

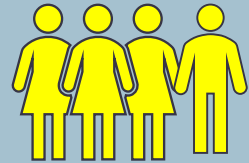
Livelihoods hanging by a thread:

A survey of garment workers and firms in Yangon, Myanmar.

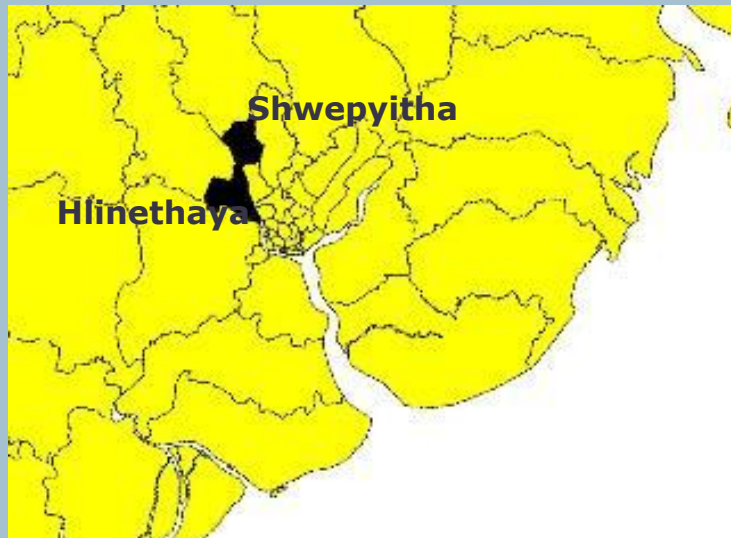
Mixed Method

Quantitative

1,600 Workers

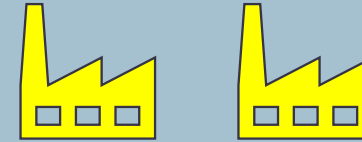


2 townships in Yangon



Qualitative

55 firms



45 garment sector + 10
auxiliary firms
interviewed

Sample Frame

COVID-19 provoked garment factory closures and short-term mass unemployment of tens of thousands of garment workers. Sequa gGmbH and SMART created the **EU Myan Ku Fund**.

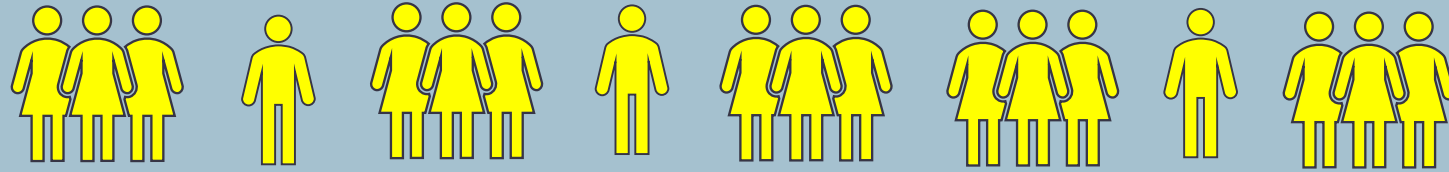
"Myan Ku" = Quick Assistance in Myanmar language.

The sample frame consisted of **people who had received Myan Ku assistance.**

Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) survey of 1,600 people.



Quantitative survey of workers



1,600 Workers

1,232 Garment Workers

153 Ex Garment workers who are now working in another sector

215 Ex Garment workers who are now unemployed

Results: Household Income

Figure 1: Share of respondents stating that household income has gone down since the takeover, by employment status (percent)

