

Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

REGIONAL SUMMARY REPORT | April 2024



About the survey

Climate change presents a clear and continuing threat to food security and livelihoods in the Caribbean. Increased climate variability destabilises food systems by disrupting production, access and availability. This instability, coupled with the high cost of living, exacerbates vulnerable households' inability to absorb shocks, especially those reliant on climate-dependent livelihoods such as farming and fishing.

Since 2020, CARICOM has been conducting the Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey to gather data on people's livelihoods, access to markets and food security, providing snapshots over time. The survey aims to inform the analysis and decision-making of governments and development partners in the region, building on the data collected in the previous six rounds, highlighting the state of food security and livelihoods amid the continued high cost of living and risks related to climate change.

This report analyses data from the seventh round of data collection, which took place from 19 March to 24 April 2024. It compares findings with previous survey rounds conducted between April 2020 and May 2023. Implemented by the World Food Programme on behalf of CARICOM, the online survey was circulated via social media, media outlets, SMS and emails. While the survey contributes to a better overview of the 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.



Apr-24

4,053
Respondents

71 | **29%**
Female | Male

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

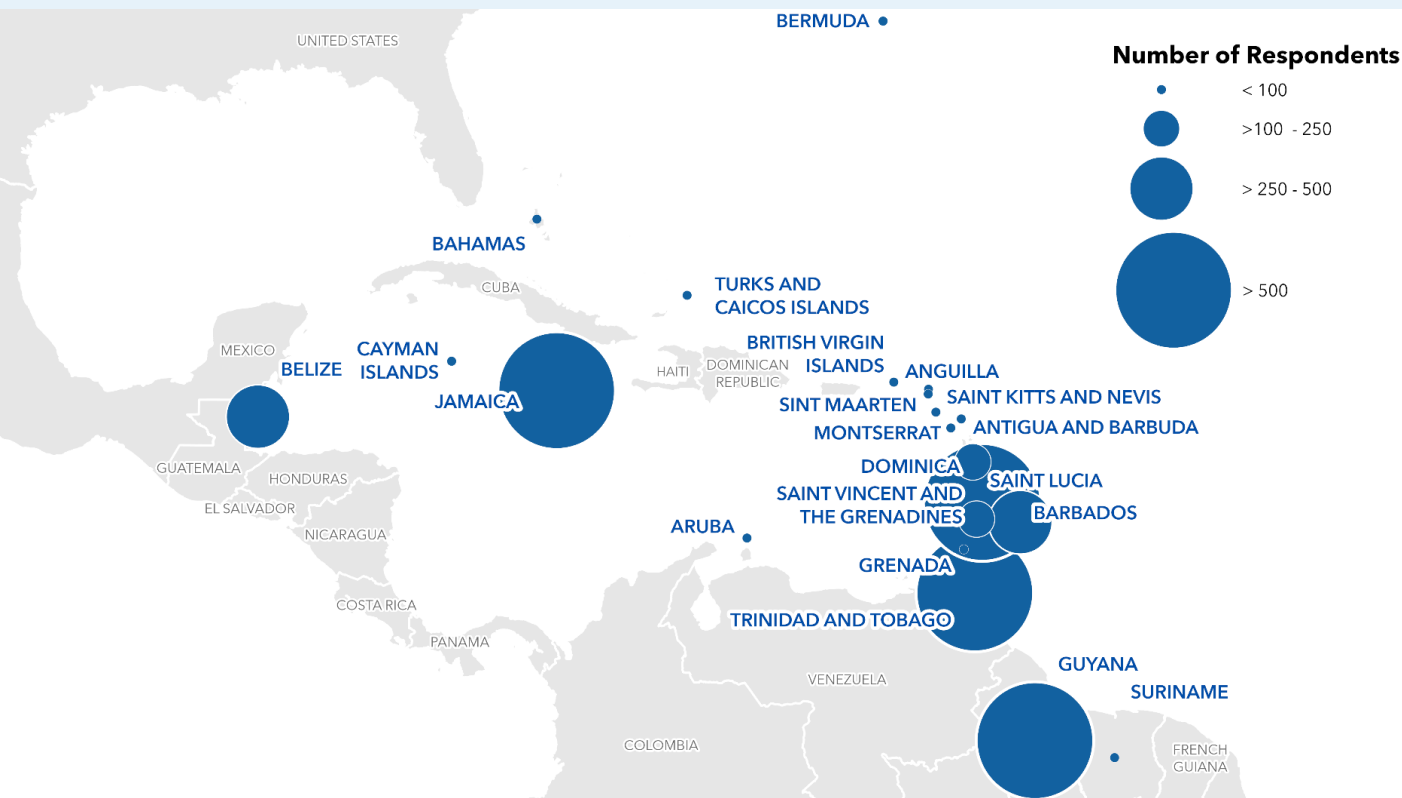
5,707
Respondents

69 | **31%**
Female | Male

Apr-20

4,501
Respondents

71 | **29%**
Female | Male



Foreword

Food insecurity remains a pressing concern in the English-speaking Caribbean, with an estimated three million people currently experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity. While the numbers have decreased by 17 percent compared to a year ago, food insecurity is 78 percent higher than at the start of the pandemic in 2020— with the most vulnerable, particularly those with lower incomes or those with a disability/chronic illness being the most affected.

Due to a myriad of challenges including over-dependence on extra-regional imports, financial downturn, global conflict, and climate impacts, an estimated 43 percent of the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean is categorized as moderately or severely food insecure. While some progress has been made with respect to the loss of livelihoods since the pandemic, there are continued challenges especially among vulnerable population segments within the countries surveyed. This is despite a decrease in global food prices.

This seventh iteration of The Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey, a joint initiative between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), paints a vivid picture of the region's experiences with food security, accessing markets and earning an income during the month of April 2024.

Spanning 22 countries and territories, the survey amplifies the voices of 4,053 individuals and sheds light on the pervasive livelihood challenges faced by communities across the region. From rising food prices to mounting input costs for farmers and fisherfolk, the survey captures the impacts of multifaceted crises, underscoring the urgent need for action.

Amidst the adversity, there is evidence of resilience. While many households continue to grapple with job and income loss, livelihood disruptions appear to be easing significantly as compared to a year ago. Yet the adoption of resilience-eroding coping strategies, such as drawing down to savings to make ends meet, threatens to undermine future well-being, particularly among the most vulnerable segments of society.

These findings underscore the imperative for holistic economic, social, and environmental policies, emphasizing the importance of increased synergy and collaboration among diverse public, private, and civil society actors within the region as well as amongst countries.

To address the root causes of food insecurity, targeted investments and regional partnerships are paramount, fostering integrated, adaptive and resilient food systems that can withstand future shocks and pave the way for a more resilient future, in the face of climate impacts and market disruptions.

CARICOM and WFP express gratitude for the contributions of partners such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Union, the Government of Canada and the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), whose support has been instrumental in documenting the evolving situation since April 2020.

Joseph Cox

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Caribbean

Summary

- The 2024 survey sheds light on the continued food security and livelihood challenges in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.
- It is estimated that approximately 3 million people out of 7.1 million (43%) in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean are food insecure as of April 2024. This represents a 17% reduction since May 2023 but a 78% increase compared to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.
- The highest proportion of food insecure households was found amongst those with lower incomes (77%) and with disability/chronic illness (50%).
- Although the levels of food insecurity show a slight but steady decline since the peak of food insecurity seen in mid-2022 following the war in Ukraine, the overall picture remains deeply concerning especially in the context of climate-related vulnerabilities. Impactful investments to address risks and strengthen food systems need to be prioritised.
- Inflation continues to affect people with 96% of respondents reporting higher food prices in the last three months, which can compromise their reliable access to adequate and nutritious diets.
- Natural hazards pose a consistent threat with 39% of respondents impacted in the last 12 months, mainly by heatwaves, floods, drought and tropical storms.
- Nearly one third of respondents have low resilience capacity to cope with and adapt to natural hazards, especially those from lower income households.
- Twenty-nine percent of respondents are skipping meals or eating less than usual, 27% are eating less preferred foods and 5% went an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey.
- To meet their needs, 70% of the respondents have spent savings and 53% reduced spending on health and education. Almost a quarter have sold productive assets or means of transport, further compromising their livelihoods.
- A third of the respondents experienced job loss or reduced income in their household, while 22% are resorting to secondary sources of income.
- Livelihood disruptions remain widespread, with 44% of respondents facing disruptions. The high cost of livelihood inputs was cited as the main driver. Persons engaged in agriculture continue to face challenges related to the high costs of animal feed and fertilizers.
- Respondents mainly worry about their inability to cover essential needs (46%), illness (36%) and unemployment (35%).
- Almost a third of the respondents had no food stocks at the time of the survey – a similar pattern to levels reported since August 2022.
- The overall picture shows improvements since the height of the food price crisis in 2022/2023, but key metrics on food security, coping and access to markets are worse compared to before the pandemic. These challenges disproportionately affect households with lower incomes.

Main results from the survey

| | LIVELIHOODS | | MARKETS | | FOOD SECURITY | |
|---------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Disrupted livelihoods | Job loss/reduced income revenues | Lack of market access | Increase in food prices | Food Insecure | No food stocks |
| Apr-24 | 44% | 32% | 38% | 96% | 43% | 28% |
| May-23 | 60% | 40% | 52% | 97% | 51% | 32% |
| Aug-22 | 55% | 54% | 49% | 97% | 57% | 30% |
| Feb- 22 | 50% | 57% | 33% | 93% | 40% | 23% |
| Feb-21 | 51% | 63% | 30% | 71% | 38% | 17% |
| June-20 | 54% | 69% | 27% | 78% | 41% | 13% |
| Apr-20 | 74% | 48% | 38% | 59% | 24% | 3% |

*Comparisons of the April 2024 and May 2023 survey rounds with the previous rounds should be taken with caution due to slight changes in the questions' recall periods.

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MACRO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS AND COST OF LIVING

► Inflation continues to impact Caribbean households with 96% of respondents reporting higher food prices.

According to FAO’s Food Price Index, global food prices have decreased as of January 2024, down 3 points (2.62%) from December 2023 and 45 points (29%) from the all-time high in March 2022. The decline was driven by decreases in all categories of food prices that comprise the index (meat, cereals, vegetable oils, dairy, and sugar).

High food inflation rates continue to impact the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. Despite a decline from April 2023, year on year food inflation remained high in Suriname (24.6% increase in food prices in February 2024). Similarly, food inflation has also increased in Barbados (9.2% in Oct 2023), Belize (8.2% in January 2024), and Jamaica (7.6% in February 2024), putting further pressure on households’ purchasing power. Food prices are increasing at a much lower rate in Guyana (1.6% in January 2024), while Trinidad and Tobago experienced a negative food inflation rate of -1.9% in January 2024.

Energy price dynamics affect food prices through various channels. While crude oil and fuel prices have declined to some extent since peaking in June 2022, prices continued to trend upward in 2023. Energy price fluctuations have contributed to higher prices for essential commodities, with most respondents reporting higher prices for food (96%), gas and electricity (80%), transport (74%), and housing (78%).

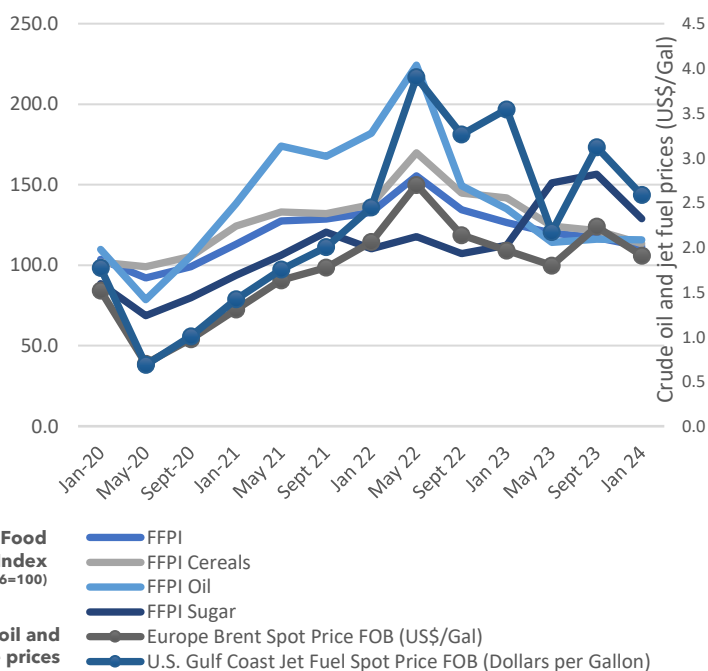
Import reliance although it decreased slightly from 56% in 2021 to 49% in 2022 (FAO Stat, 2022), is still high.

Guyana, Belize, Jamaica and Suriname continue to be the largest agricultural producers in the region, making up a total of 82% of regional agricultural production (FAOSTAT, 2022).

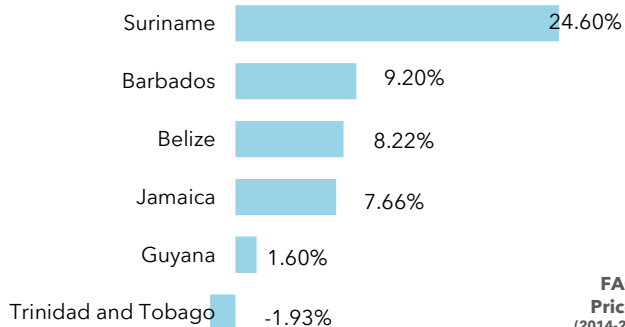
In terms of total merchandise trade; Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago are the only overall net exporters up to 2022. Prices for the region’s major exports (sugar, rice, bananas) continued to rise in 2023. (IDB: International Trade Outlook for LAC, 2023). These price increases continue to benefit exporting countries but will put further strain on importing countries that rely on these commodities. Energy prices declined an average of 25% between January and August 2023, which affects the value of related exports from Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

Public debt levels in the Caribbean remain high, although they declined significantly, returning to almost pre-pandemic levels. Average public debt to GDP ratios rose from 75% in 2019 to 99% in 2020 and is estimated to be around 77% at the end of 2023 (IDB: [Dealing with Debt in the Caribbean, 2023](#)). Sustained reductions in public debt levels is important for fostering economic growth and development, attracting investments, and boosting resilience to shocks .

