



**GROUND TRUTH  
SOLUTIONS**

# **HURRICANE MARIA**

GROUND TRUTH SOLUTIONS SURVEY OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY  
HURRICANE MARIA

DOMINICA

– **ROUND TWO** –

26 JANUARY 2018





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# CONTENTS

OVERVIEW.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Highlights.....	3
Overview of mean scores .....	4
SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	5
Q1. Information about support .....	5
Q2. Information channels.....	8
Q3. Effectiveness of support.....	9
Q4. Usefulness of household items .....	11
Q5. Safety and security .....	12
Q6. Targeting of aid provision.....	13
Q7. Community engagement.....	15
Q8. Respect .....	16
Q9. Awareness of complaints mechanisms.....	18
Q10. Trust in government complaints mechanisms.....	18
Q11. Trust in aid agency complaints mechanisms .....	19
Q12. Improvements in people’s lives.....	19
Q13. Push factors.....	21
Q14. Incentives to return .....	22
Q15. Further insight.....	23
DEMOGRAPHICS .....	24
RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	26
NOTES ON METHODOLOGY .....	26
Background.....	26
Survey development.....	26
Sample size.....	26
Sampling methodology.....	26
Data disaggregation .....	27
Language of the survey .....	27
Data collection.....	27
WORKS CITED .....	27



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# OVERVIEW

## Introduction

This report analyses data collected from interviews conducted with 403 Dominicans impacted by Hurricane Maria, the worst natural disaster on record for the island nation. This round of interviews took place between 4 and 12 January 2018, roughly three months after Hurricane Maria made landfall on 18 September 2017. As part of the [H2H Network](#)'s DFID-funded mission in the Caribbean, Ground Truth Solutions is providing a regular flow of feedback on people's perceptions about the effectiveness of the response and their evolving needs. The surveys offer decision-makers insight into community concerns as the basis for programmatic course corrections and to manage expectations. This report covers the second of what will be a total of three rounds of data collection in Dominica. For reference, the results from the first round can be found on [our website](#). The raw data can also be found on [HDX](#). The next round of data collection will take place in February 2018.

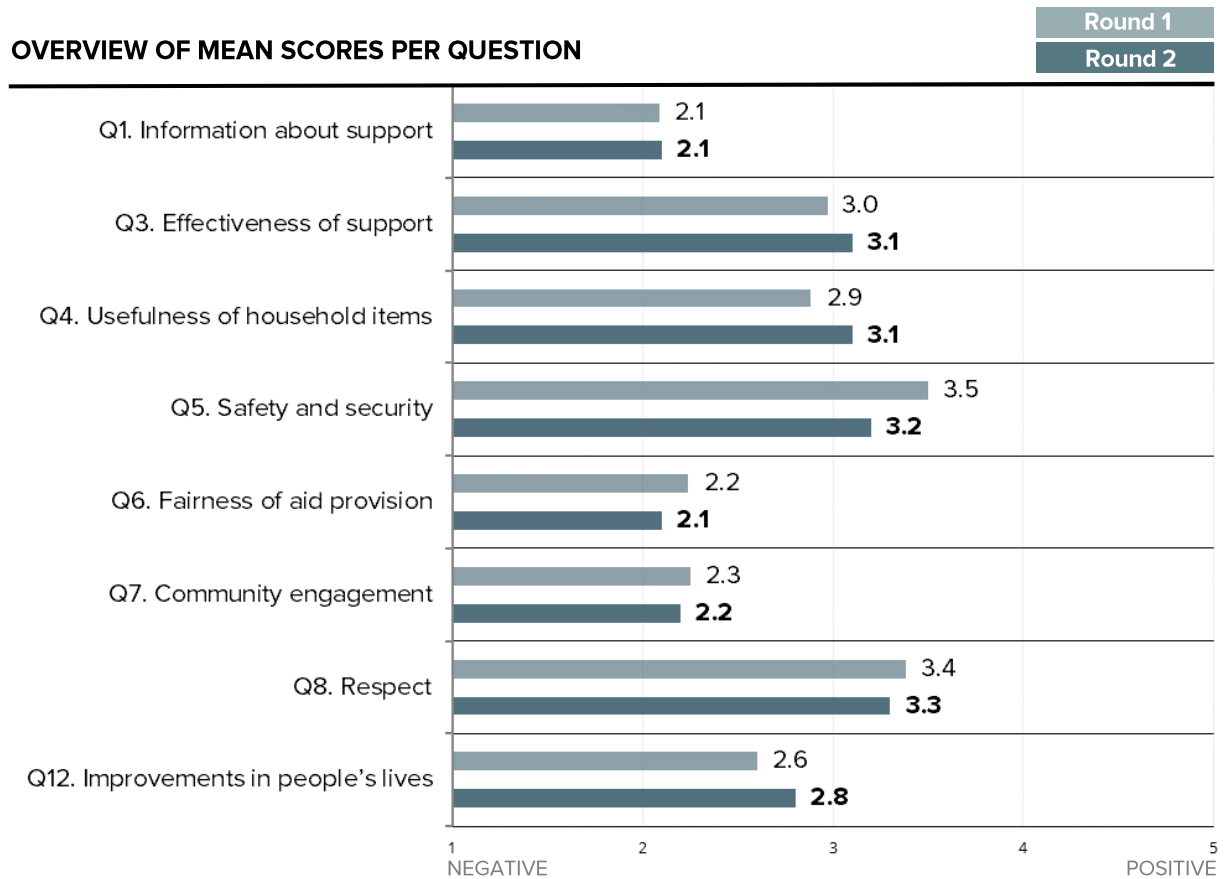
## Highlights

- Respondents remain in the dark about where or how to access available support, mirroring the low awareness recorded in the previous round of surveys in November 2017 (Q1);
- Over a third of those interviewed do not feel their priority needs are being addressed, citing food, building materials, help in rebuilding homes, and financial support as the most pressing (Q3);
- Just over half of respondents feel safe in their current accommodation (Q5). Most of those who feel unsafe in homes or shelters attribute it to the structural damage incurred in the hurricane. This sense of safety has decreased slightly since November;
- Most of those surveyed do not feel that the support goes to those most in need and many have a sense that the poorest or most vulnerable do not receive support (Q6);
- The majority of respondents are unaware of existing complaints mechanisms (Q9). Those who know how to make complaints about the support they receive are fairly confident that they will receive a response from local government representatives or council members (Q10), as well as from relief workers (Q11);
- Correlations across survey questions suggest that those who feel satisfied with how they or their community have been consulted on the support they receive also feel treated with respect by relief workers.



## Overview of mean scores

The survey includes eight core questions about affected people's perceptions on a range of issues related to the effectiveness of the response. Closed questions use a five-point Likert scale. Mean scores above three indicate a tendency towards positivity; mean scores below three suggest a tendency towards negativity. A more detailed analysis is provided in the question-by-question breakdown of responses.





# SURVEY QUESTIONS

The bar charts for closed questions show the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option, with colours ranging from dark red for negative answers to dark green for positive ones. For open questions, the bar charts indicate the percentage and frequency of respondents with answers pertaining to a particular theme. For these charts, percentages do not always total 100% because respondents might have been given the option to provide multiple answers. For each question, we indicate the main take-away or conclusion drawn from the data.

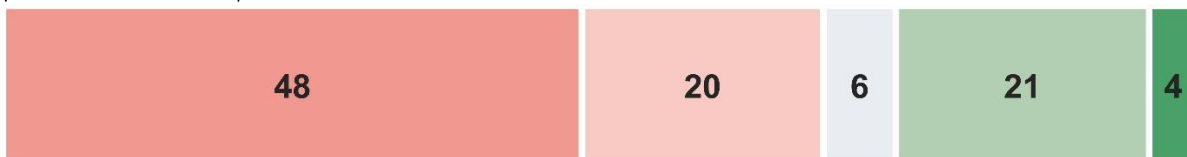
## Q1. Information about support

### Have you been kept informed about how to access the support available to you?

1 = Not at all
2 = Not very much
3 = Neutral
4 = Mostly yes
5 = Completely

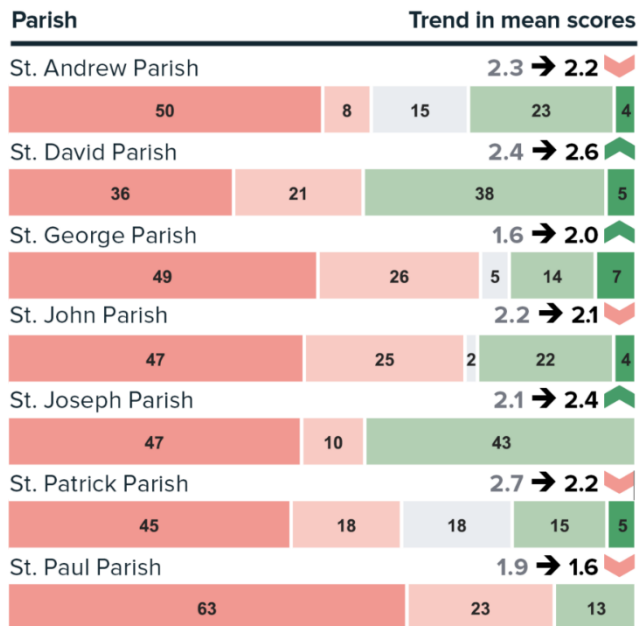
(values in %, n = 397)

Trend in mean scores: 2.1 → 2.1

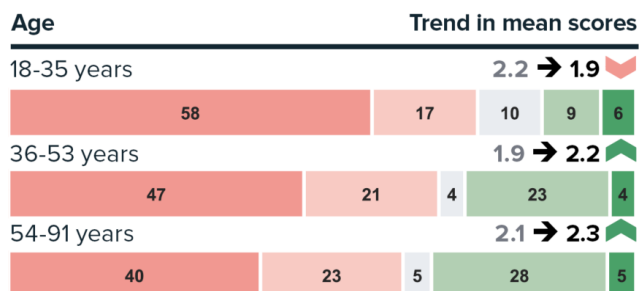


**Awareness of available support remains low, with over two-thirds of those surveyed responding negatively.**

The most notable change in perceptions between rounds can be seen in St. Patrick Parish, where awareness of available support has decreased since November. Most respondents in St. Paul Parish feel uninformed about how to access support.