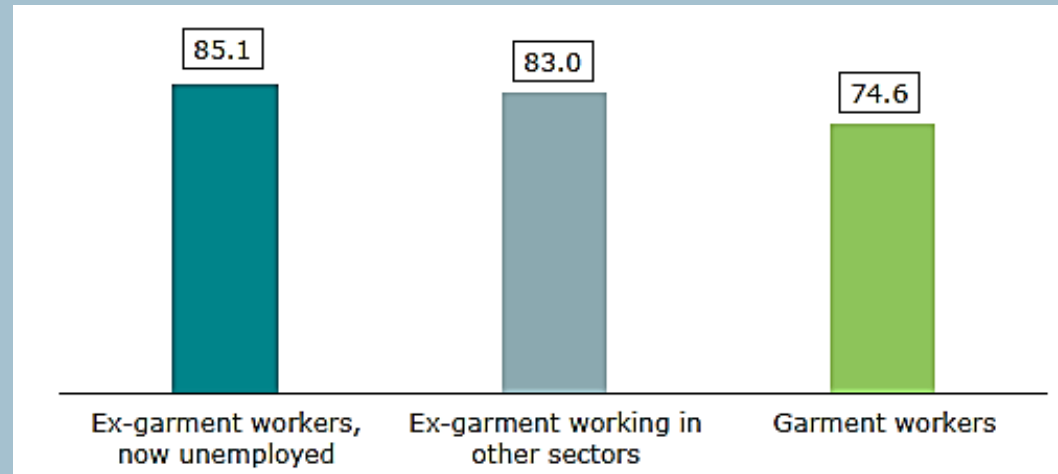
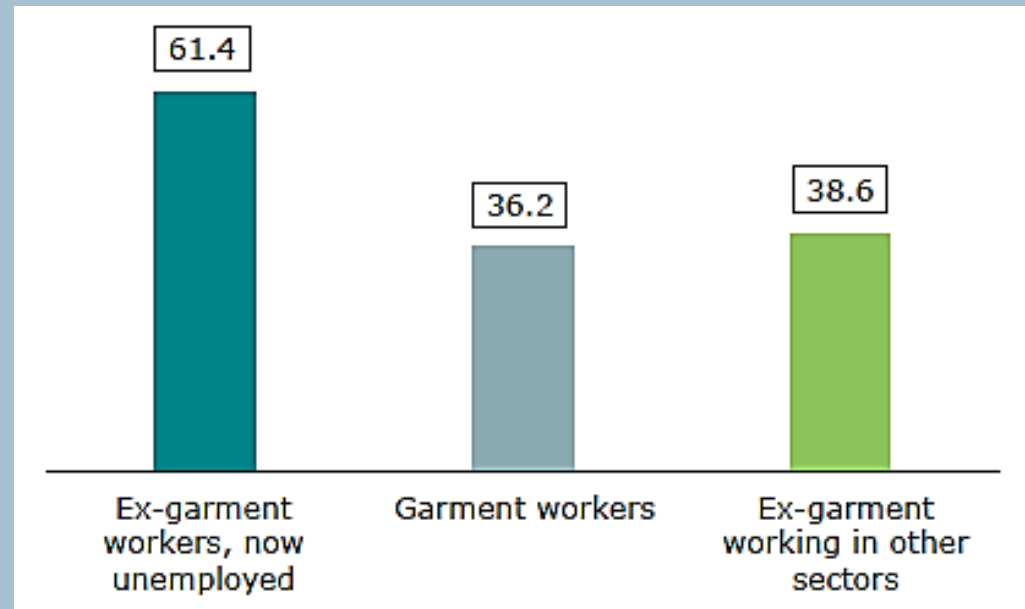


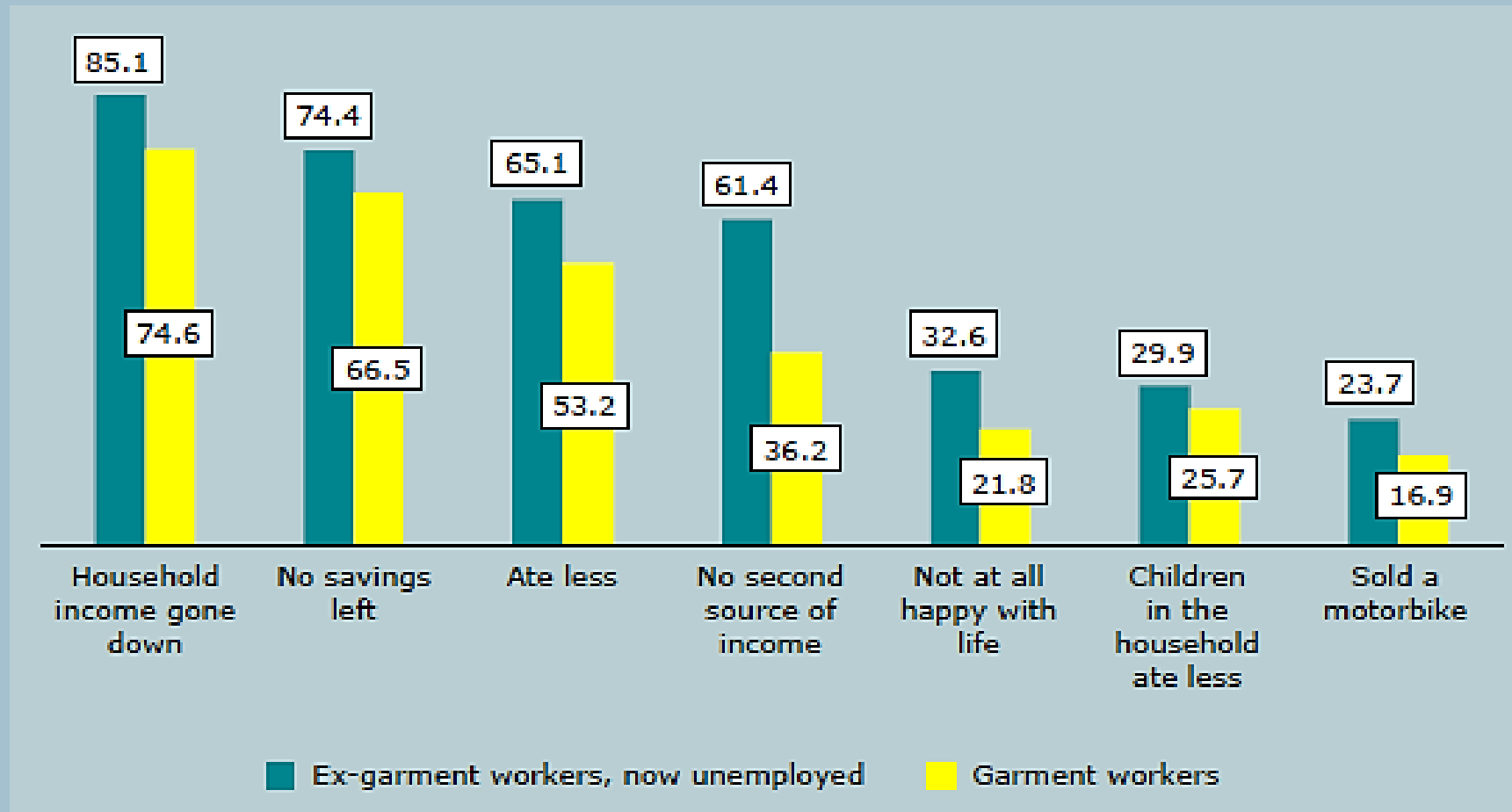
Figure 2: Percentage of households without a second source of income, by employment status



