

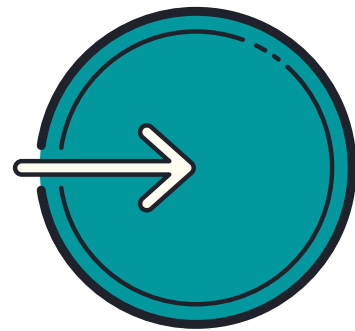
# COVID-19 AND BARRIERS TO **SAFE WATER AND SANITATION** AMONG STREET POPULATION IN MEXICO CITY

8th of April, 2021

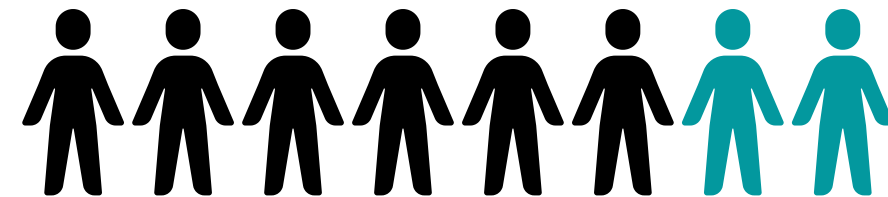
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# OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH



Document **experiences** and **factors affecting access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services**, and resulting **coping strategies**, among the homeless population in Mexico City during COVID-19.



Investigate the **knowledge, attitudes and practices** related to **WASH and COVID-19** among the homeless population in Mexico City.



Identify **challenges** faced by the homeless population for **practicing specific COVID-19 hygiene-related recommendations and accessing COVID-19 interventions**.

# HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH RIGHT TO WATER AND SANITATION

- **2010** --> The human rights to water and sanitation (HRWS) were **recognized** by the UN through resolution 64/292.
- **2015** --> Sanitation was **recognized** as a **distinct right**.
- The right to water entitles **everyone** to have access to **sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible**, and **affordable water** for personal and domestic use.
- The right to sanitation entitles **everyone** to have **physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life**, that is safe, hygienic, secure, and socially and culturally acceptable and that provides privacy and ensures dignity.

# HUMAN RIGHTS BASED-APPROACH LEAVING SOME BEHIND?

## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



- Tracking progress towards these Human Rights is challenging and has left some people behind.
- The **Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP)** and the **Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS)**, have been used to monitor progress on drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- **Monitoring vulnerable groups** using the JMP or the GLAAS platforms is **challenging because** they only measure results at a household level.

# HOMELESSNESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

"Homelessness is a profound assault on dignity, social inclusion and the right to life. It is a **prima facie violation of the right to housing and violates a number of other human rights** in addition to the right to life, including non-discrimination, health, **water and sanitation**, security of the person and freedom from cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment."

- Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing (A/HRC/43/43, para. 30)



# HRWS AND HOMELESSNESS AND THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH



- Limited attention on the rights to water and sanitation of homeless people in research and policies



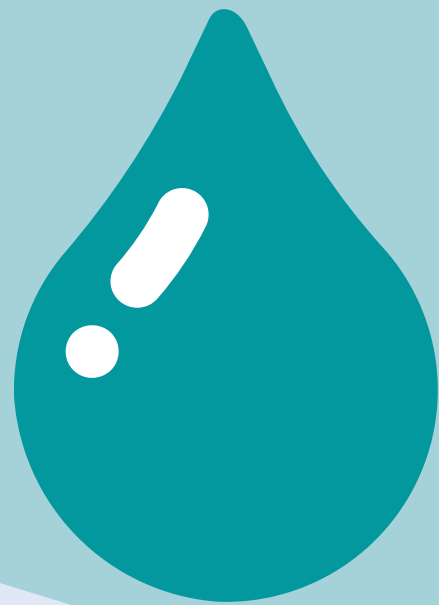
- Special Rapporteur on HRWS: "People living in the street should be guaranteed free facilities providing access to water and toilets" – HOW?



