

110520 press release

Corona Survey: State-imposed emergencies make people more anxious and unhappy

Working people do not feel less but more anxious as a result of state-imposed emergency measures. Quite the opposite. Having to stay home and wear protective gear when going out, makes people not just more anxious but also more dissatisfied. This is the most general finding from the WageIndicator Survey 'Living and Working in Corona Times', based on data from 25 advanced and developing countries between March 23 and May 1. During those 5 weeks observations were obtained from 2,565 respondents.

The elderly are less afraid

Some other outcomes are: respondents aged 50 and over, though more vulnerable, report lower dissatisfaction and anxiety than the average, women report anxiety more often than men, living with a partner makes people more satisfied and less anxious, and having children or a pet in the household makes no difference.

Not surprisingly, reduced income also increases fear and unhappiness. Changes in the workload and/or routine have the same effect: an increase of tasks, but a decrease of the workload too, makes people more anxious and unhappy.

Limited mobility and required protection add to fear

The imposition of emergency measures varied (and varies) between all 25 countries from the sample. Policies differ in terms of strictness, range of application, prioritized target groups and the moment of coming into effect. This variation allowed researchers to explore how state-imposed emergencies impact the feelings of anxiety and (un)happiness amongst respondents. Part of the data was collected before the imposition of states of emergency, and part of the data came in after. This made the exploration of differences in the impact of restricted mobility and required protection gear possible. With the overall outcome: people may understand the need for these measures, but these do not make them feel less anxious or more satisfied.



Job protection supports well-being

The researchers from the Netherlands, Slovakia and Spain conclude that their findings are relevant for policy-makers who design paths to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. They endorse the pursued maintenance of employment for as many people as possible: 'protecting jobs implies the protection of citizen's well-being'. That conclusion applies to the lockdown period studied, but also to the much needed recovery, they say.

Corona Survey and research report

The continuous Survey *Living and Working in Coronavirus Times* is presently fielded in 110 countries through the national WageIndicator websites. Since its launch on March 23, almost 5,000 respondents have shared their data and each day fresh data is coming in. The questionnaire is designed to tackle the individual, family and interpersonal coping with the corona pandemic for as long as it lasts.

The dataset used for the first analysis on which this press release is based, was collected between March 23 and May 1. In the estimation sample 25 countries with at least 20 valid observations could be included. This final sample numbers 2,565 individuals. Of these 58% are women, the average age is 40, 20% is over 50. Two-thirds have tertiary education, 44% lives with one or more children, 61% lives with a partner and 13% lives alone. 86% has a paid job, most report changes in their workload (37% down, 23% up). 79% report good health, 15% suffered from fever, coughing and/or difficult breathing. 15% report a family member or friend who tested positive, 6% said a colleague tested positive.

- The full report can be consulted **here**:
<https://wageindicator.org/Wageindicatorfoundation/publications/2020/de-pedraz-a-p-guzi-m-tijdens-k-g-2020-life-dissatisfaction-and-anxiety-in-covid-19-pandemic-muni-econ-working-papers-2020-03-masaryk-university>
- For promotion and participation in the Corona Survey please go to:
<https://wageindicator.org/salary/living-and-working-in-times-of-the-coronavirus>
- Daily updated national survey results may be consulted here:
<https://wageindicator.org/salary/living-and-working-in-times-of-the-coronavirus/work-life-in-corona-times-graphs>
- **More about the project**
<https://wageindicator.org/Wageindicatorfoundation/projects/living-and-working-in-coronavirus-times>