Results:

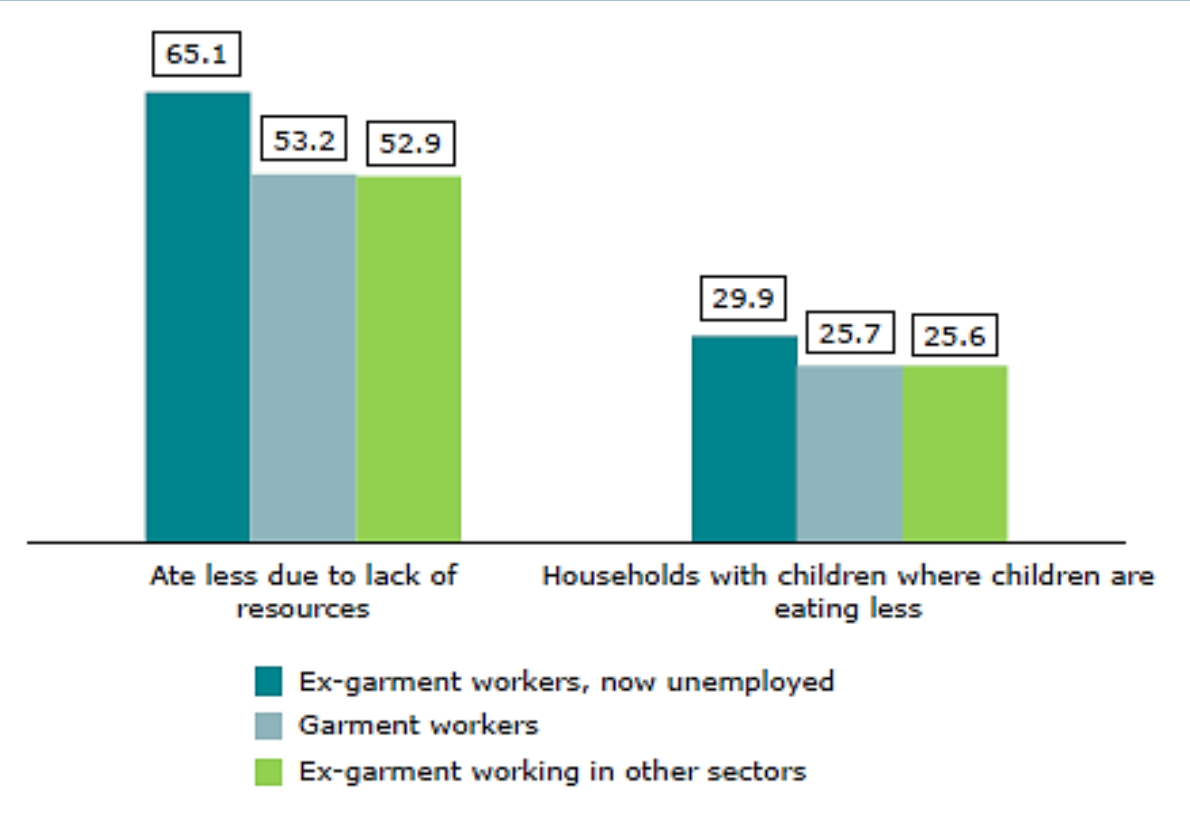


Figure 3: Ex-garment workers and current garment workers. Measures of objective and subjective well-being (percent)



Extreme coping strategies.

