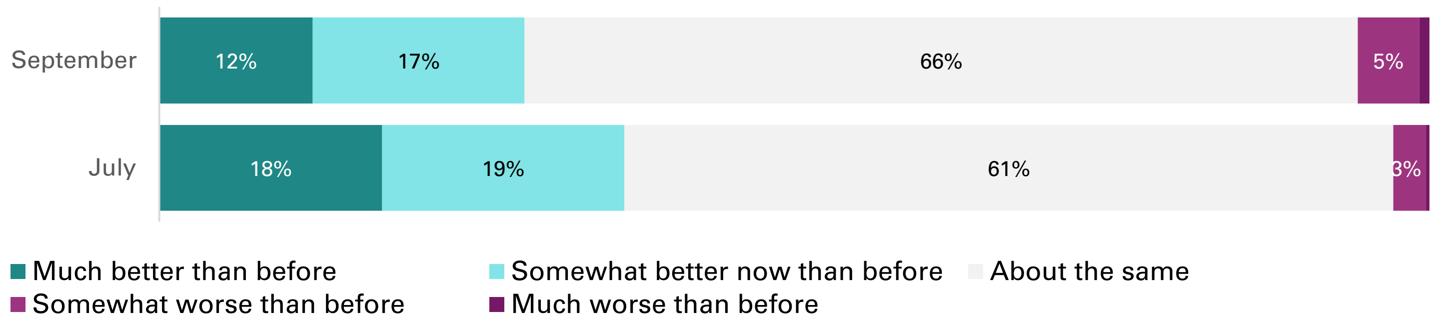
**How satisfied are you with the way household tasks are divided between you and your spouse or partner?**




Two thirds of respondents (66%) indicated the distribution of chores between them and their partner was the same as before the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining third consisted mostly of those who thought the distribution was better (29%), rather than worse (6%), although this is less of a positive story than July where 37% thought the distribution of work was better than before the pandemic, and 3% thought it worse.

Both men and women were more likely to see housework distribution as having improved, than having gotten worse, with women slightly more polarized (31% of women saw an improvement, compared to 26% of men; but 8% of women saw things as having gotten worse, compared to 3% of men).

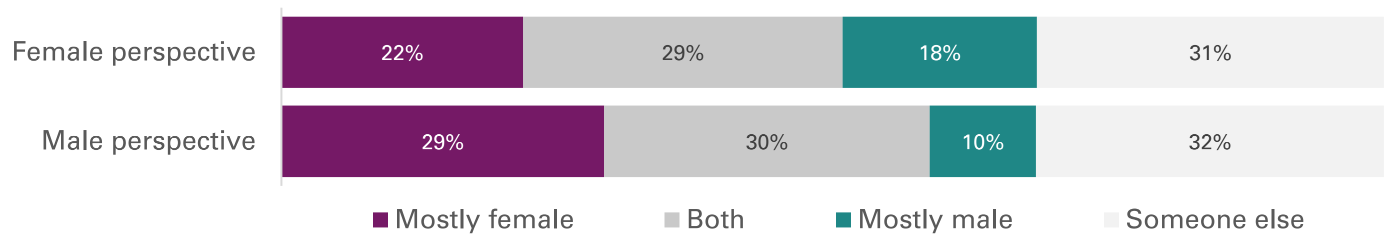
**How does your satisfaction with this division of household tasks between you and your spouse or partner compare with how it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?**



Respondents were asked about the distribution of various household chores between themselves, their spouse or partner, or someone else (such as a relative, child or roommate). As in July, men tended to attribute more work to their partners than to themselves (on average, across all household tasks, men attribute 29% of the work to their partners, and 10% to themselves), while women are more even in their attribution (attributing 18% to their partners, 22% to themselves). On average similar proportions of women and men say that the work is shared equally (29-30%), and similar proportions attribute the work to someone else (31-32%).

The proportion of work attributed to 'someone else' has doubled since July (when on average, respondents said 15% of household chores were performed by another party). Largest increases in third-party workloads related to doing the dishes (42% performed by someone else, up from 20%), housework such as cleaning (39%, up from 17%) and laundry (38%, up from 21%).

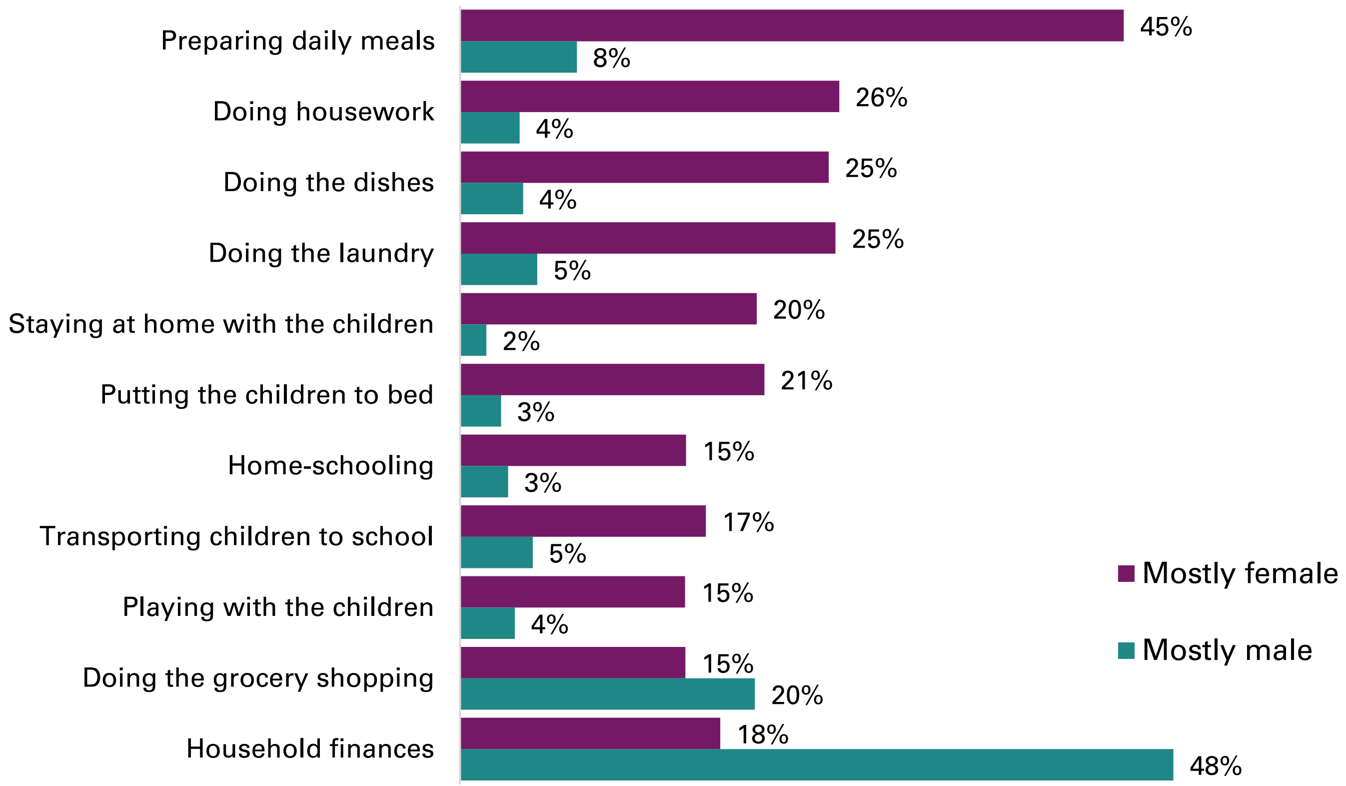
**Perception of task distribution (average across all items)**




Most tasks were performed mostly by women more often than they were performed mostly by men—particularly preparing daily meals (mostly women in 45% of respondents' households, mostly men in 8%), housework (26% vs 4%), dishes (25% vs 4%) and laundry (25% vs 5%).