FAO Food Price Index (2020-2024)



**Food inflation rate:
An increase in the cost of food in Jan/Feb 2024 over the same month in the previous year.**



Source: Trading Economics

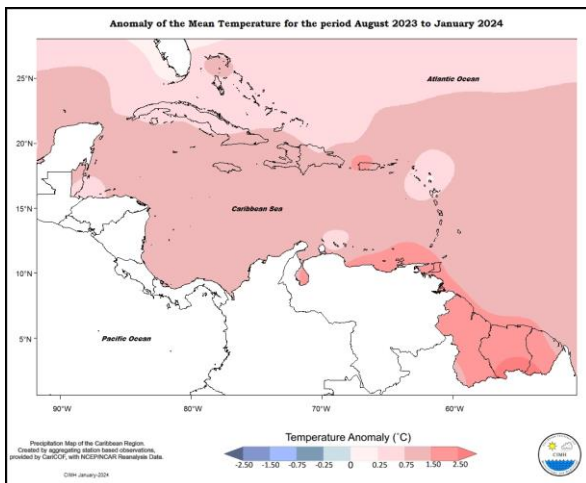
Source: FAO, US Energy Information Administration

CLIMATE VARIABILITY AND EXTREMES IN THE CARIBBEAN

► Climate change and variability exacerbate risks to food security in the Caribbean

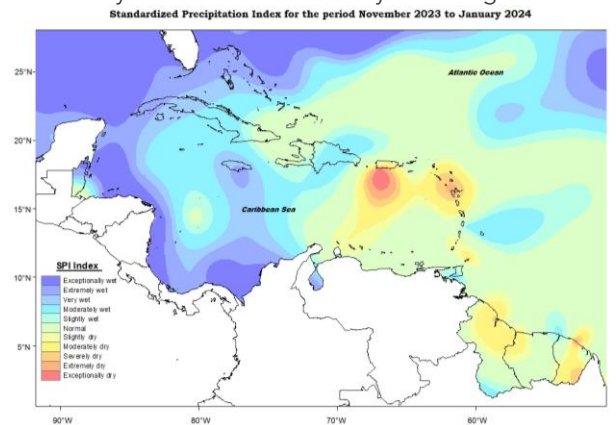
The Caribbean region and especially the small island developing states (SIDS) experience the impacts of climate change disproportionately. They face increased land and sea temperatures and increased frequency of severe weather events, alongside hazards that are unique to the Caribbean, such as sargassum influx and Atlantic dust events. According to [EMDAT](#), the International Disaster Database, 210 major hazards have occurred in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean, affecting 5.3 million people and inciting a total loss of US\$38.9 billion, in adjusted damages. Impacts of these hazards have far-reaching consequences that can exacerbate social inequalities and resilience of people and communities.

The [State of Global Climate report](#) published in March 2024 by the World Meteorological Organisation confirms that 2023 was the hottest year on record. On the back of a stronger than usual El Niño event and warmer than usual Northern Atlantic Ocean, records in the Caribbean captured mean temperature anomalies in excess of between 0.75-1.5c above pre-industrial levels between August 2023 to January 2024 for many Eastern Caribbean states (ECS). The SIDS towards the South American continent and the continental CARICOM states experienced the highest temperature anomalies (see below). According to [CARICOF](#), several countries in the Caribbean also recorded their highest max, min and mean temperatures in 2023.

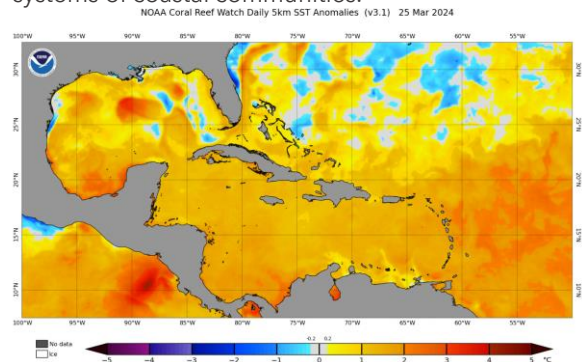


These extreme heat events have cascading impacts on water supply, agricultural yields, food supply and energy generation. Furthermore, there are impacts on health as [PAHO](#) reports a 3-fold increase of dengue in 2023 which has been [correlated to coincide with El Niño events](#). Prolonged dry seasons in the Caribbean are more

prevalent during El Niño. The Standard Precipitation Index reported severely to extremely dry conditions between November 2023 to January 2024 for parts of the region, especially in the ECS and the continental CARICOM states in South America. The agricultural sector is vulnerable to the impacts of drought conditions as much of it, especially in SIDS such as Barbados and Jamaica are almost entirely rainfed. The consequence of reduced crop yield and potential livestock fatalities have a flow on impact on food systems and food security in the region.



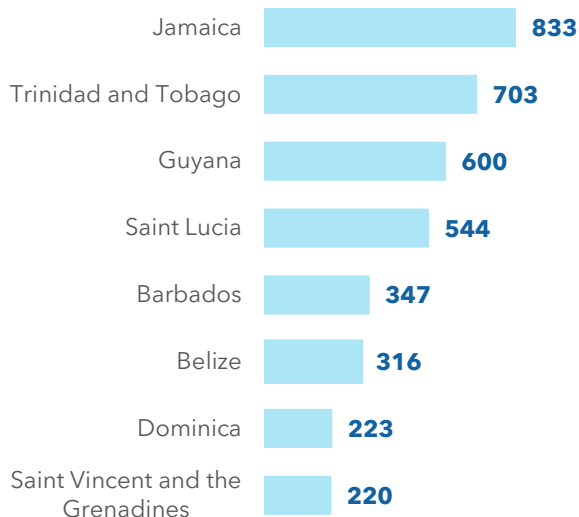
In addition to above average terrestrial surface temperatures, sea surface temperatures have also reached record levels in this past season. The strong El Niño oscillation has also caused temperatures to exhibit a 2.0c anomaly (See below). While many other factors such as wind shear and the Atlantic dust layer come into play, it is recognised that increases in [SSTs can result in a greater proportion of category 4 and 5 hurricanes \(ECLAC, 2022; UN, 2021\)](#). Multiple sources such as [TSR](#) and NOAA are already predicting an active storm season for 2024. Hurricanes in the region often result in devastating damage to infrastructure, land, loss of lives, displacement of communities, and significant economic setbacks. Furthermore, increased SSTs can also cause coral bleaching, reef mortality, diseases, and sargassum influx which can all impact tourism and the livelihoods, and food systems of coastal communities.



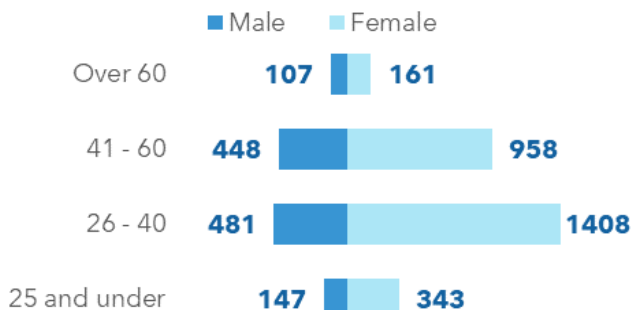
DEMOGRAPHICS

Number of Responses

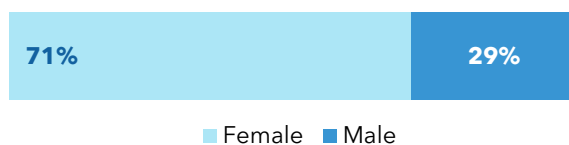
By country*



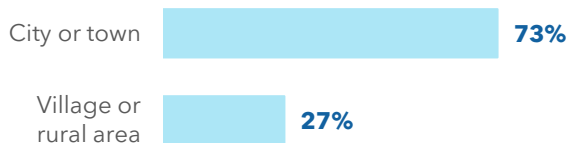
Age and sex of respondents



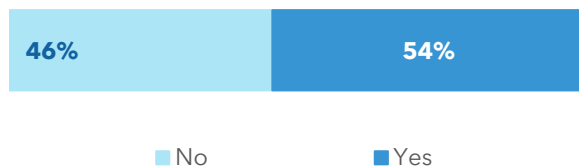
Sex of Head of Household



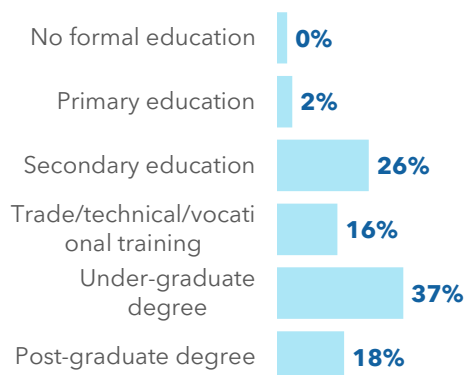
Urban/rural location



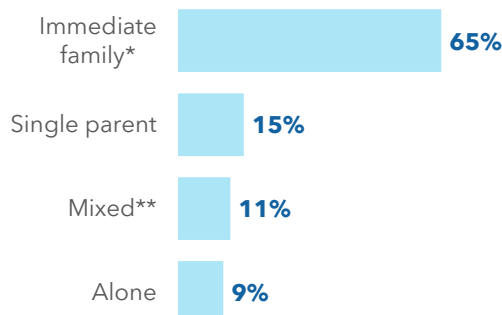
Households with a person with disability or person with chronic illness



The highest level of education achieved in the household



Household composition



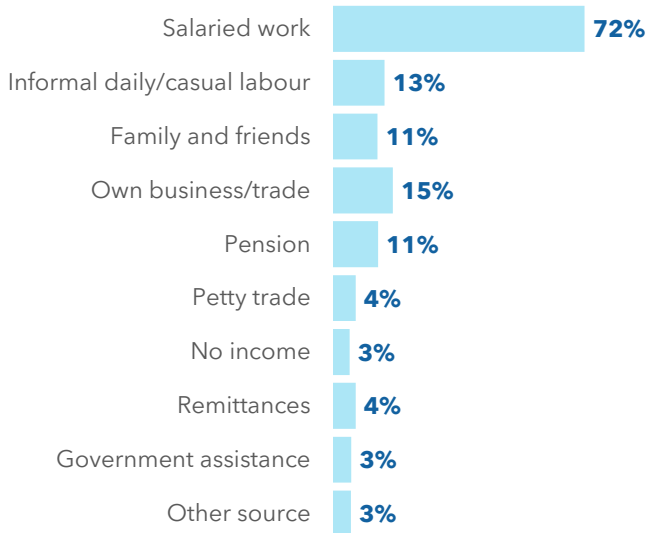
*Countries with less than 100 responses: Suriname, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, Cayman Islands, Anguilla, Bahamas, Saint Christopher and Nevis, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and, Bermuda.

* Immediate family includes partner, children and grandparents.
** Mixed households are composed of immediate family members, other relatives as well as non-family members.

DEMOGRAPHICS

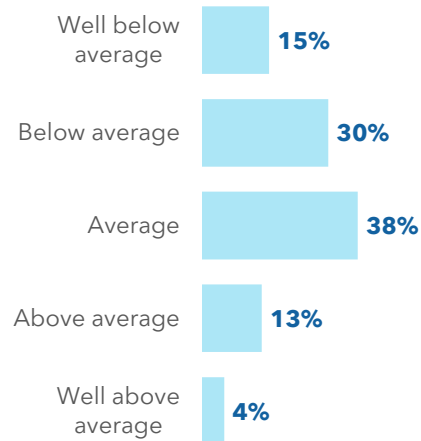
Main income sources

Up to two options could be selected.



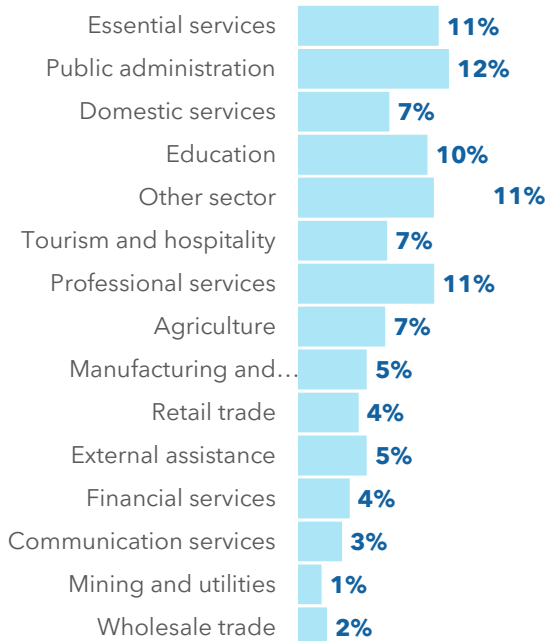
Perceived income levels

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



Main income sector

As a percentage of respondents that indicated having an income.



*"Living is expensive and your salary is so little to live and feed your household "-
Female, 28, Guyana*

*"Due to the rising food prices, fuel and other cost of living expenses and salary which has remained constant for the past 10 years, a number of changes were made to household expenditure. These included maintaining a strict budget, changing to cheaper food brands, shopping around for deals, reduce eating out and reduce expenses towards entertainment and spa services. Additionally, yearly international vacation travel was also reduced. "-
Female, 45, Trinidad and Tobago*

*"Salary basically remains the same although cost of living keep rising everyday"- Female, 58,
St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

*"The head of the house got a second job to help with food expenses and the increase in medication costs." Male, 45, Trinidad and
Tobago*

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

LIVELIHOODS PROFILES | Farming and fishing

► Households' engagement in agricultural activities (livestock raising and fishing/coastal activities)

Almost a quarter of all survey respondents (23%) were engaged in farming or livestock rearing. Of those, 60% practice farming mainly for consumption purposes. Similar to previous survey rounds, the most common products cultivated by respondents are vegetables (62%), plantains/bananas (51%), fruits (36%), roots and tubers (36%), and poultry (34%). A much smaller proportion of households (3%) are engaged in fishing, also primarily for consumption. Fishing activities mainly comprise small-scale aquaculture (32%), inland fishing (29%), and marine and coastal fishing (29%). The proportion of households engaged in farming and fishing activities, whether for consumption or sale, has remained stable throughout prior rounds of this survey.

