

Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

Natural Hazards and the Cost of Living Crisis

REGIONAL SUMMARY REPORT | May 2023



About the survey

After facing successive crises and shocks in the last few years, people in the Caribbean are still feeling the impacts on their purchasing power, while coping with the underlying threat of natural hazards in the region.

CARICOM launched the Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey to gather data on people's livelihoods, access to markets and food security, and provide snapshots of these impacts over time. The survey aims to inform analysis and decision-making of governments and development partners in the region, building on the data collected in the previous five rounds highlighting the impact of COVID-19, the cost of living crisis and the effect of natural hazards on food security and livelihoods.

This report analyses data from the sixth round of data collection, which took place from 10 to 28 May 2023. It compares findings with previous survey rounds conducted between April 2020 and August 2022. Implemented by the World Food Programme, the online survey was circulated via social media, media outlets, SMS and emails.

While the survey contributes to a better overview of current state of food security and livelihoods, the data is not representative, and the use of an online questionnaire limits inputs from people without internet connectivity.



May-23

7,734
Respondents

73 | **27%**
Female | Male

Aug-22

6,316
Respondents

70 | **30%**
Female | Male

Feb-22

6,010
Respondents

73 | **27%**
Female | Male

Feb-21

4,186
Respondents

69 | **31%**
Female | Male

Jun-20

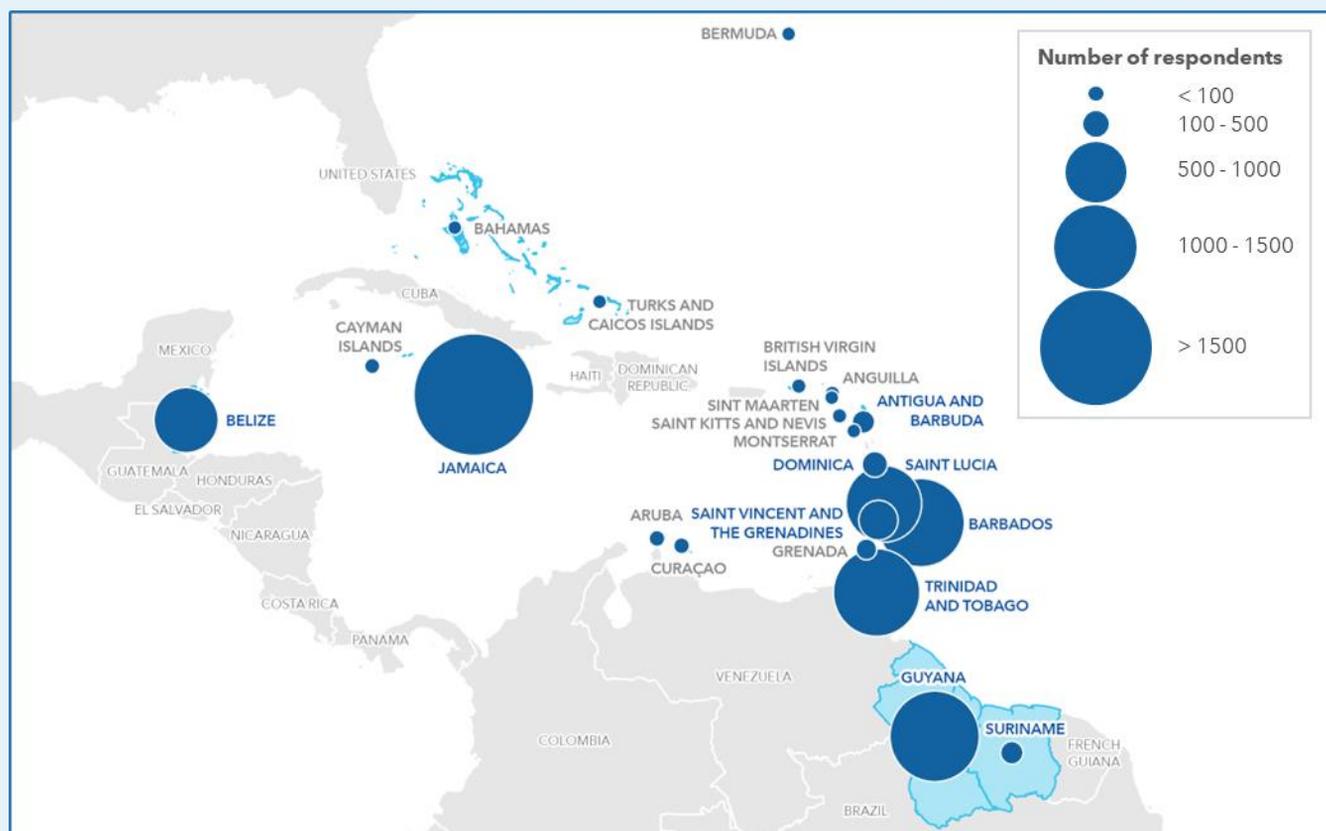
5,707
Respondents

69 | **31%**
Female | Male

Apr-20

4,501
Respondents

71 | **29%**
Female | Male



Foreword

Food insecurity has increased substantially in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean since April 2020. While it appears to be levelling out in the first half of 2023, food insecurity remains widespread, with the most severe effects felt among the most vulnerable.

A cost-of-living crisis, driven by economic impacts from the pandemic, global supply chain disruptions and surges in fuel and food prices, has lingered among the Caribbean's net-importing countries, despite a decline in FAO's Food Price Index between March 2022 and May 2023. Natural hazards are an ever-present threat to disrupting the production and supply chain of healthy and nutritious foods.

The Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey, conducted by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), in collaboration with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), tracks the food security and livelihoods situation. This sixth survey round reveals that there are now an estimated 3.7 million moderately or severely food insecure people in the English-speaking Caribbean, which equates to over half of the population.

This important survey depicts the voices and experiences of 7,870 people across 22 countries and territories. It reveals that high costs are being felt across all demographics. Nearly all respondents reported increases in food prices, the highest proportion across all survey rounds. From a production perspective, regional farmers and fisherfolk report rising input costs, driving many to make changes to their livelihood activities.

The survey reveals the challenges people continue to face to earn a living and meet essential needs. Four in ten respondents faced job or income loss in those households, with others turning to supplemental income streams. Most are adopting resilience-eroding coping strategies that may compromise their future well-being, such as spending savings to meet food needs or cutting back other essential expenditures like health and education. This concerning trend is more widespread among low-income families, youth and respondents from households with extended family. Such negative coping mechanisms make people less prepared for future shocks.

These findings are cause for great concern. Access to food is part of the universal human right to an adequate standard of living and a key target of Sustainable Development Goal 2.

With people facing food insecurity and livelihoods challenges, targeted investments are required to strengthen food systems and support those who are struggling to make ends meet. A renewed emphasis on regional partnerships to develop more integrated, adaptive and resilient food systems in the Caribbean is required moving forward. This will help to buffer economies and contribute to a reduced dependence on extra-regional sources.

Ramping up agricultural production to reduce extra-regional agri-food imports by 25% by 2025, as stipulated in CARICOM's "Twenty-five by 2025 Initiative" provides an example of how the region can work to simultaneously reduce escalating food prices and improve food systems. The livelihoods of those in the agricultural sector are of critical importance to the future resilience of the region.

Food insecurity is having major effects on the socio-economic welfare of citizens throughout the region. Solutions to these challenges can only be accomplished through joint regional efforts linked to national priorities in the planning and execution of comprehensive sustainable actionable solutions geared towards building resilience against climatic conditions and future market disruptions.

Joseph Cox

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Summary

- The survey reveals concerning trends on food insecurity, highlighting the importance of investing in livelihoods and food systems, especially for those living in poverty and facing vulnerabilities.
- While global food prices have been slowly decreasing since March 2022, food inflation remains high in some countries in the Caribbean. Nearly all respondents (97%) reported food price increases, which continues to destabilize households' consistent access to nutritious food.
- It is estimated that approximately 3.7 million people out of 7.1 million (52%) in the English-speaking Caribbean are food insecure as of May 2023. This number has decreased by 400,000 since August 2022, but remains well above pre-COVID levels.
- Food consumption and diets deteriorated with 37% of respondents skipping meals or eating less than usual. Respondents continue to eat less preferred foods, and 6% went an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey. The highest proportion of respondents so far are purchasing cheaper or less preferred foods (62%) and smaller quantities than usual (57%).
- These trends and impacts were most widely reported by lower income, single parents and respondents from mixed households.
- To make ends meet, three-quarter of respondents are using their savings, while 58% are reducing expenditures on health and education.
- Forty percent of respondents are experiencing loss of income. While fewer than previous rounds, more (24%) are resorting to secondary sources of income and turned to savings (76%). Worryingly, 10% of respondents already fully depleted their savings.
- Livelihood disruptions appear to be worsening since August 2022 with nearly 60% of respondents facing disruptions. Unaffordability of inputs continues to be the main driver. Respondents involved in agriculture continue to report high costs of inputs, especially for animal feed and fertilizers.
- Respondents mainly worry about their inability to cover essential needs (48%), meeting their food needs (35%) and unemployment (33%).
- Natural hazards pose a consistent threat with nearly half of respondents reporting to have been impacted in the last 12 months, mainly by heatwaves, floods, drought and tropical storms.
- Over one third of respondents have low resilience capacity to cope with and adapt to natural hazards; particularly women and lower income households.
- Only 8% of respondents reporting to have received assistance in the last 12 months.

Main results from the survey

	LIVELIHOODS		MARKETS		FOOD SECURITY	
	Disrupted livelihoods	Reduction/loss of income	Lack of market access	Increase in food prices	Reduced food consumption	Lack of food stock
May-23*	60% ▲	40% ▼	52% ▲	97% ▲	43% ▲	32% ▲
Aug-22	55%	54%	49%	97%	42%	30%
Feb-22	50%	57%	33%	93%	35%	23%
Feb-21	51%	63%	30%	71%	33%	17%
June-20	54%	69%	27%	78%	32%	13%
Apr-20	74%	48%	38%	59%	17%	3%

*Comparison of the May 2023 survey round with the previous rounds should be taken with caution due to slight changes in the questions' recall periods.

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COST OF LIVING CRISIS IN THE CARIBBEAN

► While global food prices are slowly declining since the all-time high in March 2022, respondents continue to report increasing food prices in the Caribbean.

According to FAO's Food Price Index, global food prices have decreased as of May 2023, down 3.4 points (2.6%) from April 2023 and 36.7 points (23.5%) from the all-time high in March 2022. The decline was driven by price drops in vegetable oils, cereals and dairy, while the price indices for meat and sugar have been rising sharply since the beginning of 2023.

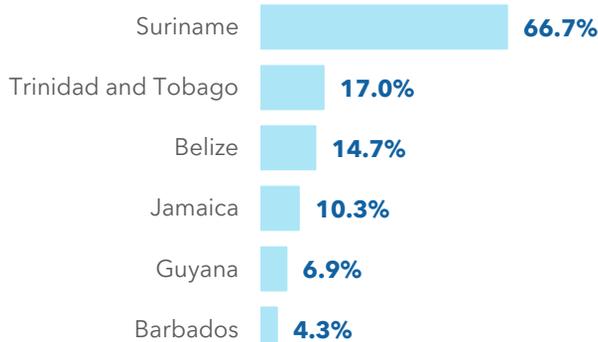
High food inflation rates continue to impact the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. Year on year food inflation stayed high in Suriname (food prices increased by staggering 66.7% in April 2023) Worryingly, year on year food inflation also drastically increased in Trinidad and Tobago (17% in April 2023) and Belize (14.7% in April 2023) making essential food purchases unaffordable for many. On the other hand, food prices are increasing at a slighter lower rate in Guyana (6.9% in April 2023) and Barbados (4.3% in March 2023).

Energy price dynamics affect food prices through various channels. While crude oil and fuel prices have decreased somewhat since the all-time high in June 2022, they remain higher than during the 2015-2020 period. High energy prices are driving up local inflation. The majority of respondents from the Caribbean continue to report increases in food, gas, electricity, and other fuel prices. However, compared to August 2022 a slightly smaller proportion noted increases in gas and other fuels.

The English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean relies heavily on imports. While the reliance on total imports has slightly decreased between 2019 and 2021 (from 64% to 56% of all trade), there are only three net exporters in the region: Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname (FAOSTAT, 2021).

Food inflation in the Caribbean

An increase in the cost of food in April 2023 over the same month in the previous year.



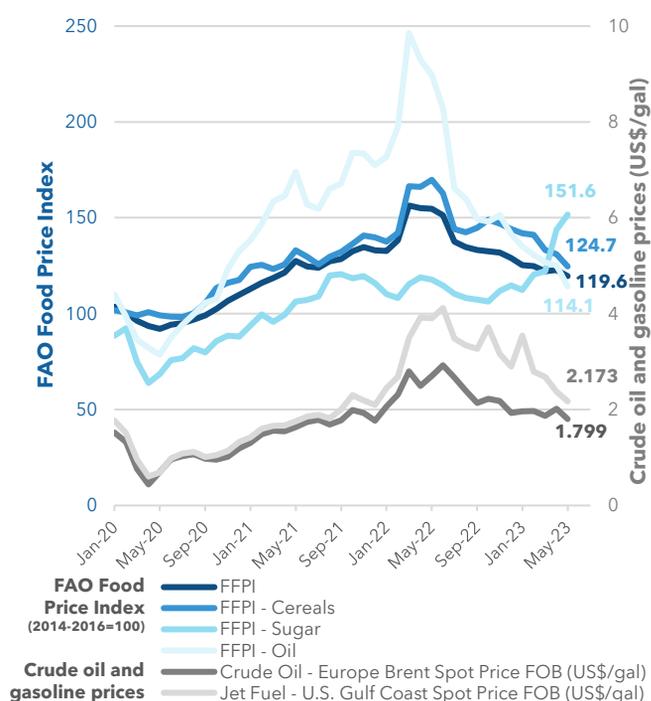
Source: Trading Economics

Regarding trade in agricultural products, imports across the Caribbean make up more than 74% of all trade in agricultural products (FAOSTAT, 2021). Belize is the only net exporter of food in the region. This means that local food prices are vulnerable to fluctuations in regional and global food markets.

By far the largest agricultural producers in the Caribbean are Guyana, Belize and Jamaica, making up a total of 84% of all agricultural production in the region. The most common agricultural product in the region is sugar cane (49% of all agricultural production), followed by fruits (16%) and cereals (12%, largely rice) (FAOSTAT, 2021).

Heavy reliance of the agricultural sector on sugar cane makes it vulnerable to sugar price fluctuations. Sugar prices have spiked since the beginning of 2023 as rising demand was compounded by the production fall due to adverse weather. This could mean that for countries producing sugar cane, the price increases might lead to increased revenue, job creation, and improved standards of living. However, it may pose challenges for countries with high domestic sugar consumption and limited production, potentially leading to further inflation and affecting consumers' purchasing power.

FAO Food Price Index (2020-2023)



Source: FAO, US Energy Information Administration

NATURAL HAZARDS IN THE CARIBBEAN

► The Caribbean is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards which pose an underlying threat for climate sensitive livelihood activities.

The diverse geographical landscape of the Caribbean makes it prone to a wide range of natural hazards across the region. The positioning of the chain of small island developing States (SIDS) of the eastern Caribbean along the Atlantic basin places them in the path of storms as they gain strength and track through the region. They are also in proximity of the subduction zones and where the Caribbean and North American tectonic plates meet which poses seismic hazards. Micro and macro factors influencing social inequalities also amplifies vulnerabilities in the region.

Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) shows that there were 204 named events in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean (excluding data from Haiti and Dominican Republic) between 1980 - 2022. Jamaica has the most recorded named events, followed by the Bahamas, Saint Lucia, Belize and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A large portion of these (139 out of 204) are meteorological events which include storms or extreme temperatures, followed by 39 hydrological events such as landslides and floods. A total of 10 geophysical hazards including volcanic eruptions were recorded.