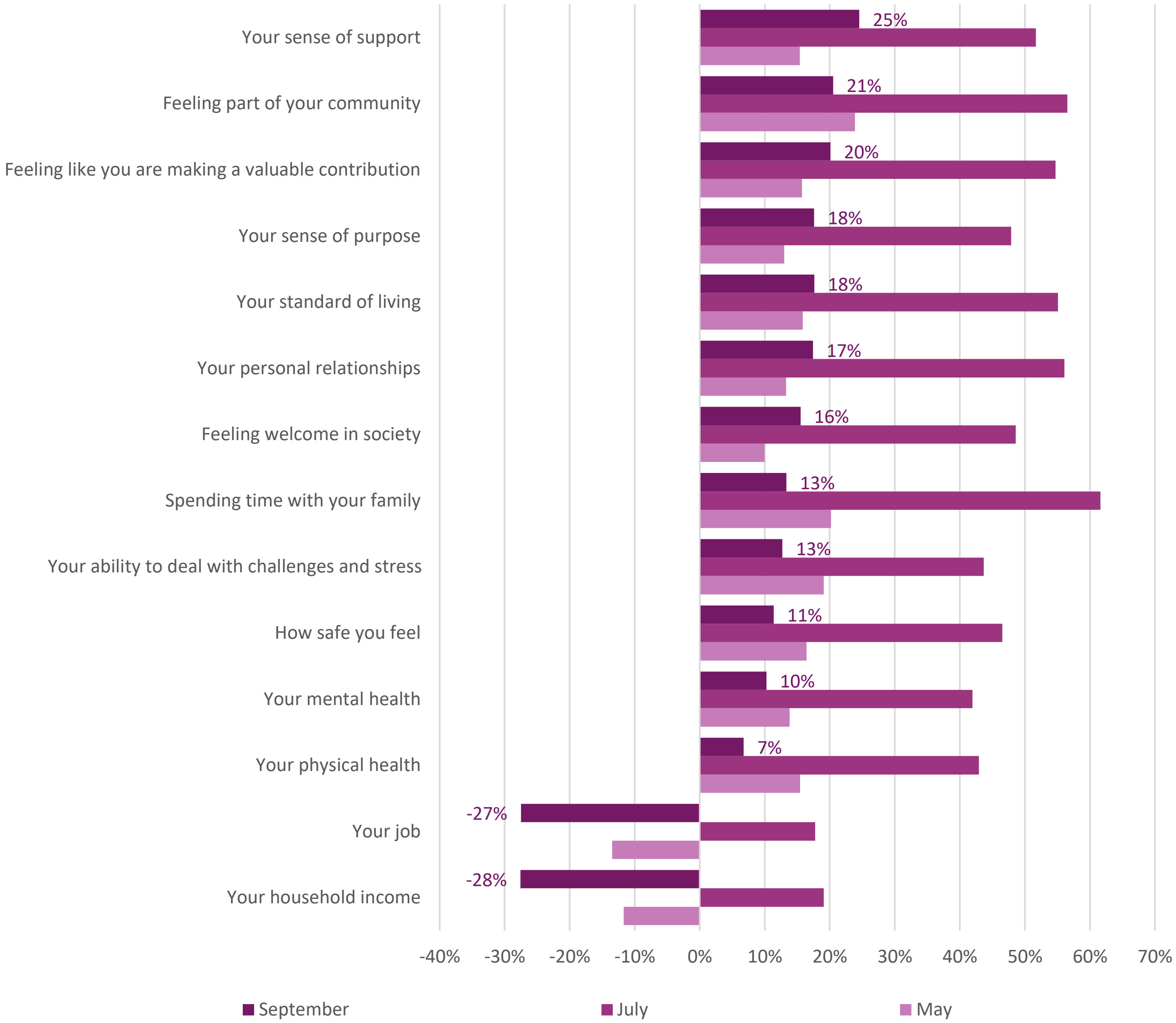
The two tasks most likely to be mostly a male responsibility were household finances (mostly performed by men in 48% of households, mostly by women in 18%) and grocery shopping (mostly men in 20% of households, mostly women in 15%). The household task most likely to be shared equally between the two partners was playing with the children (41% of respondents indicated that this was equally distributed in their household).

**Task distribution (perception from own gender)**



## Social and economic impacts

**Perceived personal impact of COVID-19** [Net balance: positive impact *minus* negative impact]



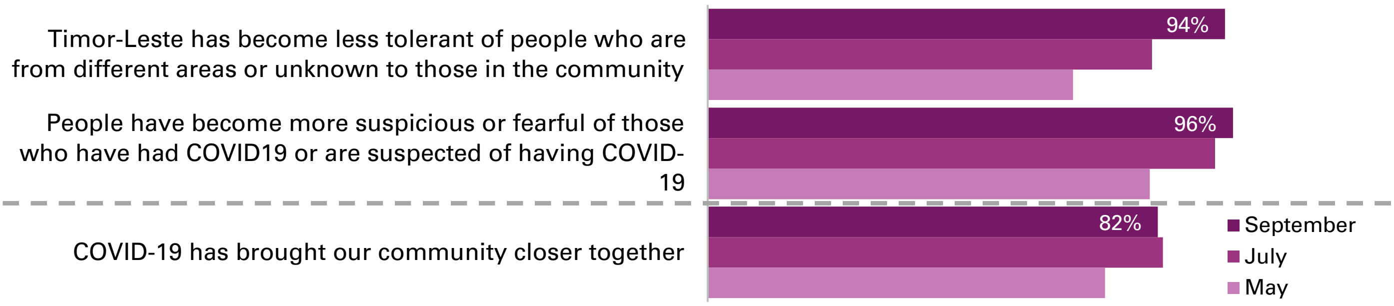

Respondents were asked to identify how COVID-19 had impacted them personally across a range of aspects of their life—whether they had been impacted positively, negatively, or not really affected at all. The resulting *net balance* scores (positive sentiment minus negative sentiment) show that in most respects, people were more likely to view the impact of COVID-19 on their life as positive rather than negative.

This effect could be seen across all three survey rounds, but was especially pronounced in July. In September, positive sentiment had been scaled back to similar levels as in May.

Respondents were most favorable about the impact of COVID-19 on their sense of support (55% indicated a positive impact, 30% a negative impact, with a net balance of 25% positive), their feeling part of the community (21% net balance positive) and their feeling like they are making a valuable contribution (also +20%).

The two life aspects respondents on balance thought had a negative impact were their household income (31% thought the impact positive, 58% thought it negative—a net balance of *minus* 28%) and their job (also a net balance of minus 27%).