- What does adequacy, sufficiency, accessibility, availability, quality, safety, and cultural acceptability mean? this varies between different sectors of a society depending on factors such as climate, diet, lifestyle, and culture (Walters, 2014)



- Explore the use of the capabilities approach where freedom to achieve well-being is prioritized and well-being is understood in terms of people's capabilities and functioning= Focusing on what people are able to do and be within their context (Nichols, 2010)

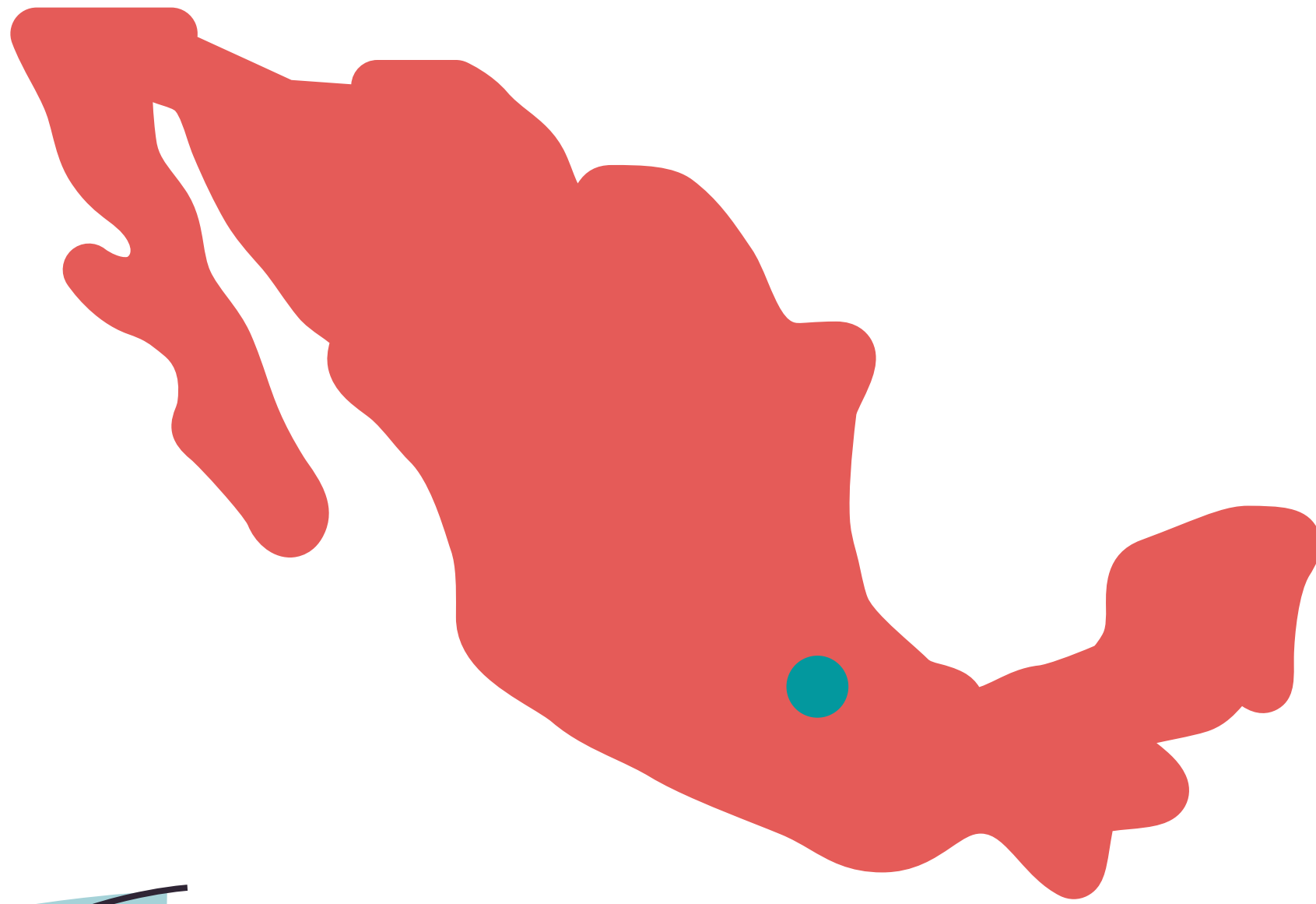


# CASE STUDY AND DATA COLLECTION



# CASE STUDY: MEXICO CITY, HOMELESSNESS AND COVID-19

- Currently, 6 754 homeless people live in Mexico City out of which 87% are men and 13% are women
- 50% percent of the homeless population is concentrated in 3 out of the 16 boroughs of Mexico City.
- On March 30th a national health emergency was decreed in Mexico, given the evolution of confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19.