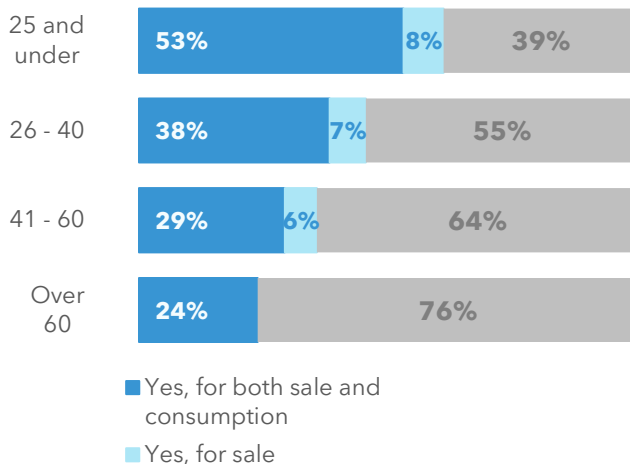
A higher proportion of younger respondents were engaged in farming for both consumption and sale (53% for respondents younger than 25 compared to 24% for respondents above 60 years). Contrastingly, more respondents over 60 (76%) practiced farming mainly for consumption compared to those younger than 25 years (39%). No major differences were observed by age among households engaged in fishing.

Respondents describing their income as below or well below average (41%) were involved in farming for both consumption and sale compared to those describing their income as above or well above average (33%). However, slightly more respondents in the higher income brackets (59% for above average income) practiced farming purely for consumption compared to those with lower income levels (53% for below average income). It is also worrying that, among households engaged in fishing, almost half (49%) experienced loss of jobs or reduced income in the six months prior to the survey, compared to 37% for households engaged in farming and 40% for all survey respondents.

"The challenges are the cost of living has increased, things are very expensive therefore I am planting my own vegetables and home gardening to eat healthy."-female, 52, Saint Lucia

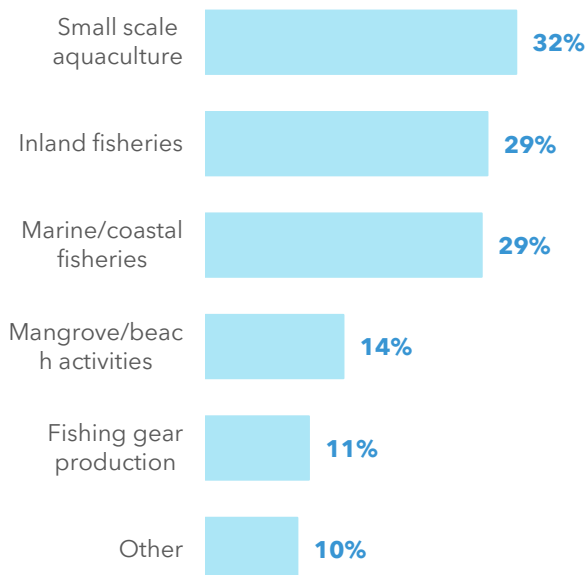
"Fresh fruits and vegetables as well as legumes are more expensive now. Now, I have to plant kitchen garden with the food items I regularly consumed."-Female, 49, Grenada

Households engaged in farming/livestock raising
By age group



For those that engage in fishing/coastal activities, the activities are...

Multiple choices could be selected.



LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing inputs

- ▶ Households engaged in agricultural activities are constrained by the impact of high costs of key inputs including fuel, fertilizers and animal feed

Households engaged in farming and livestock rearing continue to feel the impact of high prices for essential agricultural inputs, though to a lesser extent than was experienced in the previous survey rounds. During the six months prior to the survey, 69% of respondents observed increases in the price of animal feed, 68% saw higher fertilizer prices, and 66% saw increased seed costs. Though still worrying, the results represent a reduction from May 2023, when more than 90% of respondents experienced increases in the prices of these inputs (97% for animal feed and 92% for fertilizer). Notable increases were also observed in the prices of tools and machinery, labor, and water and irrigation.

For respondents engaged in fishing and coastal activities, 79% were impacted by high cost of fuel for their operations. Similarly, 71% of respondents engaged in fishing reported increases in prices for fishing nets, tools and machinery, and nearly 60% saw the price of fish feed and bait increase in the six months preceding the survey. Less significant increases were reported for costs of casual labour, ice, and storage facilities.

Although price increases for fishing inputs remain significant, they are slightly less widespread than in May 2023, when 91% of respondents reported increases in the price of fuel and more than 82 experienced increase in the price of nets, tools, and other machinery.

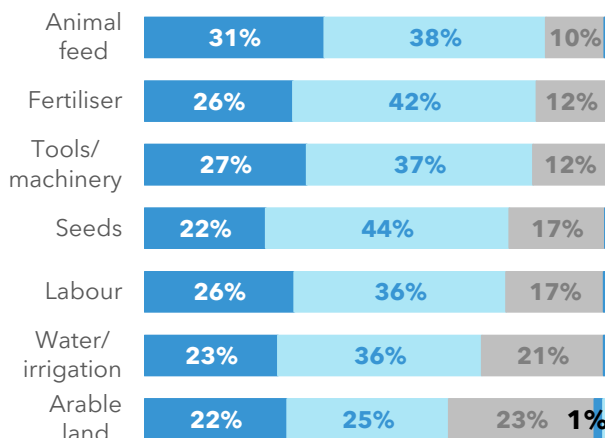
"Generating money was a problem... but right now, we using agricultural methods to help reduce cost of living." Female, 30, Guyana

"Supplementing food needs through subsistence agriculture is essential because salary just will not meet the needs demand, increased health risk from processed foods, and increased cost of living." Female, 48, St. Lucia

"It's difficult to access fresh organic food in my community. This has led me to start off rearing my own large and small ruminants and poultry... I have started off just to supply my household but other villagers requesting for me to supply their house also. This too has made me apply for a farm area in my community as at the moment am using my resident area to rear my poultry and sheep, my cows and pigs it's at my parents homestead for now." Female, 36, Guyana

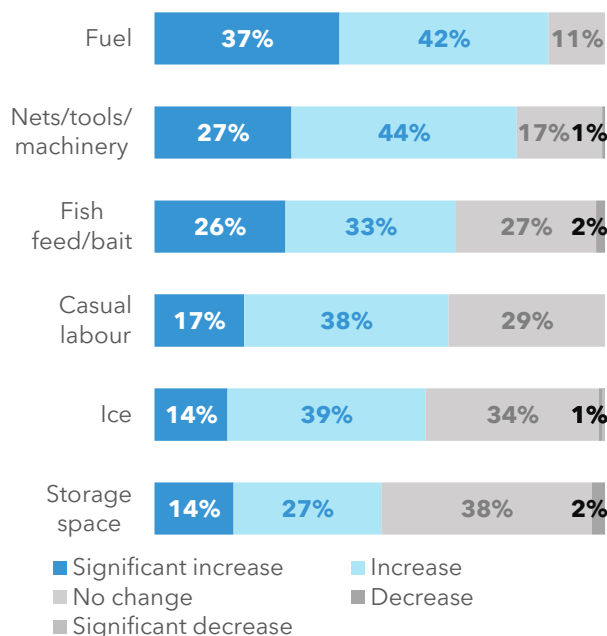
Have you observed any change in the costs of the following agriculture inputs in the last 6 months?

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



LIVELIHOODS | Income changes

- ▶ Reports of loss of jobs or reduced incomes are the lowest since the survey began, but still impact a third of respondents.

Thirty-two percent of respondents faced job or income loss in their household. This represents a continued decline since June 2020 but remains deeply concerning as it underlines the limited income opportunities for some households. Twenty-two percent of respondents reported turning to secondary or alternative sources of income. This is a similar observation as last year and one that has been steadily increasing since the surveys began.

A higher proportion of females (34%) reported household job loss or income reduction compared to males (26%). There was also a minor difference in the proportion of males and females who reported resorting to secondary income sources (25% of men and 21% of women).

Respondents with income levels well below average (54%) and below average (39%) were more likely to report loss of job or reduced income than those with above average (13%) or well above average (19%) income levels.

Some variations were also observed across the countries surveyed, with slightly more respondents from Jamaica (37%) and St. Lucia (35%) reporting income reduction and job losses than those from Guyana (25%) and Belize (29%).

It is also notable that households relying on support from family and friends (48%), and informal daily/casual labor (48%) and government assistance (47%), experienced a higher occurrence of income reduction and job losses in the six months preceding the survey.

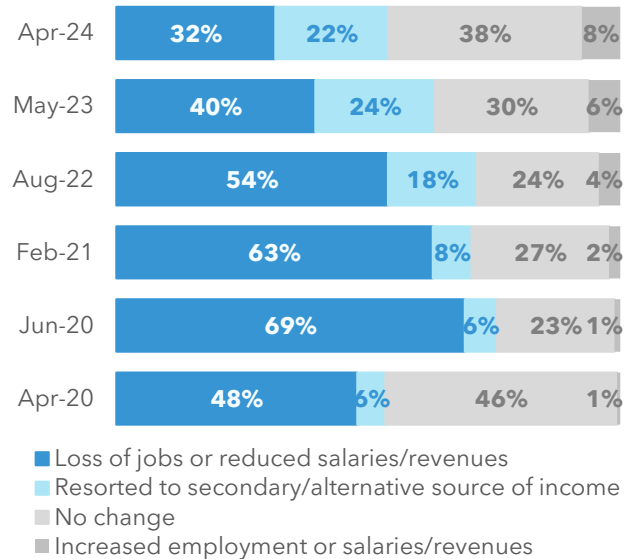
"Well, my dad salary went down. We try not to waste food or cook to much as it can go to waste. We always keep in mind to not waste. Since he is the main breadwinner." Female, 39, Trinidad and Tobago

"Low income led to cutting back quite a bit hence, we had to make do with the mere basics. We held back from buying some essentials and are still doing without them". Male, 38, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

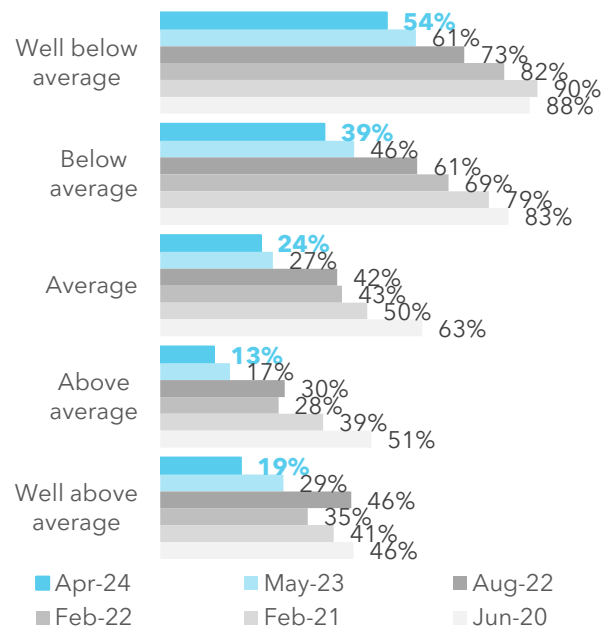
"Recently changed jobs for job security but with that I am receiving less than I was earning prior to the job change and it's hard to maintain my family understand these circumstances, due to the fact I have a newborn". Female, 53, Cayman Islands

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

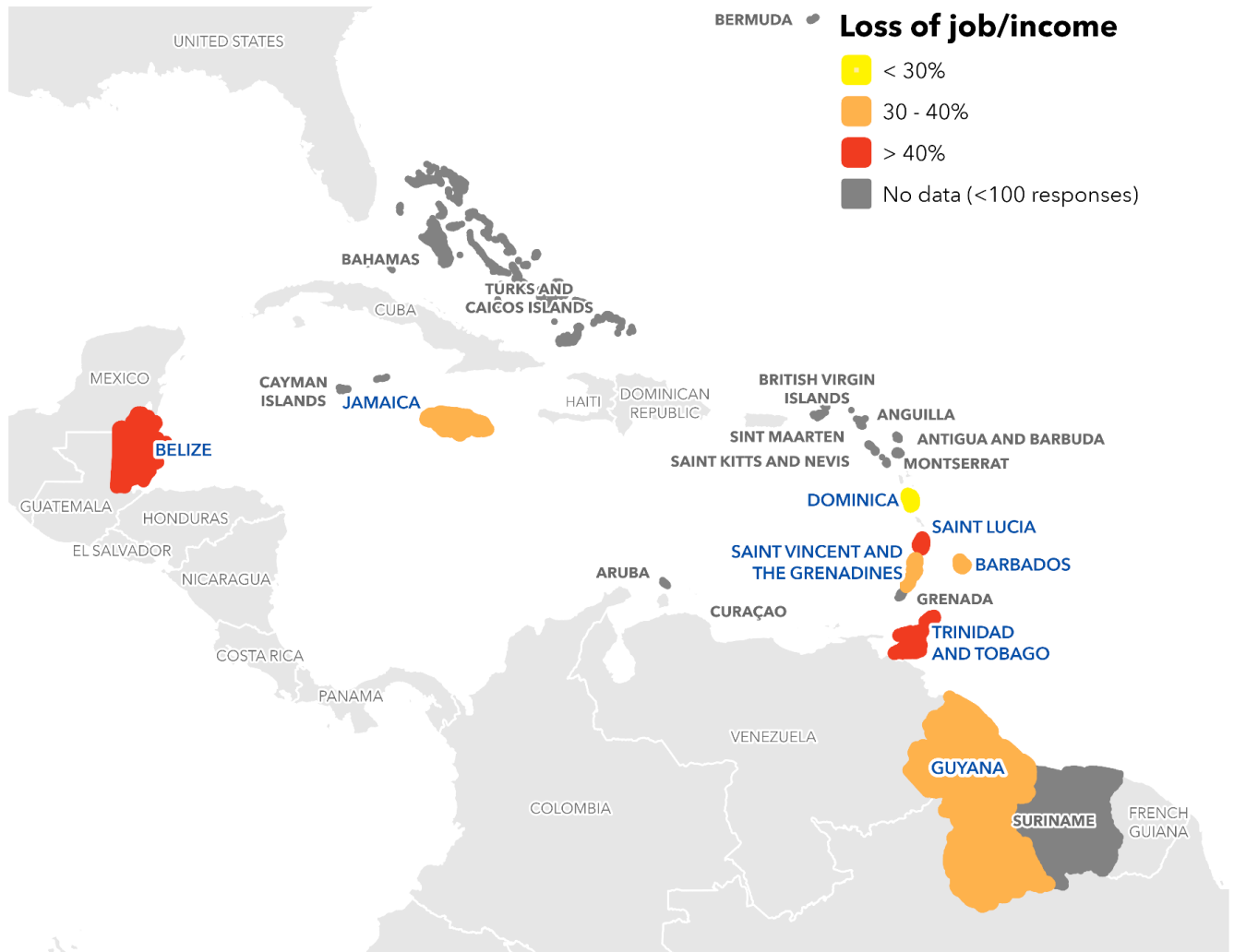


Households experiencing loss of jobs or reduction of income in the 6 months prior to the survey By perceived income level and survey round



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 April 2024 survey round.