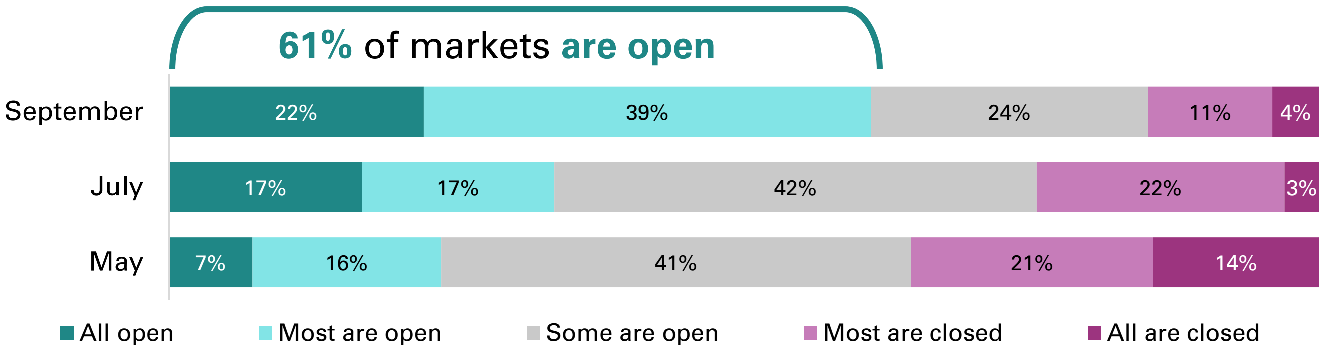
**How do you think your community has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?**




Eighty-two percent believed that COVID-19 had brought their community closer together, in line with the July result (83%) and an increase from 72% in May. However, respondents were also more likely to consider that Timor-Leste has become less tolerant of people from different areas or unknown to the community (94%, up from 81% in July and 67% in May), and that people have grown more suspicious or fearful of suspected COVID-19 cases (96%, up from 92% in July and 81% in May).

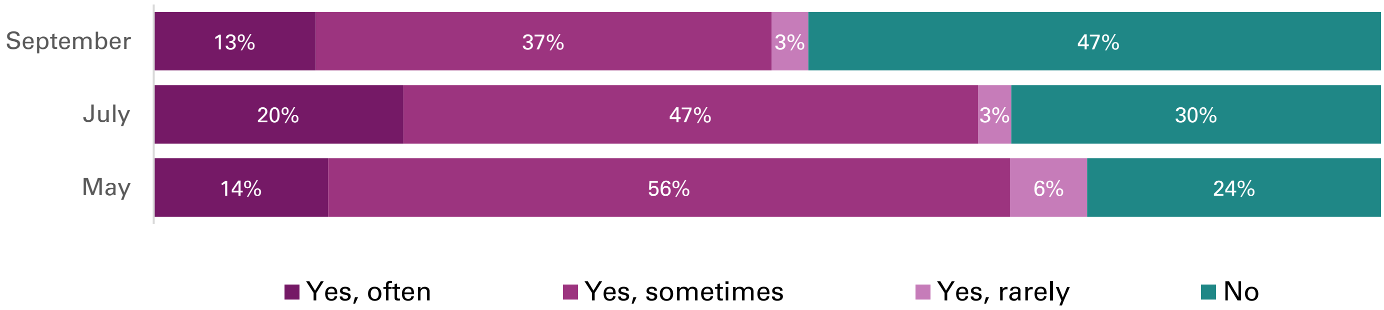
Markets have continued to open up since May, when 23% of respondents said most (or all) markets were open, and 35% said most (or all) were closed. Now, 61% find that most of their markets are open, and only 15% say most are closed). Respondents were most likely to indicate markets being open in Ermera (83%), Dili (74%) and Covalima (71%), and least likely in Lautem (22%) and Bobonaro (24%).

**How many markets are open in your local area?**

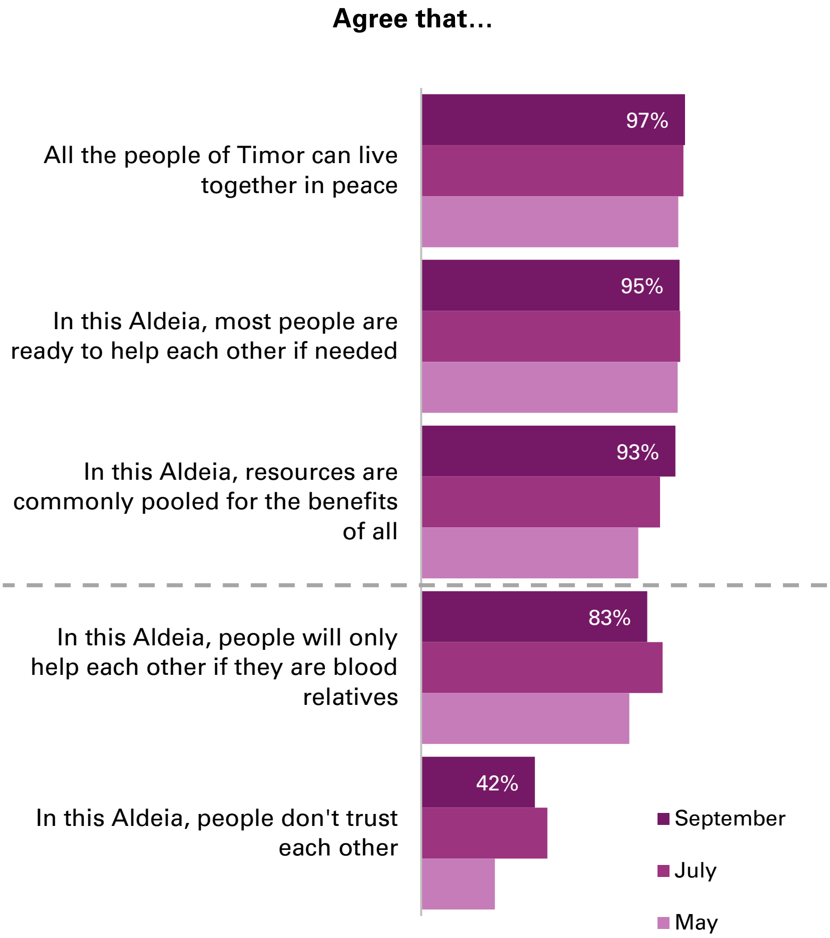



While a majority of respondents (53%) indicated they had been forced to skip or cut the size of a meal at least once in the past month because of a lack of money, this proportion had declined considerably since July (70%) and May (76%). Respondents were most likely to report having to skip or reduce a meal in Covalima (81%), and least likely to do so in Lautem (5%). Respondents aged under 25 were less likely to have skipped on meals (42%) than those aged 25-44 (58%) or older (55%).

**In the past 30 days, did you have to cut the size of a meal or skip a meal because there wasn`t enough money for food?**



## Personal and community resilience

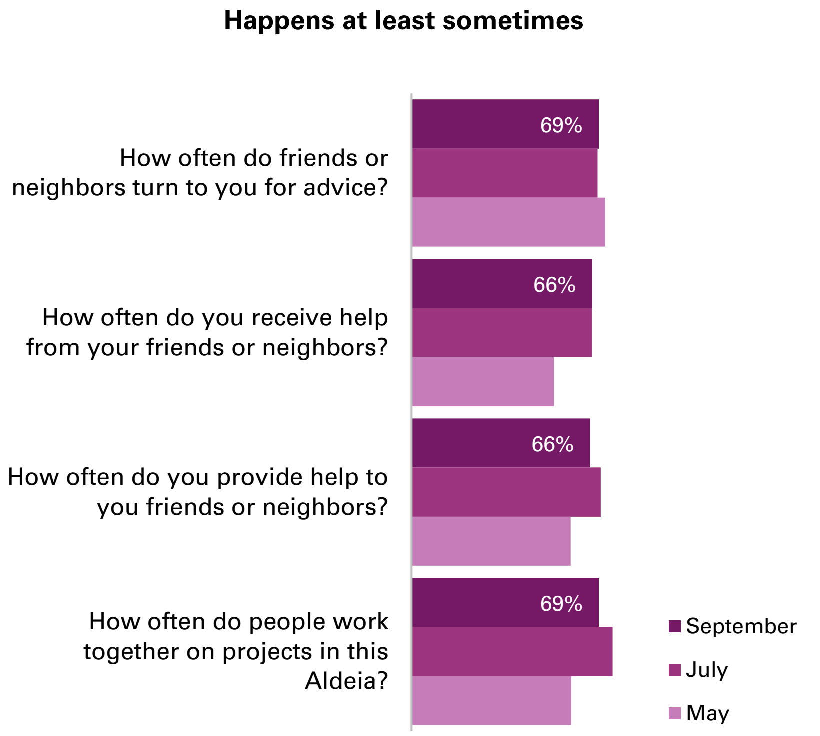



There remains general agreement among respondents that all people of Timor-Leste can live together in peace (97% agreed, 1% disagreed) and that most people in their Aldeia are ready to help each other if needed (95% agreed, 0% disagreed). These proportions have been similar across all three survey rounds.

