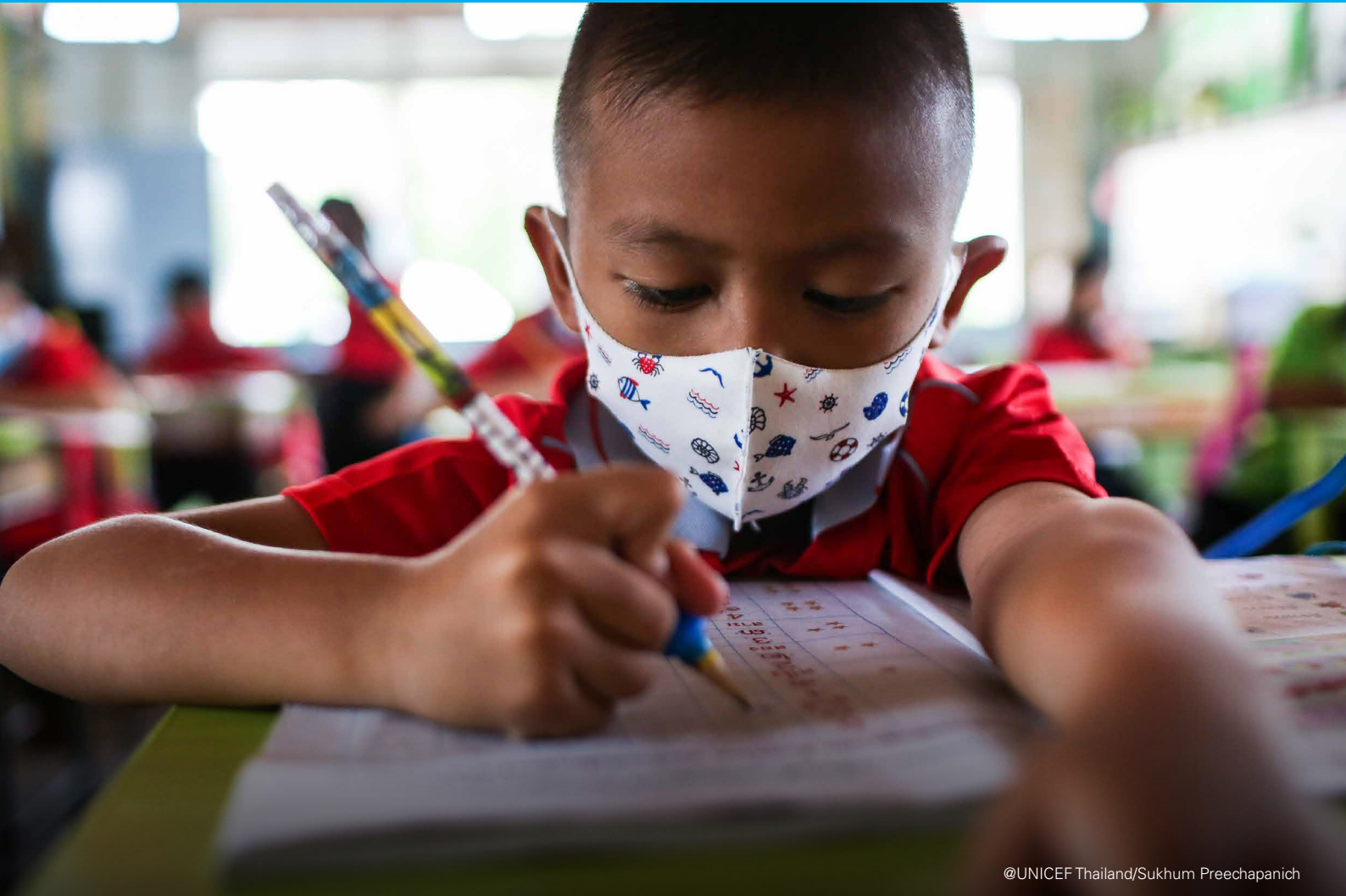




Mahidol University
Institute for Population
and Social Research

unicef 
for every child



@UNICEF Thailand/Sukhum Preechapanich

A RAPID ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION



Institute for Population and Social Research
Mahidol University

Supported by
UNICEF THAILAND



Mahidol University
Institute for Population
and Social Research

unicef 
for every child

A RAPID ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION



Executive Summary

This report consolidates results from analysis based on a rapid survey of families and children affected by internal migration. The purpose of this report is to discern the challenges that children their families are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular focus on children left behind, and to advocate with policymakers for policy response. This project is a continuation of research conducted in 2013 by the Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR) with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The previous survey, which comprised of 1,080 households who had young children ranging in age from newborns to 3 years old, was intended to examine the impact of parents' internal migration on the well-being of young children, in particular, on child development. The study settings are rural areas of two provinces, Khon Kaen in the northeast and Phitsanulok province in the north, where both internal and international migration is most common. Our previous survey was designed to include children whose parents were migrants as well as children who lived with their parents. We followed up with the same households approximately seven years after the previous survey, which took place from April 22 to May 17, 2020, by employing telephone interviews as with the previous study. The follow-up rate was about 80%, or 854 out of 1,080 households. The children, now in primary school, are between the ages of 7 to 10 years old.

As a result of the sampling design of the previous survey, which predetermined to oversample children with whom both parents are internal migrants, a majority of the children included in this 2020 survey do not live with either mother or father (58%). About one in four children (21%) have both parents at home, while 17% live with their mother only since the father lives away. Only 4% of the study children live with fathers only, since the mother is away. Caregivers of the children are generally grandparents (63%), while mothers account for 28% of the children's primary caregiver. Almost half of the children (46%) within this study have parents who are divorced or separated. When the parent's relationship ends, the children are more likely to stay with their mothers (29%) rather than with their fathers (7%), and fathers who terminate contact are more common than mothers (16% vs. 5%).

Findings are as followed.

Impacts on parents and households

- A lesser proportion of migrant parents (4% of migrant fathers, and 8% of migrant mothers) returned home during the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly due to the temporary closure of their workplaces (48% of returned mothers, and 42% of fathers) or job loss (18% of mothers and 38% of fathers). A higher number of migrant parents (69% of migrant mothers and 48% of migrant fathers) remained at their workplace, mostly because of having to work.
- Almost all households (90%) experienced income decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, regardless of the family situation. Among different groups, those living with both parents or one parent had slightly higher proportion of households affected (93% - 95% VS 87% for both parent-absent households).
- When disaggregated by gender, more mothers experienced a reduction in income or job loss than fathers (36% of household members with reduced income or job loss are mothers vs. 24% are fathers).
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, some households experienced the increase in expenditures, particularly in utilities (69%), health protection supplies (64%), daily consumption (40%), and food and drink (39%).
- More than one-third of the households reported a lesser amount of food in each meal when compared to the time before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Households adopted various strategies to cope with reduced income, including cutting expenses or working more (54%), taking out a loan (20%), or exhausting their savings (16%).
- A majority of households are in debt (88%) and 74% of those in debt are not able to pay back the loan during the COVID-19 period.
- Almost half (49%) of the families reported spending more time together than before the outbreak, particularly among households with both parents present, or with father absent.

Impacts on children

- Children living without parents were reported as spending more time on social media, online activities, watching TV, and playing games than before the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to children who live with at least one parent. In particular, children spending more time on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic was reported among 88% of the households with both parents absent compared to 38% among households where both parents are present, or mothers only present, and 15% where fathers only present.
- Aggressive verbal and facial expressions, and physical aggression are conventional child punishment methods (i.e., 79% of the children experienced being shouted, yelled, or screamed at, and were aggressively told that they were dumb or they were lazy). Two in five respondents reported that they sometimes hit or slapped children on their hands, arms, legs, or bottoms. One in ten respondents reported doing more punishment since March 2020. Households with mother present and father absent are more likely to execute these aggressive disciplinary behaviors compared with other types of households.
- The respondents perceived that measures to thwart the COVID-19 outbreak might affect the children's further study (27%), or the children may not be able to catch with school lessons (22%), together with their mental health (12%).