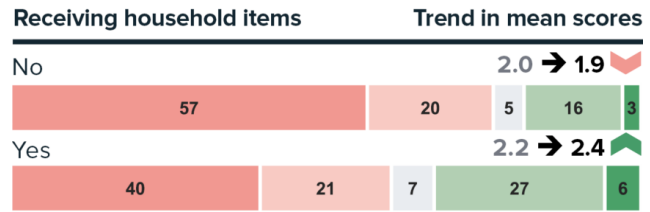


Young respondents are least positive, with over three quarters reporting feeling uninformed about support available to them.



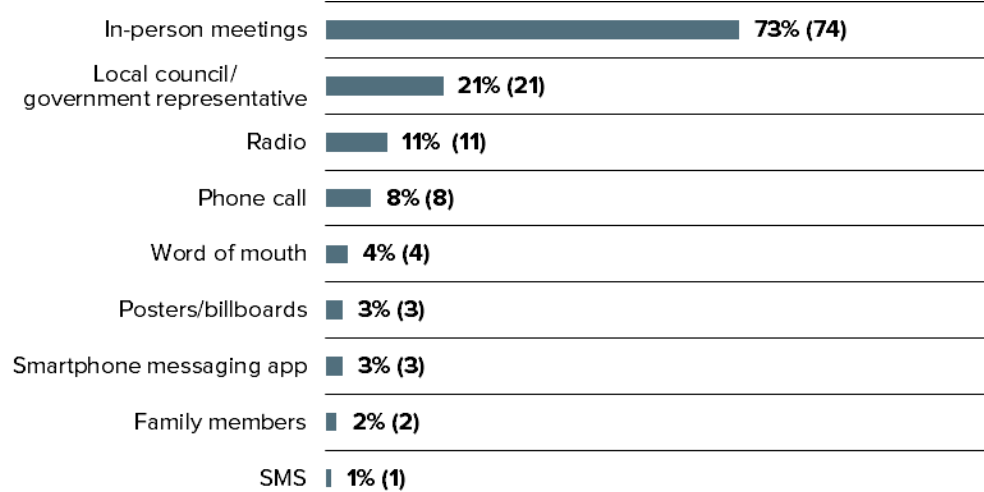


Those who receive household items feel better informed about services available to them.



### Follow-up question asked to those who answered 4 or 5 to Q1:

## How have you been receiving information about available support?

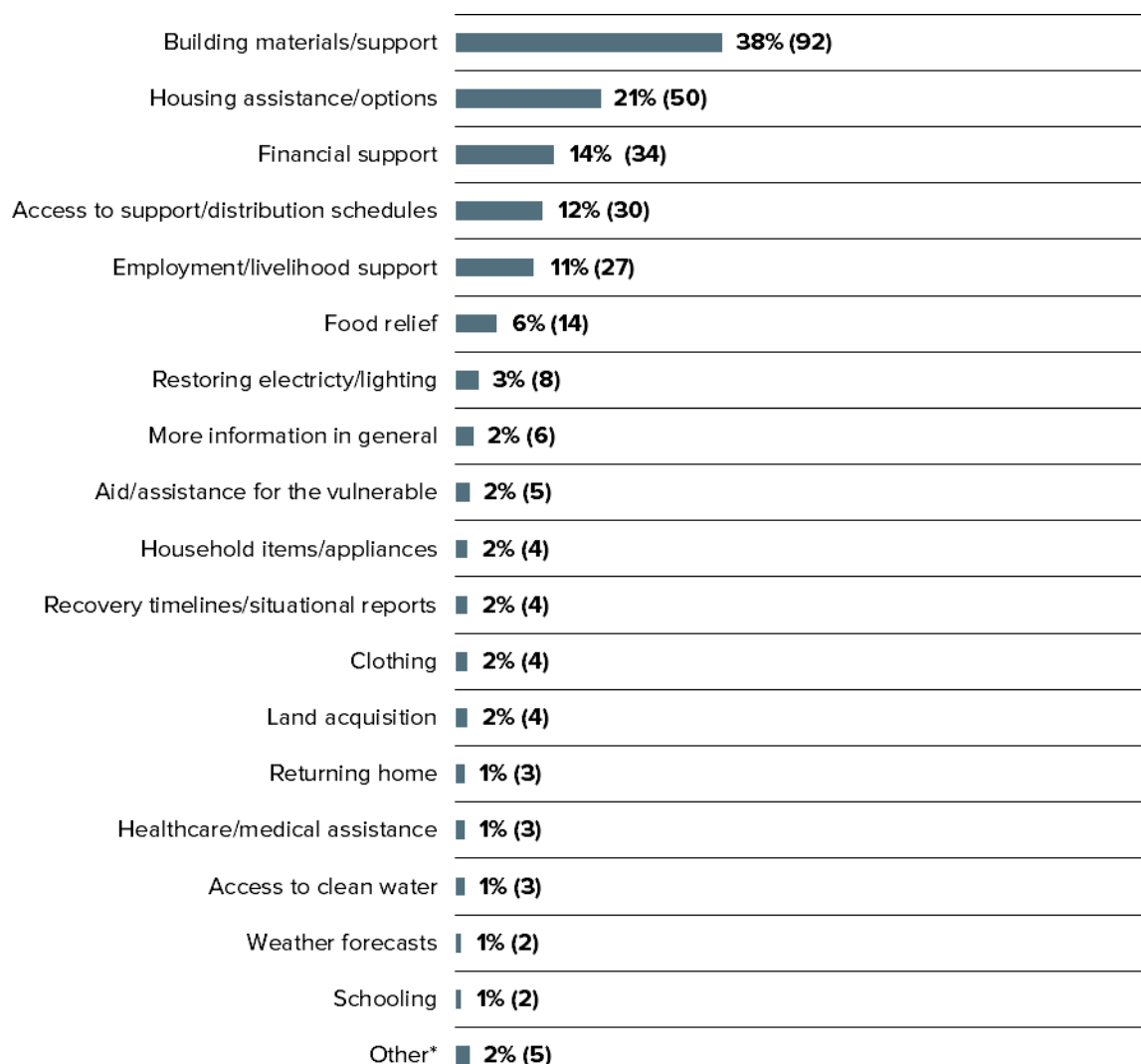


The majority of respondents receive information in face-to-face meetings or directly from local council or government representatives.



## Follow-up question asked to those who answered 1, 2, or 3 to Q1:

### What would you like to have more information about to help improve your current situation?



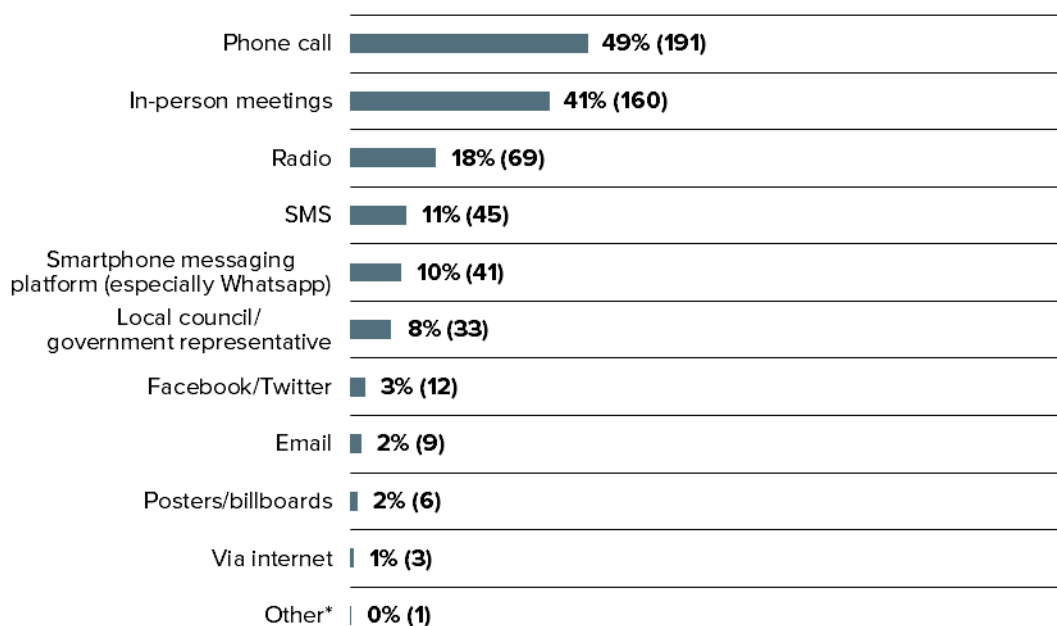
In line with findings from the previous round, most respondents want more information on accessing building materials, financial assistance, and support in rebuilding their homes.

\* “Other” includes how to bring the community together, how to help family members, information on how to fix a vehicle, and about proper garbage disposal after a hurricane.