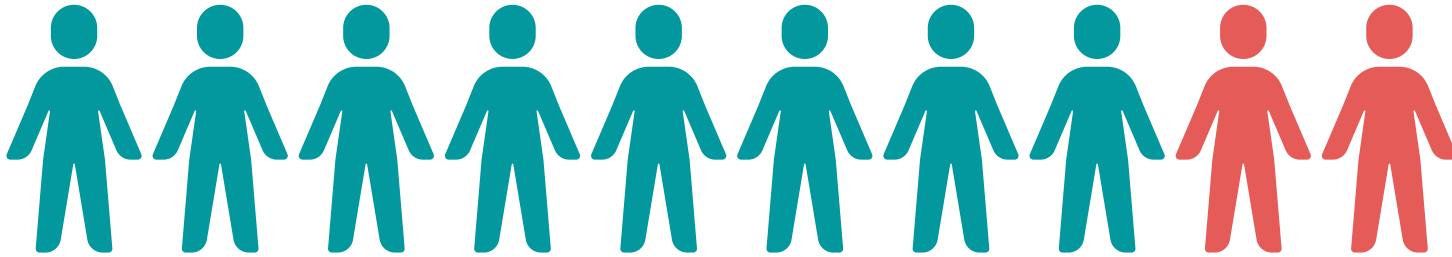
# DATA COLLECTION

- This study is conducted by the **Stockholm Environment Insititute (SEI)** in collaboration with the **Mexican NGO El Caracol**.
- The collection of data is undertaken as **part of the health campaign** initiated by El Caracol to address the right to health of homeless people during the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Quantitative research consisted of a **survey of 85 questions** mainly focusing on: **access to WASH services before and during the pandemic**.
- The collection of data began on **February 2021** and will continue until **the end of April 2021**
- So far **60 out of 100 surveys** have been conducted and analyzed using the data collection tool **Kobo toolbox**



# RESULTS OF THE STUDY (PARTIAL)

# GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY GROUP



**72% MEN**

**28% WOMEN**



**46%**

**GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL**

**61%**

**HAVE AN INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT**



Windshield cleaner

Street seller

Garbage Collector (PET)