- Only a small group of the children (38%) are prepared for online-based education. Unpreparedness is due to the lack of mobile devices or computers (65%), no access to the internet (44%), adults lacking IT skills to assist the target child (TC) (43%), or due to the inability of the children to study online (24%). The issue of unreadiness is more evident among households where both parents are absent (66% vs. 54-58%).

Concerns and additional needs

- Reduced income due to the COVID-19 pandemic is the top issue (47%) that the respondents are most concerned with, followed by health protection and fear of COVID-19 infection (28%).
- Two-thirds of the respondents reported anticipating their survival time at fewer than three months if the pandemic continues, and more than one-third (38%) reported that their household could survive for less than one month.
- Family, relatives, and friends are the most essential coping support to lessen people's worries about COVID-19. More than half (55%) of the households reported turning to family, relatives, and friends in times of stress about the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Three out of four households have members who registered for government subsidies, with two-fifths (39%) of those registered being rejected at the time of the survey.¹ Not registering because of being unable to access the program website is substantial (16%).
- Almost all households need family support (89%). The main kind of assistance required is cash subsidies (80%), followed by having existing state welfare increased (37%), job-creation or income-generation (27%), then having debt repayment waived (24%).
- Households who need support for children account for a staggering 81%. Support required for children includes student uniforms (61%), school supplies (58%), extra class supplies (42%), and scholarships (22%).

¹ Some government programs to release the impact of COVID-19 were being launched at the time of survey.



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Background	11
1.1 Rationale	11
1.2 Objectives of the survey	11
1.3 Methodology	12
1.4 Ethical consideration	13
2. Findings	15
2.1 Characteristics of the respondents	15
2.2 Characteristics of households	16
2.3 Characteristics of the children	19
2.4 Characteristics of caretaker	20
2.5 Mother's and father's migration status and living arrangement during COVID-19 outbreak	23
2.6 Socio-economic impacts on households	25
2.7 The quantity of daily food in household	31
2.8 Daily activities of TC and time spending with caretakers	32
2.9 Violence against children	34
2.10 Household concerns and additional needs	36
3. Summary	45

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Percentage of households in 2020 by type of households	12
Table 1.2	Summary of the fieldwork	13
Table 2.1	Characteristics of the respondents	15
Table 2.2	Household size by type of household	16
Table 2.3	Percentage of household with vulnerable members	17
Table 2.4	Social welfare received from the government by type of household	17
Table 2.5	Sources of household income by type of household	18
Table 2.6	Returned household members by type of household	18
Table 2.7	Gender and age of TC by type of household	19
Table 2.8	School class attended in the last school year of the TC	20
Table 2.9	Relationship of caretakers by type of household	21
Table 2.10	Current marital status of TC's parents by type of household	22
Table 2.11	Current marital status of TC's parents by type of household	22
Table 2.12	Mothers' and fathers' living status, and living arrangement during COVID-19 outbreak	23
Table 2.13	Household income reductions during the COVID-19 pandemic by type of household	25
Table 2.14	Number of household members with reduced income or job loss by type of household	25
Table 2.15	Father's and mother's income reduced or lost job by type of household	26
Table 2.16	Changes in expenses during COVID-19 pandemic by type of household	26
Table 2.17	Whether household is financially affected by type of household	29
Table 2.18	Household debt by type of household	29
Table 2.19	Percentage of households spending time together during the pandemic	30

Table 2.20	The quantity of daily amount of food by type of household	31
Table 2.21	The quantity of daily food by change of food expense	31
Table 2.22	Daily activities of TC by type of household	32
Table 2.23	Respondents reporting the higher frequency or longer time spending on activities by type of household	33
Table 2.24	Time spent together between caretaker and TC since March 2020	33
Table 2.25	Parental discipline by type of household	34
Table 2.26	Parental discipline compared to the time before March 2020	35
Table 2.27	Perceived domestic violence in community	35
Table 2.28	Whether household is worried that the pandemic would affect daily life by type of household	36
Table 2.29	Things that are most concerning with the pandemic of COVID-19 by type of household	36
Table 2.30	Methods of coping with the anxiety due to the COVID-19	37
Table 2.31	Expected survival time with current resources if the pandemic continues by type of household	38
Table 2.32	Registered for government support (5,000 baht for 3 months) by type of household	38
Table 2.33	Reasons for not having registered for government support by type of household	38
Table 2.34	Whether household member who registered received support by type of household	39
Table 2.35	Priorities perceived from the impact of COVID-19	39
Table 2.36	Highest priority perceived from the impact of COVID-19 by type of household	40
Table 2.37	Perceived effects of the measures due to the pandemic on the TC by type of household	40
Table 2.38	TC's readiness for online-based learning by type of household	41
Table 2.39	Reasons for not ready for online learning	41
Table 2.40	Specific support needed for family by type of household	42
Table 2.41	Specific support needed for TC by type of household	43



1. Background

1.1 Rationale

While the risk of infection of COVID-19, and its economic impact, is already being felt by the entire global population due to restrictions on travel or available services, analysis from across countries reveals that those who are economically and socially vulnerable are the most affected.

Children are more vulnerable to social and economic impact, with some groups of children being at a higher probability of facing increased risk of deprivation. One such group is children who are left behind, or those not living with either biological parent. Based on data of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Thailand collected from 2015 to 2016, more than one in every five children are left behind.² These children are most often living with older persons who are not only in high-risk groups of possible COVID-19 infection, but are also vulnerable to social and economic risks due to the high poverty rate. The income of the older persons often depends on remittances from family members working in Bangkok or other municipalities, and which may likewise be facing particular vulnerabilities that may not come to the attention of high-level policymakers. Currently, no research or evidence is available that grasps the potential socio-economic impacts on children left behind and their families, and no notable policy has been announced to this group.

The purpose of this rapid assessment is to identify the challenges that children left behind and their families are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to advocate with policymakers for a targeted policy response. The assessment consisted of phone surveys to households with children left behind based on the previously sampled population (1,080 cases from Khon Kaen and Phitsanulok provinces, where the rate of children left behind was particularly high).

Findings presented in this report are expected to be utilized for advocacy, programming, and policy planning processes to mobilize further needed support for children and families left behind.

1.2 Objectives of the survey

This rapid survey aims at understanding how the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, which started its escalation in Thailand as of March 2020, has affected the lives of children and families left behind by migrant parents. Results are expected to serve as evidence for policy implications for providing needed support for children left behind, as opposed to those living with parents. Specific objectives include:

² National Statistical Office, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2015-2016, NSO, Bangkok, 2016 <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/sites/unicef.org.thailand/files/2018-06/Thailand_MICS_Full_Report_EN_0.pdf>

- To comprehend critical issues faced by children left behind and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic period.
- To comprehend how left-behind families and left-behind children respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To comprehend how left-behind families and left-behind children cope with or adjust to, or plan to cope with or adjust to the COVID-19 situation.
- To identify the need for support so that policies can respond to the identified needs in a timely manner.

1.3 Methodology

Telephone interviews were conducted with about 1,080 households of left-behind children and children living with parents from the original 2013-2014 CLAIM2 survey (CLAIM2 survey). The study is likewise set in two provinces, Khon Kaen and Phitsanulok, as with the initial 2013-2014 CLAIM2 survey. The children were zero to three years of age in the previous round of surveys; thus, in 2020, these same children are now between seven and ten years old. The status with some children's parents has remained the same, while the status of other children's parents has changed from migrants to returnees, or from usually residents to migrants, as shown in the table below.

The highest proportion of unchanged status of parents is found among both parent-absent households, where a majority (81%) fell into both-parents absent in 2013-2014, and again in 2020. Only 8% changed to both-parent present. Among both-parent present households in 2013-2014, 60% remained unchanged, while almost one-fifth (18%) changed to both-parent absent households, 14% to father-only absent, and 8% to mother-only absent. As for households with father-only absent in 2013-2014, nearly half (47%) kept the same status, and one-third (34%) moved to both-parent absent.