## Q2. Information channels

### What is your preferred method of receiving information about the support available to you?



Most respondents would like to receive information about available support through a phone call, an in-person meeting, or on the radio, a view shared across all ages and among both men and women.

As a general note on best practice, the CDAC Network recommends communicating through local media, stipulating that they “can interpret the relevance and urgency of the concerns of their audience, and can play an important role as ‘mediators’ between the community and the national and international humanitarian actors, including government . . . local media has a unique role to play, which cannot be replaced by regional or international media who are not part of the community they are reporting on.”<sup>1</sup> However, in light of connectivity challenges as a result of damage to telecommunications infrastructure, in-person and community meetings are preferable alternatives to complement locations that have no coverage. This will ensure communication remains two-way and complaints are adequately addressed.

\* “Other” includes word of mouth.

<sup>1</sup> CDAC Network, “Communication and Community Engagement - Local Media Dominica Overview.”





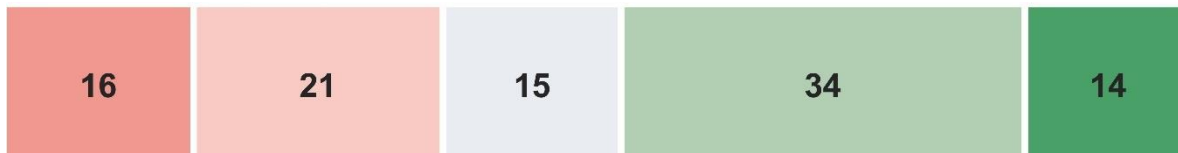
### Q3. Effectiveness of support

## Are your most important needs being met?

1 = Not at all
2 = Not very much
3 = Neutral
4 = Mostly yes
5 = Completely

(values in %, n = 400)

Trend in mean scores: 3.0 ↑ 3.1



**Responses on the effectiveness of support are mixed.** There have been slight improvements since the previous round, in which 43% felt their priority needs were being met, compared to 48% now.

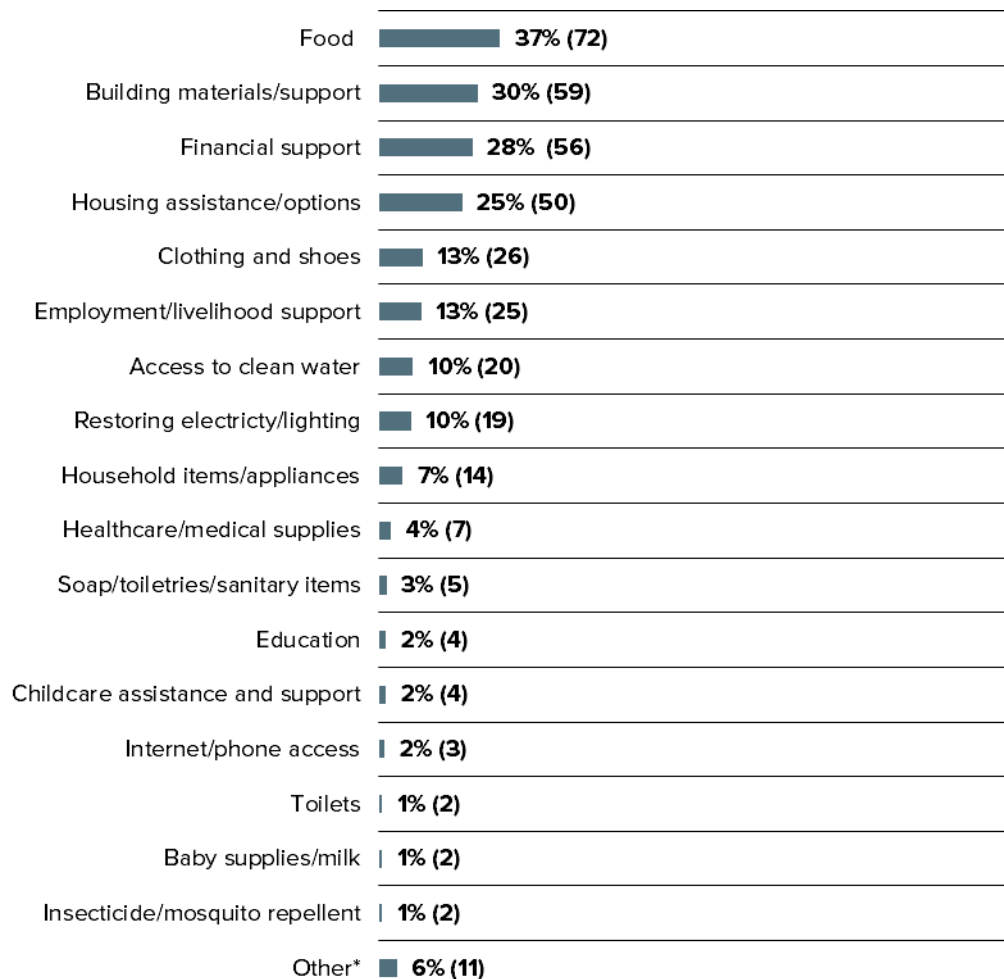
Respondents in St. Paul Parish feel the most positive about support meeting their main needs.

Parish	Trend in mean scores
St. Andrew Parish	2.7 <span style="color: green;">→</span> 3.0 <span style="color: green;">▲</span>
St. David Parish	2.7 <span style="color: green;">→</span> 2.8 <span style="color: green;">▲</span>
St. George Parish	2.9 <span style="color: green;">→</span> 3.0 <span style="color: green;">▲</span>
St. John Parish	3.0 <span style="color: red;">→</span> 2.8 <span style="color: red;">▼</span>
St. Joseph Parish	3.4 <span style="color: red;">→</span> 3.3 <span style="color: red;">▼</span>
St. Patrick Parish	3.1 <span style="color: green;">→</span> 3.3 <span style="color: green;">▲</span>
St. Paul Parish	3.3 <span style="color: green;">→</span> 3.6 <span style="color: green;">▲</span>



## Follow-up question asked to those who answered 1, 2, or 3 to Q3:

### What are your most important needs that are not adequately addressed?



Food remains the most pressing unmet need, followed by materials and help in rebuilding homes that were damaged by the hurricane.

\*“Other” includes the need for security, representation, as well as governmental support in assisting those in the tourism sector. Windows for vehicles, computer repair services, and TV service are also mentioned as unmet needs. Respondents point to infrastructure repairs, transportation, land acquisition, and workers’ rights as areas which require further attention. Increased support for elderly people and those without a family is also cited as an urgent need.



Question asked to recipients of household items:

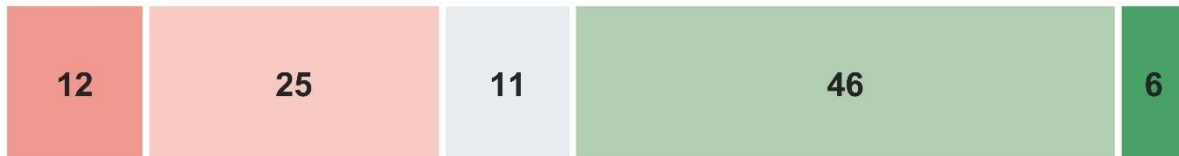
#### Q4. Usefulness of household items

### How important is the provision of household items for your family's well-being?

1 = No difference
2 = Made a small difference
3 = Neutral
4 = Made a big difference
5 = Has been life-saving

(values in %, n = 191)

Trend in mean scores: 2.9 3.1



Of the 191 recipients of household items, more than half feel that the provision of household items (non-food items to help meet shelter needs) has either made a big difference to their family's well-being, or it has been life-saving. Household items are considered more important in influencing well-being than they were in the previous round.



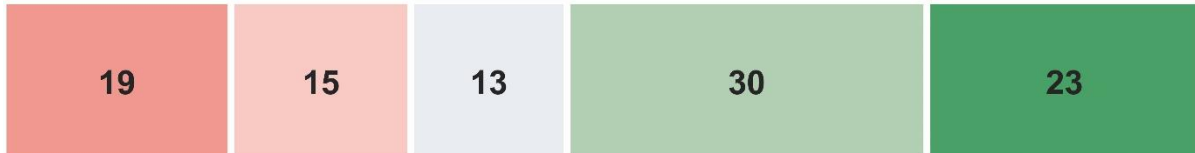
## Q5. Safety and security

### Do you feel safe in your current accommodation?

1 = Not at all
2 = Not very much
3 = Neutral
4 = Mostly yes
5 = Completely

(values in %, n = 403)

Trend in mean scores: 3.5 ↓ 3.2



**Just over half of respondents feel safe in their current accommodation.** The sense of safety has decreased since the previous round.