There has been an increase in agreement among respondents that resources are commonly pooled for the benefit of all (93% agree, up from 88% in July and 80% in May).

However, a substantial majority also agreed that in their Aldeia, people will only help one another if they are blood relatives (83%, down from 89% in July but still above 76% in May). Only 10% *disagreed* that this was the case.

In addition, 42% of respondents agreed that people in their Aldeia don't trust one another, with 51% disagreeing. These proportions are marginally more positive than in July, but remain less positive than in May (27% agreed, 62% disagreed).




Around two in three respondents indicated they at least sometimes turned to friends or neighbors for advice (69%), receive help from friends or neighbors (66%), or provide help *to* friends or neighbors (66%). Overall, 69% of respondents indicated that people at least sometimes work together on projects in their Aldeia (including 13% who said 'often')—a decline from 74% in July, but still positive compared to May (59%).

These 'cooperation' measures were all most positive in the 35-44 age group (with an average level of 80% indicating they take place at least 'sometimes') and least positive in the 17-24 age group (average rating of 53%). The average 'cooperation' measure was also higher among respondents who receive government payments (75%) than among those who do not (46%).



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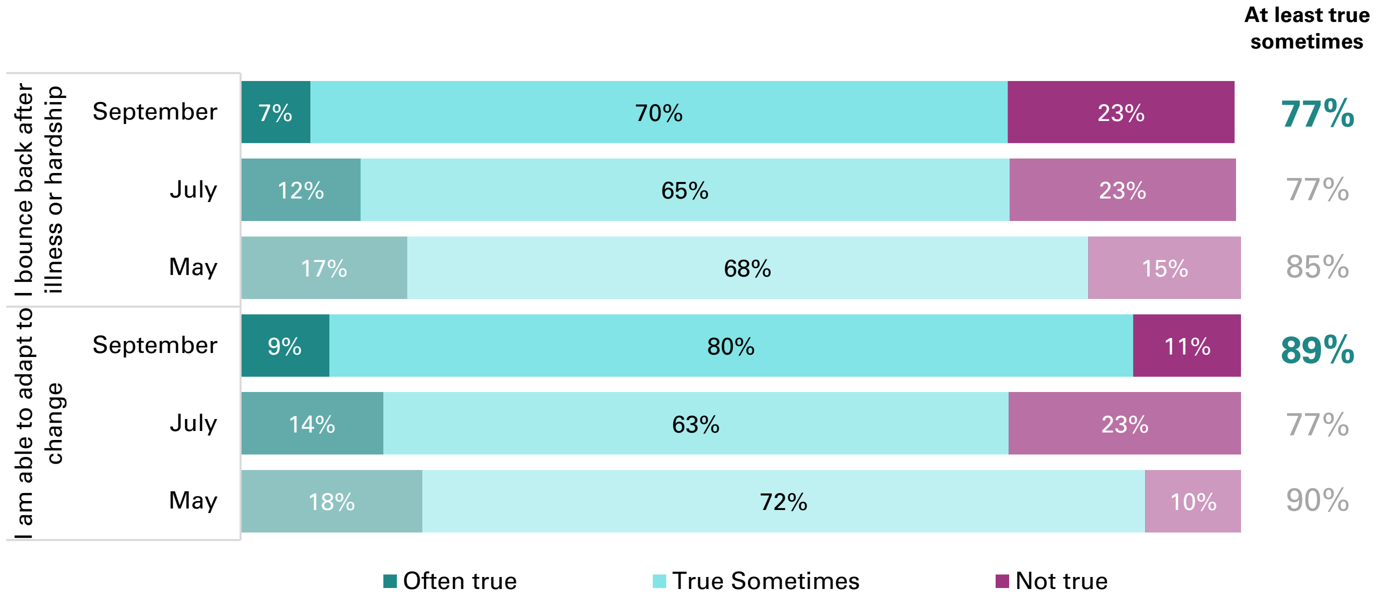
Respondents tended to indicate lower levels of resilience than in May. There have been declines in the proportions who indicated they could 'often' bounce back after illness or hardship (7%, down from 17% in May), and adapt to change (9%, down from 18%). Over three quarters said they could at least *sometimes* bounce back (77%, in line with July, but down from 85% in May), and 89% said they could at least *sometimes* adapt to change (up from 77% in July, but similar to 90% in May).

**How much do the following things describe you?**




Most respondents had positive views ('good' or 'very good') about their relationships with their family (99%), neighbors (97%) and people in the community generally (90%). Positive ratings of all three kinds of relationships have gradually improved since May, particularly community relationships (when 80% rated these positively). Across all three survey rounds, no more than 1% of respondents rated any kind of relationship *negatively* ('bad' or 'very bad').

This increase over time is matched by respondents' own impressions, 13-23% of people in September saying their relationships had improved, and only 0-2% indicating they had gotten worse.

Community relationships were most positively rated by respondents with no children (100%), and least positively rated by those with four or more (84%).

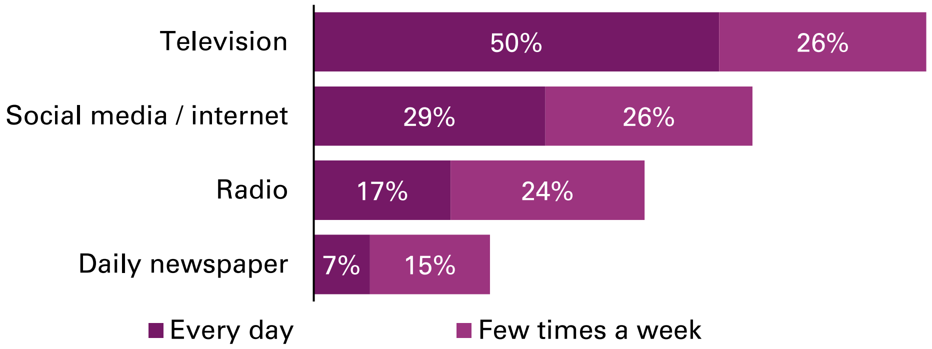
**How would you rate your relationships with…**

## News and information

In September, respondents reported lower levels of consumption across all kinds of media than in previous rounds, although with the same general pattern: respondents were most likely to watch television at least a few times per week (76%), followed by using social media and the internet (55%), then radio (41%) and lastly newspapers (22%). The differences were more pronounced in terms of *daily* use of media (with 50% watching television daily, compared to 7% reading newspapers daily).