**~ \$70**

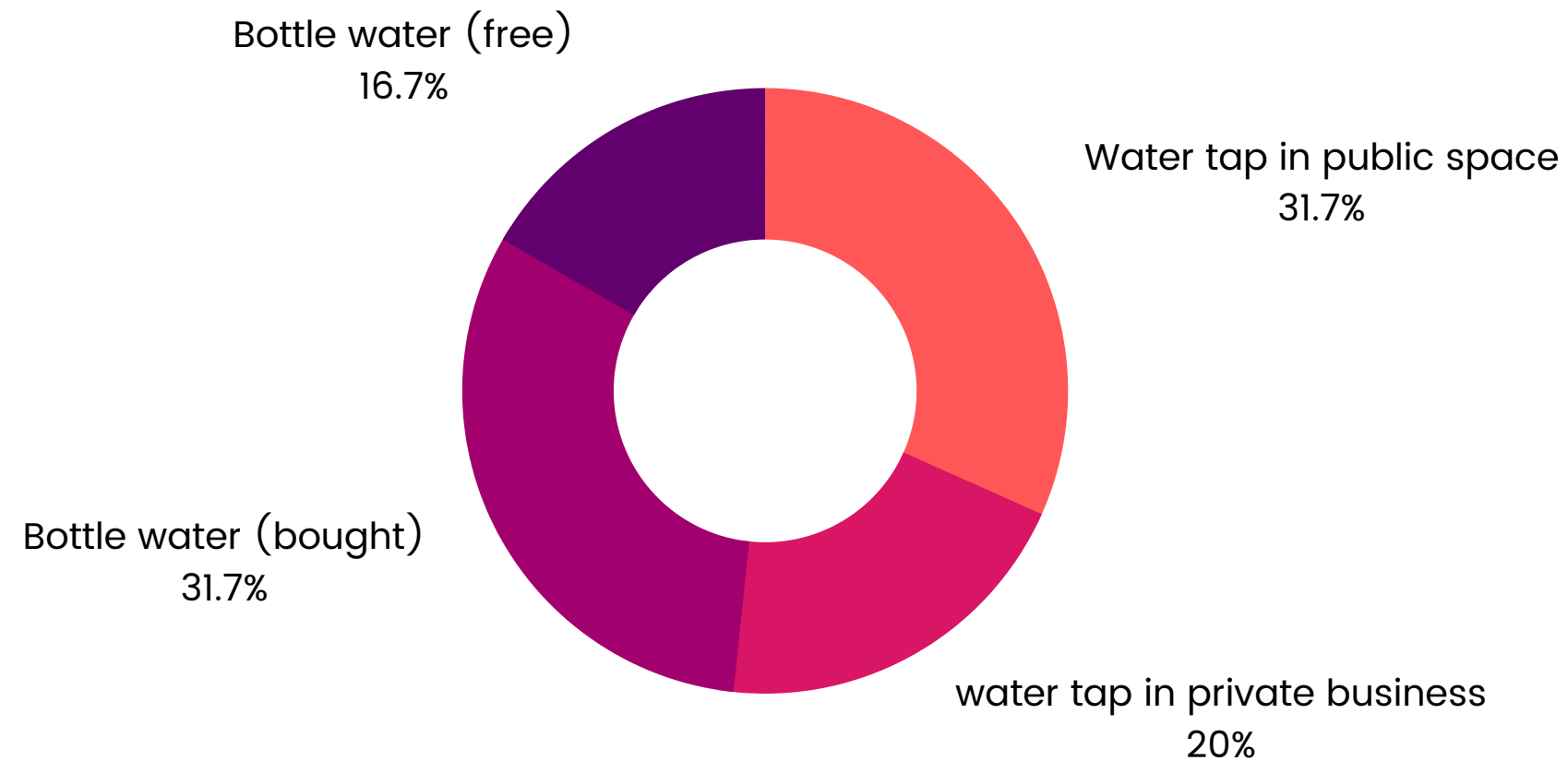
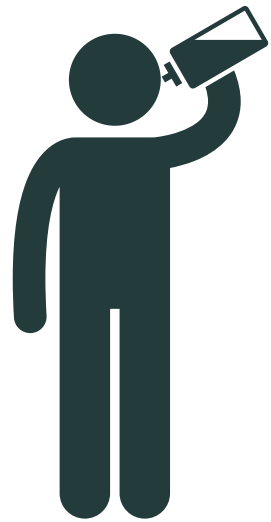
**AVERAGE INCOME PER MONTH PRE COVID-19**

**~ \$ 20**

**AVERAGE INCOME PER MONTH DURING COVID-19**

# WATER SOURCES DURING COVID-19

## MAIN DRINKING WATER SOURCE



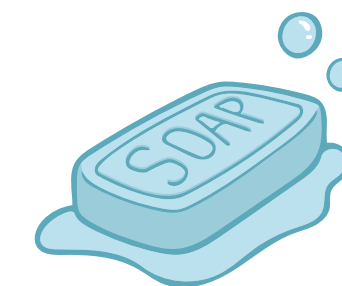
People reported spending between **\$1 - \$3** per day on water

## MAIN SOURCE OF WATER FOR HANDWASHING



- ① Sink in public toilet
- ② Water tap in public space
- ③ Fountain in public space