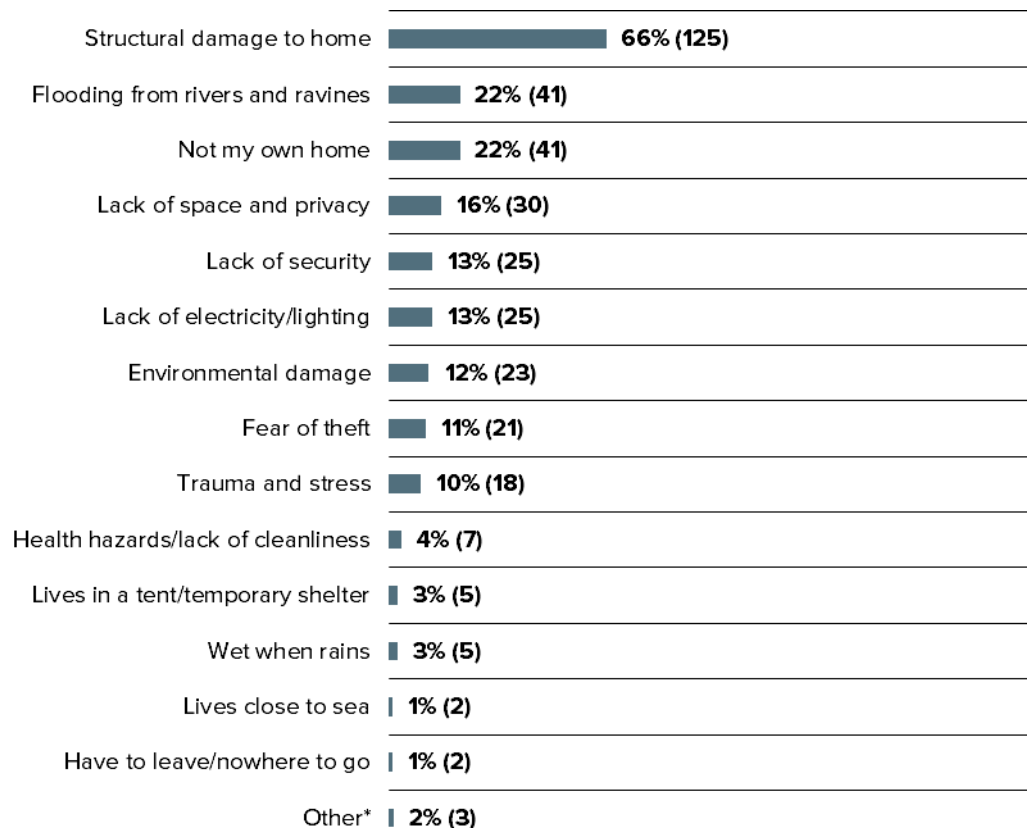
Feelings of safety are lowest among respondents in St. Andrew Parish. Those in St. Joseph Parish feel the safest in their respective accommodations.

Parish	Trend in mean scores				
St. Andrew Parish	3.2 → 3.0 ↓				
	29	6	12	44	10
St. David Parish	3.2 → 3.3 ↑				
	28	10	8	15	38
St. George Parish	3.5 → 3.3 ↓				
	16	18	8	36	22
St. John Parish	3.7 → 3.2 ↓				
	17	15	23	21	23
St. Joseph Parish	3.7 → 3.6 ↓				
	16	6	3	39	35
St. Patrick Parish	3.0 → 3.2 ↑				
	14	14	29	26	17
St. Paul Parish	3.8 → 3.5 ↓				
	12	22	9	16	41



## Follow-up question asked to those who answered 1, 2, or 3 to Q5:

### Why not?



Two-thirds of respondents say they feel unsafe in their homes because of damage sustained from the hurricane, compromising the structural integrity of the buildings. The fact that they are not living in their own home was the second most frequently listed factor among women. Among older respondents, aged between 54 and 91, fear of theft was the second most frequent reason given for feeling unsafe, while theft was cited least often among younger respondents.

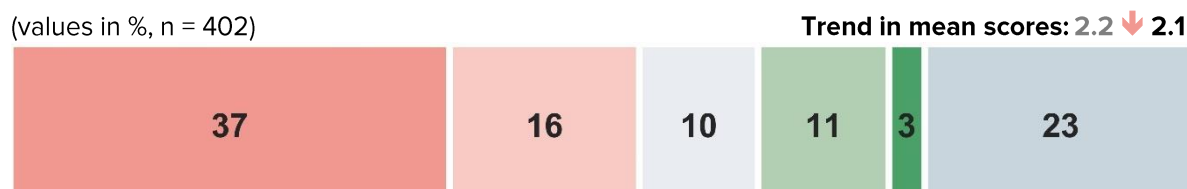
\*“Other” includes feeling unsafe due to a lack of water, having diabetes and needing insulin, and living with an infant in unsafe accommodations.

## Q6. Targeting of aid provision

### Do you think that support is going to the people who need it most?



(values in %, n = 402)

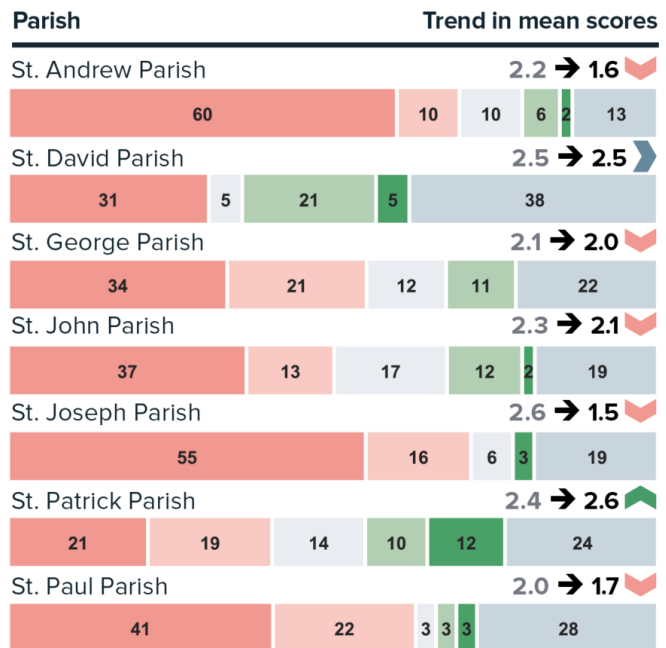


Over half of respondents do not think support goes to those most in need. Fewer respondents answered positively than in the previous round.



A report on lessons learned in Dominica published in January 2018 stipulates that “more attention needs to be placed on the proper identification and targeting of vulnerable groups,”<sup>2</sup> which could be a first step in addressing the sense that those most in need are not receiving support.

Responses are particularly negative in St. Andrew and St. Joseph parishes.

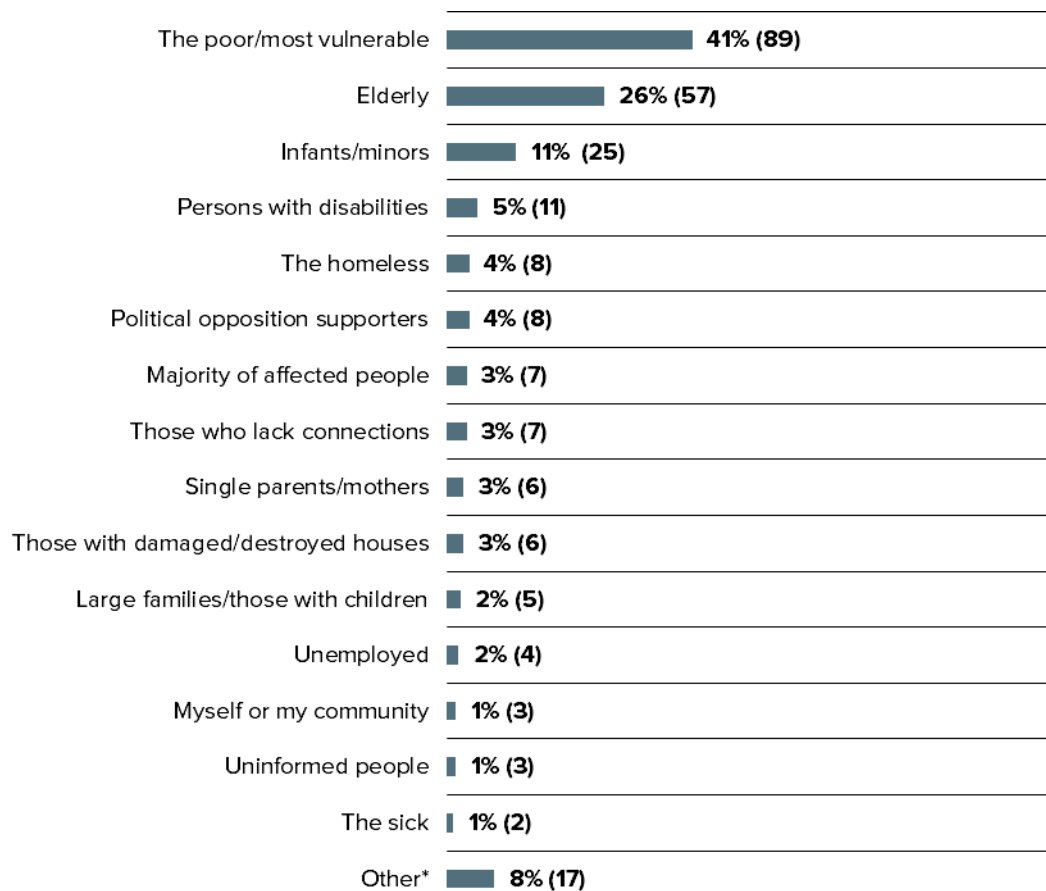


<sup>2</sup> ACAPS, “Dominica - Lessons Learned from Hurricane Maria.”



## Follow-up question asked to those who answered 1, 2, or 3 to Q7:

### Which group of people do you think is excluded from support?



Many respondents feel that the poorest or most vulnerable, including the elderly, do not receive support.