According to this data, 2004 had the highest recorded number of events, which included Hurricane Ivan. The region then went through a quieter period until 2017 when Category 5 Hurricanes Irma and Maria impacted multiple countries and territories, and 2019

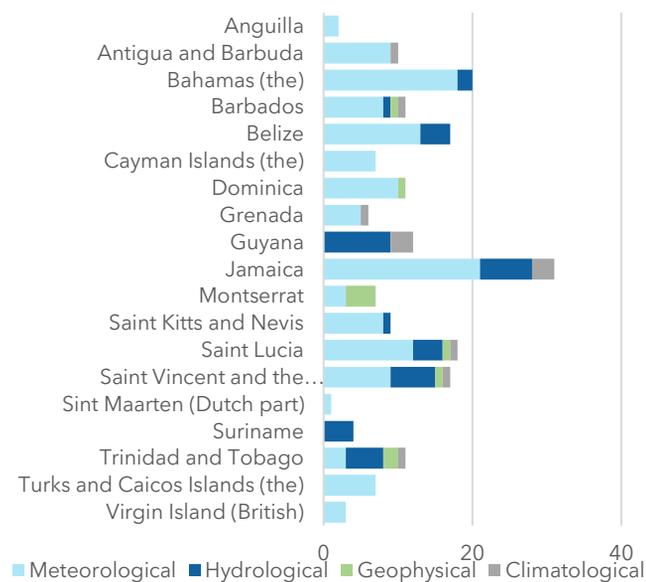
when Hurricane Dorian in Bahamas.

Recorded events between 2001-2022 resulted in total adjusted losses at USD 39 billion. Meteorological events continue to pose the largest natural-disaster related losses in the Caribbean resulting in 97% of reported total adjusted damages. These storm events have the propensity to cause widespread impact across multiple countries/territories - potentially leading to loss of life, displacement of households, and destruction to critical infrastructure.

Hydrological events such as troughs and flash flooding in the region are often hard to predict, and often go underreported. After the immediate threats of these events pass, they often have longer lasting impacts on agricultural production as landslides can make previously productive lands no longer usable. Geophysical hazards can also have protracted impacts as households are displaced and unable to return home as seen in the La Soufriere volcanic eruption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2021. The localized impact of these events also affect livelihoods and loss of production can negatively impact food prices.

New emerging hazards such as sargassum influx in coastal areas and extreme temperatures are becoming more widely reported. These events especially impact more climate sensitive livelihood activities such as those engaged in agriculture and fishing.

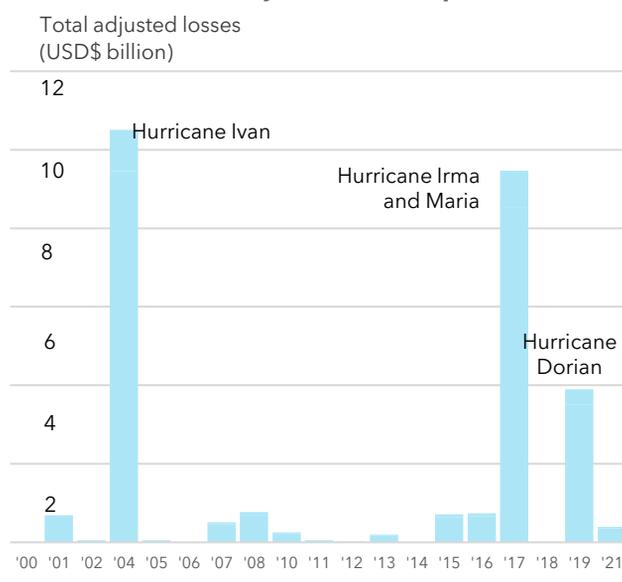
Recorded natural hazards in the Caribbean



Source: EM-DAT (1980 - 2022)

Event classifications can be accessed here <https://www.emdat.be/classification>

Total adjusted losses reported

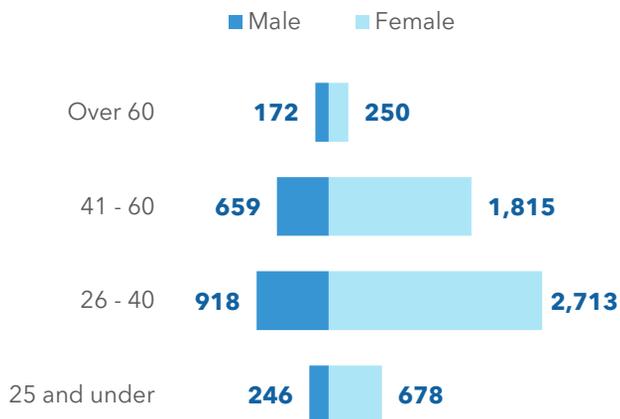


Total adjusted losses between 2001-2021 (USD\$ billion)

Source: EM-DAT

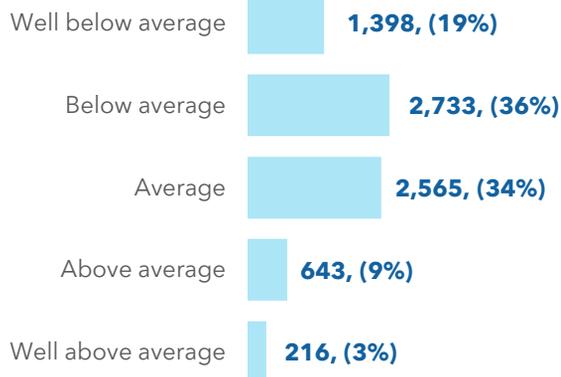
DEMOGRAPHICS

Age and sex

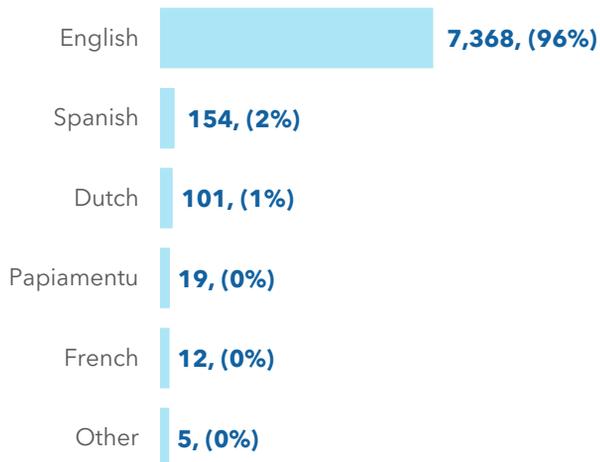


Perceived income levels

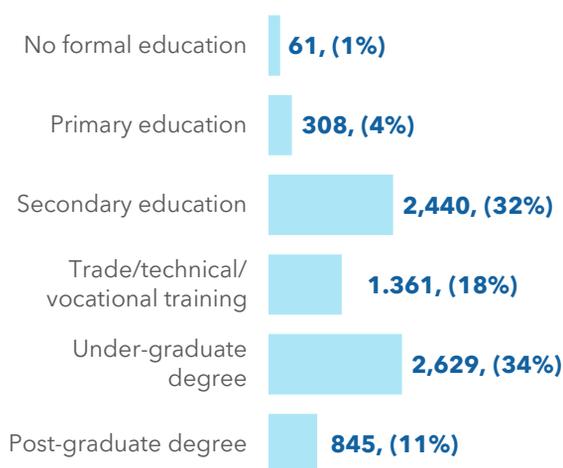
Respondents were asked to compare their household's income with the rest of their country.



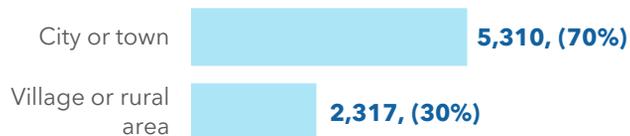
Language



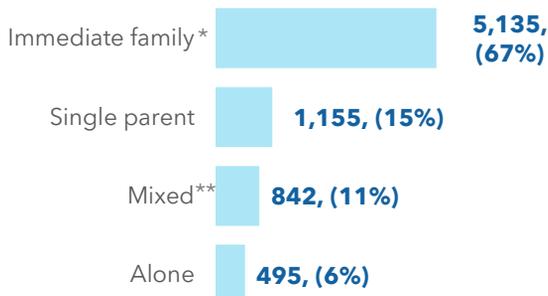
The highest level of education achieved in the household



Urban/rural location



Household composition



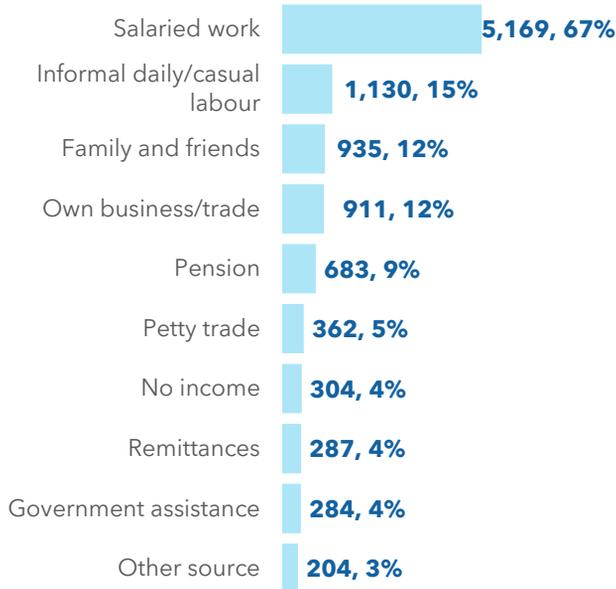
* Immediate family includes partner, children and grandparents.

** Mixed households are composed of immediate family members, other relatives as well as non-family members.

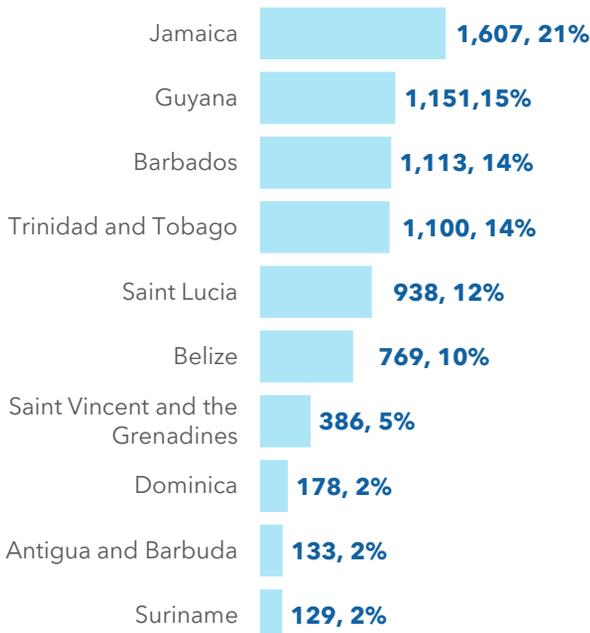
DEMOGRAPHICS

Main income sources

Up to two options could be selected.



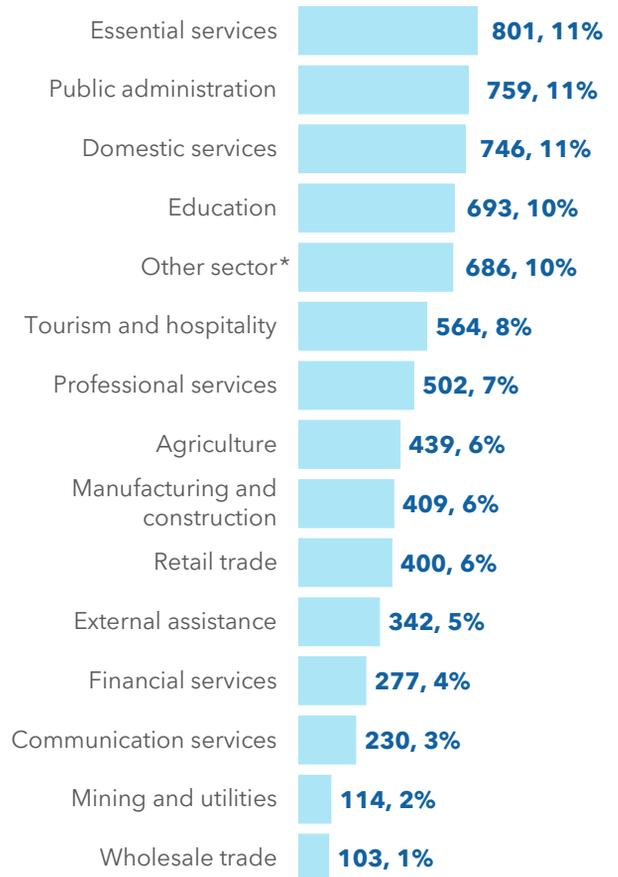
Number of Responses* By country



*Countries with less than 100 responses: Grenada, Aruba, Curacao, Cayman Islands, Anguilla, St. Kitts and Nevis, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Sint Maarten, Bahamas, Bermuda, Turks and Caicos.

Main income sector

As a percentage of respondents that indicated having an income.



*Top income sectors chosen under "Other" include working in private sector, call center, customer service, security, and receiving pension.

"Having to assist family members who cannot support their household due to rising unemployment. It is an additional strain, therefore the quality of food and household maintenance have been refused. Considering advancing our skillset, see our property and migrating." - Female, 43, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

"I lost my job due to unforeseen circumstances. I'm presently unemployed Seeking to have my job back as a teacher to maintain my family." - Female, 44, Guyana

"Hardship due to high cost of fuel therefore I lessen my traveling and decrease usage of personal vehicle." - Male, 40, Belize

LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

- ▶ Disruptions to livelihoods remain widespread, with most respondents reporting disruptions largely due to the unaffordable livelihood inputs.

Many respondents are facing issues making a living. For three fifths of respondents, the ability to pursue their livelihood was compromised in the 30 days prior to the survey. This proportion has increased slightly since February 2022. The main driver behind livelihood disruptions is the unaffordability of livelihood inputs (reported by 65% of those that experienced livelihood disruptions). This factor has grown steadily in importance with each survey round and is linked to wider trends related to supply chain disruptions, price rises and eroding economic capacities of households. As showcased by other results of this survey, households are increasingly facing income or job loss, depleting savings and are forced to sell productive assets in order to afford food.

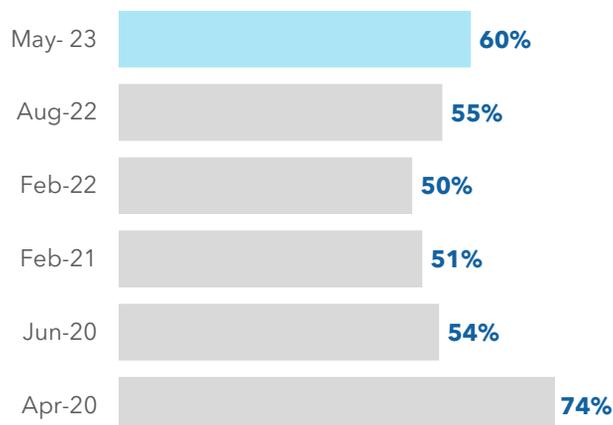
Respondents most widely experiencing livelihood disruptions were those describing their income as well below (73%) and below average (67%), compared to higher income households (36% and 46% for above and well above average income). Correspondingly, those relying on petty trade (70%), assistance from family and friends (69%) or informal labour (68%) were also more affected compared to respondents deriving their main income from salaried work (56%), own business (53%) or pension (49%).

More respondents were impacted with livelihoods related to domestic work and agriculture (68%), while respondents relying on income from professional services (49%) and mining and utilities (48%) were the least affected. Similar trends were found with education levels of respondents – those without formal or only primary education (70-73%) reported livelihood disruptions more often than respondents with higher education (56% of those with under-graduate and 42% with post-graduate degree). In addition, the Spanish- and Dutch-speaking respondents more frequently faced disruptions to their livelihoods (70-78%) than English speakers (59%). Less substantial differences were also observed across age groups, household compositions, and urban/rural location. There were no differences in livelihood disruptions between female and male respondents.

There were significant differences in livelihood disruptions across countries. Two thirds or more of the respondents in Guyana (77%) and Belize (69%) reported disruptions to their livelihoods, compared to 50% in Barbados and 51% in Antigua and Barbuda.

Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey

Recall period was changed from 2 weeks to 30 days in the May 2023 survey round.