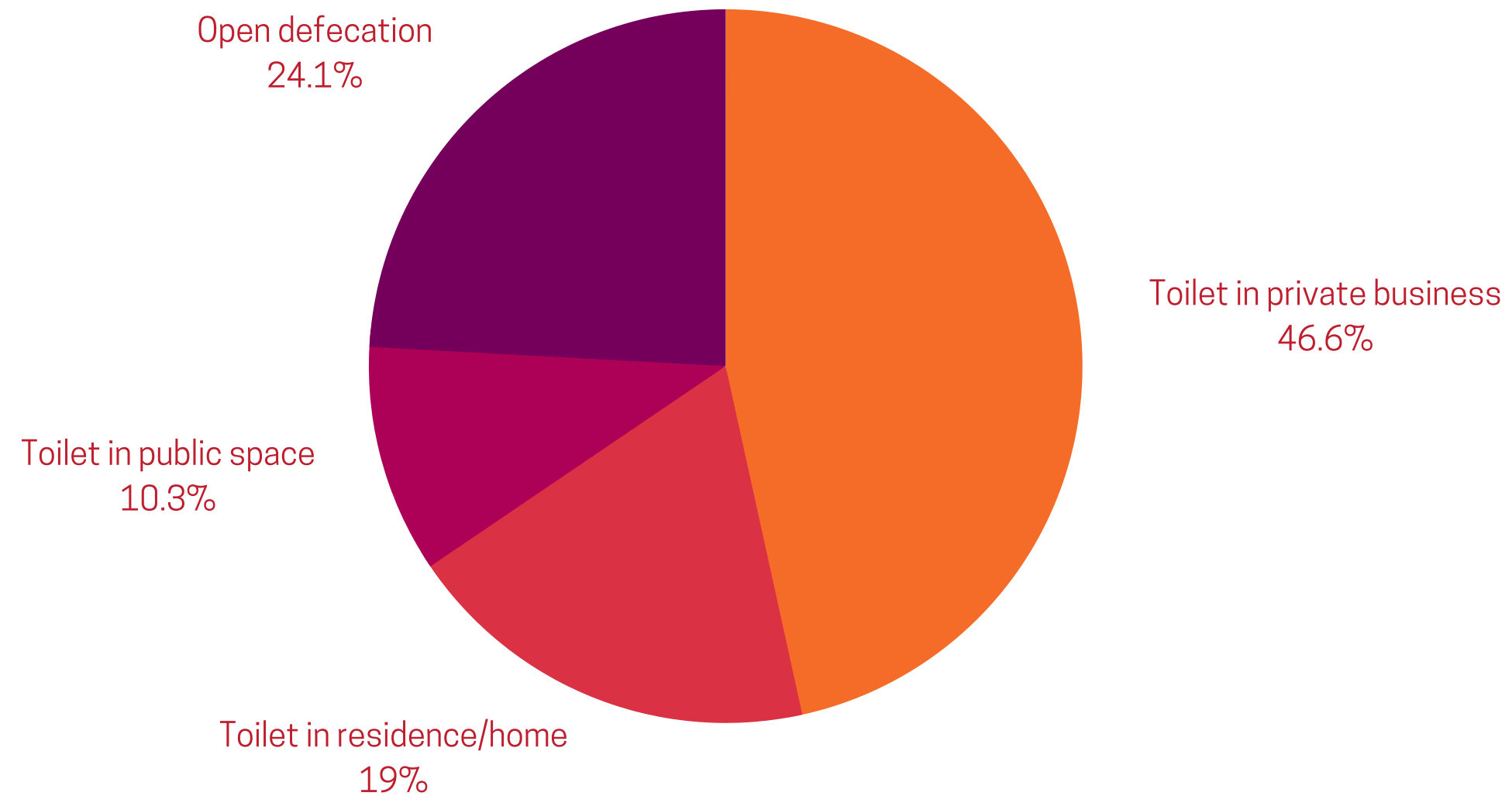
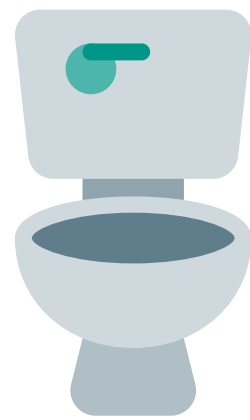
**38%**