"Loss of jobs and revenue. Now taking on more than one job to make ends meet"-Male, 54, St. Lucia

"My son is epileptic and I lost my job... 3 kids in high school and one in primary level school it's hard I need help"-Female, 50, Belize

LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

► Respondents continue to grapple with livelihood disruptions, due to high costs of essential livelihood inputs

In the 30 days prior to the survey, 44% of respondents reported disruptions to their livelihood activities, a slight decrease when compared to 60% in May 2023.

Respondents across all countries continue to experience difficulties maintaining their livelihoods, although such disruptions were less pervasive compared to previous survey rounds. Among those reporting livelihood disruptions, 66% have attributed those disruptions to the high cost of livelihood inputs.

Caribbean households continue to experience disruptions to their livelihood activities primarily due to the high cost of vital inputs.

Substantial disparities were observed among respondents with different income levels. Respondents describing their income as well below (62%) and below average (55%) continue to be more widely affected by livelihood disruptions compared to those with income levels of above (24%) and well above average (28%). Similarly, respondents whose main source of income was petty trade (60%), informal or casual labor (54%), support from family and friends (54%) experienced higher incidences of livelihood disruptions compared to those with salaried employment (41%) and own business or trade (40%).

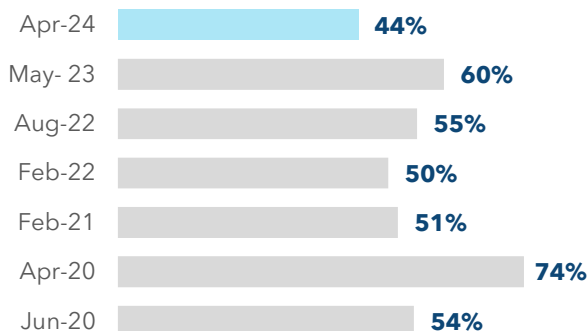
The prevalence of livelihood disruptions also varied significantly by sector of employment, with the highest levels of disruptions reported by those involved in domestic work (59%), retail trade (51%), manufacturing and construction (51%), and agriculture (49%). Similarly, educational attainment was a factor, with a higher proportion of respondents with no formal education (71%) or only primary education (52%) experiencing disruptions compared to those with higher levels of education (43% for those with undergraduate and 29% for respondents with post graduate degrees).

Disruptions to livelihood varied significantly by country, with more respondents from Belize (58%) and Guyana (50%) reporting disruptions to livelihood activities compared to Barbados (36%) and Trinidad and Tobago (39%).

There were no notable differences in livelihood disruptions between female and male respondents or between those living in urban versus rural communities.

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

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



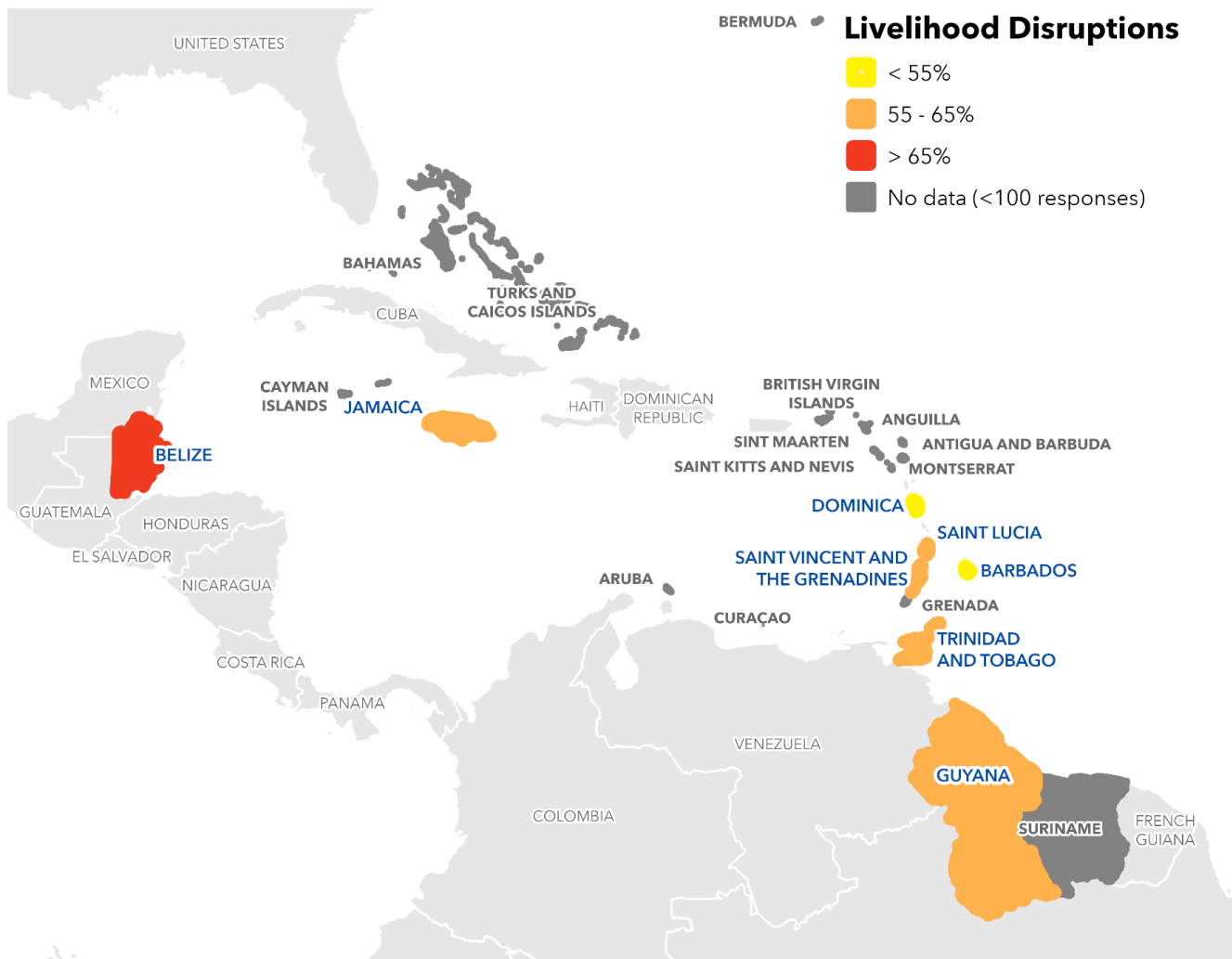
For those that reported livelihood disruptions, the main reasons were...

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".

| | Apr-24 | May-23 | Aug-22 | Feb-22 | Feb-21 | Jun-20 | Apr-20 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Livelihoods inputs are too expensive or inaccessible | 66% | 65% | 62% | 39% | 23% | 21% | 9% |
| Increased demand for goods/services | 17% | 16% | 21% | 12% | 8% | 8% | 12% |
| Reduced demand for goods/services | 15% | 13% | 15% | 13% | 18% | 21% | 20% |
| Transport limitations | 16% | 12% | 13% | 10% | 9% | 16% | 22% |
| Illness | 17% | 11% | 5% | 11% | 4% | 3% | 0% |
| Other | 9% | 9% | 23% | 56% | 66% | 70% | 83% |
| Livelihoods inputs are unavailable | 9% | 7% | 8% | 8% | 8% | 11% | 11% |
| No market to sell products | 5% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 5% | 8% | 11% |
| Natural hazard | 2% | 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 April 2024 survey round



"Inflation has caused the regular income to become significantly lower, every aspect in cost of living has increased. Salary remains the same used up savings and attempt alternative sources to offset increases but still not enough."-Male, 45, Trinidad and Tobago

"While the cost of everything has been increasing my ability to provide basic necessities for my family has diminished. I have to strategize with my family in an attempt to maintain the supply available at home. I also have to work extra shifts and off jobs to be able to purchase food and maintain the food supply as the salary barely covers the cost of housing and utilities"-Male, 38, St. Lucia

MARKETS | Access and shopping behaviour

- ▶ Limited financial resources remains a challenge for respondents and hinders access to markets

In April 2024, 38% of respondents indicated that they had challenges accessing markets/grocery stores in the 30 days prior to the survey. Although there was a reduction since May 2023, the percentage of respondents unable to access markets in this latest survey was relatively comparable to the figures observed in April 2020 and more recently in February 2022. However, in April 2024 and May 2023, the recall period was changed from seven to thirty days, which should be considered when comparing the results across the survey rounds.

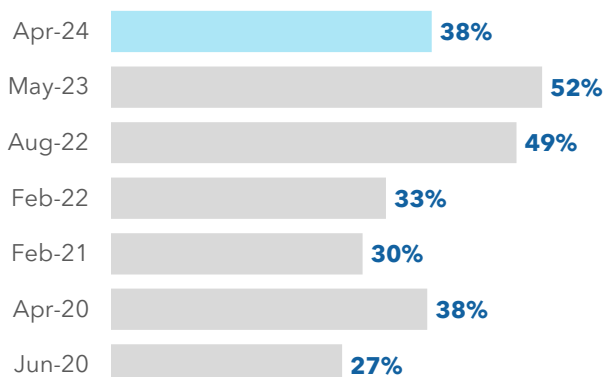
Financial constraints (95%), followed by transportation related challenges (16%) were two of the main reasons for respondents' inability to access markets.

Age, sex, highest level of education and household income levels were some of the key socio-demographic variables associated with the inaccessibility of markets. Forty-one percent of female respondents had difficulty accessing markets, compared to 33% of male respondents. Similarly, 47% of respondents who were 25 years and under had difficulty accessing markets in the 30 days prior to the survey, compared to 44%, 31% and 18% of respondents who were between the ages of 26 and 40 years, 41 and 60 years and over the age of 60 years, respectively. Moreover, 66% of respondents who were from households perceived as being "well below average income" had challenges related to market accessibility.

Over the three months preceding the survey, 81% of respondents noted changes in their shopping habits. Purchasing of cheaper or less preferred foods (68%) and the purchasing of smaller quantities than usual (65%) continued to be the main ways in which respondents altered their shopping behaviour.

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".

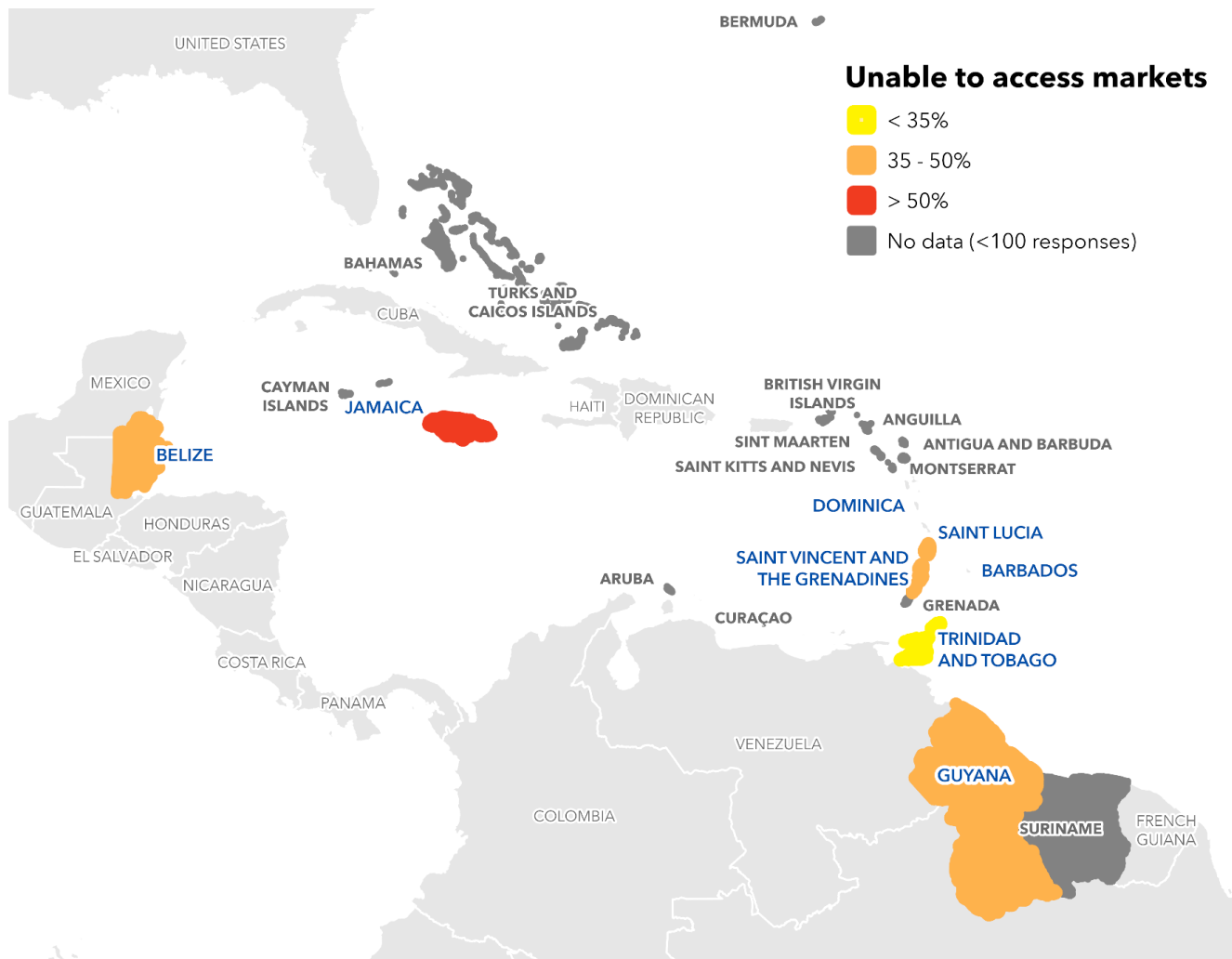
| | Apr-24 | May-23 | Aug-22 | Feb-22 | Feb-21 | Jun-20 | Apr-20 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Lack of money to spend | 95% | 96% | 91% | 80% | 84% | 34% | 4% |
| Transportation challenges | 16% | 10% | 8% | 6% | 5% | 15% | 23% |
| Illness | 8% | 5% | 3% | 6% | 1% | 3% | 3% |
| Markets/grocery stores too far away | 7% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Limited opening hours of market/grocery stores | 5% | 5% | 4% | 6% | 6% | 16% | 52% |
| Other | 5% | 4% | 12% | 30% | 25% | 50% | 86% |
| Security concerns | 4% | 3% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 7% | 14% |

"Increased taxi fare and internet bill so have to spend less money on food at supermarket; also have to go the market less and beg ground provisions from neighbours or friends." - Female, 46, Jamaica

"The prices of food have steadily increased so I now go for cheaper brands, lower quality items, different stores, smaller quantities of food and less nutritious foods to be able to meet my household's needs." - Female, 43, St. Lucia

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 April 2024 survey round.