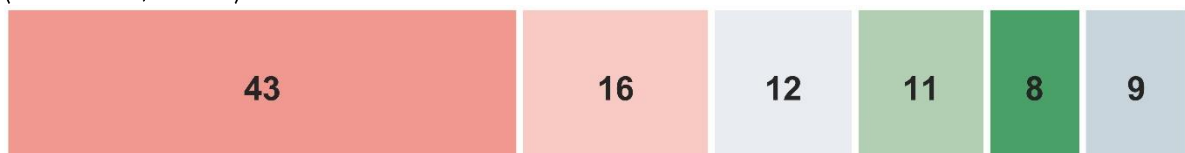
\*“Other” includes those who are less outspoken, men, those from rural areas, and those from Portsmouth, Roseau, Goodwill, Shawford, and Tanetane. Those who are politically active, non-nationals, and unionised workers are also said to be excluded from support.

## Q7. Community engagement

### Are you satisfied with how you and your community have been consulted on the support for people affected by the hurricane?



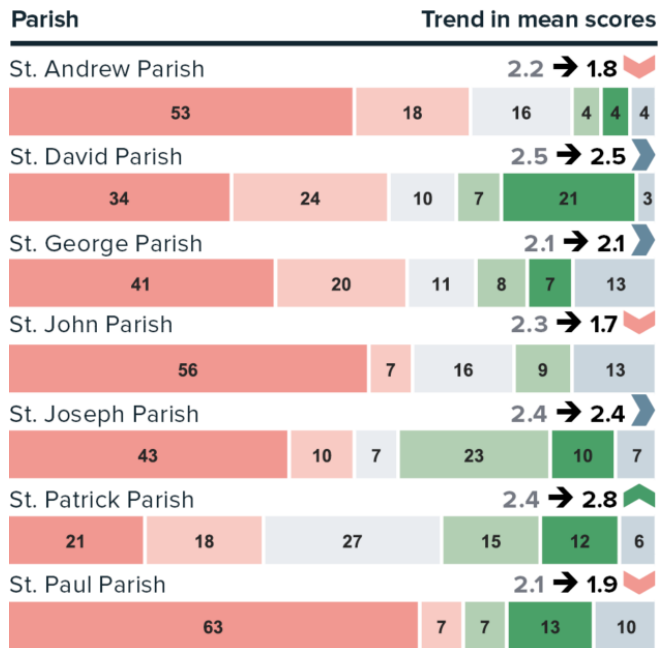
(values in %, n = 341)



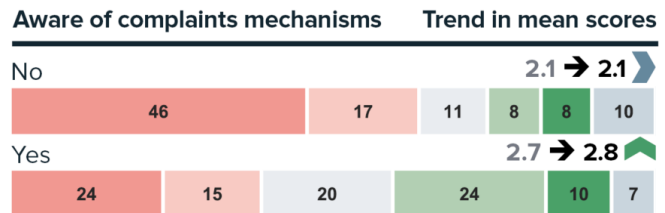
Most respondents feel dissatisfied with how they or their communities have been consulted on the support provided.



Respondents in St. Patrick Parish are slightly more satisfied with how they are consulted than they were previously, whereas most other parishes saw a decline or no improvement in satisfaction.

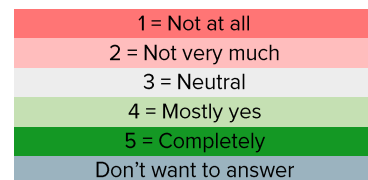


Respondents who know how to make complaints about the support they receive are more satisfied with the extent to which they or their community have been consulted than those who are unaware of existing feedback mechanisms.



## Q8. Respect

### Do relief workers treat you with respect?



(values in %, n = 397)

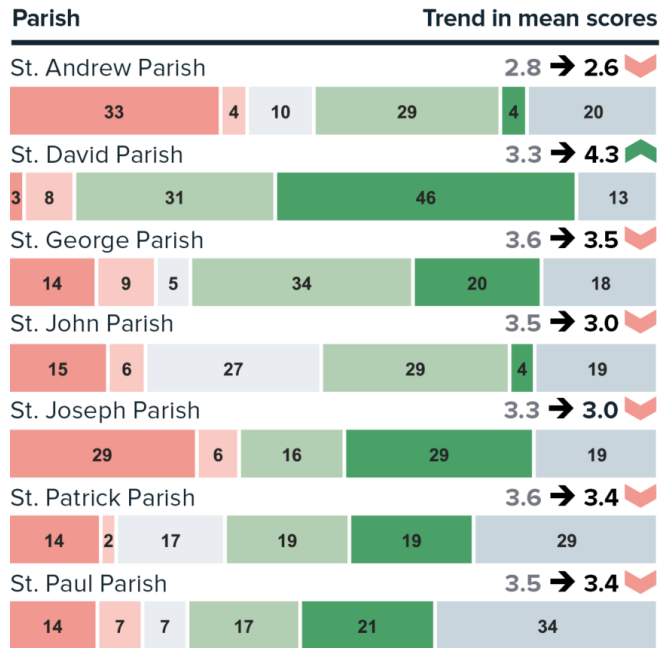


In line with findings from the previous round, just under half of respondents feel that aid workers treat them with respect.

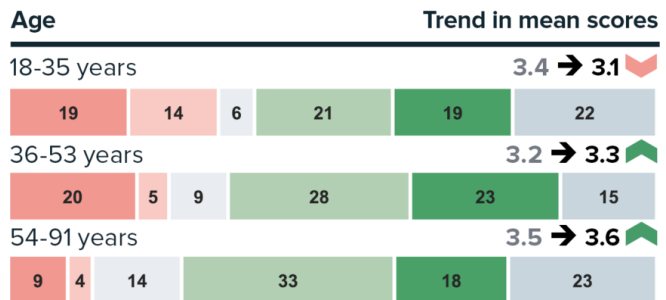




The majority of respondents in St. David Parish feel that relief workers treat them with respect. This is a notable improvement since the previous round, in which 29% responded negatively in St. David Parish, compared to 11% in this round.



Older respondents feel more positive about their treatment by relief workers.



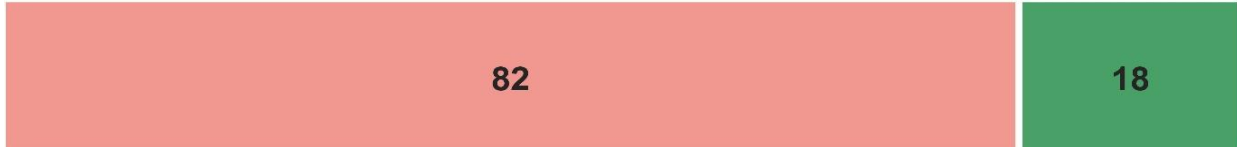


## Q9. Awareness of complaints mechanisms

**Do you know how and where to make complaints about the support you received?**

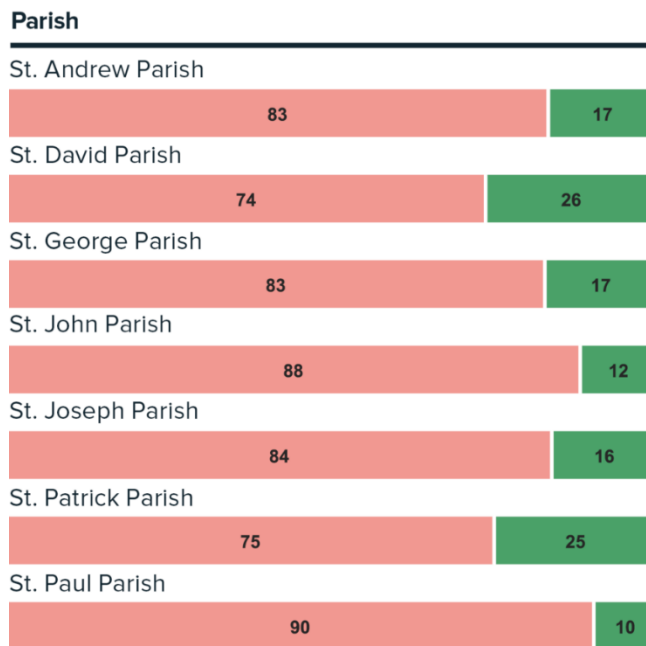
No  
Yes

(values in %, n = 384)



**The majority of respondents are unaware of existing complaints mechanisms.** In November a slightly higher percentage, namely 20% of those surveyed, said they knew how and where to make complaints.

Awareness of how or where to make complaints about services received is highest in St. David and St. Patrick parishes.



## Q10. Trust in government complaints mechanisms

**If you were to make a complaint to a local government representative or council member, do you think you would get a response?**

No  
Yes  
Don't know

(values in %, n = 68)



**More than half of those who say they know how and where to make complaints about services feel they would receive a response from a local government representative or council member if they were to lodge a complaint.** In the previous round of data collection in November only one quarter of respondents said they felt they would receive a response.



### Q11. Trust in aid agency complaints mechanisms

**If you were to make a complaint to relief workers, do you think you would get a response?**

No
Yes
Don't know

(values in %, n = 68)



Similarly, over half of those who know about existing feedback mechanisms believe they would receive a response from relief workers following a complaint. Results from the previous round were more negative, with 32% of those surveyed having said they would not have expected a response from relief workers.