Reported bringing their own soap to the handwashing source/facility

# SANITATION FACILITIES DURING COVID-19

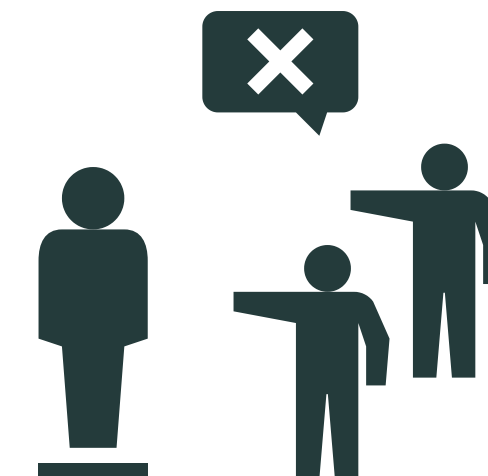
## MAIN SANITATION FACILITY



25%

Reported that they could not access the sanitation facility at all times

- ① Closed facility
- ② Economic discrimination
- ③ Physical appearance discrimination



# CHANGES IN WASH SITUATION WITH COVID-19

Changed sanitation facility or main drinking water source  
35%



Did not change main drinking water source or sanitation facility  
65%

## COPING MECHANISMS



14%

New source or facility was better than the last one



57%

New source or facility was worse than the last one

Sex favours to get water

Not drinking enough water as wanted/needed

Store water in bottles or barrels

Not eating as much as needed/wanted

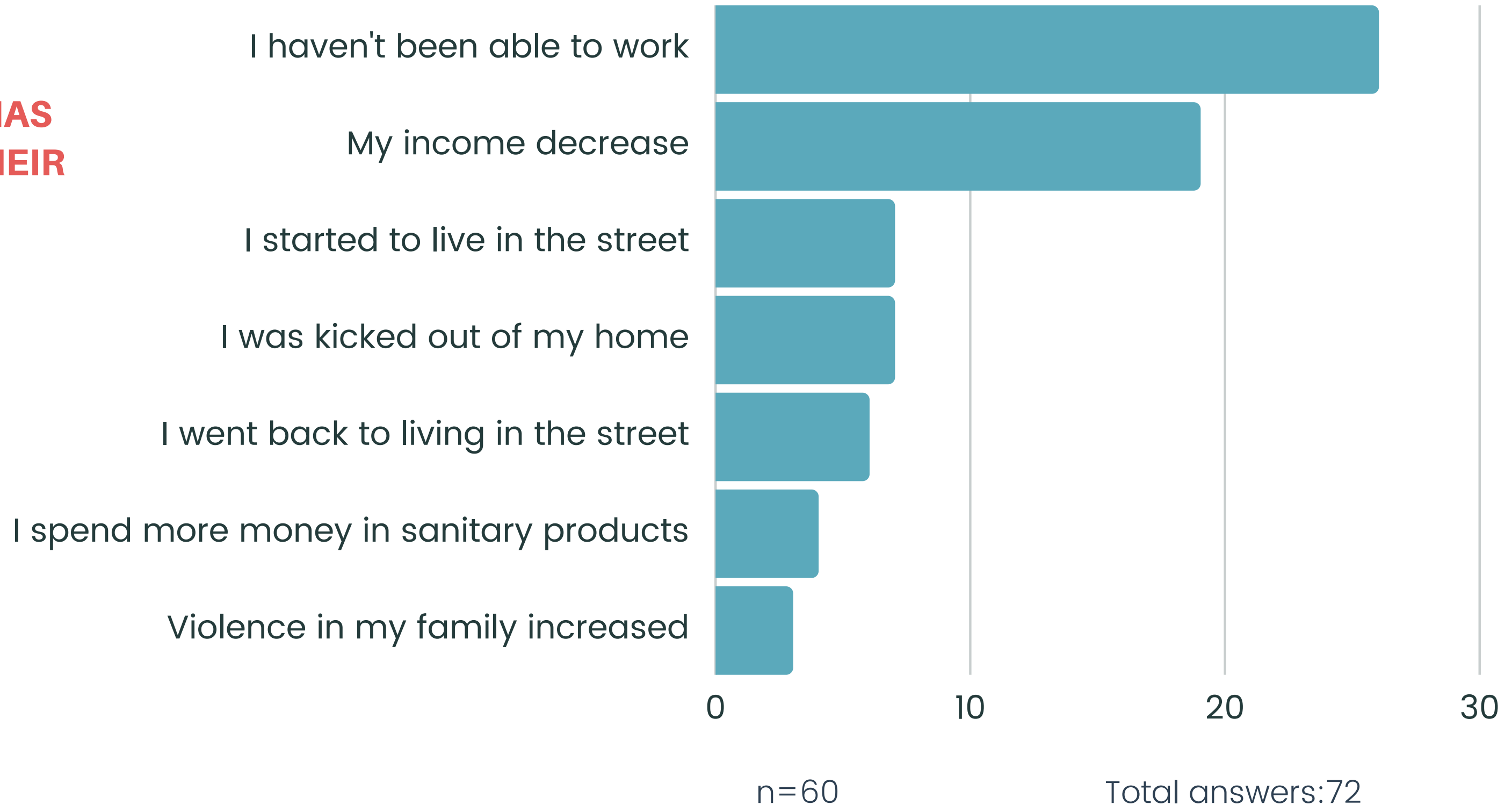
Open defecation



# OTHER RELEVANT FINDINGS

98%

NOTED THAT COVID-19 HAS  
NEGATIVELY IMPACTED THEIR  
LIVES