Figure 4: Ate less due to a lack of money or other resources and households containing children eating less (percent)



Results

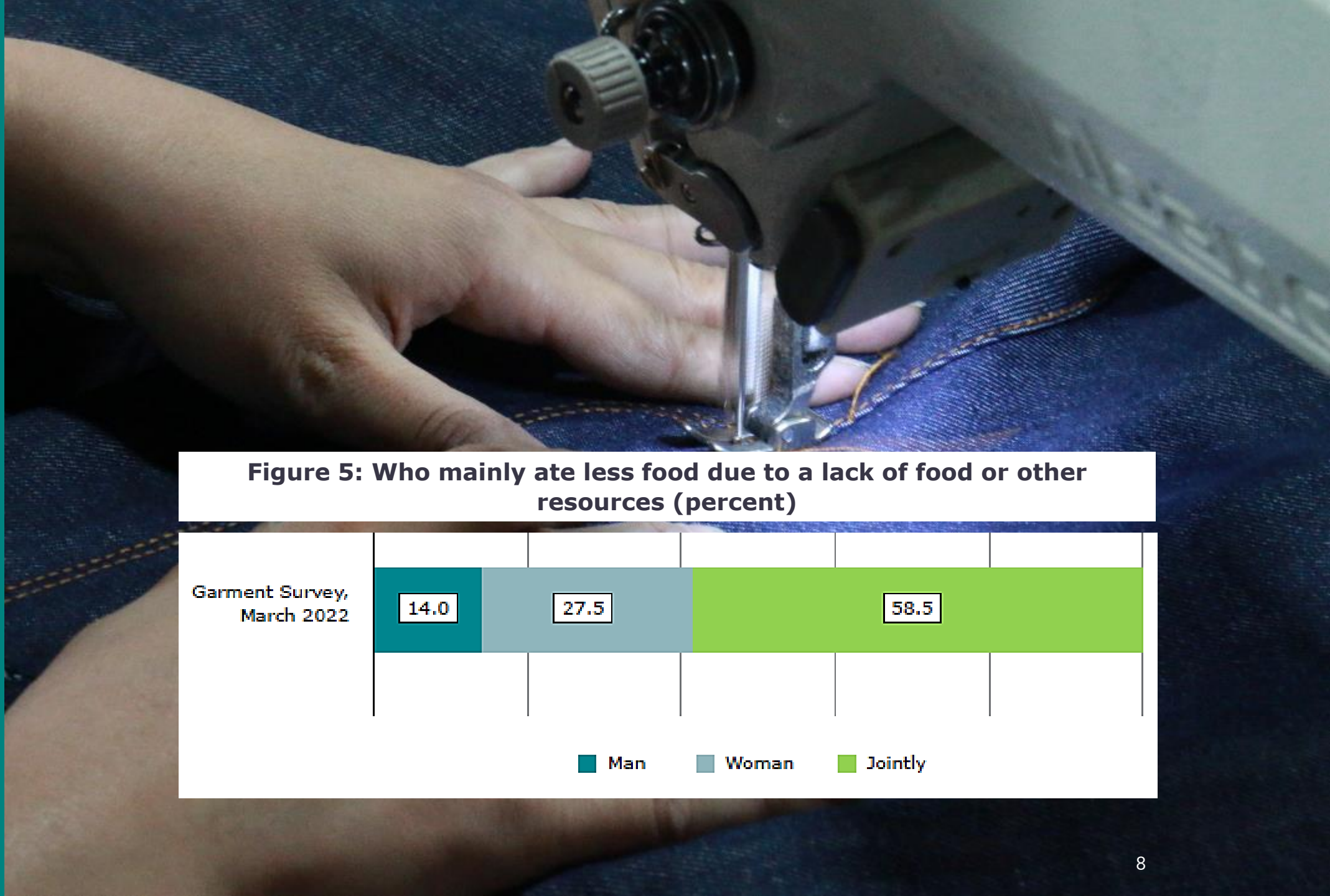
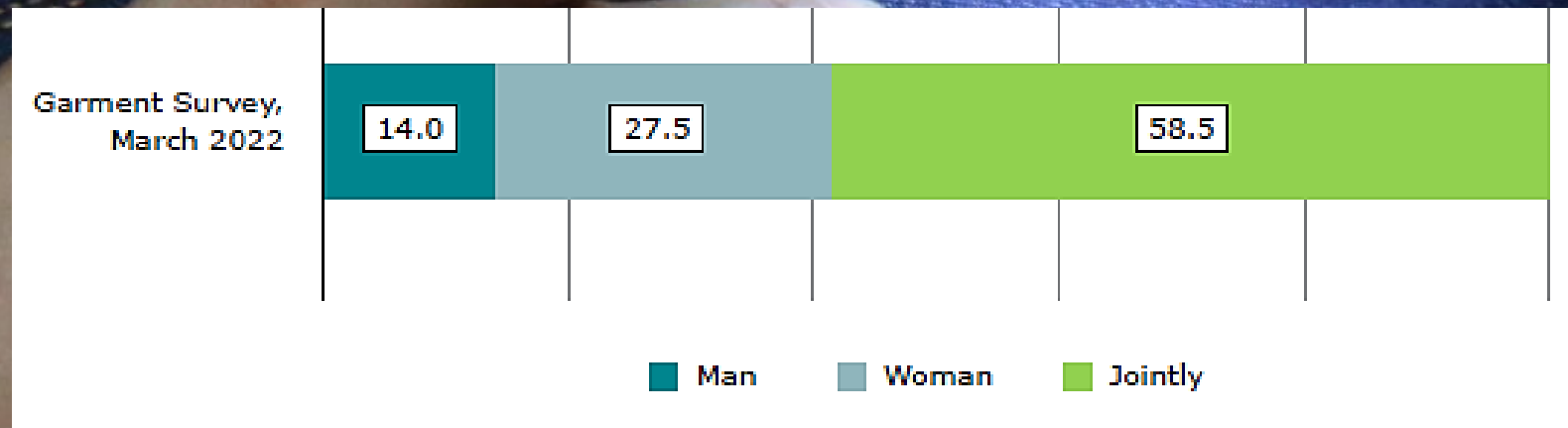