"Increase food prices at island's main supermarket has resulted in cutting back in grocery shopping and as result not eating healthy anymore and shopping at meat store directly. Carpooling or not traveling to the main city due to fuel prices." -Female, 31, St. Lucia

"Well, find that food prices have increase along with the electricity at times due to the heat as well as due to house design that limits proper ventilation. I have tried to go to the meat shops and markets more than high-end supermarkets.."- Female, 26, Jamaica

MARKETS | Prices

- ▶ Respondents across the region perceived significant increases in the cost of food and essential non-food commodities/services.

Nearly all survey respondents (96%) noted that food costs had increased significantly in the three months prior to the survey. This was a similar pattern observed in May 2023 and August 2022 at 97%.

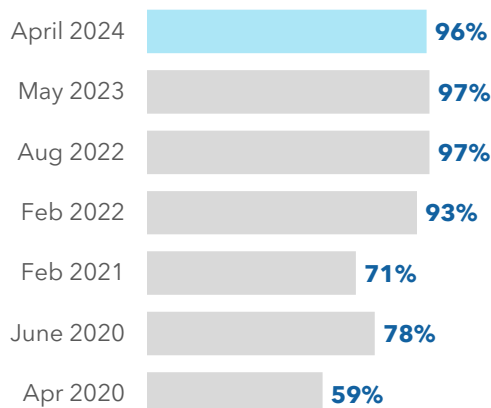
Approximately 80% of respondents thought gas prices had increased or significantly increased, which was relatively comparable to the 89% of respondents who stated this in the previous (May 2023) survey round.

There was a perception that the cost of health (79%), electricity (80%), housing (78%), transportation (74%) and education (67%) had increased or significantly increased in the three months preceding the survey.

While this survey did not directly collect price data, this observation on prices was consistent regardless of age, sex, level of education, perceived household income level and country of residence.

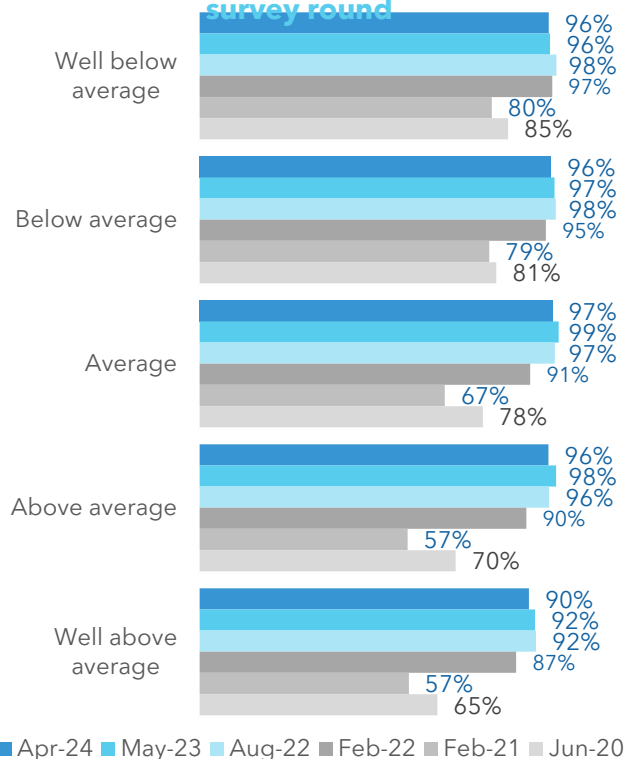
Respondents who reported an increase in food prices in the 3 months prior to the survey

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



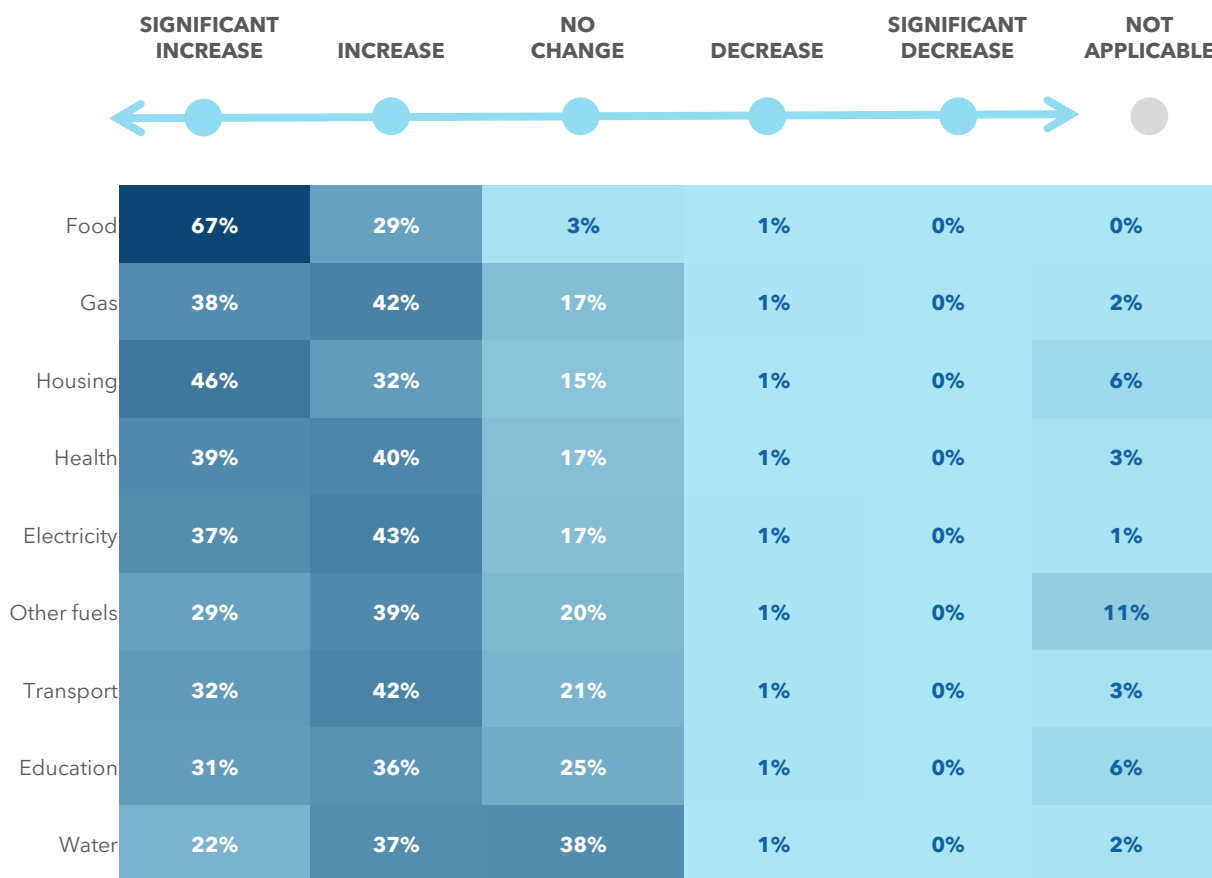
"Cost of living is very high. Prices of everything keep rising steadily. Salaries are never increasing"- Female, 52, Dominica

"Due to rising food prices, we have tried to source more vegetables from farmers' markets rather than supermarkets."- Female, 37, Trinidad and Tobago

"I realised that since the price of basic items are increasing I have made a decision to cook what I eat and avoid warehouse food like commercial bread and fast foods. Bread prices have increased a lot. I have not eaten store bought in 7 months I make my own."- Female, 74, Barbados

"Increasingly high cost of foods at supermarkets... change shopping habits and shops at several locations to get better pricing. Limited options in some instances."- Female, 42, St. Lucia

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.

"We live paycheck to paycheck. Any surprise will put us in debt. We don't go out or spend on anything unnecessary. It strangles long term vision as your focus is always just surviving to the next payday. Savings is slow and very limited...as life has a way of finding necessary tasks that cannot be put off"-Male, 31, Guyana

"Cost of living skyrocketed. Everything is going up and keep rising. No hope of things getting better in terms of prices of goods and services decreasing. I had to adopt my style of living and especially buying things to eat that are affordable"- Male, 44, Belize

"I buy less food stuff and walk around to find things that are cheaper"- Female, 40, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

HOUSEHOLD CAPACITIES | Coping mechanisms

► Seventy percent of respondents are spending savings or have exhausted them to meet their food needs

Households are resorting to various coping strategies to make ends meet, with 70% of households expending their savings in order to meet the food needs of their household. In addition, over half of respondents are reducing spending on other needs such as education and health, while a quarter of respondents have sold productive assets or means of transportation. All of these actions can undermine well-being and livelihoods in the short and long term.

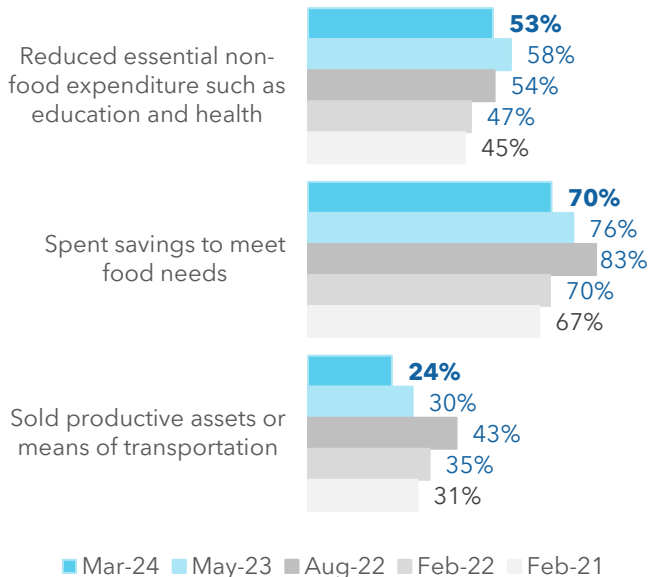
Lower-income families are having to stretch their resources further to cope. Results show that well below (87%) and below average (82%) perceived income households are more likely to spend savings when compared to wealthier households. Lower income households are also more frequently reducing essential non-food expenses.

Similar trends were observed among respondents with no formal education, with 93% having spent savings compared to those with an undergraduate degree (52%). Single-parent households, those relying on assistance and respondents with irregular income also showed more propensity to spend their savings and reduced non-essential expenditures.

Similar levels were reported between sex, locality and presence of disability in the household.

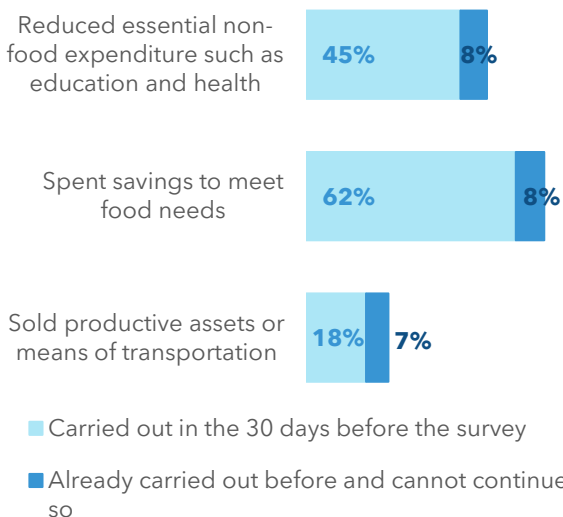
Households' coping strategies

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.



Households' coping strategies

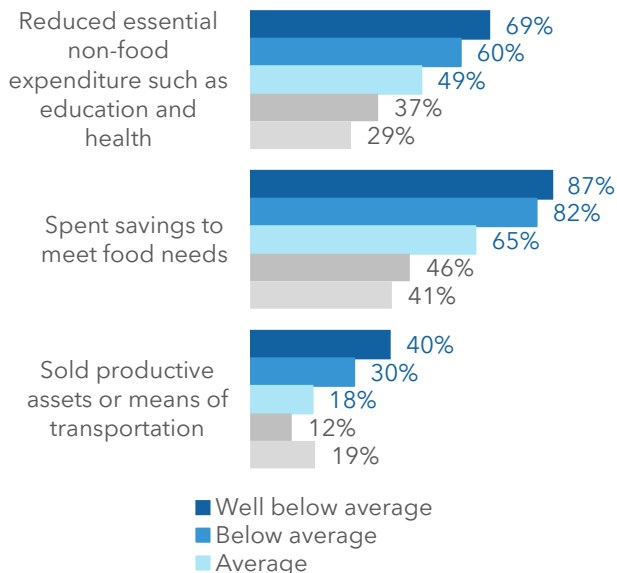
Multiple choices could be selected.



Households' coping strategies in the 30 days prior to the survey

Multiple choices could be selected.