### Q12. Improvements in people's lives

**Overall, is life improving for the people affected by the hurricane?**

1 = Not at all
2 = Not very much
3 = Neutral
4 = Mostly yes
5 = Completely
Don't know

(values in %, n = 396)

Trend in mean scores: 2.6 2.8

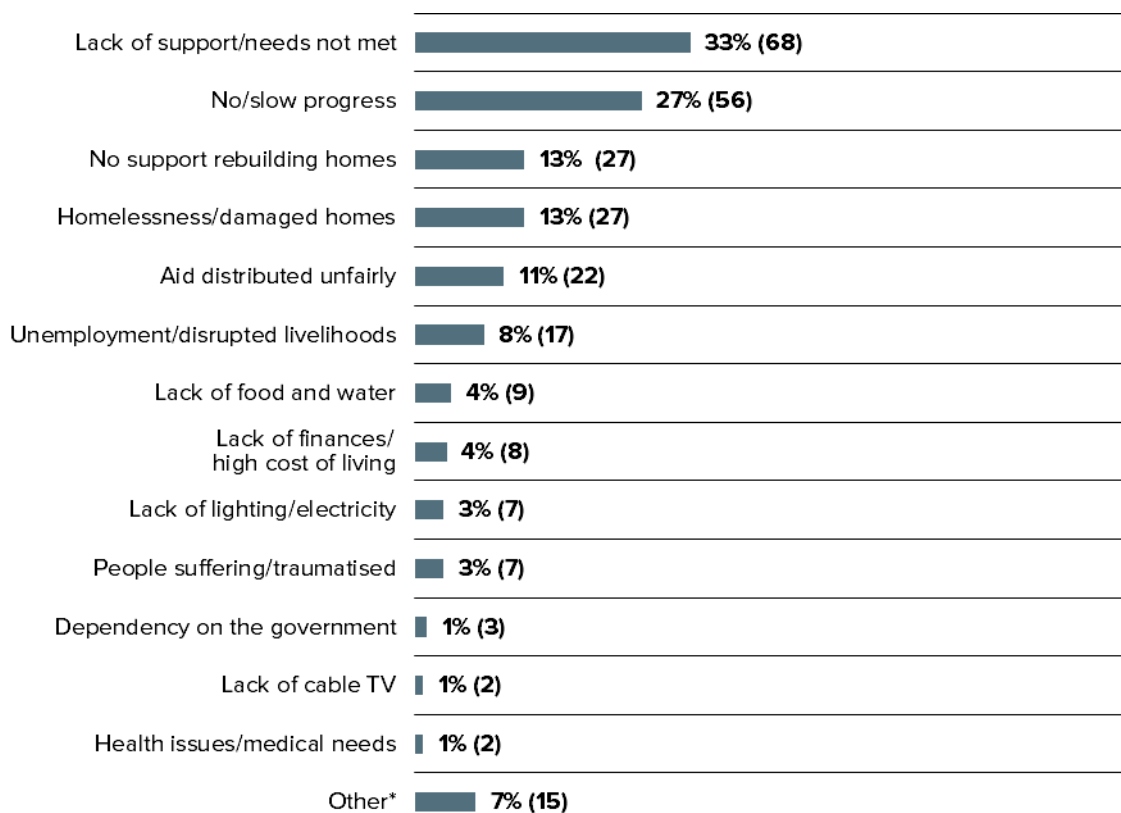


Responses are mixed regarding improvements in people's lives in the aftermath of the hurricane. Fewer people responded negatively than in the previous round.



## Follow-up question asked to those who answered 1, 2, or 3 to Q12:

### Why not?

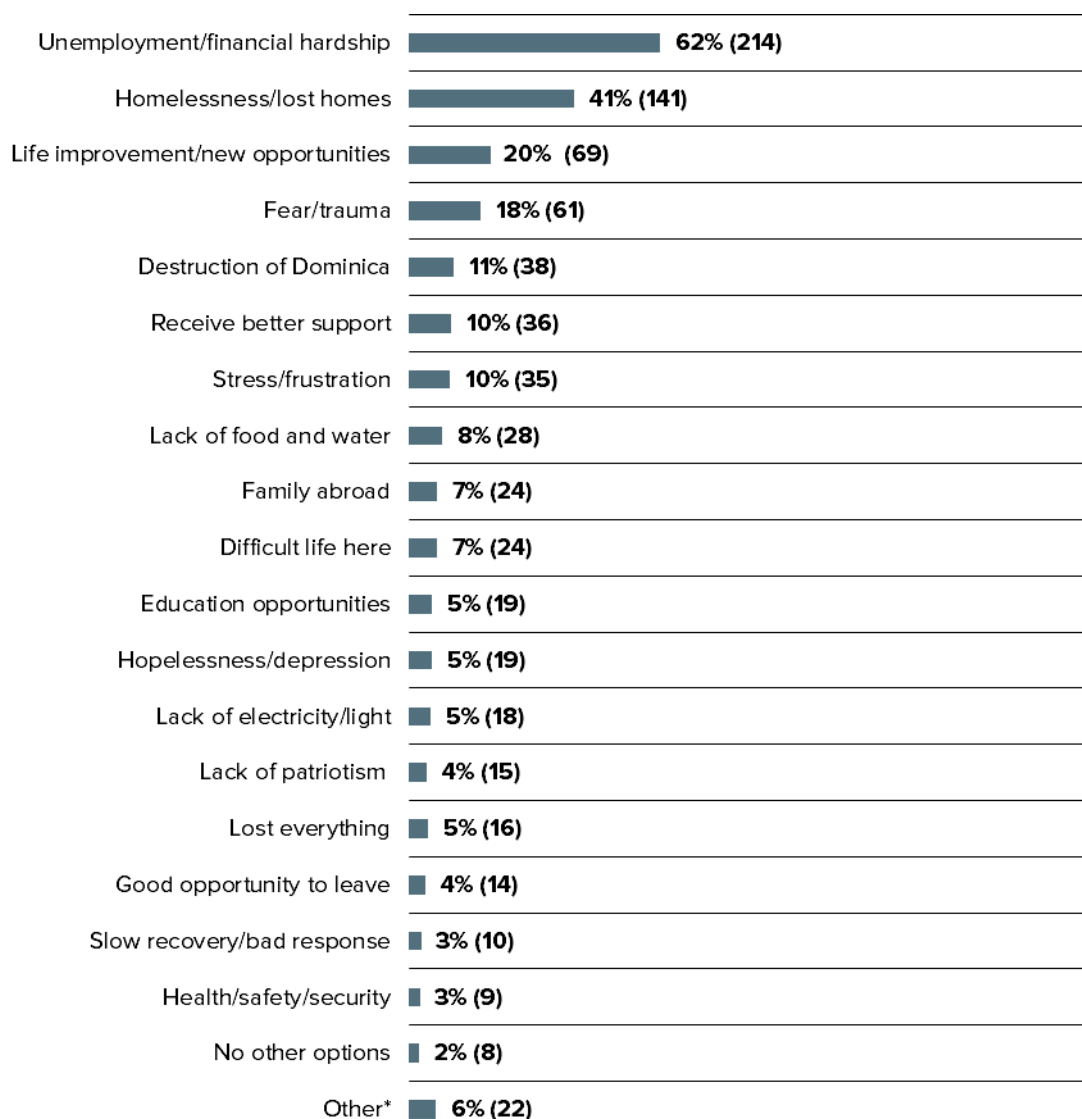


Respondents who do not believe the situation is improving for those affected by the hurricane cite a lack of support and persisting unmet needs as the main reasons. Many also feel that there has been no progress or that the progress they have seen has been slow.

\*“Other” includes increased crime rates, a lack of social and community solidarity, governmental apathy, and business stagnation. The fact that schools are still closed, a lack of initiative, and the feeling that flooding could still occur are also listed as reasons for why life is not improving.

## Q13. Push factors

### What do you think are the top three reasons some people are leaving Dominica?



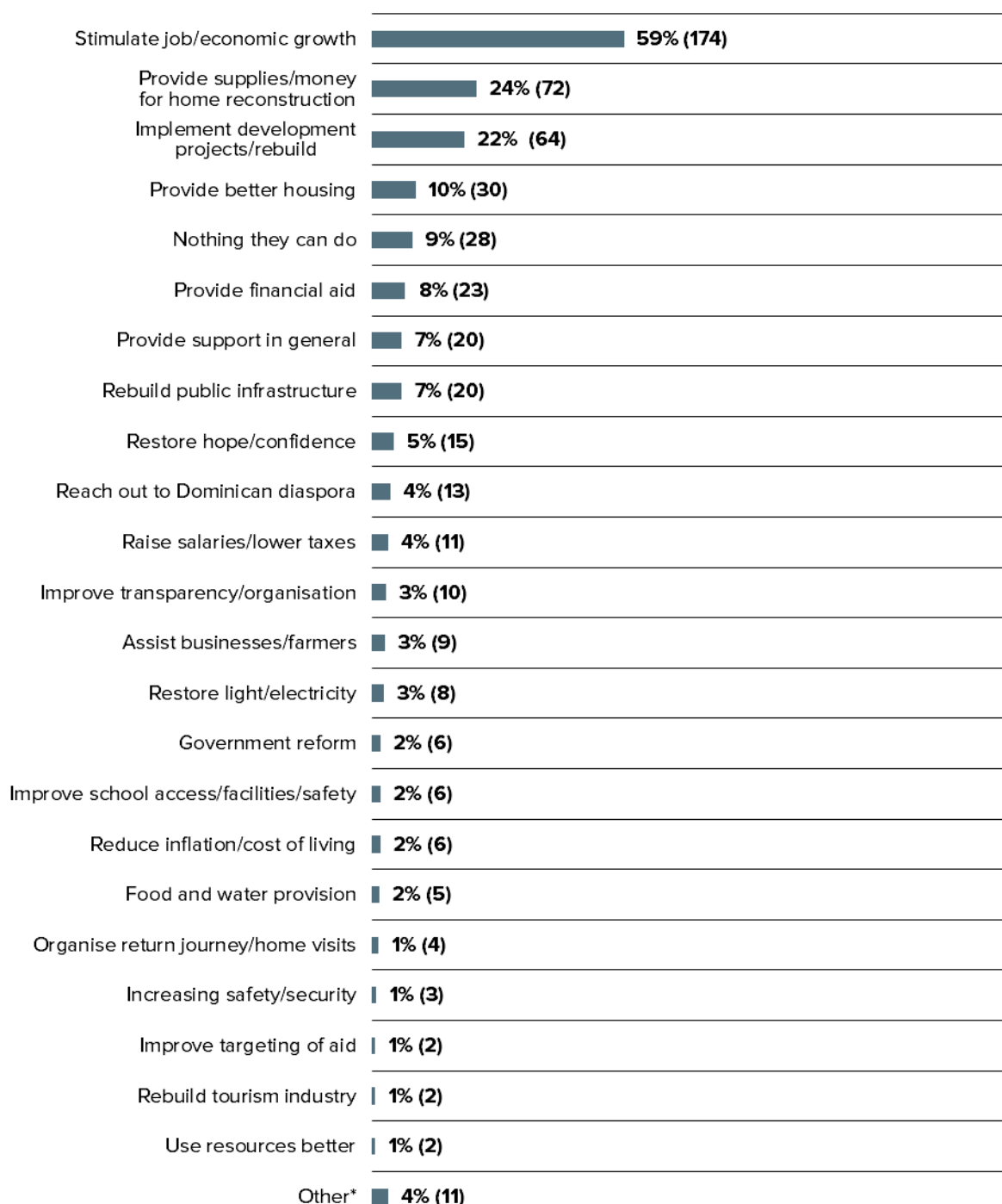
Most respondents say the lack of employment opportunities in Dominica and the accompanying financial troubles are causing people to leave the country. Homelessness in the aftermath of the hurricane is also cited as a factor propelling people to leave.