Figure 5: Who mainly ate less food due to a lack of food or other resources (percent)

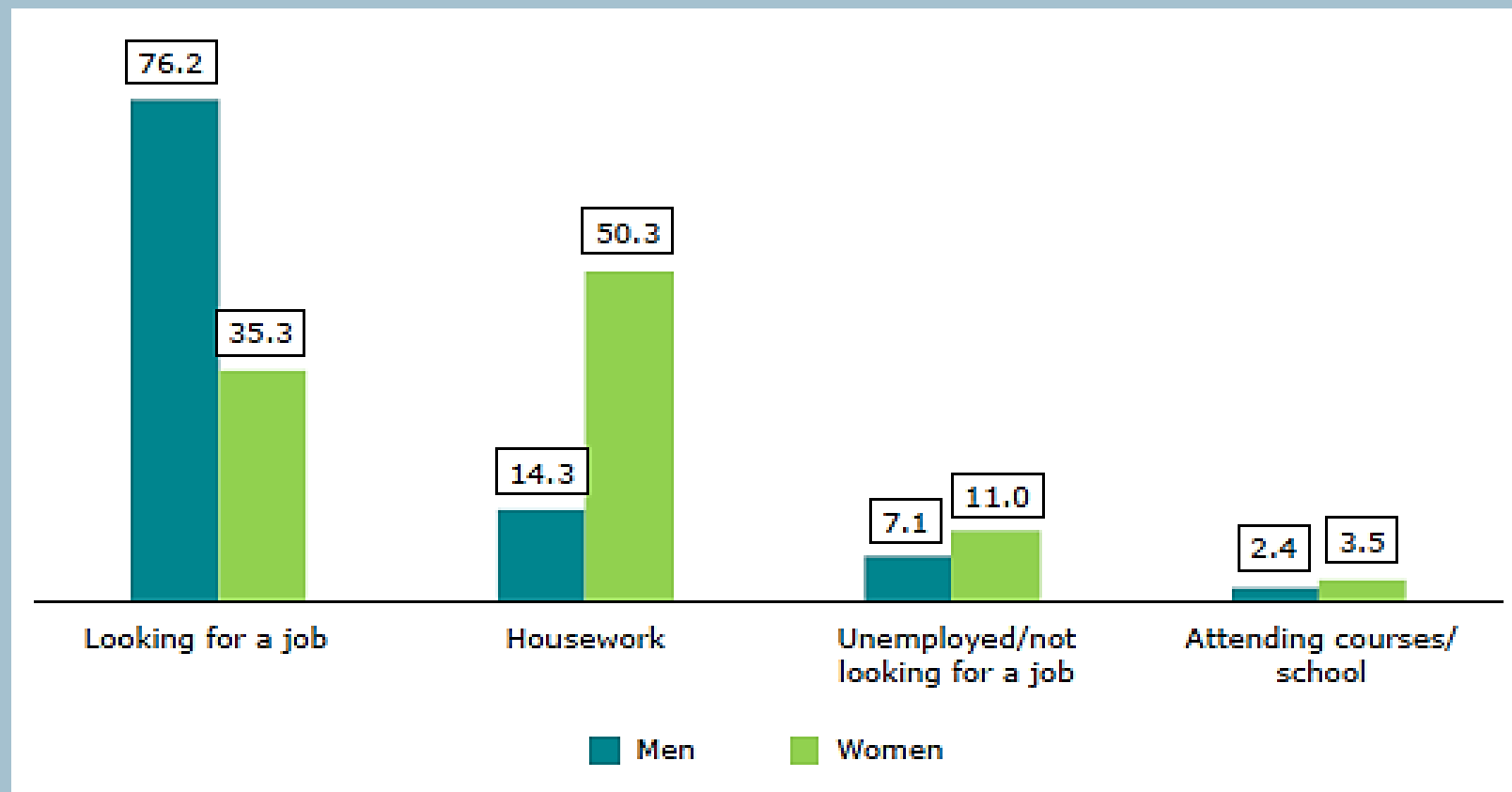


What happened to garment workers who are now unemployed?

Results: Current activity

Most men are actively looking for a new job. Most women have moved into doing housework.