Dili residents were less likely to listen to radio (34% did so there at least a few times a week, compared to 43% outside Dili), but more likely to watch television (85% vs 72%), use social media or the internet (76% vs 43%) or read newspapers (33% vs 18%). Internet and social media use also peaked among respondents aged 25-34 (70%) and was lowest among those aged 45 or over (35%).

**How often do you use different types of media and entertainment?**




At least a few times a week

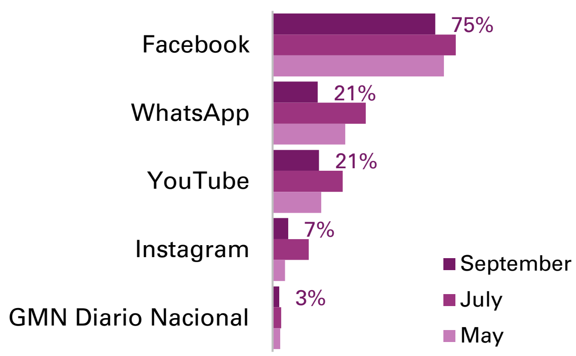
| September | July | May |
|---|---|---|
| 76%↓ | 83% | 82% |
| 55%↓ | 65% | 64% |
| 41%↓ | 55% | 59% |
| 22%↓ | 31% | 28% |

**In their household…**

**82%** Do not share their phone with others, and

**77%** Access the internet using a phone

**Top 5 most used websites or apps**




More than four in five respondents (82%) had their own phone, with almost as many accessing the internet or social media on their phone or knowing someone in their household who did (77%)[1].

Dili residents (88%) and people from households with no children (90%) were most likely to have their own, dedicated phone.

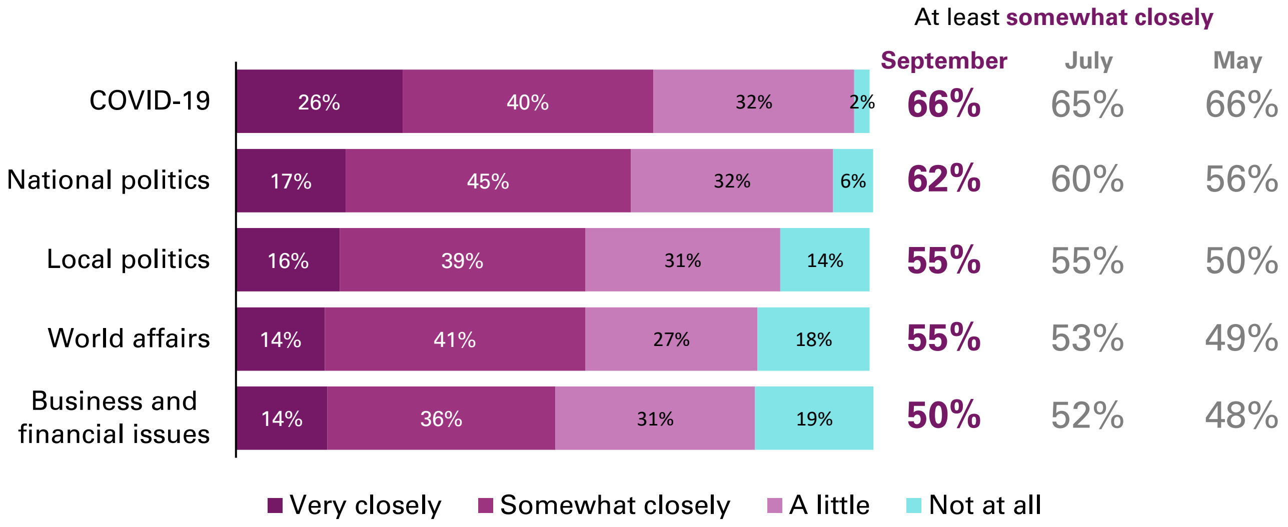
Overall, 85% of respondents indicated using some apps or websites frequently (whether on their phone, someone else's phone, or by other means)—a decline from levels of usage of over 94-95% in previous rounds. Regular app or website usage was higher in Dili (93%) than elsewhere (82%).

The most used website or app was Facebook (75%), followed by WhatsApp and YouTube (both 21%). Patterns of usage were broadly similar across men and women, except that women were more likely to regularly use Facebook (81%, compared to 69% of men).

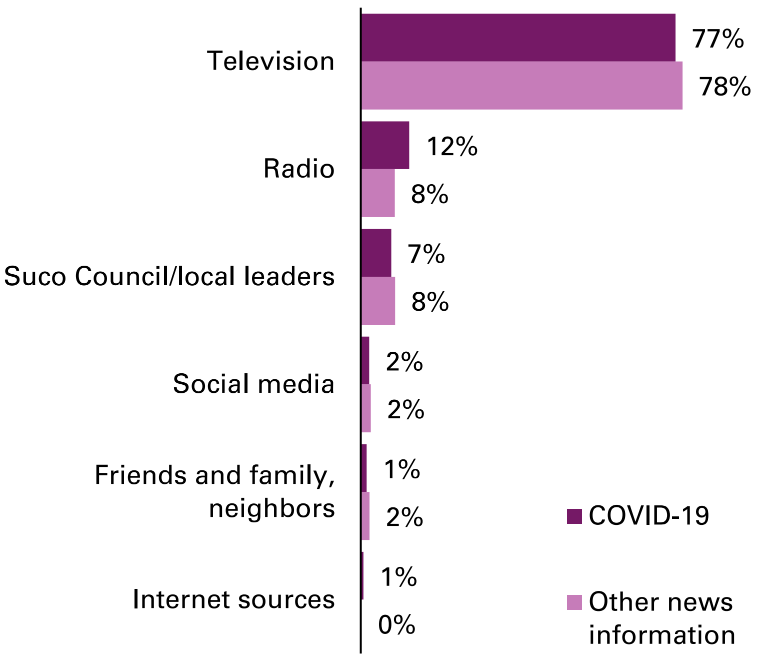
[1] As the survey was conducted over the telephone, all respondents had access to a telephone. As a comparison, in 2018, 76 percent of respondents provided a mobile phone number and only 33 percent of respondents said they had access to the internet.

In September, COVID-19 remained the most closely followed news topic. Nearly two thirds of respondents (66%) followed COVID-19 news at least 'somewhat closely', in line with previous months, including around one quarter (26%) who followed the topic 'very closely'. At least half of respondents also followed national politics (62%), local politics (55%), world affairs (55%) and/or business and financial news (50%). All these topics were more likely to be followed in Dili than elsewhere, particularly COVID-19 (81% in Dili, 61% outside of Dili). Respondents aged 35-44 were also more likely to follow all news topics closely, from COVID-19 (74%) to business and financial issues (56%).

**How closely do you follow each of the following topics?**




**What source of news and information do you trust the most?**




Television remains by far the most trusted source of information, both for COVID-19 (for 77% of respondents) and other news (78%). As in previous rounds, Dili residents were more likely to nominated television as their trusted source of information, both for COVID-19 news (91%) and other news (86%).