\*“Other” includes people leaving due to confusion, misinformation and miscommunication, dissatisfaction with the way the country is being run, unfairness in the way people are treated, and being unprepared for life after the devastation. Another view is that as people leave the country others are inclined to follow suit. Respondents also mention the government’s help with the departure process. Considerations such as the prospects for children on the island and climate change are also noted as push factors. Finally, there are those who say some people simply wish to take a break.



## Q14. Incentives to return

### How could the government facilitate/encourage the return of those people who left the island following Hurricane Maria?



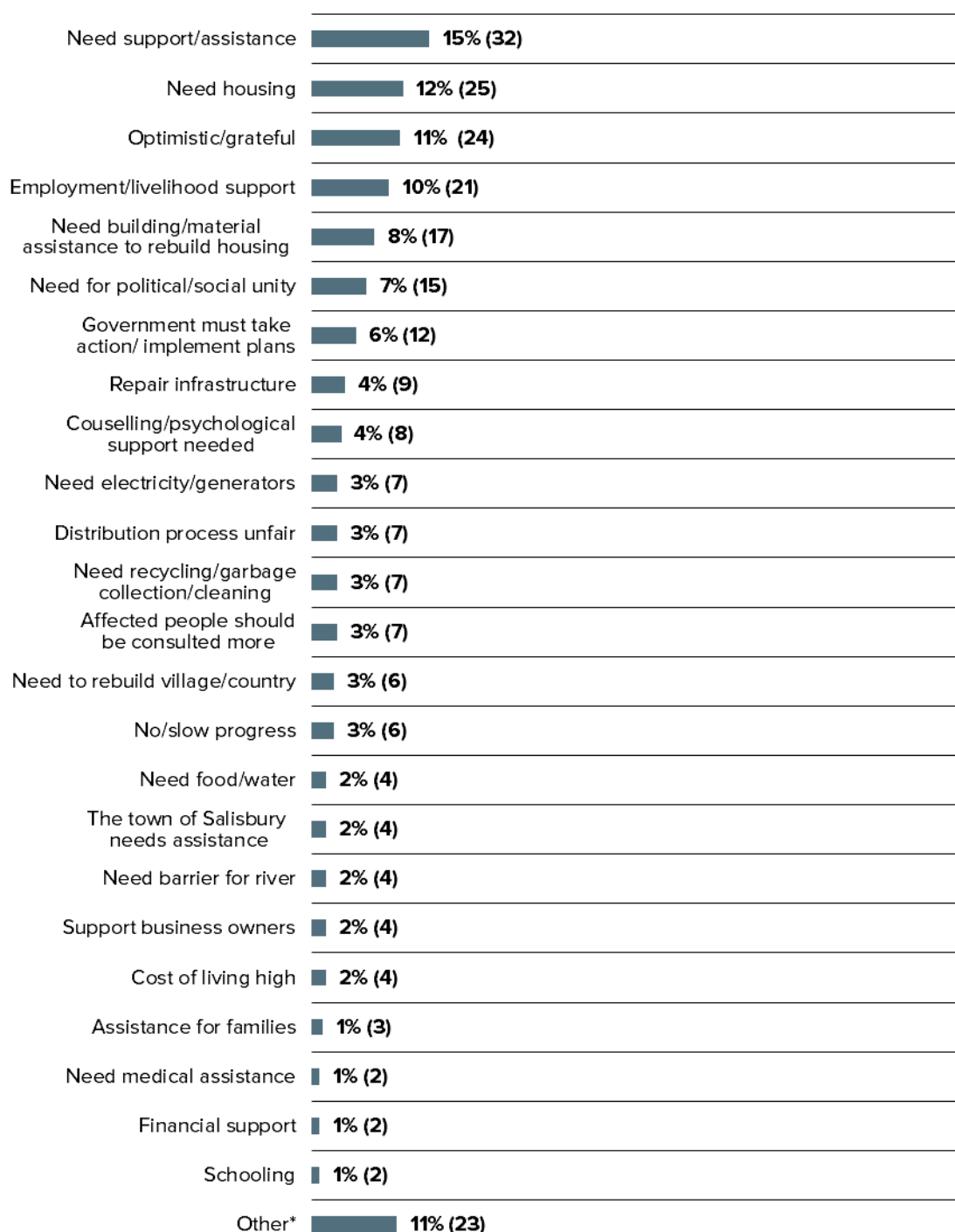
Well over half of respondents say that the government could incentivise individuals to return to Dominica by encouraging economic stimulation and increasing job opportunities. Many also called for the provision of supplies and money for home reconstruction.

\*“Other” includes increasing incentives through schemes such as providing entertainment, rewards for returning, counselling sessions, medical care, and the introduction of youth development programmes. Respondents also suggested providing government-owned land to returnees, removing homes which are close to rivers, and better preparatory planning for future natural disasters. A need for improving the treatment of affected people – in terms of respect and empowerment– is also mentioned.



## Q15. Further insight

### Is there anything else you would like to share with us?



Many respondents are still in need of basic support and assistance, including housing, livelihood support, material assistance to rebuild their homes, and infrastructure repair. They also called for political and social unity and asked that the government take action in implementing a recovery plan.

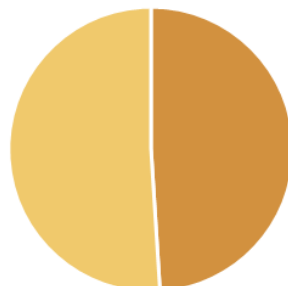
\* "Other" includes participants pointing to the need for aid organisation's contact details, calling for a change in government, the need for less reliance on the government, and for better emergency planning in the case of future disasters. Others point to the need for more personal space, the problem of frustration and oppression of citizens in the country, and the need to look after the most vulnerable groups. Suggestions also include securing foreign investment and boosting tourism.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

The graphs below depict the demographic breakdown of the 403 respondents. Each graph includes percentages, as well as the frequency in parentheses.

## Gender



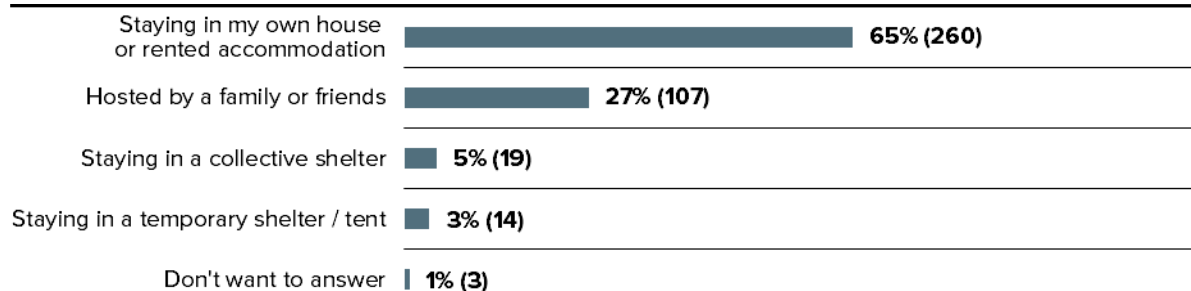
Male 51% (207)

Female 49% (196)