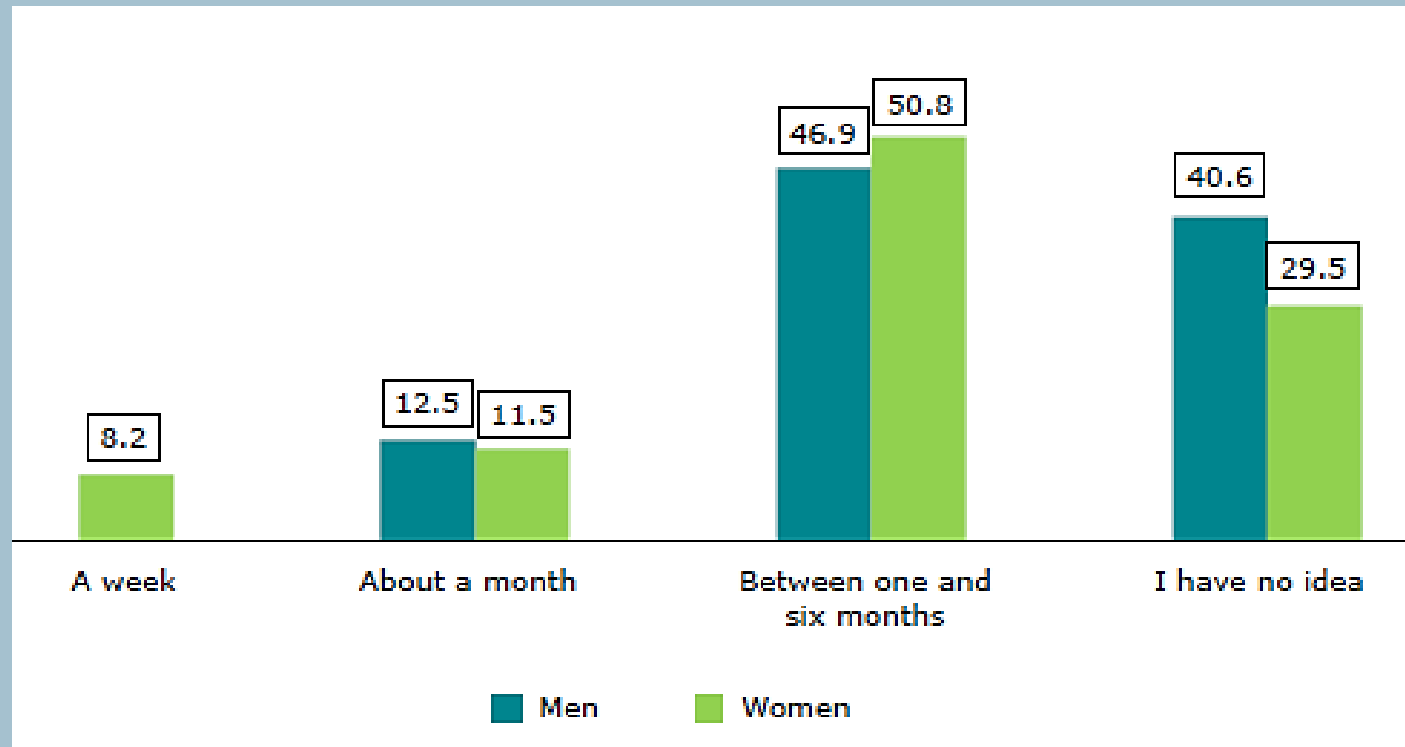
Figure 6: Current activity of unemployed ex-garment workers, by gender (percent)



Results:

Time needed To find new job

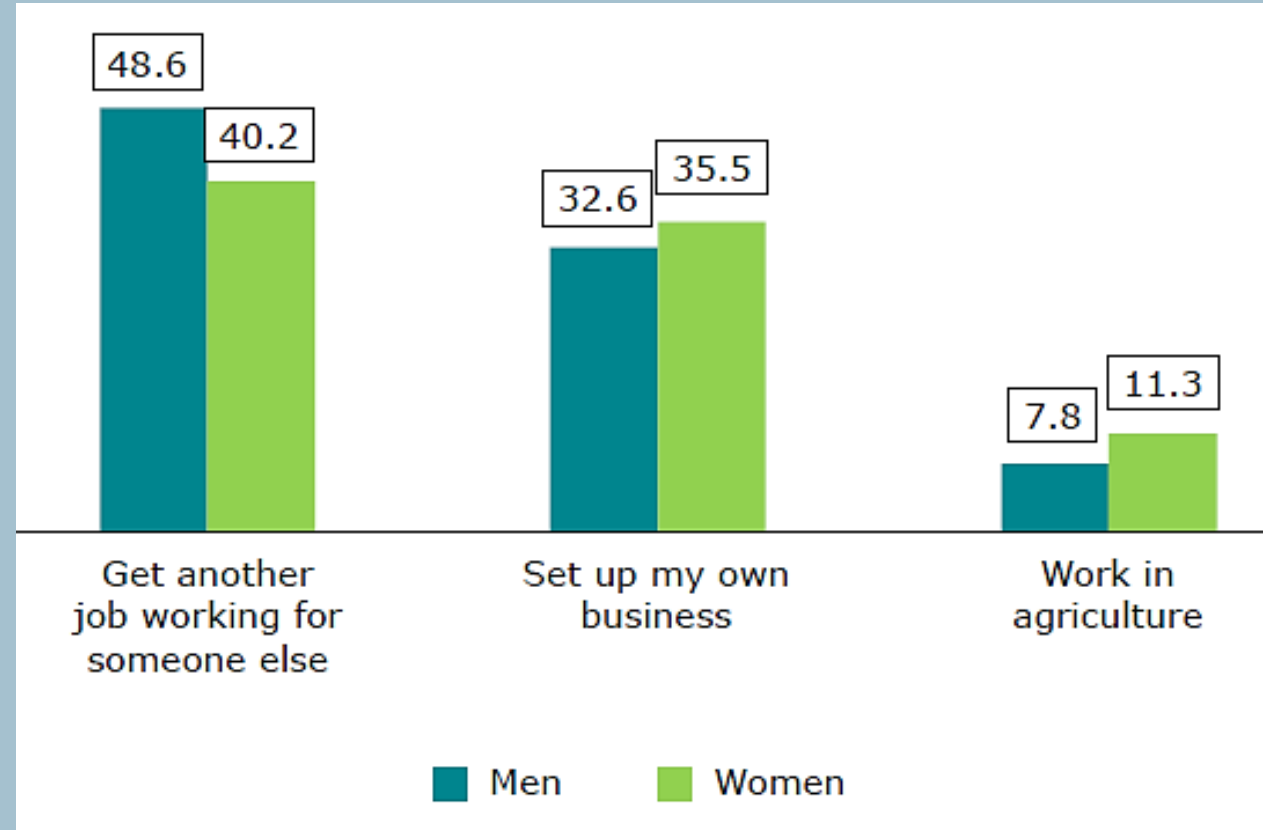
Figure 7: Expected time to find a new job for ex-garment workers who are not currently working, by gender (percent)