In this 2020 survey, more than half of the children (58%) do not have their parents living with them. There are 33 households (4%) with only the father living with the children.

Table 1.1 Percentage of households in 2020 by type of households

Households in 2020	%	N
Both parents present	21.2	181
Father absent	17.2	147
Mother absent	3.9	33
Both parents absent	57.7	493
Total	100.0	854

The respondents of the survey are the children's caretakers or adult persons in the households who were available to participate in the telephone interview.

Table 1.2 Summary of the fieldwork

Number of households targeted	1,080
Number of households with telephone number	1,032
Number of households interviewed	854
% completed interviews	79%
Number of households unable to follow-up	225
Moved or not in the usual place of living	118
No contact or could not contact	73
Refused	11
Dead (children)	3
Other reasons	20
Number of interviewers	17
Start date	April 22, 2020
End date	May 17, 2020
Total interview duration	26 days

1.4 Ethical consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from IPSR-IRB Mahidol University (COA. No. 2020/04-187). Standard research ethical procedures for human-participation research have been strictly followed, including respect for persons (e.g., informed consent rules, respect confidentiality, and privacy), beneficence, and justice.



2. Findings

2.1 Characteristics of the respondents

In total, 854 adult respondents were interviewed. A majority (88%) of the respondents are female, 45% of the respondents are 41 to 59 years old, and 59% of the respondents completed primary education or lower. The respondents work as self-employed with no employee in the highest proportion (41%), while one-fourth are not working or unemployed.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of the respondents

Total number of respondents (N= 854)		%	N
Gender	Female	88.1	752
	Male	11.9	102
Age group	Ages 18 - 25 years	2.2	19
	Ages 26 - 40 years	27.4	234
	Ages 41 - 59 years	45.3	387
	Ages 60 years and over	25.1	214
Place of residence before COVID-19	Khon Kaen	47.7	407
	Phitsanulok	49.6	424
	Other provinces	2.7	23
Highest completed level of education	Never been to school	3.9	33
	Primary education or lower	58.5	500
	Lower secondary education	14.9	127
	Upper secondary / vocational / Diploma	18.0	154
	Bachelor or higher	4.6	40

Total number of respondents (N= 854)		%	N
Type of job at the time of survey	Government official or state employee	3.3	28
	Private employee	6.3	54
	Self-employed with no employees (e.g., farming, vendor, hawker stalls, writer, motorcycle, taxi)	41.0	350
	Business owner with no more than ten employees	1.4	12
	General laborer	20.8	178
	Family business without pay	1.1	9
	Not working or Unemployed	26.1	223

2.2 Characteristics of households

The range of the number of household members is between two to thirteen persons (overall mean = 4.9), 59% of households have four to six members, 24% have two to three household members, 15% have seven to nine household members, and only 2% have ten or more persons in the households. Both-parent absent households have the lowest number of household members.

Table 2.2 Household size by type of household

Number of household members (persons)	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
	Mean = 5.3	Mean = 5.3	Mean = 5.0	Mean = 4.6	Mean = 4.9
2 – 3	15.5	14.3	21.2	30.6	24.2
4 – 6	58.6	61.9	60.6	58.0	58.9
7 – 9	23.8	21.8	18.2	9.7	15.1
10+	2.2	2.0	0.0	1.6	1.8
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

Range: 2 – 13, mean = 4.9

More than half (55%) of the households have older persons ages 60 years old or older in the household, about half (49%) have persons with chronic diseases, 11% have disabled persons, and 29% have children aged birth to five years old.

Table 2.3 Percentage of household with vulnerable members

		N of households (N = 854)	%
Household with	Children aged 0-5 years (Range: 1-4, mean = 1.17)	244	28.6
	Older persons aged 60 years and older (Range: 1-3, mean = 1.49)	468	54.8
	Disabled persons (Range: 1-2, mean = 1.08)	97	11.4
	Bedridden patient (Range: 1-1, mean = 1)	17	2.0
	Persons with chronic disease (Range: 1-3, mean = 1.25)	419	49.1

More than half of the household members receive social welfare cards from the government, and one-fourth receive an allowance for the elderly. About one in three households (32%) do not receive any of the existing social welfare benefits from the government. The proportion is particularly high among both-parent present (47%) households, followed by father-absent households (39%).

Table 2.4 Social welfare received from the government by type of household

	N of respondents receiving government welfare By HH type					
	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall	N
Does not receive benefits	47.0	38.8	24.2	24.9	32.0	273
Social welfare card	45.9	53.7	42.4	59.6	55.0	470
Child support grant	3.9	4.1	0.0	0.2	1.6	14
Elderly grant	5.5	8.8	48.5	34.5	24.5	209
Disability grant	1.1	0.7	3.0	1.8	1.5	13
Subsidized money for agricultural sectors	3.3	0.7	6.1	2.4	2.5	21
Subsidized money for persons impacted by COVID-19	2.8	4.8	0.0	0.8	1.9	16
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.4	3

The interviewed households receive income from various sources. The primary source of household income is wage labor or self-employed, from which 91% of households receive income. A majority of households (84%) were also supported by government, e.g., state welfare for the elderly, low-income person, or agricultural subsidy. It should be noted that remittance is the source of income of more than half of the households (56%). Receiving income from remittances is particularly high among households of which both parents are absent.

Table 2.5 Sources of household income by type of household

Sources of household income	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Wage labor or self-employed (e.g., farmer, gardener, merchant)	98.9	97.3	90.9	86.4	91.1
Government benefits (e.g., state welfare for elderly, low income person, agricultural subsidy)	76.8	85.0	84.8	86.6	84.2
Remittances	14.4	33.3	33.3	78.9	55.6
Allowance for community health service volunteer	1.7	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.6

Across types of households, we found that about 10% of the households (n = 82) have members who returned home since March 2020, with the highest proportion (14%) being among both parents absent households. In terms of persons who returned home (131 persons in total), the majority (79%) are ages 18 to 59 years.

Table 2.6 Returned household members by type of household

Household members returned home since March 2020	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Total N
Children ages 0-5 years	1	0	0	7	8
Children ages 6-17 years	2	0	0	15	17
Persons ages 18-59 years	7	5	1	91	104
Older persons ages 60 years and older	1	0	0	1	2
Total N	11	5	1	114	131
Total %	8.4	3.8	0.8	87.0	100.0

2.3 Characteristics of the children

The proportion of male children in the interviewed household is higher than that of female children (54% vs. 46%). This is consistent across most types of households, except among households with mother absent, where the proportion of male children accounts for only 36%.

Two in five children were eight years old, while 38% and 22% were six to seven and nine to eleven years old, respectively. Across types of households, the highest proportion (51%) of children younger than eight years old live with both parents, while only 27% of those older than eight years old live with father only.

Table 2.7 Gender and age of TC³ by type of household

Gender of TC	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Gender					
Female	48.6	44.2	63.6	43.8	45.7
Male	51.4	55.8	36.4	56.2	54.3
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
Age					
6-7 years old	50.8	32.7	42.4	33.9	37.6
8 years old	30.4	45.6	30.3	43.2	40.4
9-11 years old	18.8	21.8	27.3	22.9	22.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
Mean	7.6	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.8
S.D.	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9

Most of the children are enrolled in the grade level consistent with their age (i.e., seven years old in Grade 1 or Prathom 1 or 2,⁴ eight years old in grade 1 or 2, etc.). Note that there are only eight children who were enrolled in a grade level lower than their age.

³ Target child (TC) refers to the child who was subject of the study on “The Impact of Internal Migration on Early Childhood Well-Being and Development” conducted by IPSR with UNICEF support, published in 2016. The present phone survey used the same sampling frame to follow-up and ask questions about the situation changes due to COVID-19.

⁴ This is depending on the children’s birth month. Children must be seven years old as of their last birthday to enroll in Grade 1. Since the semester starts in May, children born by May or after May would result in different grade levels for children born in the same year.