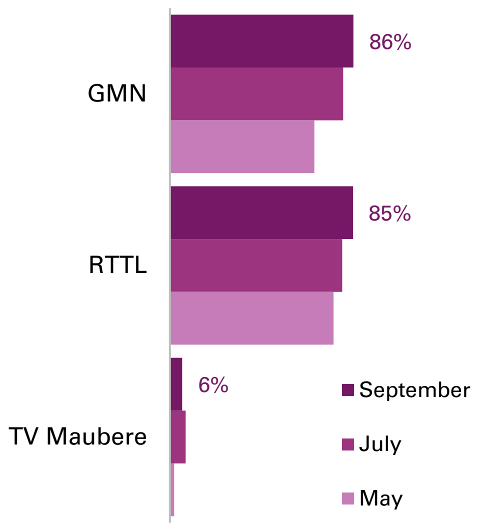
Radio was next most trusted source of information for COVID-19 news (12%), followed by Suco Council/local leaders (7%). Trust in the latter source varied considerably by municipality—this was cited by 0% of respondents in many municipalities, but was a much more commonly trusted source in Viqueque (31%), Aileu (28%) and Oecusse (22%).

Respondents who indicated they trusted television the most for other news and information were asked which stations they watched. Viewership levels of GMN (86%) and RTTL (85%) remain similar, as in July (although in May, RTTL had an edge over GMN, 76% to 67). Although the two stations have similar audience numbers overall, RTTL is relatively stronger in Dili (76 vs 67%), and GMN is relatively stronger outside Dili (90% vs 85%).

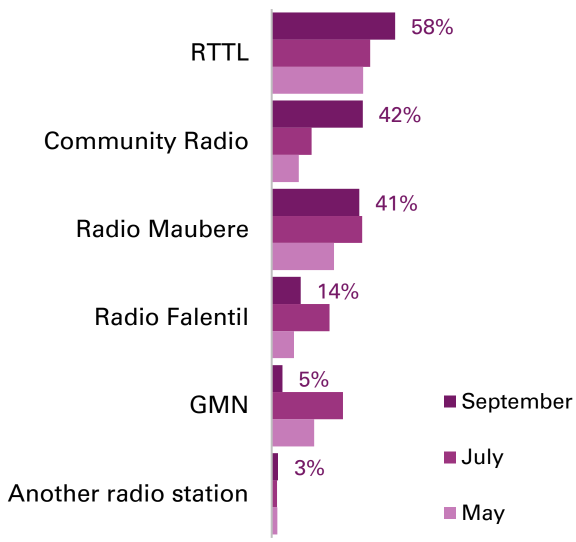
Respondents who indicated they trusted radio the most for other news and information were asked what stations they listened to. RTTL remains the most popular station, as it was in May and July, with a higher share of listeners in September (58%). Around four in ten also listened to Community Radio (42%, up from 19% in July) and Radio Maubere (41%, similar to July).

In Dili, RTTL held just over half of listeners (52%), but was less dominant over Community Radio, Radio Maubere, and Radio Falentil (each with 48%).

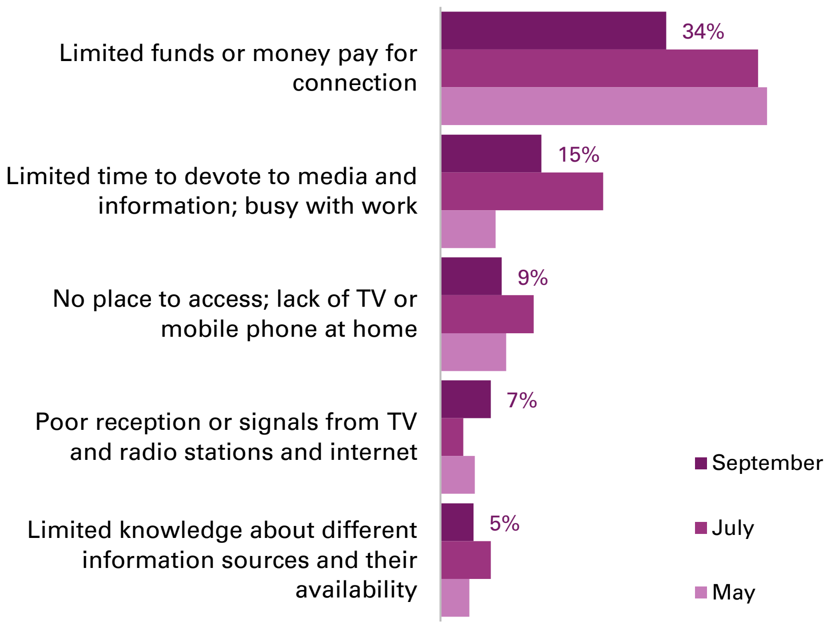
**What television channels do you most often watch?**




**What radio stations do you most often listen to?**




**Top 5 challenges in accessing information**



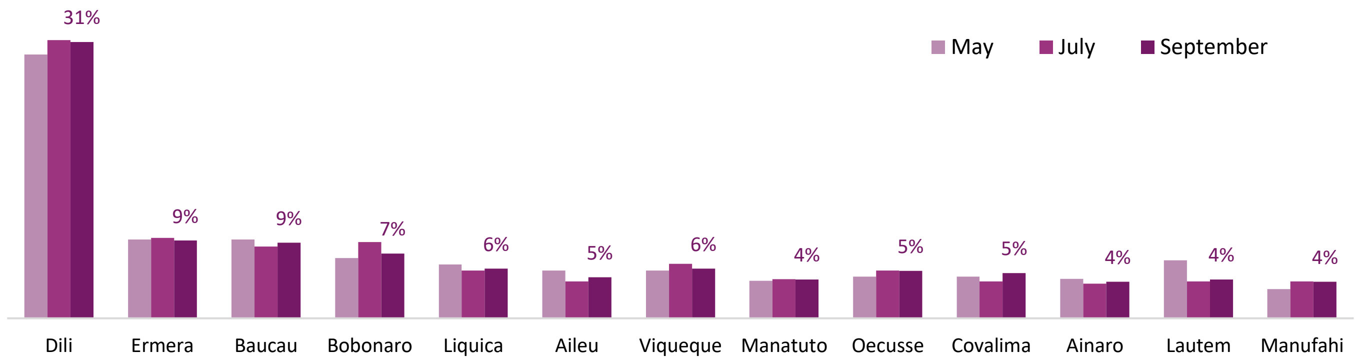

More than two in three respondents (69%) indicated they had encountered some challenge in accessing information, although this proportion has declined since May (82%). The most common challenge in each round has been limited funds to pay for a connection, which was less of a problem in September (34%) than in previous rounds (47-49%).

Poor reception or signals, a challenge for 7% overall (and 1% in Dili) is a more serious challenge in some municipalities (34% in Aileu, 20% in Oecusse). In general, respondents are more likely to indicate having encountered challenges outside Dili (75%) than inside (54%).

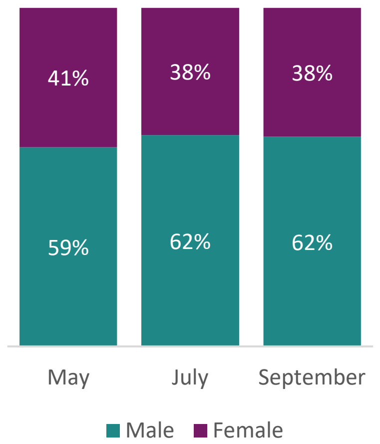
## Respondent profile

The profile of respondents below is based on **unweighted** data (raw counts of respondents, not adjusted to reflect the Timor-Leste population).