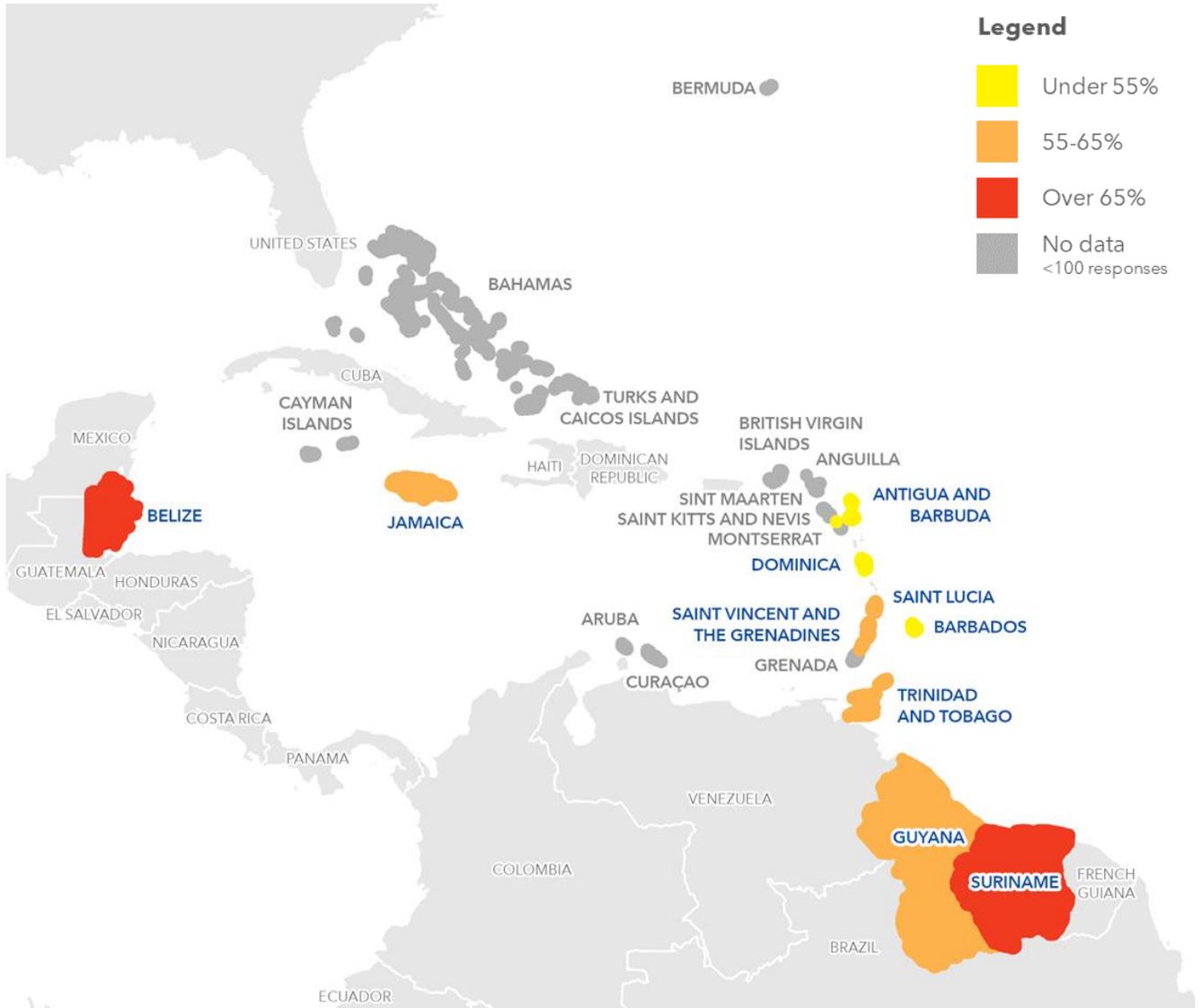
For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected. Answer options were adjusted in May 2023, adding new options for selection which were not included in the previous rounds and removing Covid-19 related options that are now displayed as "Other".

	May-23	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
Livelihoods inputs are too expensive	65%	62%	39%	23%	21%	9%
Increased demand for goods/services	16%	21%	12%	8%	8%	12%
Reduced demand for goods/services	13%	15%	13%	18%	21%	20%
Transport limitations	12%	13%	10%	9%	16%	22%
Illness	11%	5%	11%	4%	3%	0%
Other	9%	23%	56%	66%	70%	83%
Livelihoods inputs are unavailable	7%	8%	8%	8%	11%	11%
No market to sell products	4%	4%	4%	5%	8%	11%
Natural hazard	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT THEIR ABILITY TO CARRY OUT LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES WAS AFFECTED IN THE 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY

For countries that received over 100 responses in the May 2023 survey round



"Pandemic made loose my job. But my parents farming allow me to survive. I learnt to support my family to maintain their farm." - Male, 37, Belize

"In Suriname the exchange rate is having an effect on everyone. The higher it gets, the more the prices, oil and everything is increasing. Salary has stayed the same and everything around increases " - Female, 38, Suriname

LIVELIHOODS | Income changes

- ▶ Forty percent of respondents faced loss of income or jobs in their households in the last six months. They are increasingly resorting to secondary or alternative income sources.

Loss of income and jobs is less widespread than previous survey rounds, with 40% of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries in 6 months prior to the survey. However, the proportion of those having to resort to secondary or alternative source of income has been steadily increasing since June 2020, suggesting the continuation of economic hardship and adaptation to find new options.

Most impacted by loss of jobs or reduced income were respondents with the lowest income levels (61%), Spanish speakers (60%), those relying on support from families and friends (59%), domestic workers (59%), those with only secondary or lower education (49-52%) and younger respondents (47% for respondents younger than 26 years). Female respondents (41%) also reported job loss and reduced income in the household more often than male respondents (35%), however a higher proportion of men (27%) reported resorting to secondary or alternative sources of income than women (22%). Smaller differences were observed across household compositions and urban/rural location.

Wide differences can be observed across the region. Almost half of respondents in Trinidad and Tobago (45%) and Belize (42%) reported job loss or reduced salaries. On the other hand, less than a third of respondents reported the same in Antigua and Barbuda (31%) and Dominica (29%).

"Not working to take care of mom without any assistants or income only what my husband make on a weekly"- Female, 48, Barbados

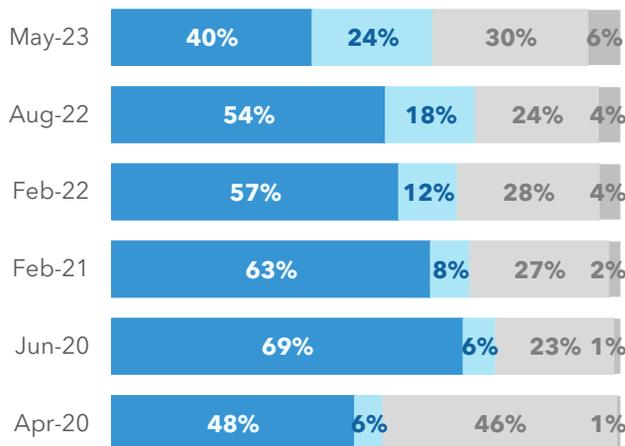
"I'm in between jobs at the moment and it's really hard being a single mom of 3"- Female, 41, Belize

"Due to job loss the previous year so last year, income was much smaller. Loan payments are skipped in favour of unhealthy food at smaller portions. " - Female, 43, Dominica

"Spouse lost job 10 months now. On the onset of covid he bought a house now he has no income and might lose house if no job comes soon in the hospitality industry for him. Savings depletion but will run out soon. One income " - Female, 44, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Has your household income changed in the 6 months prior to the survey?

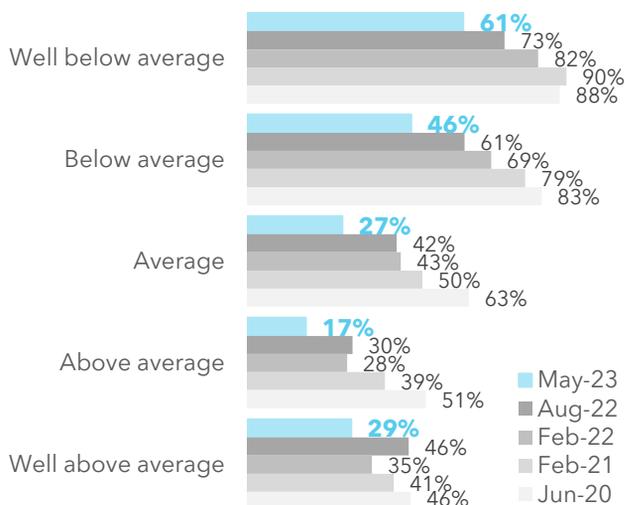
Recall period changed from "since COVID-19" to "in the 6 months prior to the survey" in May 2023 survey round.



- Loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues
- Resorted to secondary/alternative source of income
- No change
- Increased employment or salaries/revenues

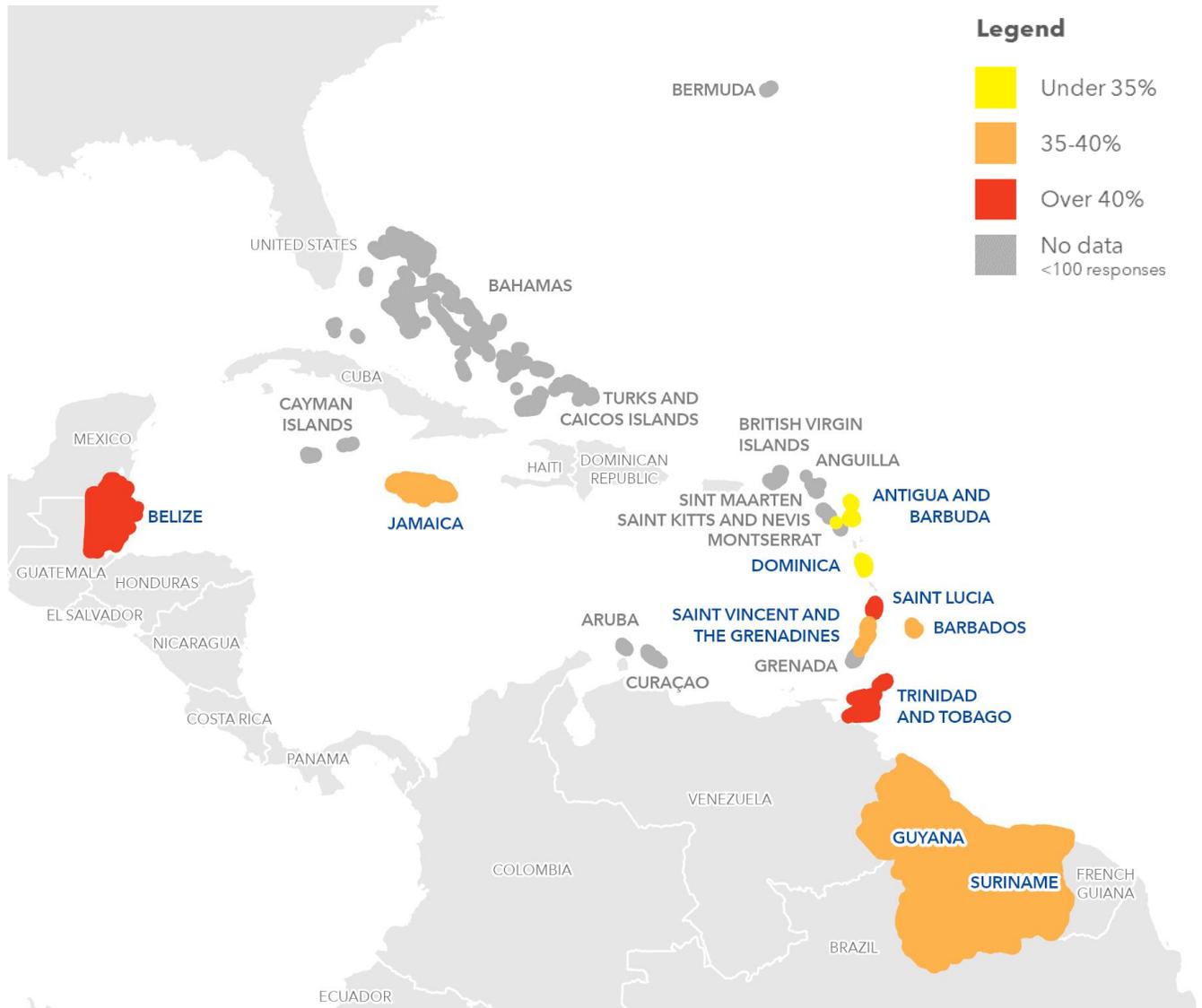
Households experiencing loss of jobs or reduction of income in the 6 months prior to the survey

By perceived income level and survey round



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING LOSS OF JOB OR REDUCTION IN INCOME IN THE 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY

For countries that received over 100 responses in the May 2023 survey round.



"Lack of work and sales has able less income to be available meanwhile the cost of living accommodation and food has increase tremendously. We adopt by cutting back on some items we usually purchase as essentials and conserve on the usage of our utilities." - Male, 45, Belize.

"Low income sometimes no income only welfare cheque. ... skipped meals to make sure my sons are well fed and getting healthy meals ... an opportunity to attend classes and attain a skill has opened up... I hope to be more experienced and employable by next year." - Female, 26, Trinidad and Tobago

LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

- Respondents engaged in farming and/or fishing continue to report input price increases, particularly for animal feed, fertilizer and fuel.

Almost a quarter of respondents reported engaging in farming (23%) and a small proportion of respondents engaged in fishing (5%), both primarily for their own consumption. Those that engaged in farming were mostly growing vegetables (63%), bananas/plantains (46%), and/or raising poultry (31%), while those that engaged in fishing mostly did so through aquaculture and marine or inland fishing (27-30%).

Rising prices in the last six months have impacted respondents engaging in farming and/or fishing. Farming respondents reported price increases for animal feed (97% of farming respondents) and fertilizer (92%). No significant differences were observed compared to the past round.

About nine in ten engaged in fishing noted increases for fuel (47% indicating significant increases), with 82% observing increases in nets and tools. A higher percentage of respondents reported overall increases in costs for storage space (59%) and casual labour (64%) than in the previous round (50% and 59%). Slightly fewer persons reported increases in costs for fish feed /bait (71% compared to 78% in August 2022).

"I am the president of the fishermen association. we are getting impacts with the new reserves and no alternatives for the fishermen . A lot of promises have been made but wasn't any productive so far. We will be loosing 40% of our income in a few days." - Male, 37, Belize

"My husband is a fisherman and sometimes due to the weather conditions he cannot work, but whatever he worked, we have to make much with that, like paying bills and buying less groceries and I receive no help from family members, I do farming. I plant Bora, squash, belanger etc and I also do poultry to help lessen the expense." - Female, 27, Guyana

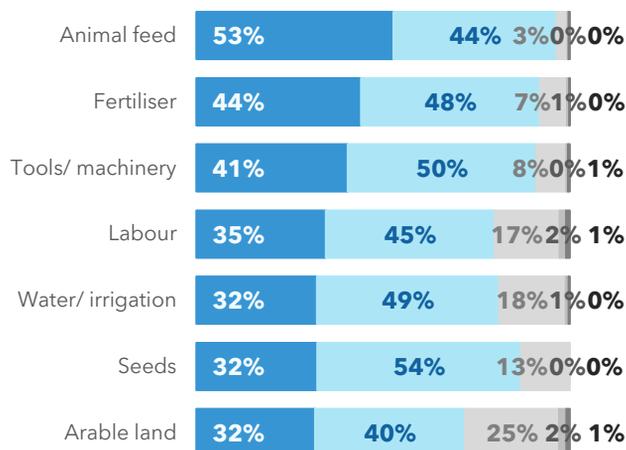
"It was harder to get jobs so I decided to plant an to fish meet some of needs " - Male, 45, Guyana

"During the rainy season we encounter floods which makes it difficult to plant crops and makes it difficult to catch fishes." - Female, 23, Guyana

"Unable to provide food for my ducks, and I had to resort to loans which are very difficult to repay." - Female, 51, Guyana

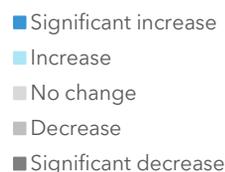
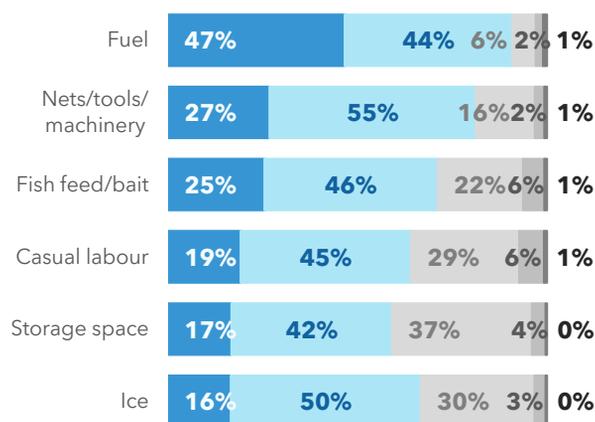
Have you observed any change in the costs of the following agriculture inputs in the last 6 months?