Table 2.8 School class attended in the last school year of the TC

School class attended in the last school year	Age						Overall
	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Kindergarten	75.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.8
Prathom 1	22.9	72.9	22.9	1.2	4.2	0.0	34.2
Prathom 2	2.1	12.5	72.2	41.7	4.2	0.0	41.33
Prathom 3	0.0	0.0	3.8	55.2	62.5	0.0	13.82
Prathom 4	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.2	29.2	0.0	1.17
Prathom 5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.12
Other (not enrolled in school, home school, ever enrolled but dropped out)	0.0	0.4	0.9	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.59
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	48	273	345	163	24	1	854

2.4 Characteristics of caretaker

Overall, the highest proportion (46%) of children have their maternal grandparents (generally maternal grandmothers) as their caretakers. Mothers as caretakers account for 28%, while paternal grandparents (again, usually paternal grandmothers) account for 17%. Among children who live with both parents, three out of four have their mothers as their primary caretakers. Children who live with only their mother have their mothers as caretakers for about two-thirds of the time, lower than among both-parent present households, whereas the remaining children are cared for by their maternal grandparents. Data suggests that when fathers are absent, mothers may have to work outside of the home more than when the father and mother are together. When both parents are absent, the roles of grandparents are more so evident for the maternal side than for the paternal side. The roles of paternal grandparents as caretakers are clearly revealed among mother-absent households, where 70% of the children who live with father only have their paternal grandparents as caretakers.

Table 2.9 Relationship of caretakers by type of household

Caretaker	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Mother	75.1	66.7	0.0	1.6 ⁵	28.3
Father	9.9	0.0	18.2	0.2	2.9
Maternal grandparents	9.9	32.7	9.1	65.5	45.9
Paternal grandparents	4.4	0.7	69.7	23.5	17.3
Other	0.6	0.0	3.0	9.1	5.5
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

The age of caretakers, in general, reflects their relationship with the child. The majority of caretakers are 50 years old or older (59%), in all probability indicating that these are the children's grandparents, with caretakers 18 to 39 years of age sharing 22%. Caretakers over 50 years of age are highest among households in which both parents are absent (83%), followed by mother-absent households (79%).

Similar to age, educational level of caretakers also implies their relationship with the child. Two in three children have caretakers who completed only primary education or lower (67%), and less than one-fifth (19%) have caretakers with at least a lower educational level. Caretakers with a primary level of education or lower are the highest among children where both parents are absent (87%), where the mother is absent (85%), and where the children are cared for by grandparents.

More than half of the children (53%) have parents whose relationships are still intact, while 46% of the children experienced parents' divorce and 2% whose parents are widowed. The changes in marital status are remarkable, given that seven years ago (2013-2014), when we first interviewed these households, all parents were married. The proportion of broken families are the highest in households without a mother (82%) or without a father (76%). Half of both-parent absent households are where parents are either separated or divorced. Further investigation is needed to confirm whether migration leads to or triggers marital dissolution.

⁵ There are nine inconsistent cases. Seven cases were children who live with parents outside of the respondent households in the surveyed provinces. The children will return during the semester break. For some of them, their mothers also returned to their home of origin due to the COVID-19 lockdown. The other two children live in the surveyed households, and are taken care of by their step-mothers (included in the same category as biological mother).

Table 2.10 Current marital status of TC's parents by type of household

Parents' marital status	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Married / Living as a couple	100.0	20.4	12.1	47.3	52.5
Separated / Divorced	0.0	76.2	81.8	50.9	45.7
Widow	0.0	3.4	6.1	1.8	1.9
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

The next table looks at the data by marital status to establish the extent of parental migration across parents' marital status. Data shows that even among children whose parents are still together, more than half of the children do not live with either parent (52%). The majority of children who live with their mother (29%) rather than with father (7%) suggest that when the parents either separate or divorce, the children more commonly stay with their mother than with their father (around four times higher). The highest proportion (64%) are children whose parents are separated or divorced, and who do not live with either parent.

Table 2.11 Current marital status of TC's parents by type of household

Parents' marital status	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Total (%)	Total (N)
Married or Living as a couple	40.4	6.7	0.9	52.0	100.0	448
Separated or Divorced	0.0	28.7	6.9	64.4	100.0	390
Widow	0.0	31.3	12.5	56.3	100.0	16
Overall	21.2	17.2	3.9	57.7	100.0	854

2.5 Mother's and father's migration status and living arrangement during COVID-19 outbreak

The next table looks at both the mother's and the father's migration status and their living arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of children (61%) have mothers who usually live somewhere other than their home, and even a higher proportion of children have migrant fathers (73%). Three out of four migrant mothers usually live in another province, 16% within the same province but different residence than the interviewed households, and 4% live outside of Thailand. For migrant fathers, the majority of them live in another province (65%). There are a number of households of which the respondents did not know where the mother or the father lives, which may be indicative of an unsatisfactory relationship between the parents and the households. The proportion of migrant fathers whose residence is unknown by the respondent household is much higher than that of migrant mothers (16% vs. 5%). Data implies that when parents dissolved their relationship, losing contact with fathers is more common than with mothers.

Only a small proportion of migrant parents returned home during the COVID-19 pandemic (8% for mothers and 4% for fathers). Most migrant parents returned to their home due to the temporary closing of their workplace (48% of mothers and 42% of fathers) or job loss (18% of mothers and 38% of fathers), and to avoid becoming infected with COVID-19 (15% of mothers and 4% of fathers). It should be noted that a higher proportion of fathers returned home due to losing their jobs than mothers.

For migrant parents who remained at their place of employment, the majority reported as still being able to work (69% of mothers and 48% of fathers). However, we do not know whether their income remains the same or has been reduced during the pandemic. Migrant fathers still at their place of employment reported not any longer being in a relationship with TC's mothers at a much higher amount than that of migrant mothers (39% vs. 15%).

Table 2.12 Mothers' and fathers' living status, and living arrangement during COVID-19 outbreak

School class attended in the last school year	Mother		Father	
	%	N	%	N
Usually at home	38.4	328	25.1	214
Usually in another place	60.8	519	72.6	620
Died	0.8	7	2.3	20
Total	100.0	854	100.0	854
Usual residence, if usually in another place				
Within the province	15.6	81	16.9	105
In another province	75.5	392	65.3	405
In another country	3.7	19	2.1	13
Do not know	5.2	27	15.7	97
Total	100.0	519	100.0	620

Table 2.12 Mothers' and fathers' living status, and living arrangement during COVID-19 outbreak (Cont.)

School class attended in the last school year	Mother		Father	
	%	N	%	N
Whether still at place of employment, if usually in another place				
Returned home	7.7	40	3.9	24
Still at place of employment	92.3	479	96.0	596
Total	100.0	519	100.0	620
Why are they back? (If usually living in another place but currently returned)				
Income reduced	5.0	2	4.2	1
Loss job	17.5	7	37.5	9
To avoid COVID-19 infection	15.0	6	4.2	1
Work temporarily closed	47.5	19	41.7	10
Visit home	10.0	4	4.2	2
Other	5.0	2	8.3	2
Total	100.0	40	100.0	24
Why are they still there? (If usually in another place as well as still at place of employment)				
Have to work	69.1	331	47.8	285
Waiting for job	7.9	38	3.0	18
If returned, would be quarantined	1.7	8	1.2	7
Separated, Divorced, or Remarried	15.2	73	38.6	230
In prison	0.6	3	1.2	7
Other	1.3	6	0.8	5
Unable to travel back	1.0	5	0.5	3
Worry about being a COVID-19 carrier to family	0.2	1	0.3	2
Do not know or lost touch	2.9	14	6.5	39
Total	100.0	479	100.0	596

2.6 Socio-economic impacts on households

Most households (90%) experienced a reduction in income during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the same proportion of households reported that at least one of their members either having reduced income or job loss. Across types of households, 87% of both-parent absent households lost income or have members lose income or lose job, compared to 93-95% in other types of households.