Both men and women are pessimistic about finding a new job quickly.

Results: Alternatives

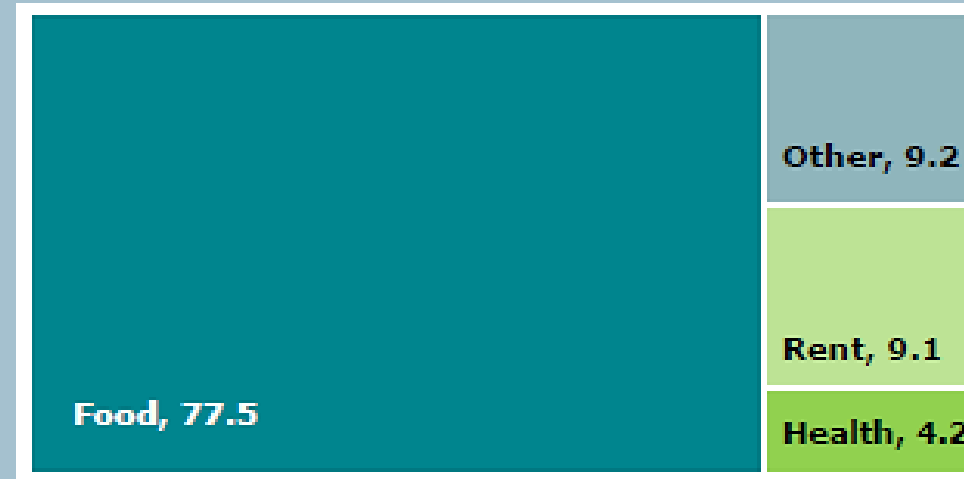
Figure 8: What would you do if you lost your job in the garment sector? (percent)



Results: Myan Ku

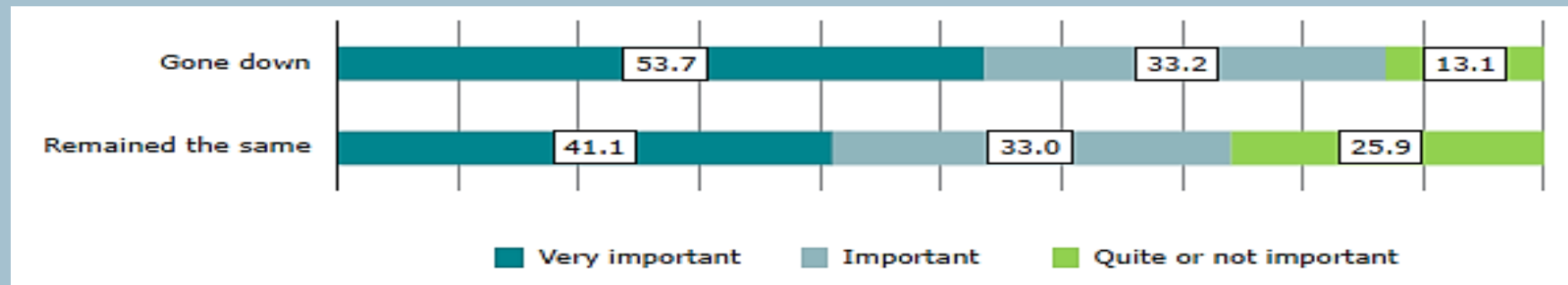
As of October 2021, payments from **Myan Ku**, totalling over 3.5 million Euro had been issued to garment and footwear factory workers who had been laid off or furloughed.