For those that engage in agriculture/livestock raising



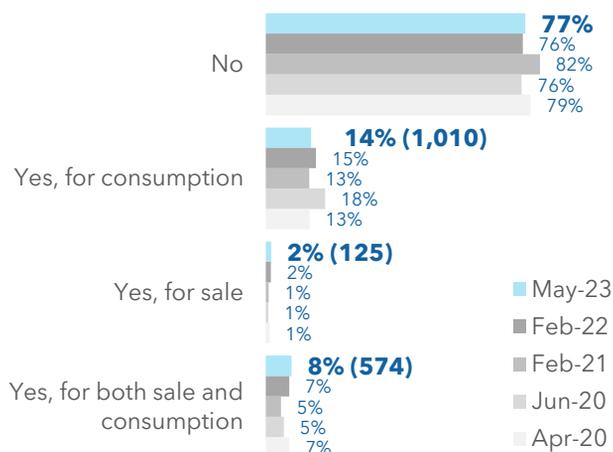
Have you observed any change in the costs of the following inputs for fishing/coastal activities in the last 6 months?

For those that engage in fishing/coastal activities

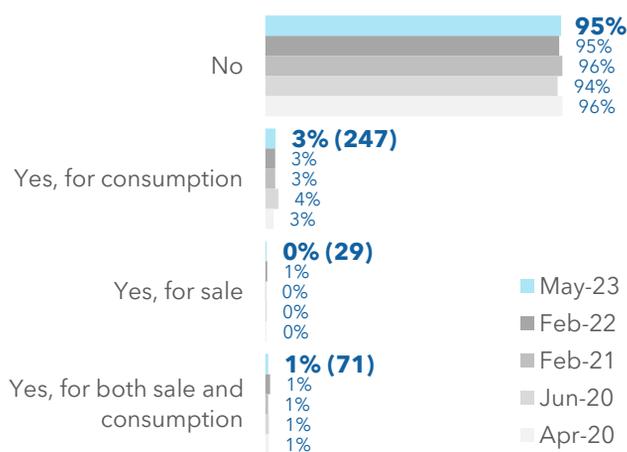


RESPONDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURE/LIVESTOCK RAISING AND FISHING/COASTAL ACTIVITIES

Is your households engaged in farming/livestock raising?



Is your households engaged in fishing/coastal activities?



For those engaging in agriculture/ livestock raising, the activities are...

Multiple choices could be selected. The list of activities has been expanded in May 2023 survey round.

	May-23	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
Vegetables	63%	69%	73%	74%	83%	74%
Banana/plantains	46%	49%	49%	41%	46%	52%
Poultry	31%	34%	31%	31%	22%	22%
Fruits (incl. tree nuts)	29%					
Roots and tubers	20%					
Corn	15%	18%	17%	14%	19%	16%
Small ruminants	14%	16%	16%	13%	12%	16%
Rice or other grains	9%	10%	12%	11%	9%	6%
Rabbit	8%					
Sugarcane	7%					
Swine	5%	8%	8%	9%	5%	6%
Other	4%	10%	9%	12%	14%	17%
Large ruminants	4%	6%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Pulses	0%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%
Herbs and spices	0%					

For those engaging in fishing/coastal activities, the activities are...

Multiple choices could be selected.

	May-23	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
Small scale aquaculture	30%	29%	31%	23%	22%	22%
Marine/coastal fisheries	28%	34%	25%	37%	37%	48%
Inland fisheries	27%	24%	30%	20%	21%	20%
Other	12%	10%	8%	16%	16%	14%
Mangrove/ beach activities	11%	9%	7%	9%	6%	4%
Fishing gear production	10%	8%	8%	8%	6%	5%
Processing of fish	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%

MARKETS | Access and shopping behaviour

- ▶ Market accessibility is a challenge for more than half of respondents, mainly due to lack of financial resources.

People's access to markets continue to be compromised, with 52% of respondents stating that they were unable to access markets in the 30 days prior to the May 2023 survey. People's access to markets has worsened as compared to April 2020 and is the highest recorded levels over the six rounds of surveys.

The challenges to accessing markets are clearly tied to financial means and income. Lack of financial means continues to be overwhelmingly reported as the main reason for limited market access, cited by 96% of those who faced a time when they could not access markets 30 days prior to the survey

Clear differences in market access can be seen across age groups, household composition education levels, income levels, sources and sectors. Between 55-60% of respondents under 40 years old reported a time when they couldn't access markets, as compared to 48% of those between 41 and 60 years and 29% of respondents over 60 years old. Mixed (58%) and single parent (64%) households also reported difficulties in accessing markets more frequently than others. These show an overall increase when compared to August 2022.

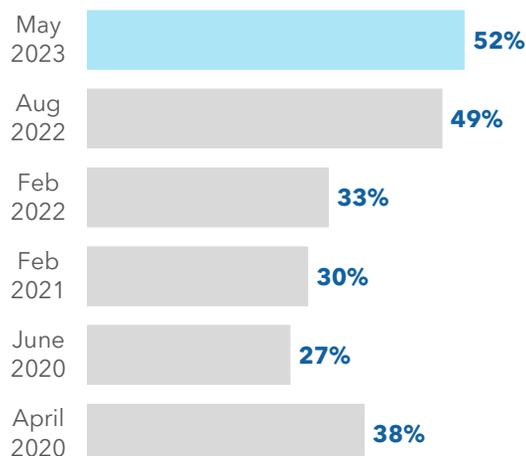
The vast majority (91%) of respondents reported making changes to how they shop, which is comparable to August 2022. Respondents who changed their shopping behaviour are mainly buying cheaper or less preferred foods (69%) and purchasing smaller quantities than usual (63%).

"It is very depressing and stressful to go to the store or market and being unable to stay within a budget because food prices have increased excessively" - Female, 33, Belize

"Over the past year I had to budget my self for the month since the cost of living keep raising and having to economize on food stuff poultry is expensive and eggs so buying vegetables from gardening than going to the market was saving in a little can't plant my own garden since I don't be home to take care of it" - Female, 27, Guyana

Respondents unable to access markets in the 30 days prior to the survey

Recall period was changed from 7 to 30 days in May 2023.



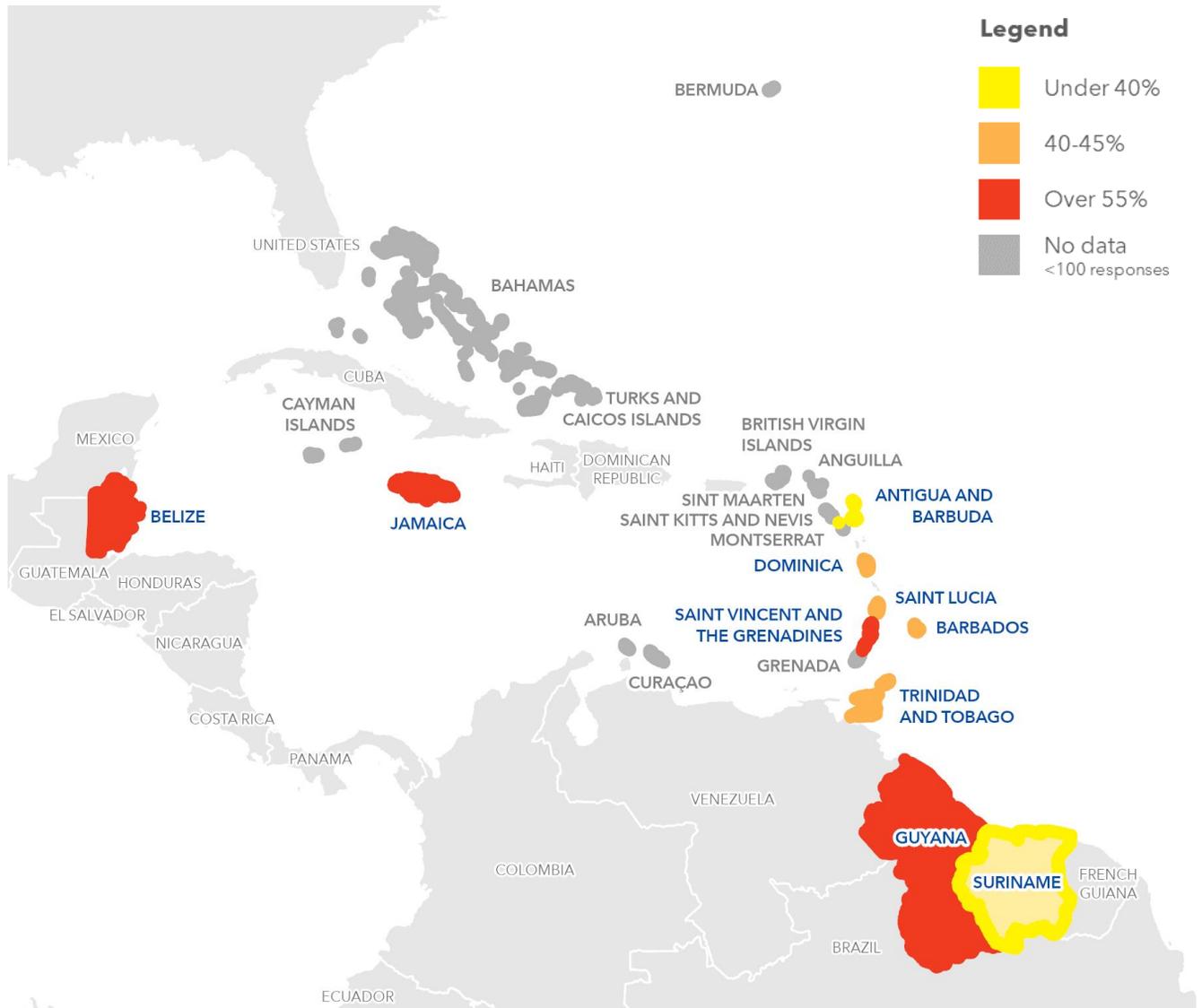
For those that faced a time when they could not access markets, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected. Answer options were adjusted in May 2023, adding new options for selection which were not included in the previous rounds and removing Covid-19 related options that are now displayed as "Other".

	May-23	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
Lack of money to spend	96%	91%	80%	84%	34%	4%
Transportation challenges	10%	8%	6%	5%	15%	23%
Illness	5%	3%	6%	1%	3%	3%
Markets/grocery stores too far away	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Limited opening hours of market/grocery stores	5%	4%	6%	6%	16%	52%
Other	4%	12%	30%	25%	50%	86%
Security concerns	3%	2%	2%	3%	7%	14%

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING A TIME WHEN THEY COULD NOT ACCESS MARKETS IN THE 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY

For countries that received over 100 responses in the May 2023 survey round.



"The constant rise in cost of living. When you visit the market you can barely buy a few items because every day the prices for food is going up and no one is doing anything to address or remedy the situation that we are faced with. " - Male, 46, Guyana

"It is hard to go in a supermarket with a certain amount of money and still can not buy what you want. I have to change brand look for something cheaper by the end of the year no one can go in a supermarket " - Female, 25, Jamaica

► Households in the Caribbean are feeling the impact of price increases on their purchasing power.

The impact of increasing food prices are being observed across all demographics with 97% of respondents reporting an increase in the three months prior to the survey.

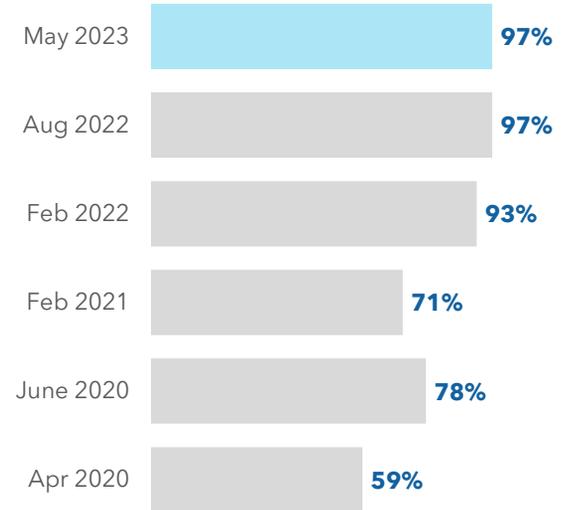
Over half of the respondents (52%) observed a significant increase in gas prices while 42% of observed significant increase in other fuels. Knock-on effects of these changes in fuel prices are observed with 43% of respondents reporting significant increases in the cost of electricity and 39% transport. Significant increases were also noted in the cost of housing (by 51%) as well as health related costs (46%).

Across the region, significant increases in food prices were noted by 83%-85% of respondents in St. Lucia, Suriname and Antigua and Barbuda. Significant increases were also observed by 72%-78% of respondents in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Guyana, Belize, Jamaica, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago.

There are no variances between those reporting food price across all demographics.

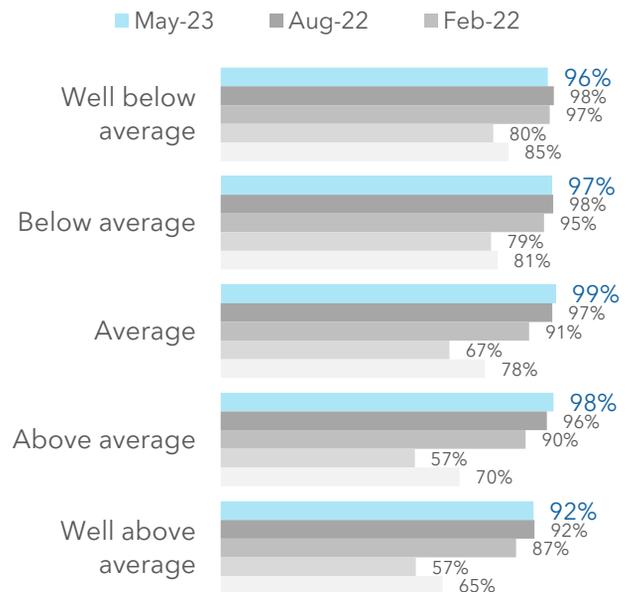
Respondents who reported an increase in food prices in the 3 months prior to the survey

Recall period was changed from 2 weeks to 3 months in May 2023.