Table 2.13 Household income reductions during the COVID-19 pandemic by type of household

Impacts on household	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Household income reduced	94.5	93.2	93.9	86.6	89.7
Household income did not reduce	5.5	6.8	6.1	13.4	10.3
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

More than half of the respondent households (55%) have at least two persons in the household who either had their income reduced or lost their job. The proportion of having at least two persons in the household affected by COVID-19 is highest among both-parent present households (71%), and lowest among both-parent absent households (49%). Data are consistent with the results shown above.

Table 2.14 Number of household members with reduced income or job loss by type of household

Number of HH member with reduced income or job loss	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
None	5.5	6.8	6.1	13.4	10.3
1	23.2	38.1	39.4	37.9	34.9
2	49.7	40.1	36.4	37.3	40.4
3+	21.6	15.0	18.2	11.4	14.4
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

When asked who in the household faced a reduction in their income or job loss, almost one-fourth (24%) of the households reported father, and 36% reported that mother had faced such issues. Fathers who lost their jobs, according to the household respondent, account for 5%, while 8% for mothers. The higher proportion of mothers experiencing a reduction in their income or loss of job compared to fathers suggests that women encounter greater economic risk than men in time of COVID-19.

Table 2.15 Father's and mother's income reduced or lost job by type of household

	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Whether household has the member with reduced income who is the father of the child					
Yes	75.1	4.1	69.7	7.7	23.8
No	24.9	95.9	30.3	92.3	76.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Father's income reduced	63.5	3.4	60.6	4.7	19.1
Father losses job	11.6	0.7	9.1	3.0	4.7
Whether household has a member with reduced income who is the mother of the child					
Yes	76.2	74.8	6.1	11.8	36.1
No	23.8	25.2	93.9	88.2	63.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mother's income reduced	65.8	58.5	3.0	6.3	27.8
Mother losses job	10.5	16.3	3.0	5.5	8.3

The survey asked about whether the household endures additional expenditures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data notes the relatively high proportion of some expenditures. These expenditures include food and drink (39%), utilities (electricity and water) (69%), daily consumption (40%), and health protection supplies (64%). The increased expenditures are more evident among both-parent present and father-absent households.

Table 2.16 Changes in expenses during COVID-19 pandemic by type of household

Changes in expenses during COVID-19 pandemic	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Food and drink					
Same	32.6	35.4	51.5	38.1	37.0
Increased	42.0	40.8	27.3	37.7	38.8
Decreased	25.4	23.8	21.2	24.1	24.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

Table 2.16 Changes in expenses during COVID-19 pandemic by type of household (Cont.)

Changes in expenses during COVID-19 pandemic	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Medicine and health services					
Same	82.9	81.6	84.9	83.2	82.9
Increased	11.1	10.2	9.1	13.4	12.2
Decreased	6.1	8.2	6.1	3.5	4.9
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
Electricity and water					
Same	20.4	23.1	27.3	25.2	23.9
Increased	75.7	72.8	54.6	65.5	68.5
Decreased	3.9	4.1	18.2	9.3	7.6
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
Telephone and internet					
Same	73.5	74.2	81.8	82.8	79.3
Increased	23.8	16.3	15.2	12.6	15.7
Decreased	2.8	9.5	3.0	4.7	5.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
Traveling					
Same	35.4	37.4	51.5	42.0	40.2
Increased	13.8	10.9	3.0	9.9	10.7
Decreased	50.8	51.7	45.5	48.1	49.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

Table 2.16 Changes in expenses during COVID-19 pandemic by type of household (Cont.)

Changes in expenses during COVID-19 pandemic	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Daily consumption					
Same	50.8	49.7	72.7	57.8	55.5
Increased	44.2	44.2	21.2	37.9	39.7
Decreased	5.0	6.1	6.1	4.3	4.8
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
Hygiene products					
Same	23.2	25.2	48.5	39.0	33.6
Increased	76.8	70.8	45.5	58.0	63.7
Decreased	0.0	4.1	6.1	3.0	2.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
Supplementary food					
Same	79.6	74.8	75.8	82.4	80.2
Increased	11.6	11.6	9.1	9.5	10.3
Decreased	8.8	13.6	15.2	8.1	9.5
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

Consistent with the data previously discussed about the extent of reduction in income that households experience, we found 91% of households are financially affected. Again, the highest figure is observed in both-parent present households (96%), and the lowest in both-parent absent households (88%). However, the proportion of households financially impacted is high in all types.

What did households do to cope with being financially affected during the COVID-19 outbreak? Data shows the priority strategy was that almost half of households tried their best to cope with the unpleasant circumstance of decreasing income by reducing their expenses (47%). A noteworthy proportion of households could not avoid borrowing money from others (20%). Only 16% of households have the advantage of using their own savings.

Table 2.17 Whether household is financially affected by type of household

	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Household is financially affected	96.1	93.9	93.9	87.6	90.8
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
If financially affected, coping strategy (by priority)					
Reduce expenses	42.5	47.8	45.2	49.1	47.2
Borrow	21.8	18.1	16.1	20.8	20.4
Use saving	16.1	17.4	25.8	14.8	16.0
Increase work	9.8	9.4	6.5	4.6	6.7
Do nothing	4.6	2.9	6.5	6.9	5.7
Other	5.2	4.4	0.0	3.7	4.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	174	138	31	432	775

As high as 88% of the interviewed households are in debt. The proportion of debt is high across all types of households, particularly among both-parent present households (92% compared with 85-86% in other types of households). Most households are debt-bonded by formal institutions (77%). Among households that have debt, about three in four will either not be able to pay the debt, will only be able to partially pay debt, or not sure. The proportion of not being able to pay the debt in full course is relatively higher among both-parent absent households (76%) and both-parent present households (73%), as opposed to father-absent (67%) and mother-absent households (64%).

Table 2.18 Household debt by type of household

Whether household has debt	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Not at all	6.6	12.2	15.2	13.0	11.6
Yes, mostly formal	81.2	75.5	75.8	75.7	76.8
Yes, mostly informal	10.5	10.2	9.1	9.9	10.1
Don't know or not sure	1.7	2.0	0.0	1.4	1.5
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

Table 2.18 Household debt by type of household (Cont.)

Whether household has debt	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
If having debt, whether able to continue paying					
Yes, able to continue	26.6	32.6	35.7	23.5	26.2
No, unable to pay	27.2	27.9	14.3	32.6	29.9
Partially pay	40.8	35.7	50.0	38.5	38.9
No idea or not sure	5.3	3.9	0.0	5.4	4.9
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	169	129	28	429	755

With regards to families spending time together, over half of the interviewed households reported that during the COVID-19 outbreak, families spent more time together than before the outbreak (49%), with a slightly lower percentage who reported no difference (47%). Households with father absent and both parents present reported spending more family time together than before in a relatively higher proportion (51% and 56% vs. 39% and 47% among mother-absent and both-parent absent households, respectively).

Table 2.19 Percentage of households spending time together during the pandemic

Changes in family spending time together during the pandemic	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
More than before	50.8	55.8	39.4	46.7	48.8
Same as before	45.3	39.5	57.6	49.5	47.2
Less than before	3.9	4.8	3.0	3.9	4.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

2.7 The quantity of daily food in household

Approximately one-half of the households reported that there was not any change in terms of the quantity of daily food. However, 36% of respondents mentioned that they had less food for each meal compared to the time before the COVID-19 pandemic. There is not any significant difference between types of households.

Table 2.20 The quantity of daily amount of food by type of household

The quantity of daily amount of food in household	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Nothing changed	49.2	50.3	54.5	53.3	52.0
Less food for each meal than before	37.0	38.1	33.3	34.9	35.8
Some meal has no food	2.8	1.4	0.0	4.1	3.2
More food than before	11.0	10.2	12.1	7.7	9.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

The following table shows that the quantity of food might be related to the cost of food. Households reporting less food now than before COVID-19 are, as well, highest among those that had less food for each meal than before (56% compared to 23% for households reported no change in food expenditure, and 35% for households reported an increase in food expenditure).