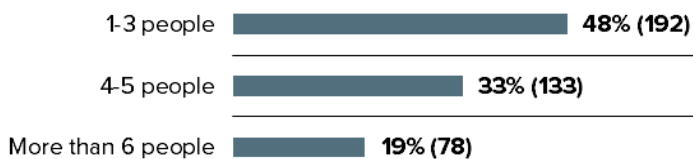
## Age



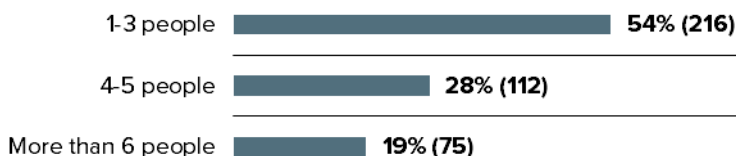
## Current housing situation



## Household size prior to the hurricane



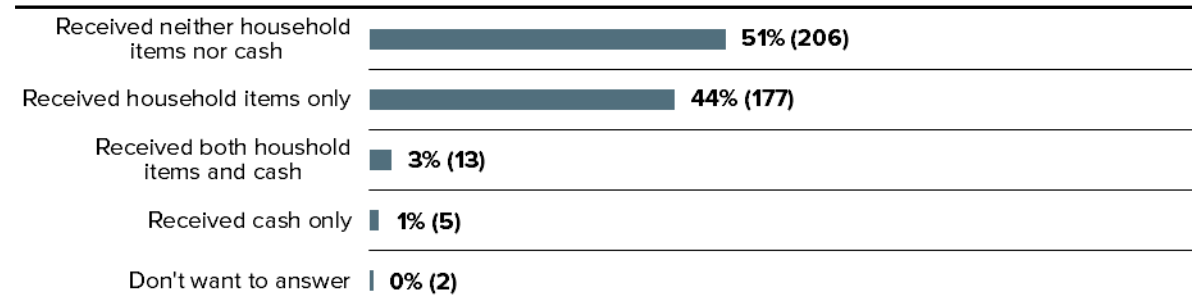
## Household size after the hurricane



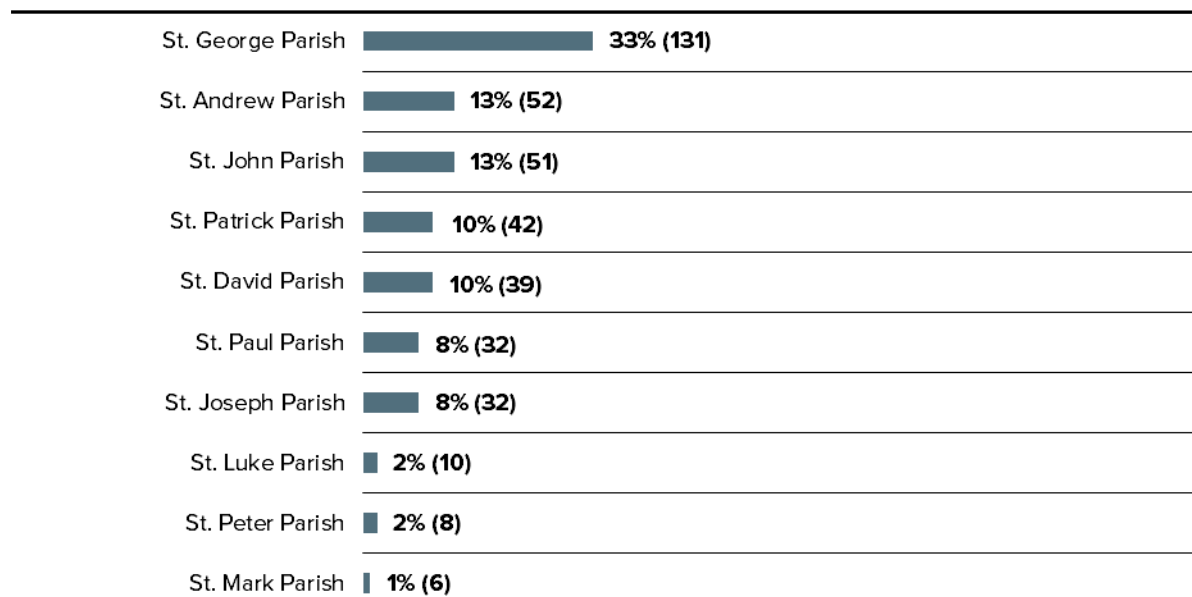




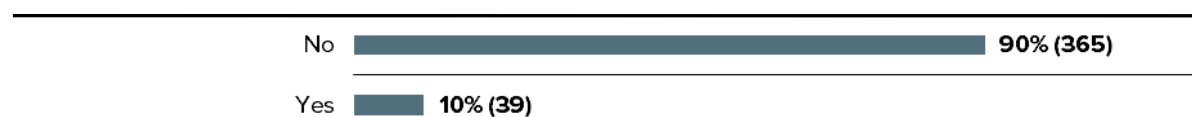
## Types of support received



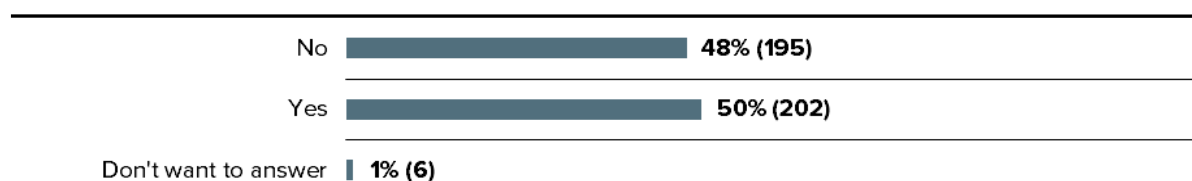
## Parish



## Do you have a disability?



## Do you use a smartphone every day?



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## RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The following next steps are suggested for consideration by humanitarian actors and government agencies in Dominica:

**Dialogue.** A Ground Truth Solutions staff member will be present on the ground to discuss the main findings with relevant aid agencies and representatives. It is important that you also circulate the main findings within your own organisation and to partner agencies. Ground Truth Solutions will also be sharing the findings with affected communities through SMS, email, and social media. It is requested that you use your proximity to the affected communities to engage in discussions around the findings to add more depth to the feedback, improve your organisation's situational awareness, and bridge information gaps. These "sense-making" dialogues should focus on themes where the data suggests that further attention or action may be necessary.

**Closing the loop.** Encourage field staff to close the feedback loop by informing affected communities of how services are being adapted to take their views into account. Organisations should be responsive to requests for information provision to be done through low-tech mechanisms such as face-to-face meetings and phone calls by exploring the possibility of holding more community meetings and establishing hotlines. Additionally, documentation of complaints and active responses should be undertaken for each mechanism. Like the support offered to communities, information provision should also be demand-led by directly addressing the information needs specifically mentioned in this report.

Jon Horler, Senior Programme Officer at Ground Truth Solutions for Hurricanes Maria and Irma, is available in Dominica to discuss findings with humanitarian actors and government agencies.

## NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

### Background

As part of the [H2H Network](#), Ground Truth Solutions, an NGO, provides humanitarian actors and government agencies in the Caribbean with the means to systematically listen, react, and respond to the views of people affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Through a series of light-touch surveys conducted with affected communities in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, the goal is to help decision-makers to better understand community concerns, manage expectations, and make adjustments to the hurricane response.

### Survey development

Ground Truth Solutions developed the survey questions in close collaboration with representatives of humanitarian agencies on the ground, including numerous humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies active in Dominica, as well as H2H partners. The goal is to gather feedback from aid recipients and track how perceptions evolve over time. Most closed questions use a five-point Likert scale to quantify answers. Several questions are followed by an open-ended question to understand why the respondent gave a particular response. Ground Truth Solutions' perceptual surveys complement regular programme monitoring and evaluation.

### Sample size

Interviews were conducted with 403 Dominicans currently residing in Dominica. Simulations were used to define the sample size for Dominica. A sample size of 400 was considered an appropriate trade-off between precision and sample size, with 95% confidence intervals for the sample means at +/-14.

### Sampling methodology

The survey was conducted face-to-face and recorded using handheld phones following the CAPI method. Using a skip pattern, enumerators selected every third household where possible. Only individuals 18 years of age or older were interviewed. Each enumerator aimed to ensure an even number of males and females were surveyed. Each of Dominica's 10 administrative parishes was sampled, and the quota for each parish was distributed proportionate to the population size as per updated settlement data provided by UNOCHA. While further adjustments may occur to some extent and collective shelters may be closed



in the future, round three of data collection will maintain these parish quotas to ensure compatibility across rounds.

## Data disaggregation

Data is disaggregated by gender, age quantile, current living situation, parish, awareness of complaints mechanisms, and size of household prior to Hurricane Maria. The analysis in the report includes any significant difference in the perceptions of different demographic groups. It does not, however, show the full breakdown of responses according to these categories. To see the complete breakdown of responses, please request the output file by sending an email to Ground Truth Solutions' Andrew Hassan ([andrew@groundtruthsolutions.org](mailto:andrew@groundtruthsolutions.org)).

To identify groups of persons with disabilities within the sample, a staff member at Inclusive Humanitarian Action was consulted and participants were asked a series of questions:

- Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
- Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
- Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
- Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?

If a survey participant indicated having difficulty or the inability to do one or more of the above activities, they were considered to be a person with a disability.

Lastly, the Kalinago Territory was targeted, however, in the breakdowns provided, respondents within the territory were included in the same category as those from the rest of Saint David Parish.

## Language of the survey

This survey was conducted in English.

## Data collection

Data was collected in face-to-face, one-on-one interviews between 4 and 12 January 2018 by Dichter & Neira and DMR, independent data-collection companies based in the Caribbean. Jon Horler, Ground Truth's Senior Programme Officer for Hurricanes Maria and Irma, was responsible for assisting in the design of the survey tools, sampling strategy, and overseeing the data collection on the ground.

**For more information about Ground Truth Solutions surveys in Dominica, please contact Jon Horler (Senior Programme Officer – [jon@groundtruthsolutions.org](mailto:jon@groundtruthsolutions.org)) or Andrew Hassan (Programme Analyst – [andrew@groundtruthsolutions.org](mailto:andrew@groundtruthsolutions.org)).**

## WORKS CITED

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