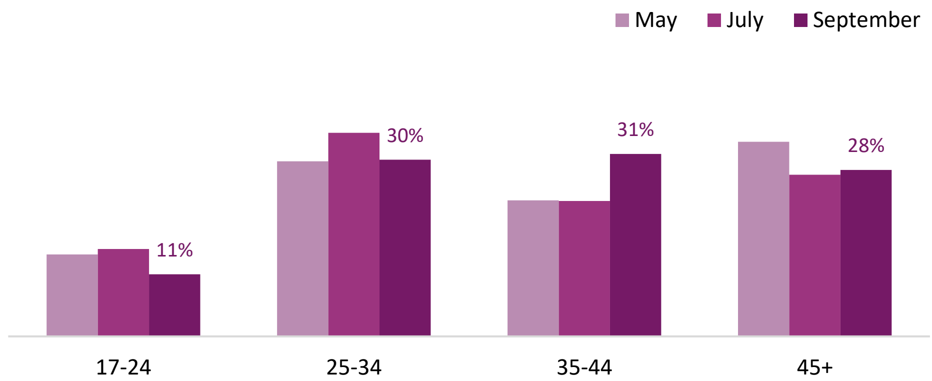
### District



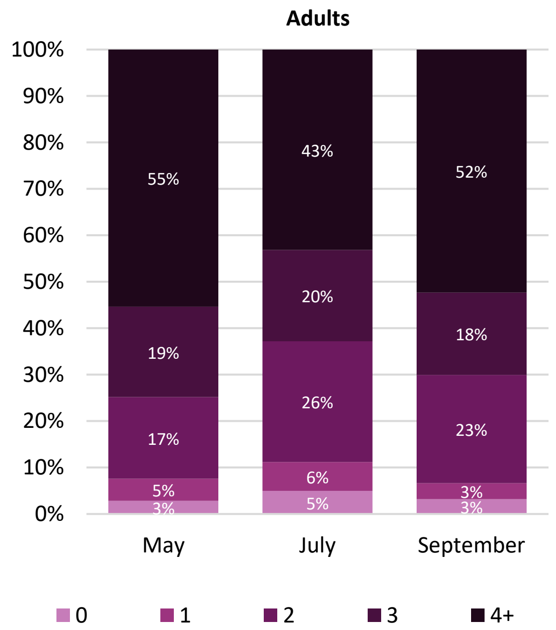

### Gender

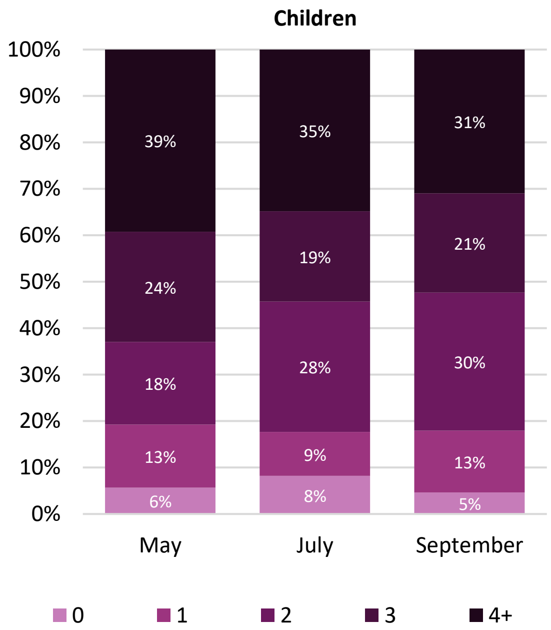



### Age

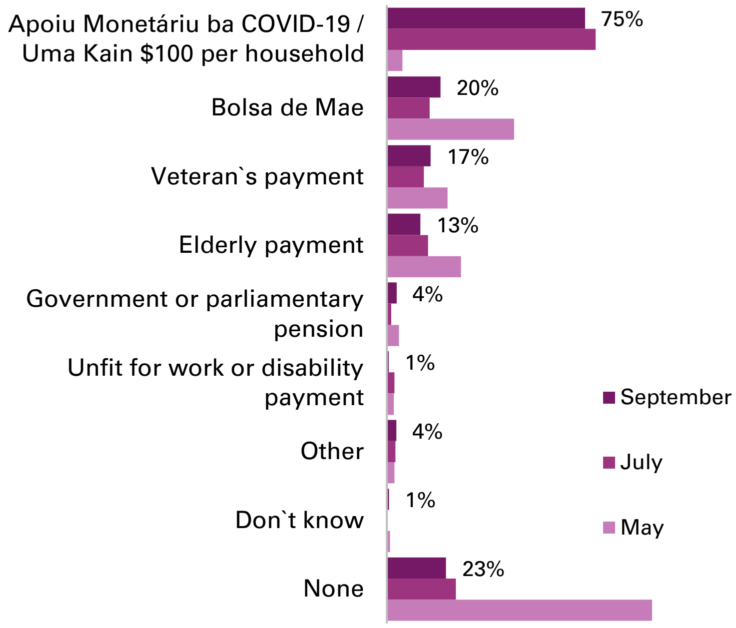



### Number of people in your household

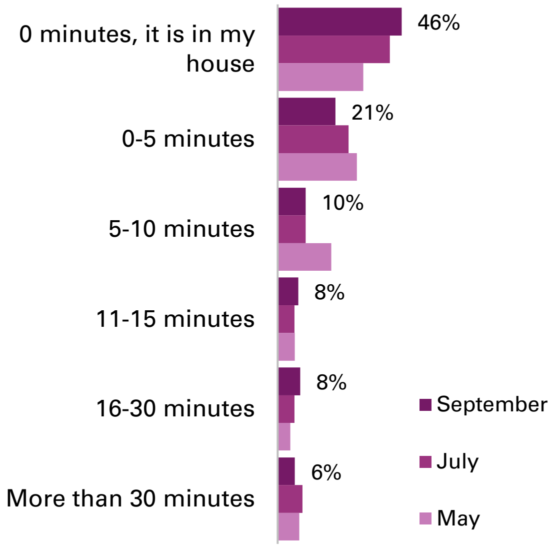


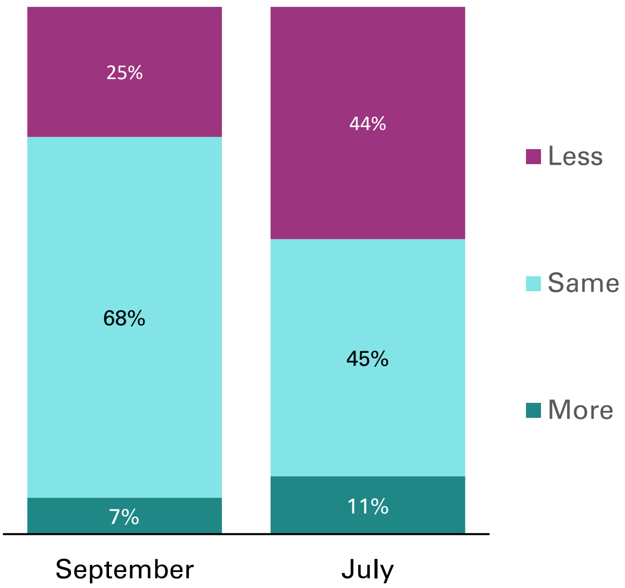
**Does your household receive any government payments?**