Table 2.21 The quantity of daily food by change of food expense

The quantity of daily food in household	Changes in food expenses			Overall
	Same as before	More than before	Less than before	
Nothing changed	69.3	45.0	36.7	52.0
Less food for each meal than before	23.4	35.3	55.6	35.8
Some meal has no food	1.6	3.9	4.3	3.2
More food than before	5.7	15.7	3.4	9.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	854

2.8 Daily activities of TC and time spending with caretakers

The next table explores to what extent that daily activities of children might have changed during the pandemic than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Among daily activities that the adult respondents reported children doing less than before, studying and reading schoolbooks are highest (44%), compared to other activities. This is not surprising as the survey was taken place during the school break or summer vacation. Reporting that the children play with their friends less than before is also relatively high (32%). Meanwhile, playing with friends more than before is also relatively high (30%). So, playing with friends were affected in different ways, some experienced increase while others experienced decrease.

Activities that the children were reported doing more than before were in relatively high proportion include spending time on social media or online (34%), watching TV (28%), doing personal hobby, and household chores (23%).

Table 2.22 Daily activities of TC by type of household

Daily activities	Any changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic				Total
	More than before	Same as before	Less than before	Usually never do this activity	
Household chores	22.6	62.2	3.7	11.5	100.0
Taking care of younger siblings	14.5	16.3	1.1	68.1	100.0
Studying, reading course books	10.1	44.1	44.3	1.5	100.0
Personal hobby (e.g., reading, drawing, crafting, music)	23.1	52.8	19.3	4.8	100.0
Social media, online participation (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Instagram)	33.8	37.6	11.6	17.0	100.0
Playing games (online and offline)	21.0	29.0	8.0	42.0	100.0
Watching TV	28.2	48.5	19.6	3.7	100.0
Playing with friends, siblings, or cousins	30.0	36.3	32.3	1.4	100.0
Doing paid job, or working for money or other compensation	1.3	6.1	1.3	91.3	100.0
Helping family business	7.4	24.4	4.4	63.8	100.0

Interestingly, we found a much higher percentage of children reported spending more time on some activities, mainly social media and online participation (88%), watching TV (85%), playing with friends, siblings, or cousins (85%), doing personal hobby (59%), and playing offline or online games (52%) among those households where both parents are absent.

Table 2.23 Respondents reporting the higher frequency or longer time spending on activities by type of household

Daily activities	% reporting spending time on activities more than before				
	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Household chores	23.8	21.8	9.1	23.3	22.6
Taking care of younger siblings	15.5	17.7	12.1	36.5	14.5
Studying, reading course books	7.2	12.9	6.1	28.7	10.1
Personal hobby (e.g., reading, drawing, crafting, music)	30.4	21.1	15.2	58.6	23.1
Social media, online participation (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Instagram)	38.1	38.1	15.2	87.8	33.8
Playing games (online and offline)	24.9	23.8	15.2	51.9	21.0
Watching TV	27.6	20.4	21.2	85.1	28.2
Playing with friends, siblings, or cousins	28.2	31.3	18.2	84.5	30.0
Doing paid job, or working for money or other compensation	1.7	0.7	3.0	3.3	1.3
Helping family business	9.4	10.9	6.1	15.5	7.4

Approximately half of the households reported that during the COVID-19 outbreak, families spent more time together. This is particularly true for both-parent present households where about 56% of caretakers reported spending more time with the children ever since March 2020.

Table 2.24 Time spent together between caretaker and TC since March 2020

Any changes since March 2020	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Spend more time together	55.8	53.7	48.5	46.7	49.9
As same as usual	41.4	43.5	48.5	48.3	46.0
Spend less time	2.8	2.7	3.0	5.1	4.1
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

2.9 Violence against children

Only 21% of households reported often using positive methods to discipline children, i.e., explaining or withdrawing the privilege things of TC's (e.g., games or social media playing, going outside). Households with mother only uses positive methods to a much higher proportion compared with other households (28% vs. 15%-21%). It should be noted that a majority of households (79%) reported that sometimes or often the caretaker shouted, yelled, or screamed at the child or called the child dumb, lazy, or another name, and used aggressive facial expression. Reporting sometimes to often hitting or slapping the child on their hands, arms, legs, or bottom is also outstanding (40%). We noticed that households with father absent reported using these physically aggressive methods more often than other household types.

A small proportion of households (5%) reported sometimes using sever types of physical aggression, i.e., hitting or slapping across the face, head, and ears, or repeated heavy beating. None reported often using the method.

Table 2.25 Parental discipline by type of household

Type of parental discipline	Frequency	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
		N=181	N=147	N=33	N=493	N=854
Explaining misbehavior; withdrawing TC's privileges (e.g., game, social media, going outside)	Never / Seldom	9.9	10.9	12.1	12.0	11.4
	Sometimes	69.1	61.2	72.7	69.4	68.0
	Often	21.0	27.9	15.2	18.7	20.6
Shouting, yelling, or screaming at child; calling child dumb, lazy, or another name; facial expression of aggression	Never / Seldom	20.4	19.0	24.2	22.3	21.4
	Sometimes	71.3	72.8	66.7	69.2	70.1
	Often	8.3	8.2	9.1	8.5	8.4
Hitting or slapping child on the hand, arm, leg, or bottom	Never / Seldom	58.0	53.7	66.7	62.3	60.1
	Sometimes	40.9	44.9	33.3	36.9	39.0
	Often	1.1	1.4	0.0	0.8	0.9
Hitting or slapping child across the face, head or ears; repeated heavy beating	Never / Seldom	95.0	94.6	90.9	95.3	95.0
	Sometimes	5.0	5.4	9.1	4.7	5.0
	Often	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Data on current disciplinary methods compared with the time before March 2020 suggest that only 10% of households reported practicing more psychological aggressions (i.e., shouting, yelling, or screaming at child, or calling child dumb, lazy, or another name, or aggressive facial expressions).

Table 2.26 Parental discipline compared to the time before March 2020

Parental discipline	Comparing to before March 2020	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Explaining misbehavior; withdrawing TC's privileges (e.g., game, social media, going outside)	More than before	17.7	16.3	21.2	18.1	17.8
	Same as before	72.4	72.8	66.7	74.0	73.2
	Less than before	9.9	10.9	12.1	7.9	9.0
Shouting, yelling, or screaming at child; calling child dumb, lazy, or another name; facial expression of aggression	More than before	14.4	7.5	12.1	11.2	11.2
	Same as before	70.7	74.1	78.8	78.3	76.0
	Less than before	14.9	18.4	9.1	10.5	12.8
Hitting or slapping child on the hand, arm, leg, or bottom	More than before	2.8	0.7	0.0	3.2	2.6
	Same as before	86.7	81.0	93.9	86.2	85.7
	Less than before	10.5	18.4	6.1	10.5	11.7
Hitting or slapping child across the face, head or ears; repeated heavy beating	More than before	0.0	3.4	3.0	0.4	0.9
	Same as before	97.2	91.8	93.9	97.0	96.0
	Less than before	2.8	4.8	3.0	2.6	3.0
Total %		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N		181	147	33	493	854

About 12% of respondents reported that they had heard of domestic violence in their community more now than before March 2020. The highest percentage of reported hearing of domestic violence in their community more now than before is found among households that reported mother absent.

Table 2.27 Perceived domestic violence in community

Whether any perception of domestic violence in the community	%	N
Yes, have heard of an escalation of domestic violence in the community	11.6	99
No, not heard of an escalation of domestic violence in the community	82.0	700
Do not know	6.4	55
Total	100.0	854

2.10 Household concerns and additional needs

Almost every household respondent is worried that the pandemic would affect their daily life (95%), with about half are worried a lot.