Respondents who reported an increase in food prices in the 3 months prior to the survey

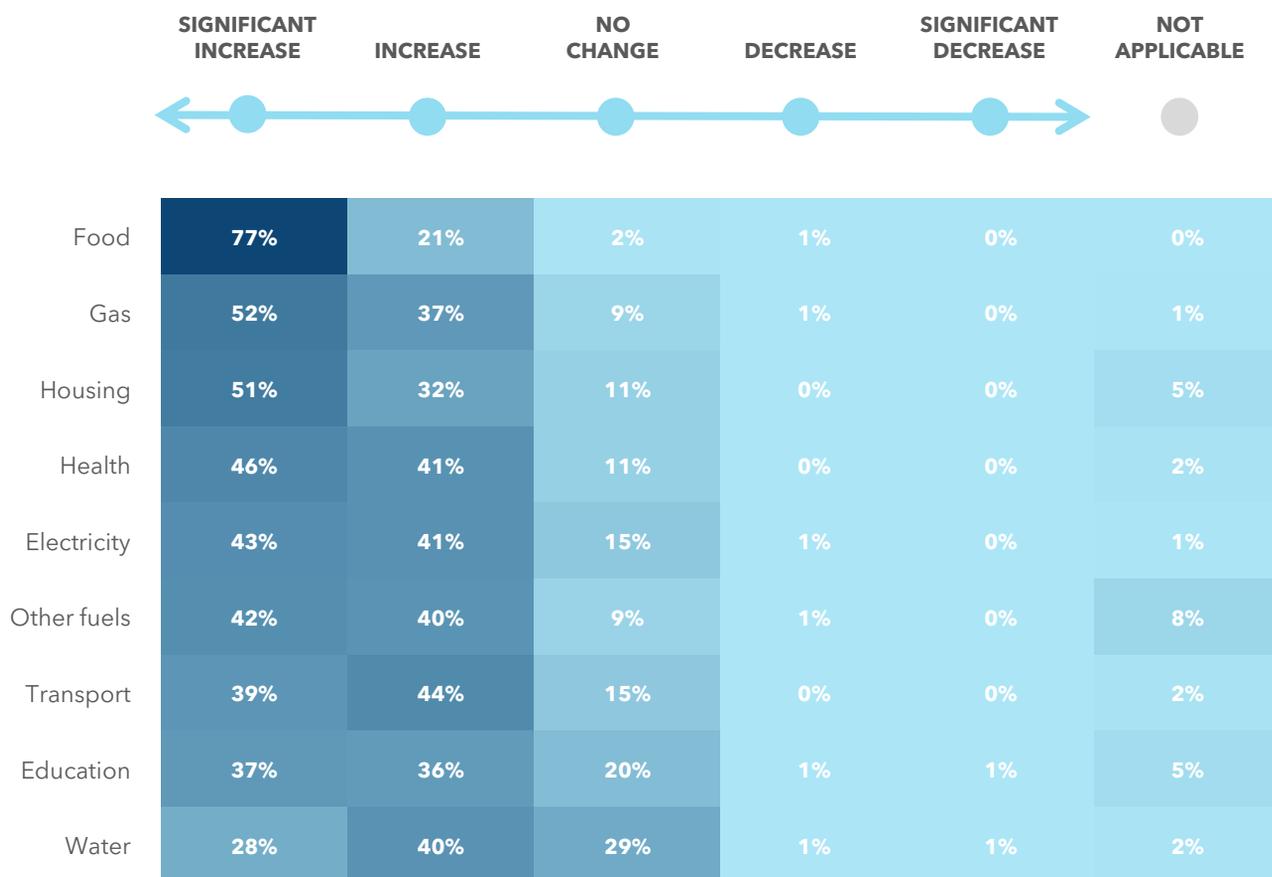
By perceived income level and survey round



"Prices of essential products such as cooking oil, rice, flour, and soap have increased drastically, affecting our savings capacity and thus having to withdraw from our savings to be able to meet our needs. Whenever shopping for groceries, we look for substitutes of products, for example if we had a preferred brand of mayonnaise, we would look for another brand; a cheaper one. The prices of fruits and vegetables increased exponentially, for example a papaya that used to cost \$2, now cost \$8, so we eat fewer fruits and veggies." - Female. 35, Belize

"Food prices have tripled based on what I know and so we utilize every item in our household. Freeze what can be frozen and substitute the things that can be Substituted. Buying less of some things and or changing brands to cheaper just so we can afford them." - Female, 38, Jamaica

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING A CHANGE IN THE COSTS OF THE FOOD AND NON-FOOD COMMODITIES/SERVICES IN THE 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY*



*Due to rounding, numbers presented may not add up precisely to the totals provided and percentages may not precisely reflect absolute figures.

"In order to cope with inflation/rising living costs, my household choose to cook more instead of eat out; travel less or only when necessary (including going to the store less frequently and buying more efficiently as well as travelling shorter distances by car); working from home as much as possible to save on transportation costs; and opting for primarily only necessary food products and produce that are also the least expensive. We have also tried minimizing our food waste as much as possible." - Female, 26, Suriname

"I shop for only essential items. I do not stock up too much in case the food expires or spoils. I have started looking at cheaper sources for my food (local markets rather than supermarkets for fresh produce). I am trying to use healthier and cleaner products but they are a bit more expensive - I am willing to pay the extra to take care of my health." - Female, 43, Trinidad and Tobago

FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

- ▶ Respondents' food consumption patterns remain worse than in 2020. Deterioration of food consumption will lead to greater hunger and malnutrition.

Food consumption and diets continue to be a concern, with 37% of respondents skipping meals or eating less than usual, 29% eating less preferred foods and 6% going an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey.

These findings represent a deterioration in the food consumption of respondents compared to 2020, 2021 and Feb 2022, but a slight improvement when compared to August 2022. Worryingly, in eight out of ten countries in the region over 65% of respondents resorted to not eating for a whole day, skipping meals, or eating less preferred foods over the week prior to the survey.

The most notable differences were observed across income levels. Respondents with perceived well below average income were the most affected, with 15% going a day without eating, and 53% skipping meals or eating less than usual. Only 10% had no difficulty eating enough compared to 47% of households classifying their income as well above average.

Differences in food consumption patterns were varied across age groups, household types, sources of income, and education. Younger respondents were the most likely to reduce their food consumption, with over half (52%) skipping meals, eating less than usual or going a full day without food compared to 25% of those over 60 years.

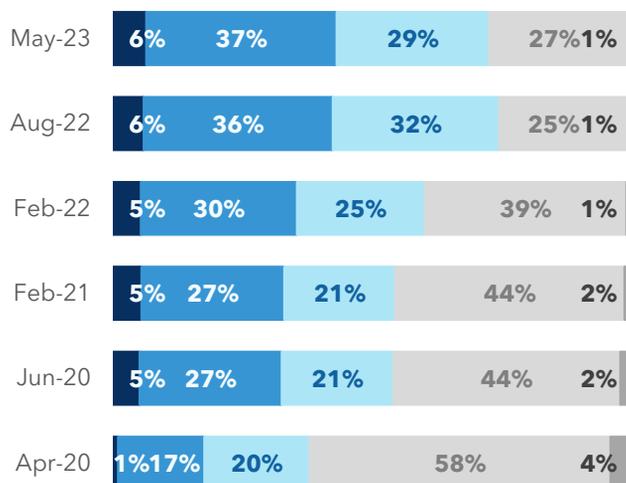
Respondents from single-parent and mixed households more frequently reported cutting consumption compared to those living alone or with immediate family.

Sources of income also reflect stark differences amongst groups. Those without a stable income source had the most difficulties eating enough, particularly those employed as domestic workers. Respondents with lower education levels were more likely to resort to negative coping measures.

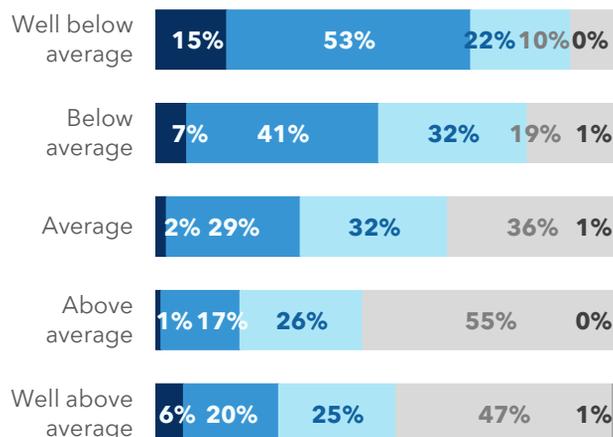
Differences between the sexes were less pronounced with slightly more female respondents (38%) reporting to have skipped meals or eaten less than usual compared to male respondents (32%).

Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?

- I went one whole day without eating
- I skipped meals or ate less than usual
- I ate less preferred foods
- I had no difficulties eating enough
- I increased my food intake

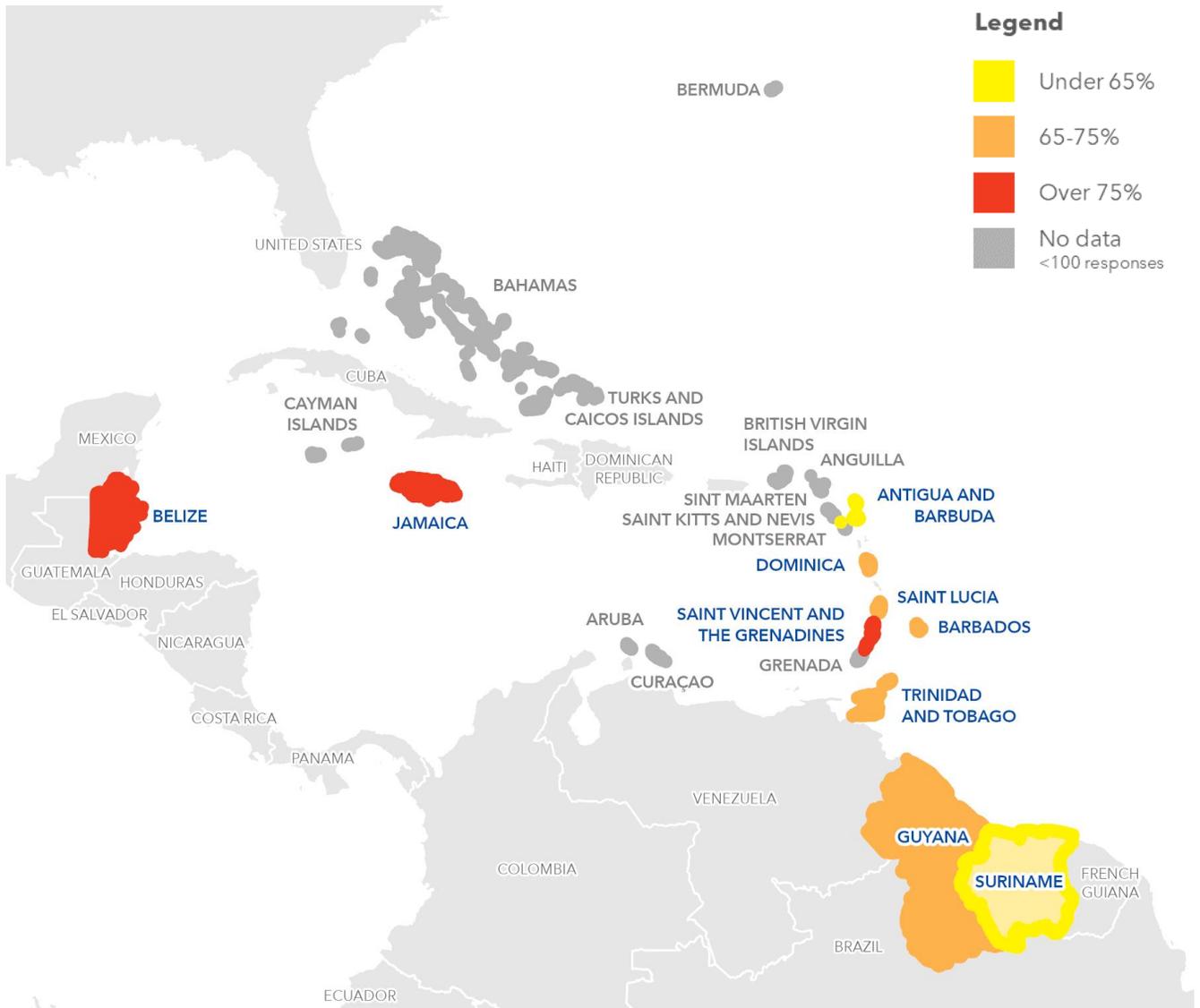


Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days? By perceived income level



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS NOT EATING FOR A WHOLE DAY, SKIPPING MEALS OR EATING LESS PREFERRED FOODS OVER THE 7 DAYS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY

For countries that received over 100 responses in the May 2023 survey round.



"I've develop medical condition that i afford the medication so I skip meals to get medz" - Female, 67, Jamaica

"The price of goods and gas have gone up every month since January. This has made savings difficult. ... savings had to cover shortfalls in budget. This isn't sustainable and this month savings have run out. Have to skip meals to keep within budget " - Male, 35, Dominica

FOOD SECURITY | Coping strategies

- ▶ An increasing proportion of people are reducing expenditures on education and health to meet their immediate food needs

Survey respondents were asked whether they had reduced essential non-food expenditures, spent savings or sold productive assets to meet their food needs in the 30 days prior to the survey.

Over three quarter of respondents indicated that they have spent savings to meet their immediate food needs, of which 10% said that they could no longer do so. Nearly six in ten reported reducing essential non-food expenditures, such as education and health, with 9% indicating this was no longer possible. Nearly a third of respondents have resorted to selling productive assets or transport. All three of these measures may compromise people's future well-being, resources and resilience.

Households with below or well below average incomes are resorting to these coping strategies much more frequently than others. Also of note, the percentage of those who classify their income as average to well above average who are adopting these coping strategies has also increased significantly when compared with previous rounds.

Male respondents were more likely to sell productive assets or means of transport (35%) compared to women (28%). While respondents under the age of 40 more frequently undertook these coping measures compared to other age groups.

Those with no formal education were more likely to reduce essential non-food expenditure (76%) or sell productive assets (71%) while those with higher levels of education were more likely to spend savings to meet food needs.

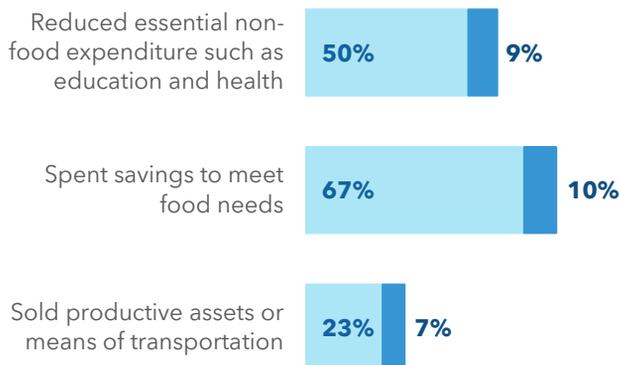
*"Income and food bill was too much so I had to stop children from school for a day are two"-
Female, 35, Jamaica*

"The challenges I faced was in regards to the high cost of living. However I was able to cut back on certain foods and reduce electricity and phone bills etc." - Female, 45, Dominica

Households' coping strategies

Multiple choices could be selected.

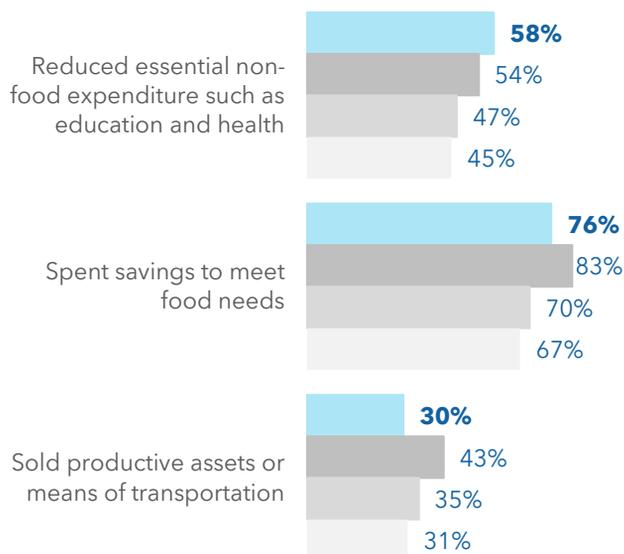
- Carried out in the 30 days before the survey
- Already carried out before and cannot continue to do so



Households' coping strategies

Multiple choices could be selected. New answer option added in May 2023 - "already carried out and cannot continue to do so" in addition to "yes", both are interpreted as if the strategy has been carried out.

- May-23
- Aug-22
- Feb-22
- Feb-21



ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS ON HOW RESPONDENTS ARE COPING WITH AND ADAPTING TO THE CHANGES OVER THE 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY

"In order to better cope with rising prices, I buy 100% locally as imported goods are those which have been impacted more." - Female, 34, Belize

"I have experienced where money seems to have little or no value as the cost of living gets higher. To cope I have cut out excess spending, I have stopped buying lunch and started to cook more and make snacks for my kids instead of purchasing. I have also lessened on the amount of time we go out for entertainment." - Female, 34, Trinidad and Tobago

"The high rate of food, education, medical, electricity bills food but I learn to buy in large portions to cope" - Female, 48, Belize

"My dad suffered a stroke and I Became the sole bread winner of the household, it also became more difficult for me since we had livestock and he helped with it as I worked long hours, I had to sell livestock as I had no time, I haven't really adapted because of my working hours and the dependability of my son." - Male, 35, Saint Lucia

"My salary has not increased however my mortgage, health insurance, security costs, gas, food, light and water, phone and internet have all gone up. I am struggling to pay my monthly expenses. I may have to sell my house as I cannot afford the mortgage and maintenance costs" - Female, 47, Jamaica

"I tried to find a job but didn't get through with any and so I decided to sell fast food from my house to my neighbours" - Female, 37, Saint Lucia

"Supermarket prices continue to sky rocket. I am hardly able to feed my children. Electricity cost is unbearable. I've turned off my refrigerator for half the month. I can not afford school shoes for my children. I've used all my savings trying to stay out of additional debt. Now I borrow from friends and family to be able to get by. I worry about basic utilities." - Female, 42, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

"I have a small business it's basically a road side stall most time I don't get any sales 2-3 days it's hard because I have my children to send to school and feed, I have electricity bill and have to buy water cause we don't have running water, so my life is hard I try to sell other accessories and fried food on the side but sometimes the business not going right at all .." - Female, 34, Jamaica

"Challenges in paying my electric bills I have tried to reduce the amount of electricity used Problem with school expenses. I have been making snacks to sell in school" - Female, 38, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

"I created a small business a home which I do sell ground products of Jamaica yam bananas tomatoes and seasoning" - Male, 51, Jamaica

"My household had 3 vehicles I had to sell mine and share with my dad and mom to save a little since I am only one with a permanent job I know if I don't clear debts in case of a disaster or emergency I will be the one who can only access a loan." - Female, 36, Saint Lucia

"It's been difficult, I'm a single parent and I also take care of and provide for my elderly grandparents, I'm a trained early childhood teacher (certificate from Ntvet) since Covid I've been out of a job, I've done other jobs caregiving and poultry farming which I do at home while I was working, I'm trying to restart as the coop was destroyed due to renovations but it has been difficult with my savings depleted, right now due to the cost of food stuff at the supermarket I have to buy less and also buy of a lesser quality than usual cheap is not always better" - Female, 46, Jamaica

"The challenges that I experienced over the past year is unable to have a proper savings due to the cost of living because I am the sole bread winner of the house a single parent" - Female, 44, Guyana

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity estimates

- ▶ Approximately 3.7 million people are estimated to be food insecure in the English-speaking Caribbean.