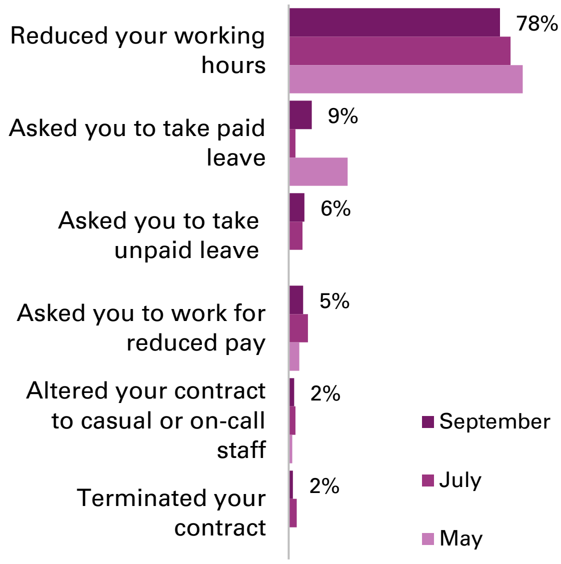

**On an ordinary day, how long does it take you to walk to fetch water?**




**Hours worked (if employed) since start of State of Emergency**




**(If hours have been reduced) Has your employer…**



# Methodology

## How was the questionnaire developed?

The Asia Foundation led the development of the questionnaire, with ORIMA Research providing advice where appropriate. Questions were drawn from previous research The Asia Foundation had conducted, as well as the ORIMA Research COVID-19 Recovery Tracker survey, amongst other international COVID-19 surveys. The July questionnaire was near-identical to May, with one new section about household duties and some other slight modifications. The Asia Foundation oversaw the programming and translation of the questionnaire into Open Data Kit (ODK), an open-source survey software platform.

## How was the sample frame developed and how effective was it?

The sample frame for this survey was drawn from past Tatoli and Community Policing surveys The Asia Foundation had conducted face-to-face. Cleaning of the sample involved the removal of blank / invalid / duplicate numbers (n=6,344).

When a number was dialed and a different person answered, this person was able to also complete the survey. Whilst steps have been taken to make this survey as representative as possible, the sample from this project is classified as non-probability.

| | Proposed minimum | May | July | September |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Males in Dili** | 38 | 70 | 78 | 80 |
| **Females in Dili** | 38 | 57 | 50 | 48 |
| **Males non-Dili** | 150 | 179 | 174 | 172 |
| **Females non-Dili** | 150 | 117 | 102 | 107 |

## How were the telephone interviews conducted?

To conduct the fieldwork, The Asia Foundation partnered with a Dili based NGO called MDI. Most interviewers had previously worked on projects with The Asia Foundation, and many have now worked on both rounds of the survey. Staff from The Asia Foundation undertook callback recontact for validation purposes, with no major issues found. Monitoring was also conducted by staff from The Asia Foundation.

In May, July, and September, nearly all surveys were conducted in Tetum, with only a handful conducted in Fatuluku, Bahasa Indonesian or Baikenu. Respondents were sent a $2 telephone credit for participating in the research.

| | May | July | September |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sample list**[2] | 2,307 | 1,192 | 534 |
| **Refusals** | 30 | 47 | 66 |
| **Non-working numbers** | 1,666 | 619 | 60 |
| **Final dataset** | 423 | 404 | 407 |
| **Response rate**[3] | 19.9% | 32.6% | 76.2% |
| **Fieldwork start (2020)** | 19 May | 18 July | 21 Sept |
| **Fieldwork end (2020)** | 25 May | 17 July | 02 October |
| **Median length of interview**[4] | 47m25s | 41m30s | 43m23s |
| **Number of interviewers** | 14 | 19 | 11 |

[2] In May, only 2,307 cases were called from the sample list. In July, enumerators targeted hard-to-reach quotas from the full sample list of 7,293 numbers (as the sample list contains gender and location of respondents). 1,192 numbers were drawn using this method.
[3] The response rate is calculated by the number of final survey completes coming from the sample frame divided by the number of valid phone numbers used from the sample frame.

[4] Excludes 25/29/28 cases where length was over 4 hours, most likely due to not pressing the final "submit" button.

## What steps have been taken to ensure the data is representative of the Timor-Leste population?

The research was designed to be as representative as possible of the adult (17+) population of Timor-Leste as defined by the 2015 Census. Considerations in the sampling approach included the need to enable comparisons between Dili and other districts, as well as being practical within the relatively short timeframe and limited sample.

Minimum quotas (see right, above) were set to ensure appropriate gender and geographic coverage. One quota, in relation to females outside of Dili, has never been met. Additionally, individual districts outside of Dili had minimum quotas proportionate to their population. The minimum quota required for each district was 10. Districts with higher populations (such as Baucau and Ermera) had minimum quotas of 25.

In each round, the sample was weighted to population benchmarks as defined in the 2015 census. This is to correct response bias from males and middle ages, as well as slight Dili over-sampling. Random Iterative Method (RIM) weighting using the anesrake package in R studio was chosen as the most appropriate weighting method with consideration to future comparability, simplicity and representation of the population. The variables used for weighting, the proportions within population and unweighted proportions are shown to the right.

| | Population | May unweighted | July unweighted |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *(N=662,285)* | *(n=423)* | *(n=404)* |
| Age | | | |
| **17-24** | 28% | 14% | 15% |
| **25-44** | 41% | 53% | 58% |
| **45-120** | 31% | 33% | 27% |
| Gender | | | |
| **Male** | 50% | 59% | 62% |
| **Female** | 50% | 41% | 38% |
| Location | | | |
| **Dili** | 26% | 30% | 32% |
| **Not Dili** | 74% | 70% | 68% |

## What data processing steps were taken?

Once ORIMA received the data, the following data processing steps were conducted:

- A duplicate check and speeder check was conducted. In round 1, this resulted in 4 cases being removed.
- String question responses in Tetun were translated by The Asia Foundation.
- "Don't know" answers in multiple-response question were made exclusive.
- Back-coding was conducted where appropriate.
- Variable labels and value labels were checked and modified for the purposes of reporting.
- Weighting was conducted as above.

Answers indicating a type of non-response (such as "Don't know", "Not applicable" and "Refused") have been removed from the base in this report, unless indicated otherwise.

## How confident can I be in the results?

| | May | July | September |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of responses** | 423 | 404 | 407 |
| **Statistical margin of error** | ±4.8% | ±4.9% | ±4.9% |

The statistical margin of error is calculated using a proportion percentage of 50% at the 95% confidence level. This can be used as a general guide when determining whether results are actually different or only different by chance. Other factors, such as the sampling method, non-response bias and measurement error should also be taken into consideration when interpreting results. Figures within text that are flagged as different amongst sub-groups were found as significant to at least one other category when using a Welch T-test at a 95% confidence interval with a Bonferroni correction within the cTables interface of SPSS. Analysis of differences amongst sub-groups are subject to higher margins of error and these tests take this into account. However, they must only be used as a general guide. Tests are not highlighted where no sub-group difference existed. For example, there were few differences by gender. Within this report, not all figures will add up to 100% due to rounding.

## About The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Working through our offices in 18 countries and informed by deep local expertise and six decades of experience, we address the critical issues affecting Asia in the 21st century by: strengthening governance, expanding economic opportunity, increasing environmental resilience, empowering women, and promoting international cooperation. In Timor-Leste, the Foundation is currently focused on strengthening governance and policy, ending violence against women, developing inclusive tourism, and promoting peace and justice.

For more information about The Asia Foundation please visit asiafoundation.org, or contact:


**Pauline Tweedie** – Country Representative – Dili, Timor-Leste – pauline.tweedie@asiafoundation.org

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## About ORIMA Research

ORIMA Research is an Australian social research company that specializes in the government and not-for-profit sectors. ORIMA has worked extensively with The Asia Foundation since 2015, including on data processing, survey methodology and analysis and reporting.

For more information about ORIMA Research please visit our website www.orima.com.au, or contact:


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This report was produced in accordance with the international standard ISO20252.