Table 2.28 Whether household is worried that the pandemic would affect daily life by type of household

Worried that the pandemic will affect your daily life	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Worried a lot	53.0	48.3	45.5	49.7	50.0
Worried somewhat	42.0	48.3	51.5	45.4	45.4
Not worried	5.0	3.4	3.0	4.9	4.6
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

The highest percentage (47%) of people are worried about a reduction in income, followed by the concern of health protection or fear of becoming infected by COVID-19 (28%). The concern about reduced income is most evident among both-parent present households, and least apparent among both-parent absent households. Almost one out of ten households reported a concern over unemployment (9%), which is most dominant among father-absent households, where only the mother lives with the TC (13% vs. 6%-9% in other types of households).

Table 2.29 Things that are most concerning with the pandemic of COVID-19 by type of household

	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
None	5.0	3.4	0.0	5.1	4.6
Reduced income	54.7	49.0	48.5	43.2	46.8
Unemployment	8.3	12.9	6.1	8.9	9.4
Health protection or Fear of COVID infection	24.9	25.9	21.2	30.2	28.0
Postponement of school semester	2.2	1.4	9.1	4.1	3.4
Fear of COVID infection	1.7	2.7	6.1	3.0	2.8
Other	3.3	4.8	9.1	5.5	5.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

We further asked respondents what did they do to ease their worries among those who reported being worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their daily life. Results show that people employed various strategies. Family, relatives, and friends are observed as the most utilized support that people tend to turn to in times of stress (55%). One in four respondents listens to music or watches movies as a method to lessen their worry, and about one in ten uses social media, does gardening or fishing, listens to dharma (Buddhist teachings), or does household chores. Respondents who reported doing exercise as a way to lessen their worry share about 8%.

Table 2.30 Methods of coping with the anxiety due to the COVID-19

	%	N
Talk to family, relatives, and friends	54.7	451
Listen to music or watch movies	24.1	198
Use social media, e.g., Facebook, Twitter	11.6	95
Do gardening or fishing	10.5	86
Listen to dharma	10.3	84
Household chores	9.4	77
Exercise	8.2	67
Do not do anything	4.1	34
Take additional work	4.1	33
Learn how to employ prevention of COVID-19	3.8	31
Mindfulness or meditation	3.8	31
Total N		815*

* Only among those who reported being worried about COVID-19

One of the most concerning results if the pandemic continues is the respondent's estimated survival time of their household with their current savings and income. As high as two-thirds of the households reported anticipating their survival time of fewer than three months, while only 7% surviving for at least six months. Overall, findings indicate the vulnerability of households, particularly in case that the situation continues affecting their income much longer period.

Table 2.31 Expected survival time with current resources if the pandemic continues by type of household

How long could you survive if the pandemic continues?	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Less than 1 week	4.4	7.5	6.1	4.3	4.9
1 week-<1 month	28.2	33.3	27.3	34.5	32.7
1 month-<3 months	34.3	29.9	33.3	27.4	29.5
3 months-<6 months	14.4	6.8	3.0	9.5	9.8
6 months-<1 year	7.7	6.8	12.1	6.3	6.9
One year+	11.1	15.7	18.2	18.1	16.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

The majority of households (74%) have registered for government support (5,000 baht per month for 3 months). The highest proportion of households having registered is mother-absent households (82%), while the lowest is both-parent absent households (72%). Among those households that did not register, about one-fourth are either not aware of the program (4%) or are unable to access the website (16%). The proportion of not having registered is particularly high among mother-absent (33%) and both-parent absent households (25%).

Table 2.32 Registered for government support (5,000 baht for 3 months) by type of household

	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Registered for government support (5,000 baht per month for 3 months)	77.4	76.9	81.8	72.0	74.4
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

Table 2.33 Reasons for not having registered for government support by type of household

Reasons for not having registered	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Not aware of the program	4.9	5.9	0.0	2.9	3.7
Unable to access the website	7.3	2.9	33.3	21.7	16.4
Do not think eligible	87.8	91.2	66.7	75.4	79.9
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	41	34	6	138	219

At the time of the survey (late April to late May 2020), less than one-fifth of the households who have registered for government support have received money, 43% received pending notice, and about two-fifths (39%) were rejected. The majority of those rejected would not appeal.

Table 2.34 Whether household member who registered received support by type of household

Whether received support	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Yes, received	25.0	32.7	22.2	10.7	18.3
Pending, not approved	35.7	32.7	48.2	49.0	43.2
Rejected, but will appeal	12.9	5.3	3.7	6.5	7.6
Rejected, but will not appeal	26.4	29.2	25.9	33.8	31.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N	140	113	27	355	635

Most respondents (77%) reported a reduction in income as the most significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adding the response of concern for job loss to the impact due to a reduction in income, shows that nearly 85% of people feel strongly about this economic impact.

Table 2.35 Priorities perceived from the impact of COVID-19

Impact of COVID-19 (most substantial impact)	%	N
Income reduction	77.1	656
Job loss	7.1	60
Not affected	4.4	37
Unable or difficult to travel	3.8	32
Difficulty in job seeking	2.1	18
Relationships within family, e.g., parent	2.0	17
Increased debt	1.7	14
Increasing living costs	0.7	6
Make more distress or anxiety about work	0.4	3
Increased crime or drug addiction in communities	0.4	3
Unable to go elsewhere	0.2	2
Fear to infect COVID 19	0.2	2
Concern on children's learning and studying	0.1	1
Total	100	851

Across types of households, data shows a high percentage reporting income reduction as the leading prioritized impact of COVID-19 (74%-85%). Both-parent absent households reported the lowest proportion (74%).

Table 2.36 Highest priority perceived from the impact of COVID-19 by type of household

	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Income reduction	81.8	80.0	84.9	74.0	77.1
Others	18.2	20.0	15.2	26.0	22.9
Total %	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	181	145	33	492	851

The respondents are concerned that measures to subdue the COVID-19 outbreak may affect the children in many ways. These include concerns that the measures to control the COVID-19 outbreak might affect the children's further study (27%), or the children cannot catch up with school lessons (22%), and, the children's mental health (12%). Six percent of the households reported that the above measures lead to additional costs for online learning of the children.

Table 2.37 Perceived effects of the measures due to the pandemic on the TC by type of household

How do the measures due to the pandemic affect TC?	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
TC can't catch up with school lesson	24.9	19.7	15.2	21.3	21.6
Effects on TC's further study	22.1	29.3	27.3	28.8	27.4
Effects on TC's mental health	13.3	12.2	6.1	11.4	11.7
Effects on parents' mental health	3.3	4.8	3.0	3.0	3.4
School unable to provide online learning	2.2	1.4	3.0	2.2	2.1
Have additional costs of online learning	2.8	8.2	6.1	6.7	6.1
TC can't go or play outside	7.2	4.1	9.1	4.9	5.4
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

Schools are moving to online-based teaching and learning. However, data shows that only 38% of households reported that their children are prepared for online learning, indicating the majority of children are not prepared. The proportion of children not being ready is highest (65%) among both-parent absent households.

Table 2.38 TC's readiness for online-based learning by type of household

	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
TC is ready for online-based learning	45.9	42.2	45.5	33.7	38.2
Total N	181	147	33	493	854

The most-often reported reason for unpreparedness is due to the lack of devices for online learning (e.g., computer, tablet, or smartphone) (65%). Children who live with both parents are prepared in terms of having devices for online-based learning more than children in other types of households (49% compared with 30% to 39%). More than two in five children (44%) are not ready due to not having access to the internet. Roughly the same proportion of households (43%) reported adults not having sufficient IT skills to assist the TC in studying online, while about one-fourth (24%) mentioned the lack of the children's capacity to study online as reasons for the unreadiness of the children for online learning.

Both-parent absent households reported more unreadiness of the children for online education as well as the lack of devices, internet, and the presence of adults who do not have adequate IT skills, than their counterparts.