The rCARI, an adapted remote version of the Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI), was used to assess the overall level of food insecurity across the English-speaking Caribbean. The CARI classifies individual households according to their level of food security. rCARI assesses two dimensions: (1) the current status of households' food consumption (based on food consumption patterns over the previous week), and (2) the current coping capacity of households to meet future needs (assessed based on economic vulnerability and the adoption of livelihood coping strategies). The composite score is comprised of 50% of the current food consumption domain, 25% of economic vulnerability domain, and 25% of the livelihood coping domain (see [page 37](#) for the CARI methodology).

The levels of food insecurity have risen over the past years with the overall number of food insecure people estimated to be about 3.7 million in May 2023. The estimated number of moderately and severely food insecure people now represents 51% of the population in the English-speaking Caribbean.* This represents a 10% reduction compared to Aug 2022 but remains well above earlier survey rounds. The number of severely food insecure people in the Caribbean in May 2023 (7%) has reduced slightly compared to the past two rounds but above surveys conducted in 2020 and 2021.

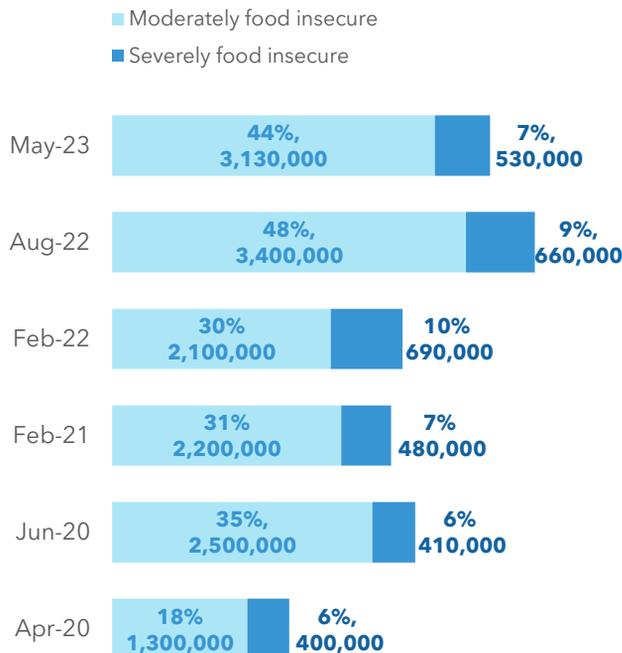
The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), which assesses how food insecurity is experienced in a household, paints an even more worrying picture as it shows a deterioration when compared to August 2022 (see next page for findings).

*Calculation includes Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, The British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos

"Had to make more sacrifices than before and still trying to recover from all the effects of the pandemic and had to make necessary adjustments to move forward regardless of economical changes and challenges. " - Male, 34, Jamaica

"For the past year has been very difficult in so many ways were I can't even find food my kids my 3 year old cry herself to sleep, now I have to watch how I spent with the little that I have " - Female, 29, Jamaica

Estimated number of food insecure by survey round



"In order to adapt to the high cost of living I started working to help with the bills in the house, we started buying just the basic, needed items to manage our household." - Female, 29, Guyana

"Challenges I have face the ability to provide nutritional food for me kids ,to purchase food items because of the increase of prices ." - Female, 31, Guyana

"Housing. lost my home in 2017 had to be renting, rent is high salary is so small today is the 11th of April no more spending money have to cope, need house of my own only eat 1 meal a day" - Female, 51, Dominica

"Increased in food costs has made me purchase less food to cover my family. I combat this factor, certain foods were changed in our purchasing." - Female, 21, Saint Lucia

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

► Using the FIES methodology, one fourth of respondents are severely food insecure.

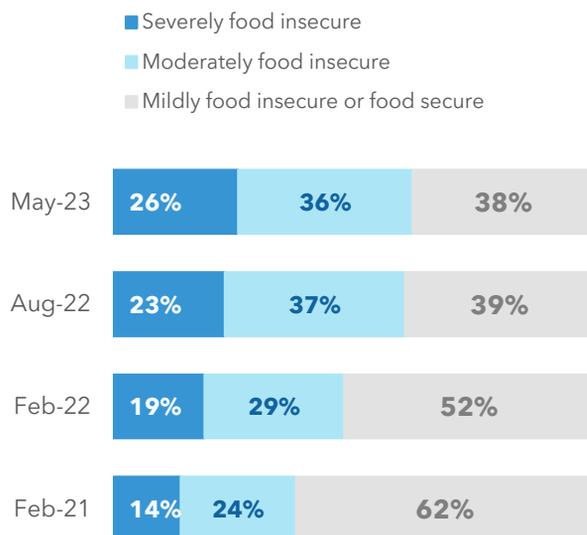
The FIES was introduced in the third survey round in February 2021 (see [page 37](#) for methodology) to provide a picture of food insecurity experienced by respondents during the 30 days preceding the survey. The FIES, which is an indicator used for the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero hunger (SDG 2), is a metric of severity of food insecurity at the household or individual level. It relies on people's self-reported food-related behaviors and experiences associated with increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints.

Using the FIES methodology and survey data to calculate food insecurity prevalence rates, it is estimated that 62% of respondents are either moderately (36%) or severely (26%) food insecure across the surveyed countries in the English-speaking Caribbean. When compared to the August 2022 survey round, the prevalence of severe and moderate food insecurity based on this indicator increased as was also the case compared to February 2022 and February 2021.

The FIES methodology asks people to identify if they faced different experiences related to food insecurity. In the May 2023 survey round, the experience most frequently cited by respondents was "eating only a few kinds of foods", followed by being "unable to eat healthy and nutritious food". All of the most severe experiences - including being hungry but not eating, going without eating for a whole day and running out of food - increased when compared to August 2022.

Prevalence rates of food insecurity

Based on FIES methodology.



"The cost for food increased drastically both dry goods and farm produces. Overall, everything gone up. Food, electricity and water." - Female, 49, Jamaica

"I had to use less current so that it doesn't come high cook on fire heat because the gas is expensive" - Female, 43, Belize

"Life rough jah jah!! Children can't go to school because u have to decide between food for them or an education we as poor ppl need more help hungry n poverty a kill we" - Female, 31, Jamaica

"Not enough funds to buy food so I had to try to grow vegetables" - Female, 62, Saint Lucia

"I can't afford a nanny, so I can't work. My husband covers for everything. And all the prices go up every week. It is really difficult in this period of time. I just wish I could work to help my husband provide for our kids." - Female, 23, Suriname

"Wish the cost of basic food items can be lower, I have been shopping less food keeping a budget of 150.00ec a week for food, and I grow a small backyard garden with peppers chives lettuce and a few fruit trees bearing I am using and I am searching for a 2 job with no luck." - Female, 49, Antigua and Barbuda

"Trying to conserve as much as possible so utility bills can be less. Buying less food items and opting for cheaper brands." - Female, 52, Saint Lucia

"My husband did not work during the pandemic. He was laid off. We went through all our savings. We took out a courts loan to manage. We are now out of debt but barely managing household expenses." - Female, 39, Guyana

NATURAL HAZARDS | Impacts

- ▶ Heatwaves, floods, drought and tropical storms were the main natural hazards affecting respondents over the last 12 months.

The occurrence of a wide range of natural hazards in the Caribbean has significant impacts on people and their livelihoods, with 42% of respondents reporting that their household was affected by natural hazard(s) in the 12 months prior to the survey. The most commonly reported hazards were heatwaves (18%), floods (13%), droughts (13%) and hurricanes/tropical storms (7%). Less than 3% of respondents reported impacts from sargassum, earthquakes, volcanic activity, wildfires and landslides.

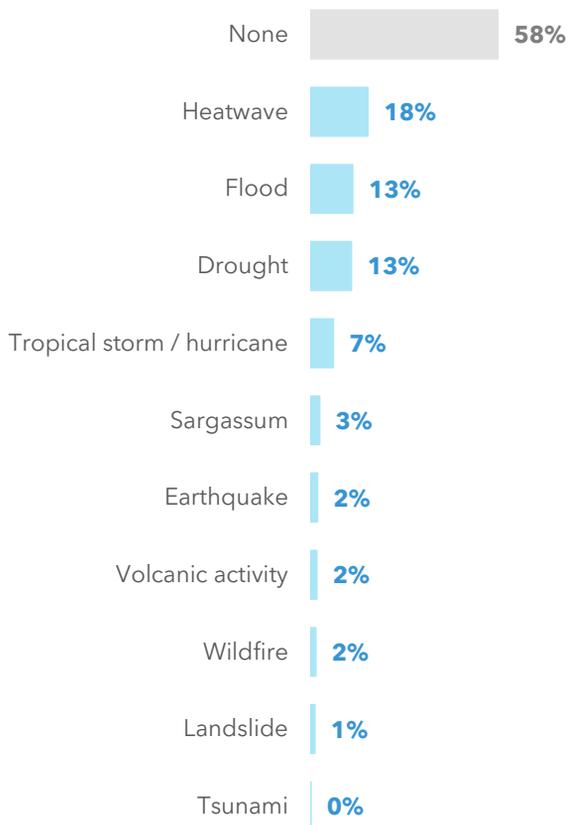
Of respondents affected by natural hazards, nearly two-thirds reported moderate (47%) or severe (17%) impacts on their livelihoods or income. Floods were the largest cause of severe impacts (for 7% of respondents that were affected by natural hazards).

The severity of impacts was closely connected with respondents' income level – lower income group respondents more often reported severe impacts (31%) compared to wealthier groups (6-20%).

There were significant differences in reported hazards and their level of impact across the region. The highest percentage of respondents that reported being affected by natural hazards over the last 12 months was in Belize (56%), followed by St. Vincent and the Grenadines (55%) and Jamaica (52%). On the other hand, the respondents were the least likely to be affected by natural hazards in Barbados (30%), Trinidad and Tobago (32%) and Saint Lucia (33%).

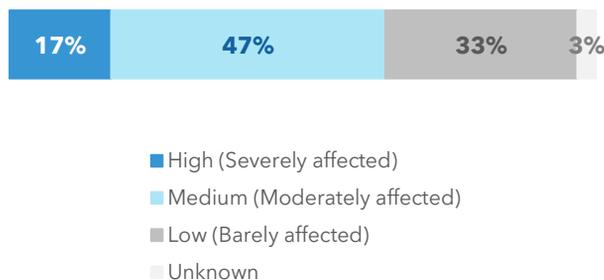
Natural hazards that affected respondents in the 12 months prior to the survey

Multiple choices could be selected.



Level of impact on livelihoods or income

For respondents that were affected by natural hazards in the 12 months prior to the survey

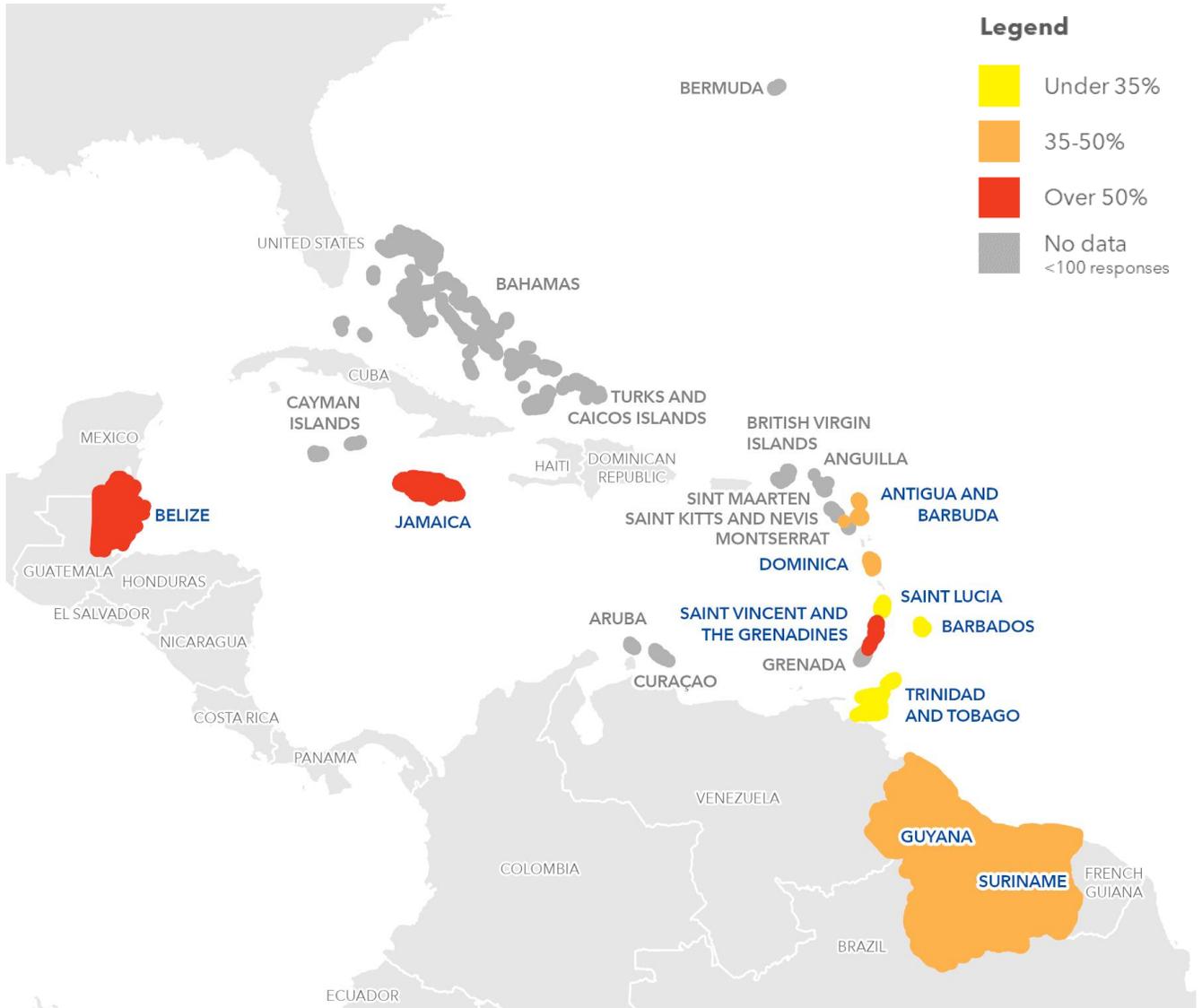


"My family struggling because of the volcanic explosion we face as a farm I lost everything an no assistance from anyone so that's why am off my feet "
- Male, 32, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

"Because of the constant flooding I had to relocated to linden to live with my children and im a single parent of 3 its really had presently had no home for my children but was stay with family until i get a place but the rent is high so im lacking of money for my children educational wise but really need assistance from government" - Female, 32, Guyana

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS AFFECTED BY NATURAL HAZARD(S) IN THE 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY

For countries that received over 100 responses in the May 2023 survey round.



"Last year we had a big flood family's and friends stayed whitout their house been months we could go out to work to buy food nothing. Months now and we no get no kind of help we are still fighting to stand our houses again and things are expensive.." - Female, 22, Belize

"Was difficult after the volcano .We sold livestock and garden produces to help out after paying mortgage and debts." - Male, 36, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

NATURAL HAZARDS | Resilience capacity

- ▶ Over a third of respondents have low capacity to cope with, recover from and adapt to natural hazards; women and lower income groups have the lowest resilience capacity.