Figure 9: Main use of Myan Ku funds (percent)



Targeting: Myan Ku money **was more important** to those whose incomes have gone down since the takeover.

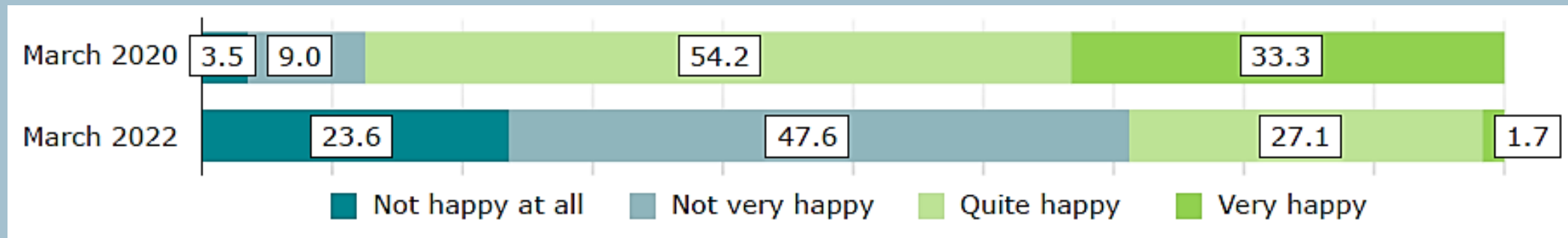
Figure 10: Importance of Myan Ku funds by whether household income has gone down or remained the same since the takeover (percent)



Results: Quality of life

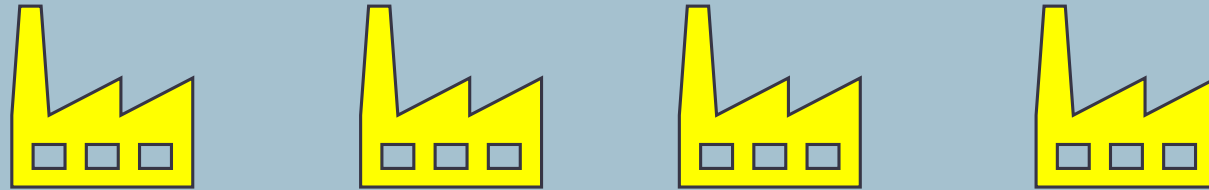
To put **quality of life** measures in a historical context, garment sector survey results compared with **World Values Survey** (1,200 respondents, March 2020).

Fig 11: Talking about your life overall at this time, would you say you are....



Both surveys use the same wording, enabling a good comparison.

Qualitative survey of firms



45 in the garment sector

10 auxiliary firms

- retail,
- transport
- services/hospitality for garment sector workers.

Results: Employment

- Reduced working hours and lack of overtime.
- **Women have been more affected as they dominate the textile industry.**
- Those laid off are looking for jobs elsewhere. International migration (e.g., to Thailand) has increased, particularly since February 2022.
- Unemployed male employees moving to sectors such as construction and agriculture while females also left for other jobs in the agriculture sector. These new jobs are physically demanding and tiring but can provide higher wages.

Results: Coping strategies

Selling assets has been used to keep businesses afloat. Assets sold include jewelry and gold, cars, plots of land and livestock. Most commonly assets have been sold to buy generators.

Employers act as a **providers of last resort social assistance.**

- Provide basic commodities such as rice, cooking oil, etc.
- Take care of their health (and health of their relatives), e.g., help with out-of-pocket payments associated with healthcare visits or treatment.

Yangon, Garment business owner:

"Although it is not my responsibility, I provided my employees with food such as rice and cooking oil while the business was closed for around 4 months after the political incident".

Auxiliary firms do not explicitly mention selling assets, **increased debt** is a common coping mechanism for this group of firms.

Results: Obstacles

Many business face serious obstacles (e.g. lack of access to electricity) with potential impact on the wellbeing of workers. For example, employees sleep or rest when the power is out and are back to work when there is electricity.



Amplified the obstacles to doing business in the garment sector, which existed even prior to 2020. Specifically:

- Access to electricity (power cuts)
- Rising prices of raw materials, further eating into the business profits;
- Access to finance and problems in the banking sector

Some of the interviewed businesses think that an improvement in the political situation essential for economic growth. However, most of them do not think things will drastically change in the short run and simply hope to survive.

PEOPLE FIRST

- The sector is critical for employment, growth, exports, and **women**.
- It was badly affected by the takeover with adverse international reaction.
- The de facto regime receives little tax from the sector and owns only one out of 750 factories.
- Ensure regular electricity supply to garment factories so that odd working hours are avoided.
- The sector is recovering and needs to be supported by multiple actors in the best interest of the workers and the economy.
- Targeted effort to improve access to finance.
- Collective effort need to support this industry for the good of the workers.
- Eliminating the industry cannot be a solution.





Thank you