Table 2.39 Reasons for not ready for online learning

If TC not ready for online learning, why	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
No device	51.0	61.2	72.2	70.0	65.2
No internet	35.7	34.1	44.4	48.3	43.6
Adults have no IT skills to help TC	24.5	17.7	44.4	55.7	43.4
TC not capable of online learning	23.5	18.8	33.3	24.8	23.9
Adults have no time to help TC with online learning	18.4	14.1	33.3	13.2	15.0
TC has no interest in online learning	25.5	21.2	22.2	9.2	14.6
No space/suitable place for online learning	4.1	8.2	11.1	4.3	5.1
Total N	98	85	18	327	528

Most of the interviewed households (89%) need support for their family, consistently across all types of households. The kind of support they need most is income subsidy (80%). The second most significant support needed is quite general, as having existing state welfare increased (37%), followed by job-creation or income-generation (27%), and having debt repayment waived (24%).

Table 2.40 Specific support needed for family by type of household

	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Need support for family	86.2	90.5	90.9	89.1	88.8
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
Type of support needed					
Income subsidy	80.8	79.0	83.3	80.0	80.1
Increase existing state welfare	30.1	28.6	40.0	41.0	36.5
Creating jobs and income generation	28.9	31.6	10.0	26.4	27.2
Waive debt repayment	30.1	18.8	23.3	24.2	24.4
Maintain cost of living	14.1	10.5	10.0	11.2	11.6
Loan with soft interest	8.3	6.0	0.0	7.5	7.1
Food supplies	7.1	4.5	10.0	5.2	5.7
Reduce utilities	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.8
Total N	156	133	30	439	758

Consistent with the support needed for families, most of the surveyed households (81%) need assistance for children, especially for student uniforms (61%), school supplies (58%), extra class supplies (e.g. computer, tablet) (42%), and scholarships (22%).

Table 2.41 Specific support needed for TC by type of household

	Both parents present	Father absent	Mother absent	Both parents absent	Overall
Need support for TC	79.0	80.3	90.9	81.3	81.0
Total N	181	147	33	493	854
What kind of support needed for TC?					
Student uniforms	58.7	60.2	50.0	63.6	61.4
School supplies, e.g., notebooks, pens	59.4	52.5	43.3	59.4	57.5
Extra class supplies, e.g., computer, notebook, tablet	40.6	36.4	33.3	44.6	41.9
Scholarship	21.0	22.0	20.0	22.0	21.7
Food and drink	10.5	9.3	16.7	16.7	14.2
Healthcare	10.5	15.3	10.0	9.7	10.8
Reduce school fee	4.2	4.2	0.0	2.7	3.2
Financial support to go to school	2.1	0.9	3.3	2.7	2.3
Total	143	118	30	401	692



3. Summary

This report presents results from the analysis of 854 households and children, among whom their parents are of various living statuses, i.e., both parents present, mother only present, father only present, and both parents absent. The report reveals vital information to develop evidence-based, target-specific policy.

Some contextual information should be noted. Following the fact that most of the children in our study live without either one or both parents, their primary caregivers tend not to be their parents, but their grandparents, especially maternal grandmothers. This signifies the supporting role of grandparents, especially when the parents work away from home. This is particularly high among children whose parents are both absent (90%).

Other contextual information is that remittances as a source of income is common. More than half of the households (56%) rely on migrants' remittances as their source of income. This is especially the case for households with both parents absent, among which almost 80% reported relying on money sent by family members who work away from home.

In terms of the extent migrant parents returned home during the Covid-19 pandemic, results show a 12% of returned migrant parents (8% of absent mothers, and 4% of absent fathers). The highest reported reason, with 48% of mothers and 42% of fathers, is returning home due to temporarily-closed workplaces. Mothers who returned because of losing their job are 18% compared to 38% of fathers. It should be noted, however, that the claim of job loss might not reflect the actual situation of people as this is a report from household respondents, not necessarily the returned parents themselves. Also, there are some parents who are no longer married that might not return home even if they lost their job. In addition, there are some parents who reported not returning home because they wanted to wait for another job, or because they feared putting their family at risk of getting COVID-19.

Almost all of the interviewed households are financially affected by the pandemic, as 90% of households reported that their household income was reduced. Data also highlighted that households reporting income reduction are highest among both-parent present households, even higher than both-parent absent households. While household income reduced, households at the same time reported an increase in expenses, in particular, 69% of households reported an increase in the cost of utilities. Other outstanding items included increased expenses for protection devices (64%), daily expenses (40%), and for food and drink (39%).

Another indicator to gauge the economic situation of households regards debt. Results show that a majority of the interviewed households (88%) are in-debt, and among them, most would not be able to pay debt as usual following the outbreak of COVID-19. The proportion of households in-debt is highest among households with both parents at home and lowest for those where both parents are absent, consistent with data on household income reduction. The quantity of food that households provide per meal could also be indicative of how much a household is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Data shows that almost two out of five households we interviewed (36%) reported that they had less food for each meal compared to before the pandemic.

If the pandemic continues, given the existing resources the household has, how long could the household survive? Results are quite alarming as two out of three households reported that they could only survive for less than three months. In particular, among those households, 38% said their household could not survive for even a month. This situation is comparable across types of households.

As most of the households are financially affected, more so in both parent-present than in both parent-absent households, it is important to understand how households respond to this challenging situation. Data shows the resilience of the households in the sense that they try various ways to mitigate the financial constraints, including reducing expenses (47%), borrowing money (20%), or using their savings (16%). Most of the households (95%) are worried about the impact of COVID-19, but they have family and friends on which to rely. More than half of the households (55%) reported talking to family or friends to lessen their worries and comfort each other.

The pandemic also impacts households and children in other aspects. As most schools are moving to online-based learning, how prepared are the households and children is an important question. Results are clear that most of the children are not prepared for online-based education, with 62% of the households reporting that their children are not ready. Contrast with economic impact, not being ready is highest among both-parent absent, and lowest among both-parent present households. In other words, children living with both parents are more prepared for online learning than those living without parents. The most dominant reason for the unreadiness is lack of devices (65%), followed by not having access to the internet (44%), then adults lacking IT skills to assist children (43%), and about one-fourth (24%) reported that children are not capable of studying online.

People are also ordinarily worried about how children spend their extra time while being locked down at home during the pandemic. Data shows that households reported children spending more time on social media than before the COVID-19 lockdown is higher than with other activities. In particular, we noted a very high percentage of households with both-parent absent (88%) reporting the increase of children spending more time on social media compared to other households.

About half of the households responded that families spent more time together during the lockdown. Yet, some unfavorable information is also revealed. Regarding a question about how often household members use violent methods to discipline children, 79% reported sometimes or often using verbal aggression with children, and 40% use physically violent means, which refers to hitting or slapping the child on their hand, arm, leg, or bottom. When asked why this practice happens, a very low percentage of households indicated an increase now compared to before the pandemic. Only verbal aggression, which about 11% of households reported doing more during the COVID-19 period than before, may be noted. This implies that the practice of aggression with children is common on a usual basis, and not only during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These results may not be generalized to all households in Thailand, but they do tell many important messages. For many households, regardless of household types, the unwarranted visit of COVID-19 means a reduction of income, loss of jobs, less food in each meal, or the higher burden of debt, which might continue for the long run. For children, the COVID-19 pandemic might interfere with their educational opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic also reveals some unhealthy conditions children regularly face in everyday life, like domestic violence in the name of disciplining methods, which are not at all 'new normal,' but more so as 'old normal.' Data shows how vulnerable are most households, especially economically, when encountering unexpected changes and uncertainty.

In sum, the survey highlights a number of key policy directions. First, COVID-19 has an impact on almost all households in various aspects, regardless of household type. Secondly, many households have existing vulnerabilities including household debt, self-employment and reliance on social welfare schemes/remittances. Thirdly, if the impact of COVID-19 continues, households are in a much more vulnerable situation that could affect other areas such as food security or education. And lastly, as we address policy priorities in which we should be mindful of the existing vulnerabilities. More particularly, we must continue to ensure access to safety nets through social protection schemes, while ensuring access to other critical opportunities such as education.



Mahidol University
Institute for Population
and Social Research

unicef 
for every child