The Resilience Capacity Score (RCS) indicator was used to measure respondents' perception of their resilience to natural hazards, meaning capacity to mitigate long-lasting adverse consequences of hazards. The method uses nine resilience-related characteristics. Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement with statements, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These generate a score that acts as a marker of overall subjective resilience.

Examples of the statements include:

- My household is fully prepared for any future natural hazard (drought, flood, hurricane...) that may occur in my area
- If affected by a natural hazard, my household can change or adapt its primary income or source of livelihood without major difficulties
- In case of a natural hazard my household can rely on the support of family and friends

Based on the RCS results, it is estimated that over a third of respondents have low overall resilience to natural hazards and only 6% are highly resilient. Looking at the nine resilience characteristics, respondents scored the worst on the financial capital (i.e. access to financial support), anticipatory capacity (i.e. preparedness for future natural hazards) and institutional capacity (i.e. support from public administration/government or other institutions). On the other hand, the majority of respondents feel that they are equipped with human capital, in that they learned lessons from past hardships, and information capital by having access to early warning information to deal with natural disasters. Respondents feel they were the least resilient to floods.

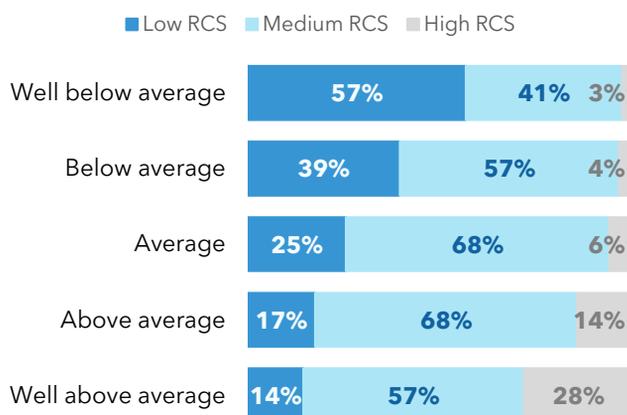
Lower income respondents more often reported low resilience to natural hazards (57% of those with well below and 39% with below average income) compared to wealthier respondents (14-17% of those with well above and above average income). Female respondents also more often had low resilience capacity scores (37%) compared to male respondents (29%). Across the region, low resilience scores were more widespread in Suriname (53%) and Guyana (44%). Only one fourth of respondents in Antigua and Barbuda had low resilience scores, followed by Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (29%).

*The RCS is based on the Subjectively Evaluated Resilience Score (SERS) designed by L. Jones (2019) and WFP's Climate Resilience Capacity Score. For more information, see WFP's 'Resilience Capacity Score' guidance.

Overall resilience capacity

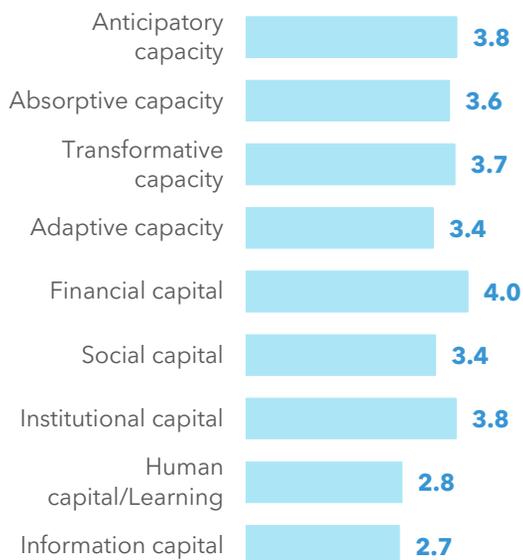


Overall resilience capacity By perceived income level



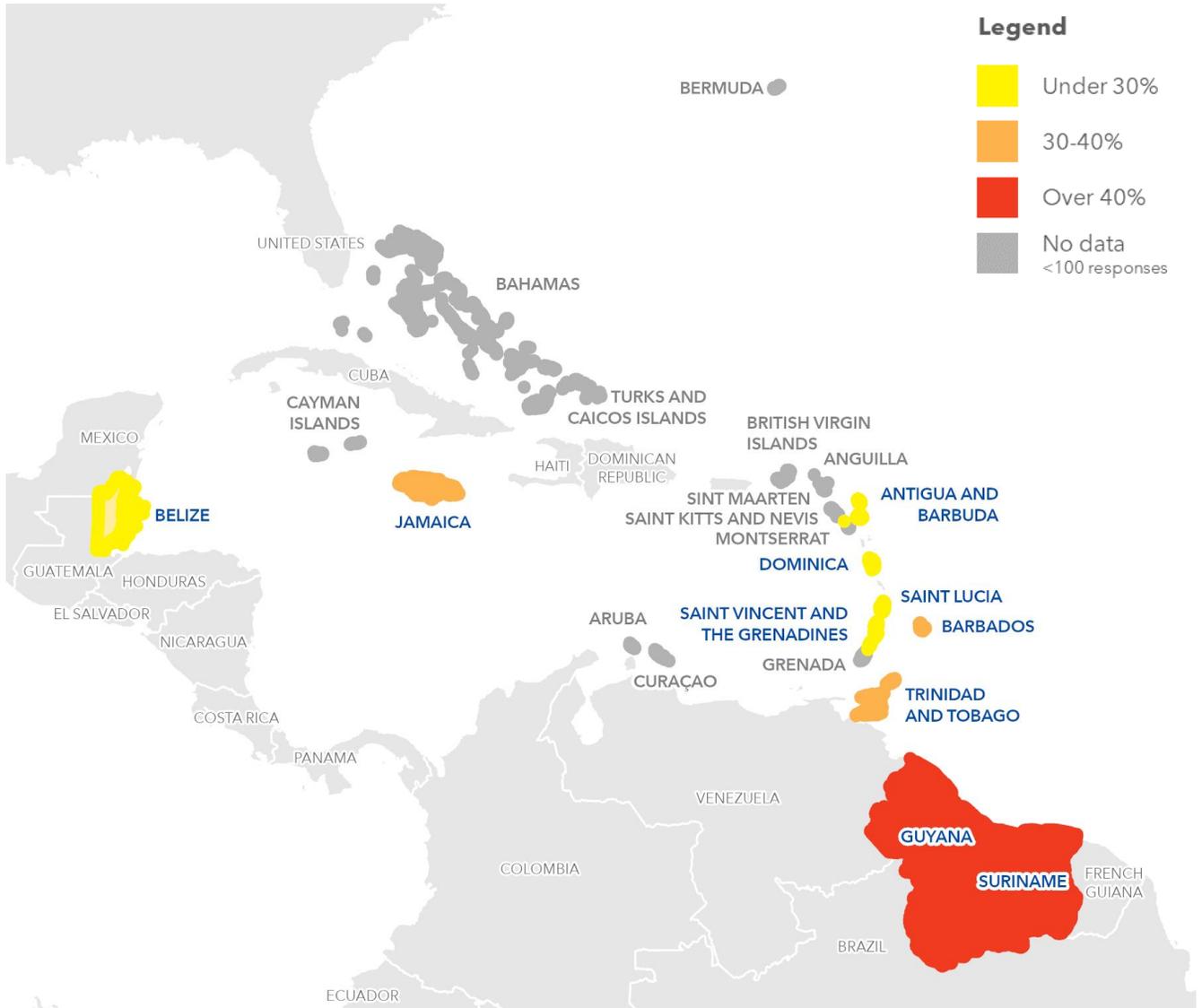
Average score for the nine resilience characteristics

Scores range from 1 (high resilience capacity) to 5 (low resilience capacity). Higher score means lower resilience capacity.



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WITH LOW RESILIENCE CAPACITY TO COPE WITH NATURAL HAZARDS

For countries that received over 100 responses in the May 2023 survey round.



"My life stock was affected by flooding and I lost a lot, so we had to go somewhere else and started over " - Female, 54, Guyana

"With the increase of fresh vegetable I have tried planting our own kitchen garden but we had a flood and most of our product were no good n the cost of living has risen we learn to make our stuff last longer then we expected it to last " - Female, 26, Guyana

OTHER FINDINGS | Main worries

- ▶ The inability to cover food needs or other essential needs continue to be the leading worries of respondents.

When queried on their main worries, inability to cover essential needs is the main concern expressed by respondents. Consistent with results from the previous survey, nearly half (48%) expressed this as their main concern. This is followed by the inability to cover food needs (35%), unemployment (33%), decreasing savings (31%) and illness (30%). Respondents are increasingly worrying about decreasing savings, which could indicate that the cost of living crisis has substantially reduced people's purchasing power or that they are simply depleting savings to cover needs. Respondents also highlighted concerns about their inability to receive or repay loans and natural hazards.

Perceived income level was a key differentiator when comparing the main worries of households. Over half of well below income households (50-56%) were more concerned about the inability to cover essential and food needs, when compared with a smaller portion of well above income households (18%). Unemployment was also a higher cause of concern expressed by below and well below income households when compared to wealthier groups. The worries were ranked similarly between sexes, however there were marked differences between age groups.

Those from the over 60 category, fewer had concerns about covering their food needs, but more were worried about illness (47%) and decreasing savings (37%) when compared to the 25 and under age group. Natural hazards also were noted more commonly as a concern by the over 60 age group (20%) when compared with the other age groups (8-12%).

Single parent households (55%) more commonly expressed the inability to cover essential needs as a key concern when compared to the 25 and under age group (46%). In addition, child/dependent care was expressed more by single parent households (18%) compared to the other groups.

Key concerns also varied based on respondents education level. Those who attained a post-graduate degree worried less about the inability to cover food or essential needs when compared with other levels of education. The most noticeable difference was that nearly half of the post-graduates (45%) were worried about decreasing savings compared to 13% of those with no formal education. This could be attributed to those with no formal education having no savings in the first place.

Main worries expressed by respondents

Multiple choices could be selected. Answer options were adjusted in May 2023, adding new options for selection which were not included in the previous rounds and removing Covid-19 related options that are now displayed as "Other worries".

	May-23	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20
Inability to cover essential needs	48%	48%	34%	37%	38%
Inability to cover food needs	35%	48%	31%	32%	32%
Unemployment / Income loss	33%	36%	37%	44%	53%
Decreasing savings	31%	24%	16%	14%	17%
Illness	30%	30%	49%	57%	52%
Inability to receive or repay loans	14%				
Child/dependent care	13%	15%	13%	10%	11%
Violence/crime in the community	13%	14%	9%	7%	9%
Natural hazards	11%				
Inadequate infrastructure	7%				
Inadequate housing	5%				
Disruption of public services	2%	8%	17%	12%	11%
Other worries	1%	15%	30%	30%	0%
Violence/abuse in the household	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
No access to services	1%	2%	2%	5%	4%

OTHER FINDINGS | Assistance

► About one in ten respondents received government assistance in the last year.

COVID-19 led to a surge in government actions to support people who had lost income and jobs, including through social protection. Previous surveys found that about one-fifth of respondents had received some form of assistance since the start of the pandemic. In this survey, respondents were asked if they had received government support within the previous 12 months, with 8% indicating some assistance had been received, and 3% still receiving it at the time of the survey.

Consistent with previous surveys, cash transfers or income support remain the most common type of assistance, received by a quarter of those who had indicated receiving some support. This is followed by vouchers (23%) and social security/national insurance (20%). Other forms of support included an adopt-a-family programme, education courses, small business grants and seed funding, subsidies, loan repayments, housing materials, vaccines and covid related support.

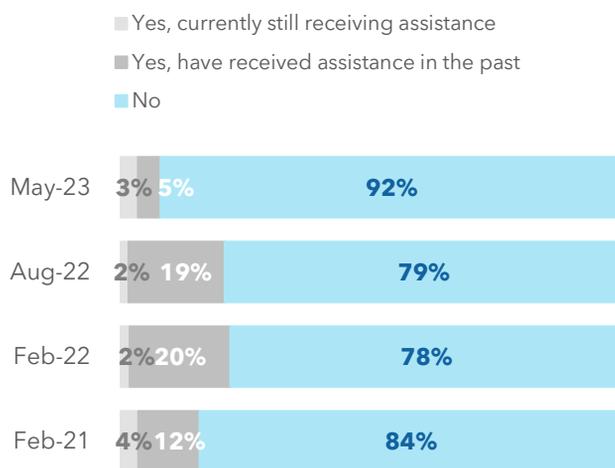
Respondents with below and well below average perceived income households (20%) more widely reported to have received assistance when compared to the wealthier income groups (13%).

Spanish speakers were more widely reported accessing government assistance with 19% claiming receipt, compared to 8% of English speakers.

There were no major differentiation in those receiving assistance between sex, age groups, locality, household composition or education levels.

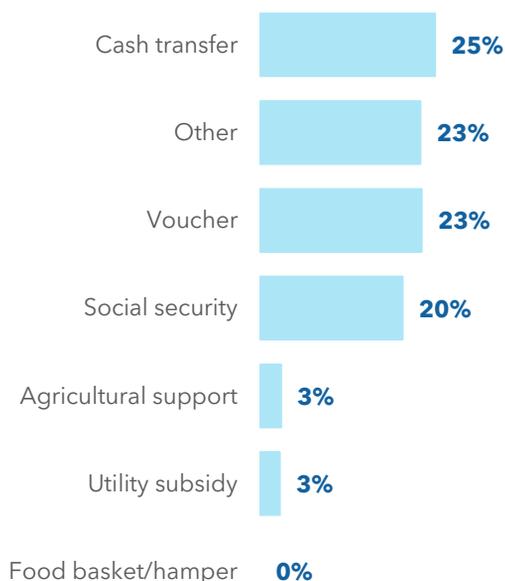
Have you received any assistance from the government in 12 months prior to the survey?

Recall period changed in May 2023 from "in response to Covid-19" to "in the last 12 months".



Respondents who received assistance from the government, have received the following...

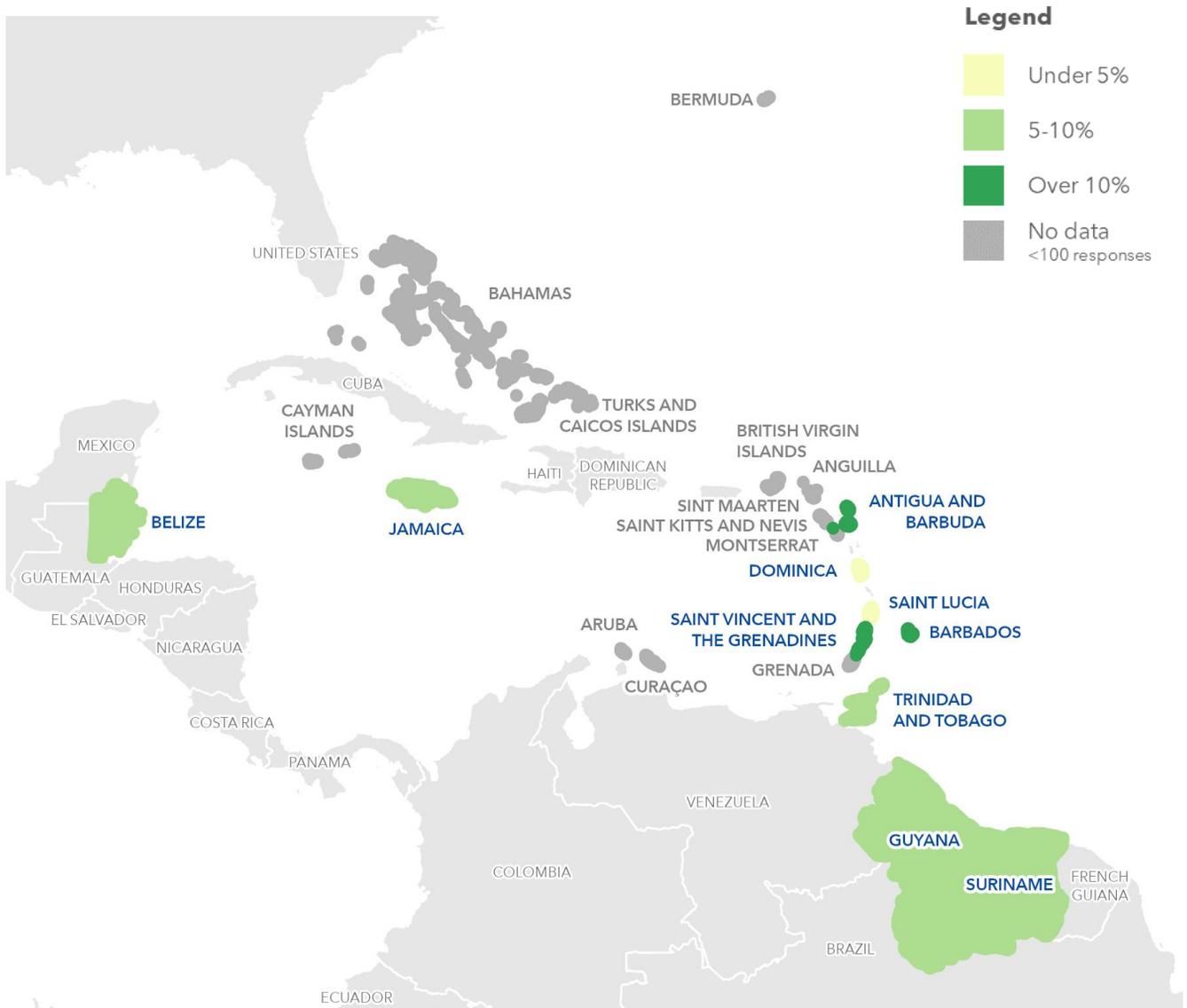
Multiple choices could be selected.