By perceived income level



ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS ON HOW RESPONDENTS ARE COPING WITH AND ADAPTING

"Food bill is now taking up the majority of my income, as well as utilities. I have to cut back and spend where needed or select a cheaper substitution"-Female, 50, Barbados

"Cost of living doesn't match up to wages and as such I have reduced the type of foods I eat to the basic amount needed for survival "- Female, 26, Jamaica

"Excessive mid-year heat killed my plants and caused me to stop planting until late last year"- Female, 56, Trinidad and Tobago

"Cost of living is so high my income alone can't get me by the month with 3 kids"- Female, 28, Jamaica

"I always ensure that my children always get something to eat. I stay without a meal just to ensure that the food lasts longer so that they will always have something to eat"- Female, 35, St. Lucia

"Running out of food before I get my salary. Had to reduce the number of items bought each fortnight to stay afloat."-Male, 33, Jamaica

"Loss of jobs made meeting the needs a day at a time rather than in big amounts or advance. Housing projects stopped to try meeting needs instead of wants and accommodating all in 1 single space"- Female, 30, Belize

"With the increase in cost of living, I have opted to eat one meal a day, I try to take the bus more or walk where possible, and I am trying to start a business"- Female, 43, Trinidad and Tobago

"I stopped driving my personal vehicle due to the high cost of fuel to be able to afford groceries and food for the family"-Female, 46, Belize

"It is very hard on mental health constantly worry about living with the high cost of living."- Female, 38, Barbados

"Small income from the head of the household therefore we have stopped making savings and paying medical insurance in other to pay utilities and to buy food. Sometimes we skip meals especially when being home and eat when having to attend classes"- Female, 42, Dominica

"For the past years cost of living keeps getting higher and higher, sometimes the simplest of things I can't provide for myself "- Female, 28, Jamaica

"Food goes up every single time I visit the supermarket. We've had to reframe our budget to suit. It's depressing, really"- Female, 37, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

"It's a challenge as a single parent and have a child that is diabetic and on a meal plan that I really can't afford with the rising prices and then have bills to pay, it's real challenging"- Female, 38, Guyana

"Hardly getting work, food prices are almost doubled it's cost, utilities are doubled, all savings gone to make up for groceries due to less work"- Male, 40, Trinidad and Tobago

"Increase in groceries and healthy foods, as a result I have to stay without in order for the children to have food for school "- Female, 28, St. Lucia

"Because the prices of food items and other commodities keep rising, I've had to adjust my spendings and limit the usual consumption of certain foods items, clothing and other necessities."- Female, 43, Guyana

"Inflation and being the main income provider for my extended family has made the past year challenging. I try to budget and shop around for lower priced food. Persons in my household also plant short term crops to assist with the food budget. We also plan to start a small scale poultry farming for personal consumption soon. Also thinking of ways to increase household income, but nothing concrete yet."- Female, 35, Jamaica

FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

► Respondents' food consumption patterns have improved since May 2023 but remain at a concerning level.

Food consumption and diets continue to be a concern, with 29% of respondents skipping meals or eating less than usual, 27% eating less preferred foods and 5% going an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey.

These findings represent an improvement in the food consumption of respondents compared to 2023, 2022 but a slight deterioration when compared to February 2021. More than half (53%) of respondents resorted to not eating for a whole day, skipping meals, or eating less preferred foods over the week prior to the survey was more than half of respondents.

The most notable differences were observed across income levels. Respondents perceiving their income as well below average income had the most challenges, with 15% going a day without eating, and 48% skipping meals or eating less than usual. Only 14% had no difficulty eating enough compared to 70% of households classifying their income as well above average.

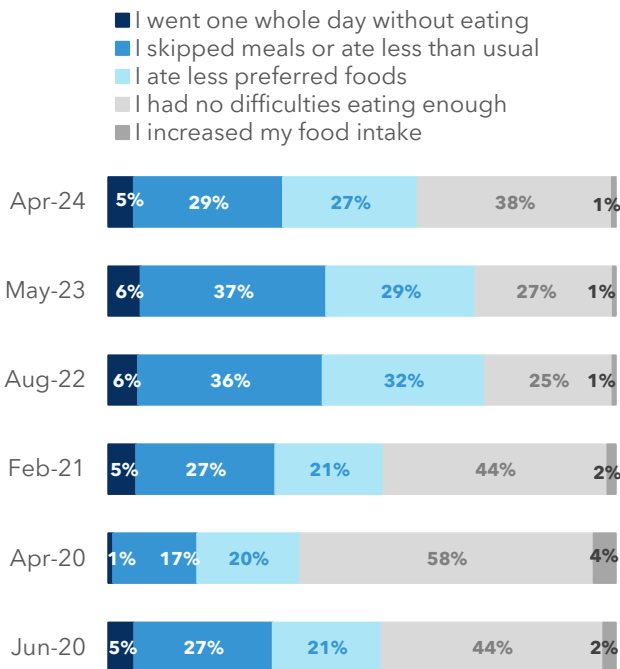
Differences in food consumption patterns varied across age groups, household types, income by sector, and education. Considering age, younger respondents were the most likely to reduce their food consumption, with over half (45%) skipping meals, eating less than usual or going a full day without food compared to 15% 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.

Linked to income levels, there was also significant variation across sources of income by sector, with over half of respondents doing domestic work (55%) and half of respondents in retail trade had negative coping strategies. Less than half of respondents who worked in professional services (23%) and financial services (24%) resorted to these measures.

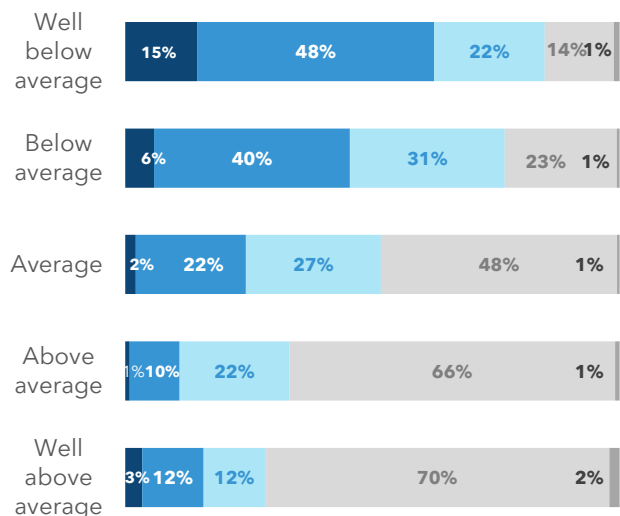
Differences between the sexes were less pronounced with slightly more female respondents (36%) reporting to have skipped meals or eaten less than usual compared to male respondents (29%).

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



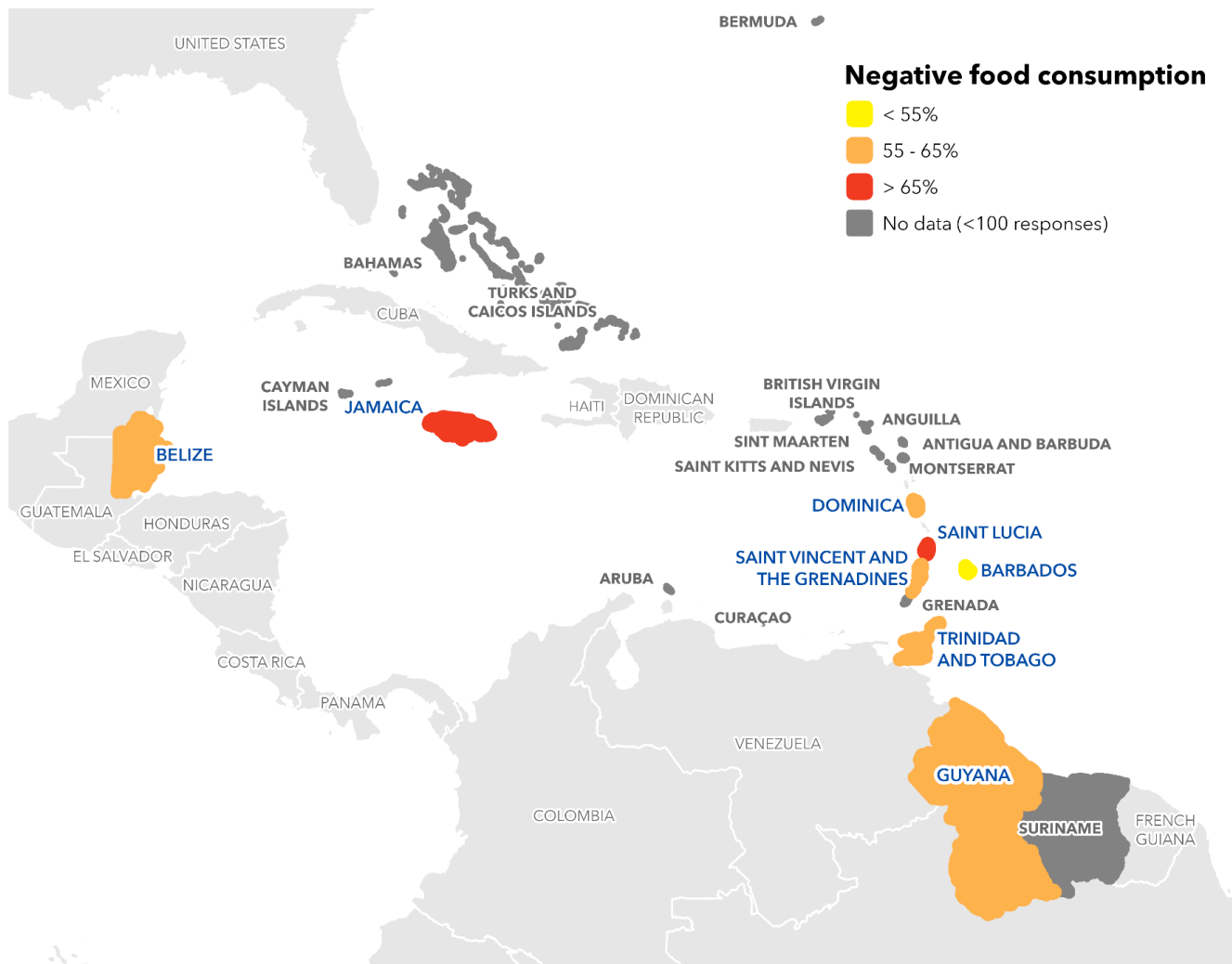
Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?

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 April 2024 survey round.



"Price has been rapidly increasing and causing me to have a higher food expense which is insufficient for my household. One of the things I did is to skip a meal so the food can last longer. Another is the high rise in utility bill especially electricity. I am now considering exploring a cheaper electricity source."
 Female, 41, Jamaica

"Within the past year, I struggle to purchase proper foods as the prices are now too high and my salary can not afford. I have tried backyard garden. However, it is not as flourishing as the area where I reside is very dry and I have limited ware. So, I purchase affordable food and skip meals."
 Female, 43, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity estimates

► Approximately 3.02 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 overall number of food insecure people estimated to be about 3.02 million in April 2024 (610,000 less than in May 2023). The estimated number of moderately and severely food insecure people represents 43% of the population in the English-speaking Caribbean.*

The levels of food insecurity have shown a steady decline since August 2022 when it was estimated that 57% of people were food insecure, driven by the impacts of the Russo-Ukrainian war on global food prices compounded by lingering socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. However, food insecurity estimates of 43% for April 2024 are higher than all survey rounds conducted between April 2020-February 2022.

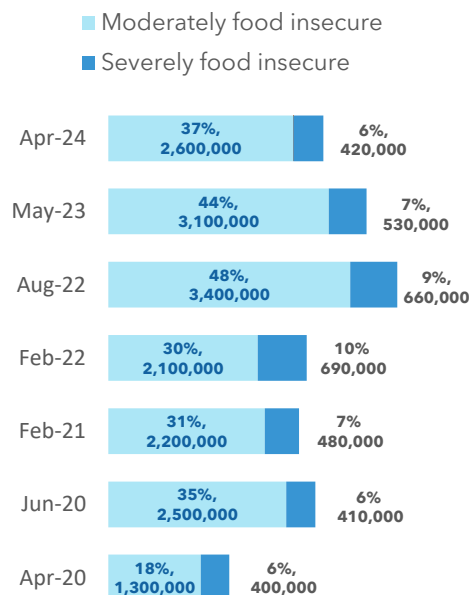
Income is a key factor linked to food insecurity, with more households in the below average (76%) and well below average (70%) income group, classified as food insecure, compared with 4% and 6% in the well above average and above average income groups respectively.

Similar trends were observed for households with no food stocks (67%), with low resilience capacity to cope with natural hazards* (60%) and with disability/chronic illness (50%) - recognizing that these are variables that are often linked to one another. No significant differences were found by sex of the respondent.

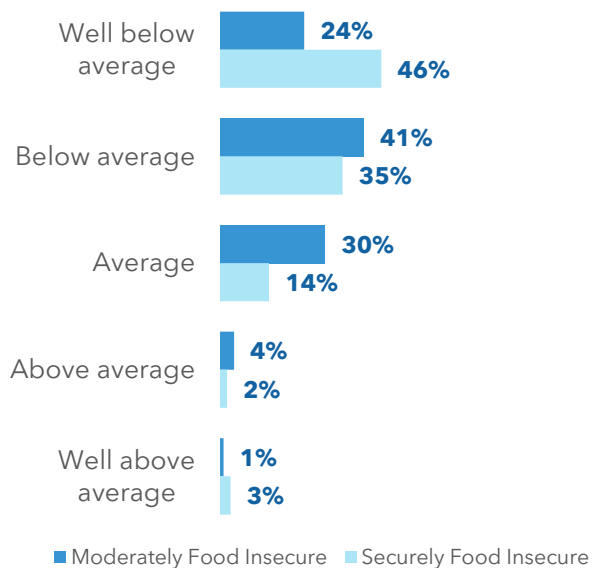
Similar trends were observed when using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) (see next page for findings).

*The resilience capacity score analysis and methodology is described on [page 27](#).

Estimated number of food insecure by survey round



Estimated number of food insecure By Perceived Income



*Calculation include Suriname, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, Cayman Islands, Anguilla, Bahamas, Saint Christopher and Nevis, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and Bermuda.

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

► Using the Sustainable Development Goal’s Food Insecurity Experience Scale methodology, one fifth of respondents are severely food insecure.