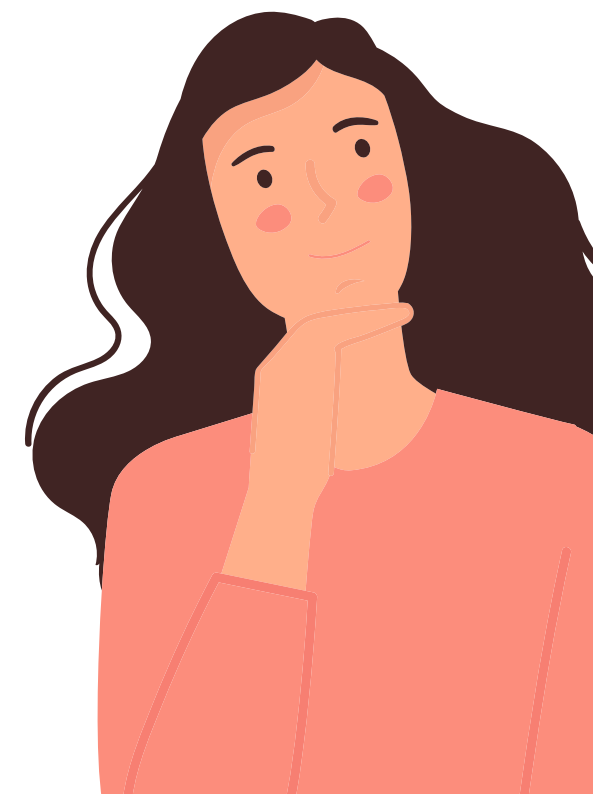
DISCUSSION





# DISCUSSION

- Barriers to safe water and sanitation services **have always existed for homeless people**. However, the **COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these barriers**.
- Many **WASH services** that are available for the homeless population are **closed or partially opened** due to the lockdown imposed in Mexico City since March 2020.
- The **cost of access to WASH services** creates an **economic burden** on the homeless population, whose **income has been highly affected by COVID-19**.
- Some **Coping mechanisms** to deal with changes in WASH services has put some members of homeless population at **risk** and has **limited their full enjoyment of their rights to water and sanitation**.
- Research fills **gaps on homelessness and Human Rights** and explores the use of the **capabilities framework** in WASH sector.



# THANK YOU

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