"I am currently living with my dad and son's and was getting a voucher from the welfare but the voucher has decreased to 90.00 every 2 weeks and my dad is a bad diabetic with other health ailments the Dr stopped him from working and my children are still in school. I do end of jobs to try and stay afloat. Even when I apply for jobs was informed I am too qualified or they don't have any available Post. Food, rent, utilities and everything just going up daily except people salaries or creating jobs for the public. " - Female, 40, Barbados

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS THAT RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT IN 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY

For countries that received over 100 responses in the May 2023 survey round.



"I was evicted and I am still unable to afford rent or housing....Due to illness I am sometimes unable to work. I am grateful for Government assistance but it is not enough to cover rent housing and food costs. I shop around a lot. I am currently continuing my studies. " - Female, 53, Barbados

"I am a cancer survivor. My medical expenses exceed my medical board assistance since doctors fees and medication has increased drastically." - Female, 57, Antigua and Barbuda

Conclusion

Shocks and crises over the last few years continue to reverberate on the food security and livelihoods of people in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis re-set the status quo to one where more people are making difficult compromises to meet their food and other needs. Lower income households continue to disproportionately face food security, livelihoods and market access challenges, risking widening the gap between those who can meet their basic needs without difficulty and those who are struggling to do so.

While some survey results showed improvements compared to mid-2022, there are striking findings that highlight the urgency of promoting food security, investing in livelihoods and strengthening food systems. More people are reporting challenges accessing markets now compared to during the pandemic – because they lack money to spend. The proportion of those facing disruptions to their livelihoods is at its second highest level since April 2020, driven by high input costs. Combined with high food prices and cost of living generally, some people are being forced to reduce non-food expenditures, deplete their savings or other measures that compromise future well-being. For others these are not even options, having already sold productive assets, spent savings or not having savings in the first place.

These trends are underpinned by the ever-present threat of natural hazards, which could be devastating for those already living in poverty and a tipping point

for those on the margins, along with widespread economic reverberations if severe hazards strike. This round introduced new analysis on resilience to hazards, with findings emphasizing the importance of supporting the resilience of women and lower income households.

Important regional efforts are underway to reduce food imports, improve access to financing, and strengthen food systems, which should be supported and accelerated. The recommendations below draw from previous surveys and lessons from COVID-19, including on how social protection programmes were expanded. As efforts are taken forward, it is critical to include focus on those most vulnerable to food insecurity, the different capacities of women and men, and opportunities to galvanize youth to promote food security.

The crises and shocks of the last few years have been clearly defined – the states of emergency declared during COVID-19, the spikes in food prices triggering strategies and actions. We must keep the same level of attention on the less visible and more structural challenges to food insecurity now and in the future, including the multifaceted components of food systems and the unfolding impacts of climate change on hazards and production. Governments and development partner must work together to drive forward comprehensive, actionable measures to strengthen food systems, promote food security and build resilience against hazards and future market disruptions.

Recommendations

- **Increase investments in agri-food systems, regional food production, productivity and trade, and targeted initiatives to resolve bottlenecks to import reduction.** Advance regional efforts to reduce imports 25% by 2025 and strengthen food systems through measures to promote production and transformation, productivity, intra-regional trade and diversification of supply chains.
- **Strengthen systems for monitoring prices, food affordability and markets.** Data is key to providing early warning signals on food insecurity, inform policies and measures to strengthen markets and trade, and trigger responses to market disruptions and price shocks.
- **Develop and expand initiatives to increase demand for local foods** to encourage healthy diets and combat non-communicable diseases, while supporting local agricultural production. Strengthen access of farmers to institutional markets such as schools to provide nutritious, locally sourced food.
- **Invest in promoting the engagement of youth and women in agriculture.** Greater involvement of youth and women in agriculture is critical to transform agri-food systems and promote sustainable production.
- **Continue to advocate for tailored financing terms and instruments to advance SDGs and climate resilience and develop innovative risk-informed financing options.** Continue to advocate for the expansion of concessional financing to small island states for climate resilience and adaptation. To mitigate the financial impact of future shocks, tailor loan terms to consider shocks and develop/expand new disaster risk finance and climate instruments.
- **Invest in strengthening social protection systems to promote resilience and respond to future shocks.** Review benefit values in light of inflation and put in place measures to facilitate expansion in future shocks, such as streamlined registration forms, standard operating procedures for expansion and more rapid payment and delivery processes.

Acknowledgements

WFP appreciates the support our UN partners such as UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana for circulation of the survey and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for their contributions to the agricultural livelihoods components of the survey tool.

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This report was prepared by WFP Amy Chong, Irina Bird Reddiar, Trisandhi Gosine, Espedito Nastro, and Regis Chapman.

Additional insights

The report is supplemented with a dashboard which analyses data collected from all six rounds of the Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey. The dashboard can be accessed through the link or the QR code to the right.



SCAN the QR code to see the Food Security & Livelihood Survey dashboard online. It may take a second to load. Alternatively, follow this link: <https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/Views/CaribbeanFoodSecurityLivelihoodsSurvey/Overview>



METHODOLOGY

The sixth round of the CARICOM Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods survey was launched via a webform, which was accessible on mobile/smartphones and PC/desktops. The data collection period was inclusive of 10 to 28 May 2023.

The survey was circulated via email, social media, SMS, media and other communication channels. WFP performed the data collection and analysis. Responses were visualised and monitored live on an interactive dashboard. Data validation methods were designed into the survey form to mitigate against data entry errors and/or unintentional outliers.

The qualitative analysis was performed using ChatGPT which provided sentiment analysis to determine the distribution of very negative to very positive responses. The overall sentiments expressed by respondents were also summarized to pull out key themes and solutions voiced by respondents. The results were reviewed by the WFP team and validated and adjusted as required.

See the following link for further details on [UN Principles for the Ethical Use of AI](#).

While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data is not representative, and the use of a web-based questionnaire limits inputs from those without connectivity. Responses were over-represented from two countries, with 21% of responses coming from Jamaica, followed by 15% from Guyana, and 14% from Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.

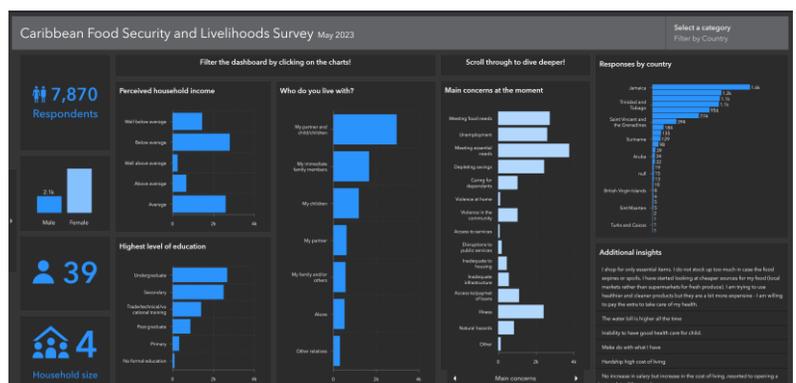
While this report refers to the results of previous survey rounds, the varying demographics of respondents limit comparability across survey rounds.

The report is supplemented with a dashboard which analyses data collected from all six rounds of the Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey. The dashboard can be accessed by following this link:

<https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/CaribbeanFoodSecurityLivelihoodsSurvey/Overview>



Survey form



[Live dashboard](#) for PCs/Laptops

METHODOLOGY | Food insecurity calculations (rCARI)

Two methodologies were used for calculating the food insecurity estimates presented in this report: the rCARI, which is an adapted remote version of the Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) and the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES).

The Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) was developed by the World Food Programme as a standardized approach to assessing and reporting the level of food insecurity within a population. Under the CARI approach, each surveyed household is classified into one of four food security categories: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure. This classification is based on the household's current status of food security - using food consumption indicators - and its coping capacity - using indicators measuring economic vulnerability and asset depletion.

The CARI combines the indicators into a summary indicator - called the Food Security Index (FSI) - which represents the population's overall food security status.

This FSI is a simple average of the summary measures of a household's current food security status and its coping capacity, ranging from 1 (food secure) to 4 (severely food insecure).

For this report, current food security status was assessed based on responses to the question "Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?". The coping capacity dimension was calculated based on responses to the questions "Has your household income changed in the past 6 months?" and "What are your household's main income sources over the past year?". The recall period for the household income change indicator was adjusted from the previous rounds which gathered responses for "Has your household income changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?".

The percentages of moderately and severely food insecure obtained through this approach were applied to the overall regional population to obtain regional estimates of food insecurity.

**For more information on the CARI, see WFP's 'Technical Guidance Notes Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI)' (2015).*

METHODOLOGY | Food insecurity calculations (FIES)

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is an experience-based metric of food insecurity severity at the household or individual level, which is used for global food security monitoring and aligned with food security targets outlined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It relies on people's direct responses to eight questions during a 12 months or 30 days recall period: while the 12 months recall period is typically used for SDG monitoring, reference to the past 30 days is in order to assess recent food insecurity and its risk factors or consequences. The eight questions focus on self-reported food-related behaviours and experiences during 30 days prior to the survey. They reflect increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints.

A concept essential to the FIES is that the eight items and respondents are positioned on the same underlying scale of severity of food insecurity. Therefore, the probability of a respondent answering "yes" to a FIES item depends on the distance along the scale between the food severity experienced by the respondent and the severity of the item. A respondent's raw score (an integer number ranging from zero to eight) is the sum of affirmative responses given to the eight FIES questions. It is the basis for estimating the respondent parameter, which provides an interval measure of the severity of food insecurity and makes it possible to produce comparable measures of food insecurity. For this report, prevalence rates of moderate and severe food insecurity were calculated based on survey data using FAO's methodology and FIES online App.

**For more information on the FIES, see FAO's 'The Food Insecurity Experience Scale: Measuring food insecurity through people's experiences' and FAO's 'Implementing the FIES in surveys'*

Cross-country comparison*

*The overview is provided only for countries in the region that received over 100 responses during the May 2023 survey.

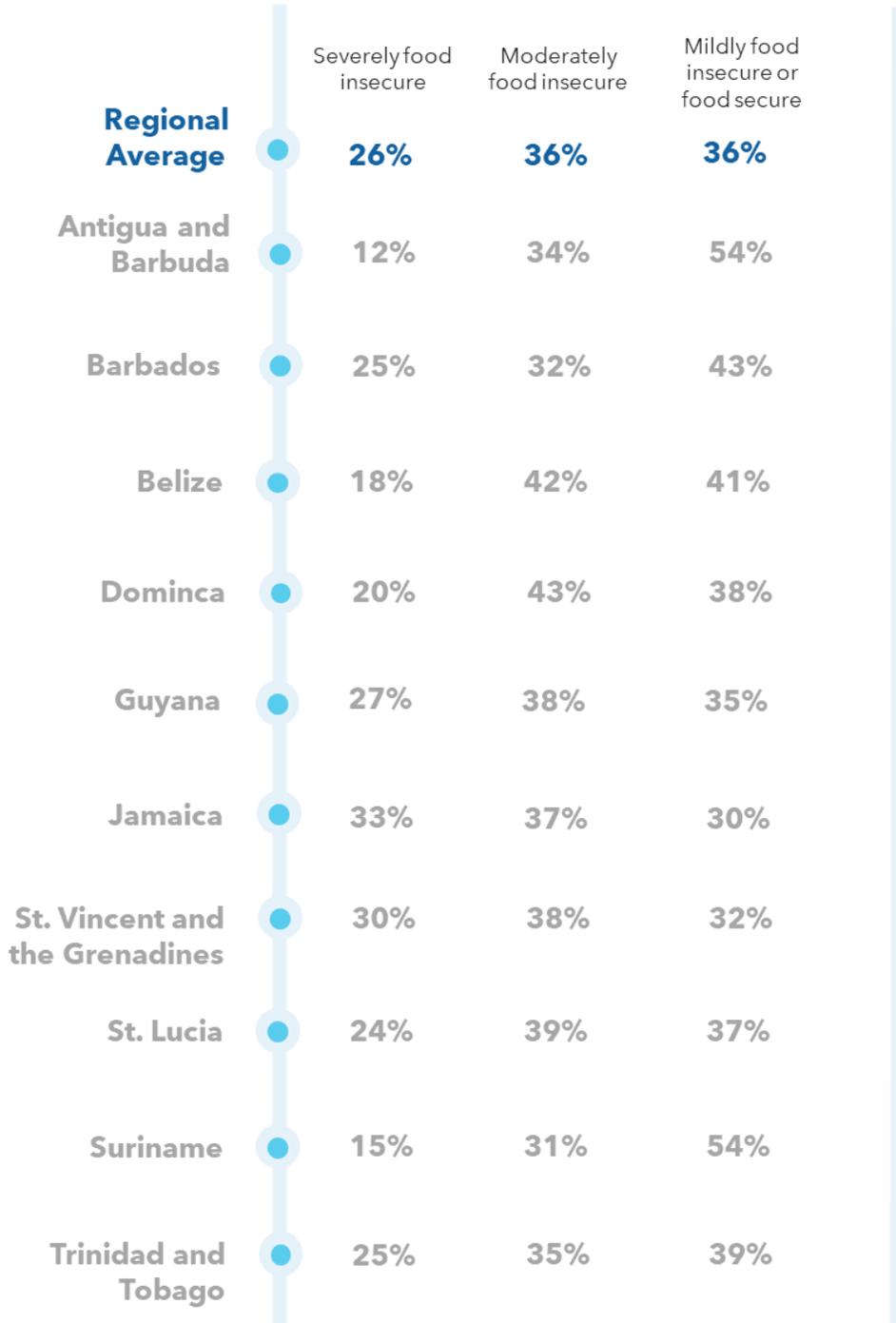
	LIVELIHOODS		MARKETS		FOOD SECURITY	
	Disrupted livelihoods	Reduction/loss of income	Lack of market access	Increase in food prices	Reduced food consumption	Lack of food stock
Regional Average	60%	40%	52%	97%	43%	32%
Antigua and Barbuda	51%	31%	32%	99%	32%	29%
Barbados	50%	39%	44%	99%	45%	28%
Belize	69%	42%	59%	98%	33%	38%
Dominica	53%	29%	47%	99%	41%	26%
Guyana	64%	37%	57%	95%	42%	28%
Jamaica	61%	40%	58%	97%	50%	37%
St. Lucia	59%	40%	49%	98%	42%	33%
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	58%	39%	56%	97%	48%	41%
Suriname	77%	38%	37%	96%	28%	30%
Trinidad and Tobago	60%	45%	50%	99%	42%	25%

*Comparison of the May 2023 survey round with the previous rounds should be taken with caution due to slight changes in the questions' recall periods.

Cross-country comparison

*The overview is provided only for countries in the region that received over 100 responses during the May 2023 survey.

Number of response to the FIES question in the May 2023 survey round: Jamaica (1607), Guyana (1151), Barbados (1113), Trinidad and Tobago (1100), Saint Lucia (938), Belize (769), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (386), Dominica (178), Antigua and Barbuda (133), Suriname (129).



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<https://www.wfp.org/publications/caribbean-covid-19-food-security-and-livelihoods-impact-survey>

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