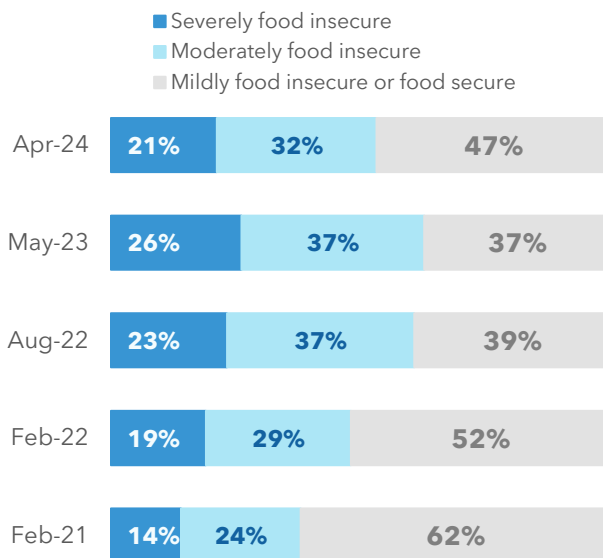
The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was introduced in the third survey round in February 2021 to provide an additional picture of food insecurity experienced by respondents during the 30 days preceding the survey (see [page 37](#) for methodology). The FIES, which is an indicator used for the 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 53% of respondents are either moderately (32%) or severely (21%) food insecure across the surveyed countries in the English-speaking Caribbean. The trends are similar to results using the r-CARI method.

The FIES methodology asks people to identify if they faced different experiences related to food insecurity. 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”. In comparison to May 2023, it is evident that the most severe experiences endured by many remain distressingly persistent. Instances of all the most severe experiences including being hungry but not eating, going without eating for a whole day and running out of food – persist at a comparable level. This continuity underscores the ongoing challenges being faced particularly among the lowest income households, younger respondents, mixed and single parent and households with disability. Female respondents also reported these experiences more prevalently than male respondents – particularly their household running out of food.

Prevalence rates of food insecurity

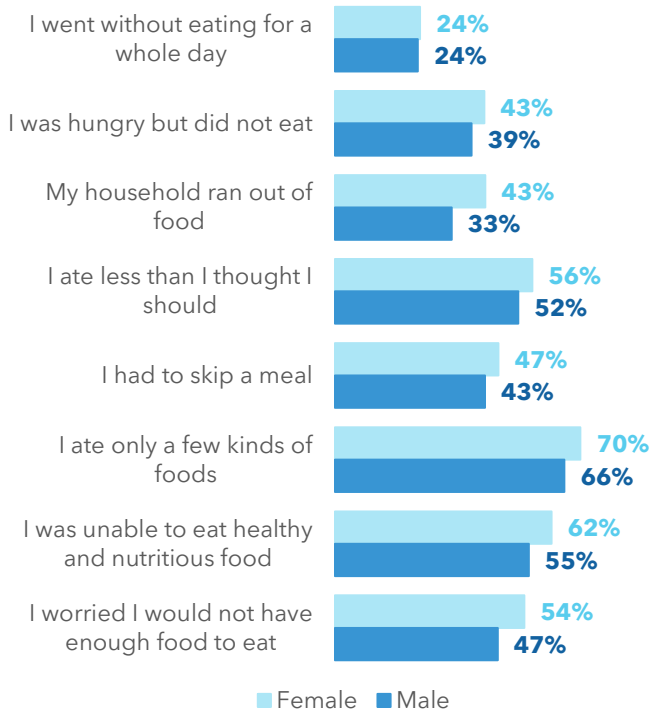
Based on FIES methodology.



Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?

Multiple choices could be selected.

By sex



"Due to increase in bills and food had to cut back on buying things I need. I have to focus on my children's needs and forget about my own." - Female, 41, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

"In the last year food prices has gone up drastically in order to keep my self and family fed we have had to eat little no healthy food such as greens and fruits from the little that we have bought we have start working on a kitchen garden." - Female, 30, Guyana

NATURAL HAZARDS | Impacts

► Natural hazards continue to impact over one third of respondents across the region.

Livelihoods in the Caribbean continue to be affected by a wide range of natural hazards in the region, with 39% 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 (22%), followed by drought (15%), floods (6%), and hurricanes/tropical storms (5%). Other hazards such as sargassum, earthquakes, volcanic activity, wildfire and landslides were less commonly reported.

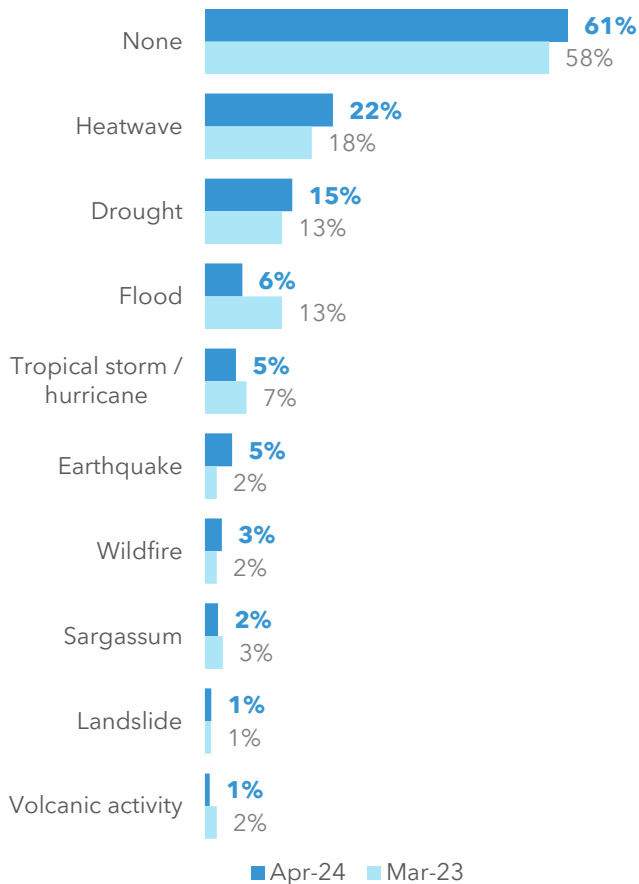
Out of respondents who reported to have been affected, nearly half (46%) indicated medium impacts on their livelihoods or income, while 14% of respondents expressed severely impacts. These levels are similar to what was reported back in May 2023.

The extent of impacts on livelihoods or income was also closely linked with the income level of respondents, with households from lower income brackets more frequently reporting to be most severely affected (2%) compared to those from wealthier segments (17%).

Differences across the region were observed. The highest percentage of respondents that reported being affected by natural hazards over the last 12 months were predominantly from Jamaica (48%), followed by St. Vincent and the Grenadines (45%) and Belize (41%). On the other hand, respondents from Bahamas (11%), Dominica (27%) and Trinidad and Tobago (29%) less frequently reported to have been affected.

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

Multiple choices could be selected.

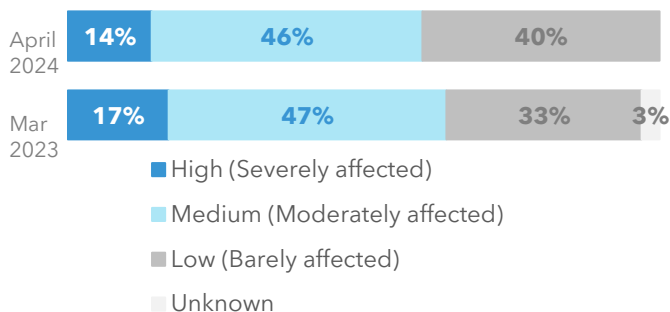


"Last year we had flood that damage our crops, right after went right in drought for a long period that cause of crops to suffer as well. water was difficult to get for our farms. Moreover, prices in the grocery shop increased rapidly. Not me really but fire and smoke affected a lot of our infants and elders"- Male, 38, Guyana

"Food prices have increased while I have 2 kids at University. The heat and drought have also reduced the water supply. We have had to adjust our spending on food, and recreation in order to compensate"- Female, 48, Guyana

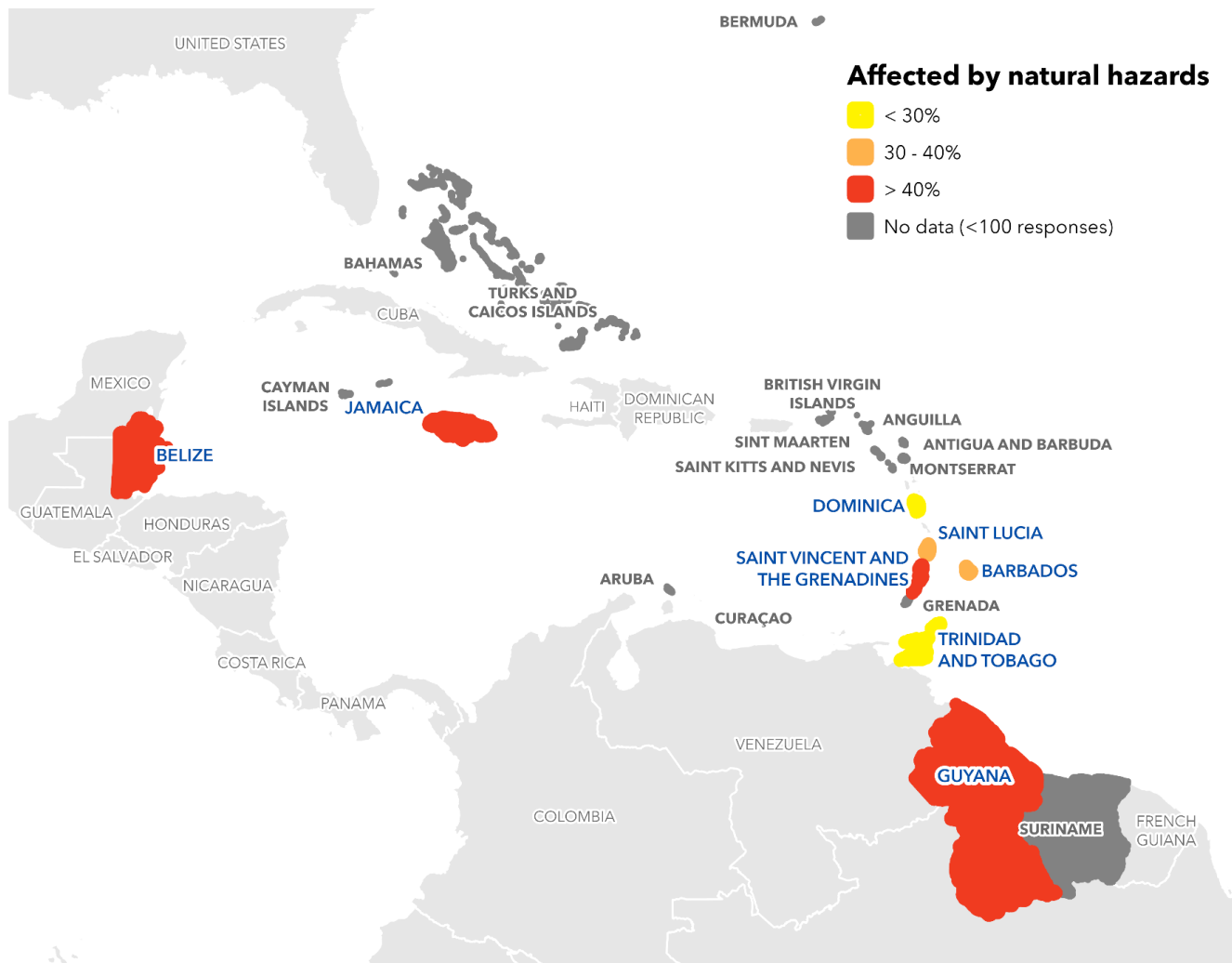
Level of impact of hazards on livelihoods or income

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



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 April 2024 survey round.



"Flooding in the area was reported to the relevant authorities. That flooding is out of my control, the relevant authorities need to fix the drainage in the area"-Female, 49, Trinidad and Tobago

"Climate change has had a great effect on agricultural production. I have tried to implement eco-friendly methods and protect agriculture to limit external factors."-Female, 27, Barbados

NATURAL HAZARDS | Resilience capacity

► A third of respondents have low capacity to absorb and rebound from natural hazards.

The Resilience Capacity Score (RCS) indicator developed by WFP 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.

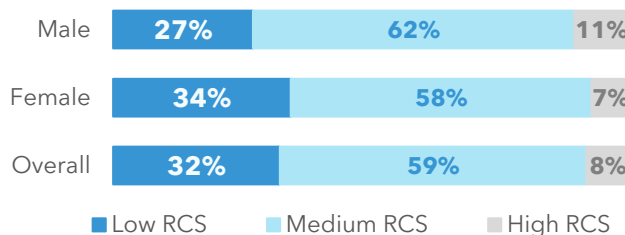
Results from the latest round show similar levels of resilience when compared to May 2023. About a third of households have low overall resilience to natural hazards, compared with 8% of households with high resilience. Out of the nine resilience capacity characteristics, financial capital and institutional capital were ranked as the most challenging for households, meaning that in the event of a shock, households have difficulty accessing financial capital or are unable to rely on institutional frameworks to rebound.

In contrast, higher resilience was reported for information capital and human capital/learning, an indication that households are more likely to access to information needed to protect them from shocks and are adaptive based on lessons from previous experiences.

Over half (52%) of lower income respondents have low resilience to natural hazards, compared with wealthier respondents (13-15% who perceive to have above and well above average household income levels). A slightly greater proportion of female respondents reported lower resilience (34%) when compared with male respondents (27%). Respondents from the lower age categories (under 40), single parent households and those without any postgraduate studies also tended to reflect much lower resilience when compared to other groups. There were no major discernible differences between households with, and without a disability.

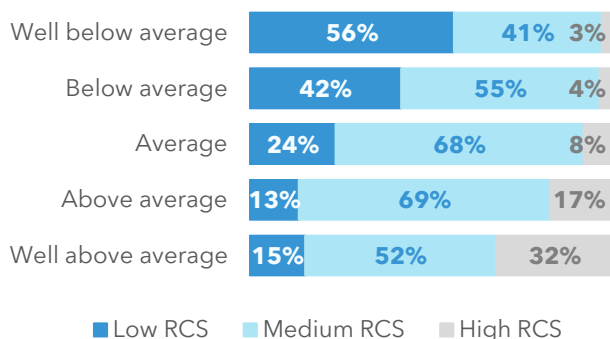
Overall resilience capacity

By sex



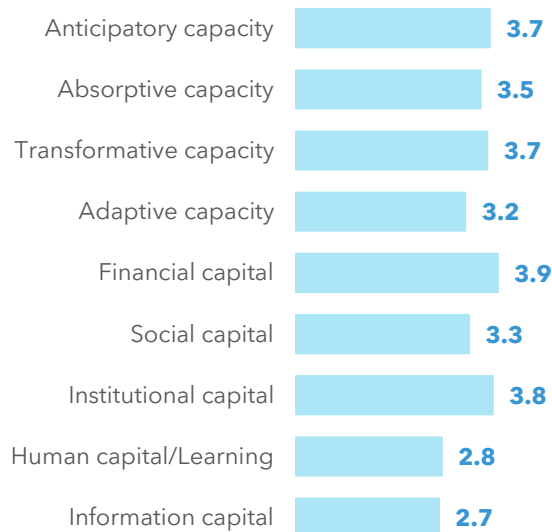
Overall resilience capacity

By perceived income level



Average score for the nine resilience capacity characteristics

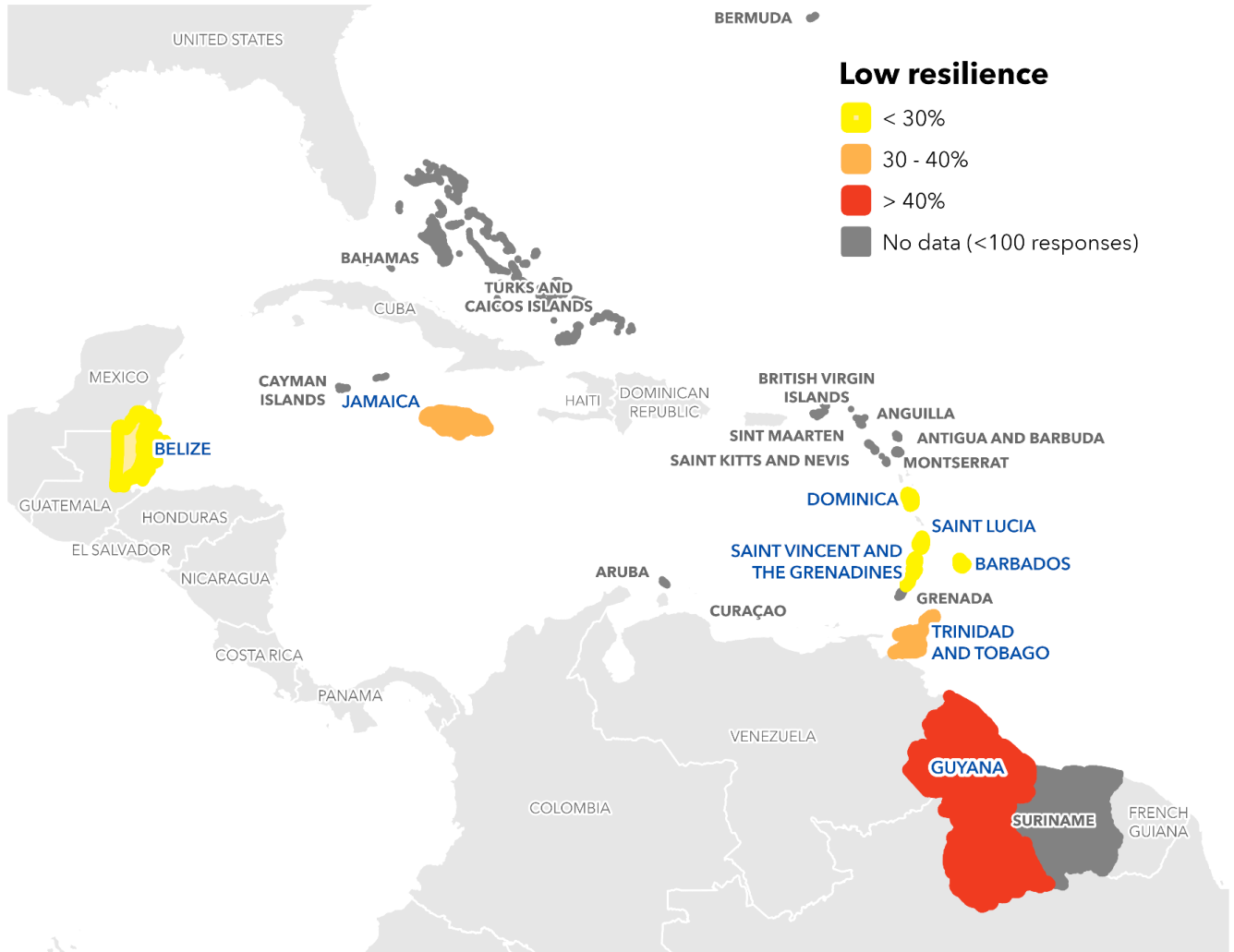
Scores range from 1 (high resilience capacity) to 5 (Low resilience capacity). Higher score means lower resilience capacity.



*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.

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

For countries that received over 100 responses in the April 2024 survey round.



"Food prices are increasing so I've started stocking up on dry foods. However, I always have to take from what I've stored and can't replenish. If a disaster where to occur, I won't have enough food to last 6 months"-Female, 44, Dominica

"I have less discretionary income and a reduction in the amount that I am able to save. This is an issue considering that retirement is just around the corner for me. One of my children is currently working but the others still need to complete their studies. I am concerned about their employment prospects.
Male, 61, Barbados

SAFETY NETS | Assistance

► Six percent of people received government assistance

Six percent of people have received government support in the last year, with only half of them still receiving such assistance at the time the survey was implemented. The percentage of respondents receiving government assistance has declined sharply since the end of the pandemic and continues to decline despite continued challenges with the high cost of living.

Among respondents who received government assistance in the previous six months, social security or national insurance (26%), vouchers (24%), and cash transfers (20%) were the most common forms of support. A quarter received other forms of assistance, such as scholarships, medication support, small business grants, food cards, school uniform vouchers, and home repair materials.

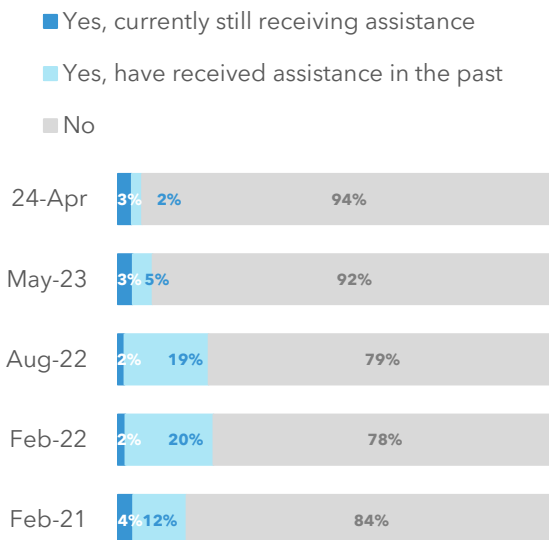
Slight variations were observed by income levels, as respondents whose income levels were well below average (9%) were more likely to have received government assistance than those with above average income (3%). Households with a disability/chronic illness (6%) were also more likely to have received assistance when compared to the rest respondents.

Similarly, respondents with only a primary education (11%) more widely received government assistance than those with an undergraduate (4%) or post-graduate (3%) education. Slightly more single-parent households (9%) reported receiving government assistance compared to four percent of those who lived alone.

Consistent with prior survey rounds, Spanish speakers were more widely reported accessing government assistance with 17% claiming receipt, compared to 5% of English speakers.

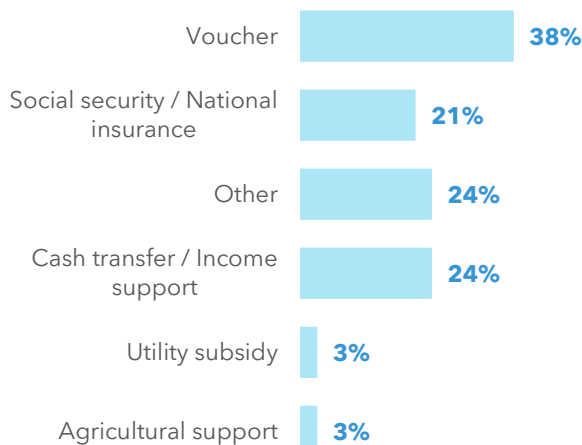
Have you received any assistance from the government in 12 months prior to the survey?

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.



"Battling an injury sustained at work, my salary is reduced to be paid by NIC contributions but I do not receive the NIC payout in a timely manner. I am constantly short on income yet still have the same expenses with the added medical expenses. I haven't heard from anyone about reimbursement for the on the job injury. I also have to give up on physiotherapy because it is just too costly. I am learning to do what little I can learn online. I am also working everyday and at customers convenience. I am stressed out"

Female, 38, St. Lucia

FOOD SUPPLIES| Food Stocks

► Nearly one third of households do not have food stocks.

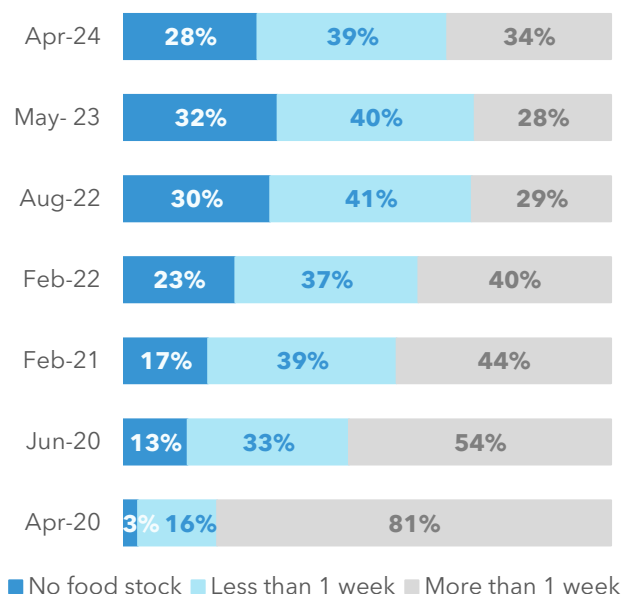
When asked about whether they have food stocks in their home, 28% did not have any food stock and 39% had less than a week's worth of food. This proportion is similar to levels reported since August 2022, suggesting many households are living day to day. While people have moved away from having to stock up due to the lockdowns during the pandemic, having some food stock can buffer households from other shocks such as natural hazards.

Income appears to be a key factor. Respondents with well below average (49%) and below average (38%) income more commonly reporting no food stocks. These figures are significantly higher when compared to those with above average (8%) and well above average (17%) income levels.

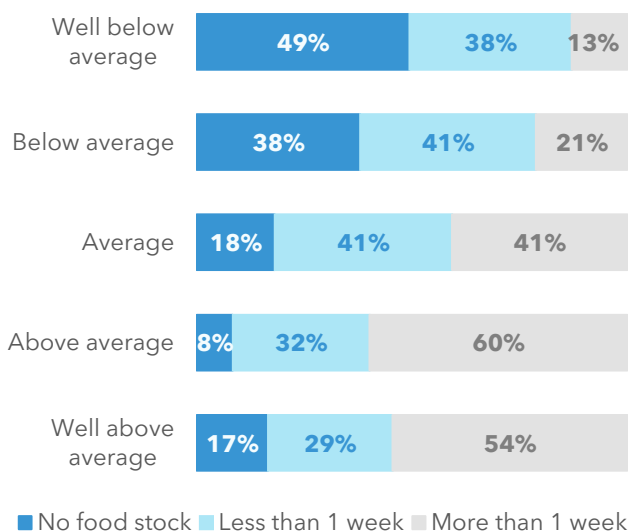
Respondents below the age of 40 (31%) more frequently reported not having food stocks compared to those over 60 (16%). Those with no income (60%) and relying on informal and petty work, assistance from government and family and friends (36-42%) tend to be more prone to not having any food stock. Attainment of higher education beyond primary schooling also correlated with having food stocks.

Responses did not vary much by different household compositions, households with or without disability, locality or female and male respondents.

Does your household have any food stock?



Does your household have any food stock? By perceived income level



"I receive from NIS a Retirement grant and have to pay half of what I collect to the dialysis center for dialysis with no help from anyone or institution. I have to eat less food buy less groceries buying less needed medication which I stopped getting in the government clinics and hospital pharmacies...those are some of the changes I made to survive."
Male, 60, Trinidad and Tobago

"Buying groceries in bulk allows for food stock quantities to last a little longer, however it is a bit costly to do so if one is just beginning/ transitioning from buying only what is needed to buying in bulk."
Female, 24, St. Lucia

OTHER FINDINGS | Sentiments

- Unemployment, reduced disposable income and the high cost of living remain the major challenges faced by respondents

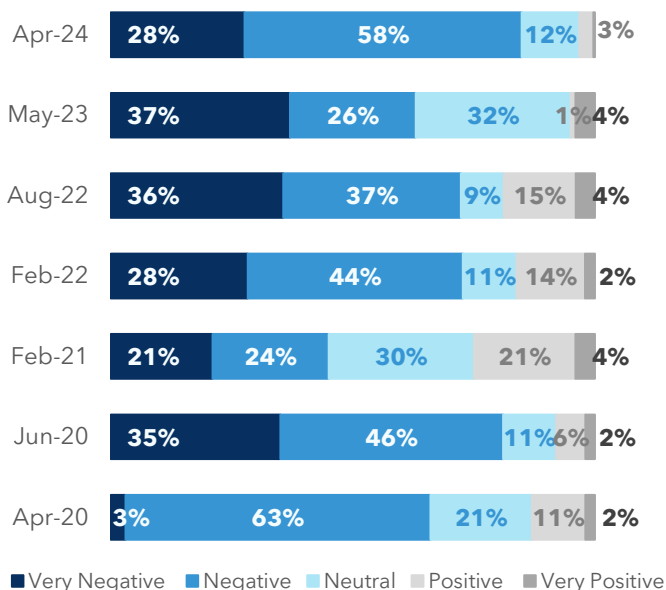
As with previous rounds, respondents were given the opportunity to leave a comment expressing their thoughts about issues raised in the survey. Overall, 1,378 (34%) of the 4,053 survey respondents answered the open-ended question. Responses were analysed using Microsoft Azure Machine Learning - an artificial intelligence tool with features comparable to the Chat GPT platform used in the May 2023 survey - to gauge the positivity or negativity of the responses. They were classified on a scale from very negative to very positive, based on the emotional tone of the statement expressed.

Respondents expressed very few positive sentiments. In fact, 86% of the 1,378 respondents had negative/very negative sentiments, most of which were related to the struggles they faced with rising food prices; increasing health care, housing/rent and transportation costs; high cost of living; inability to save; and challenges paying bills and adequately providing for their basic needs and that of their children and family.

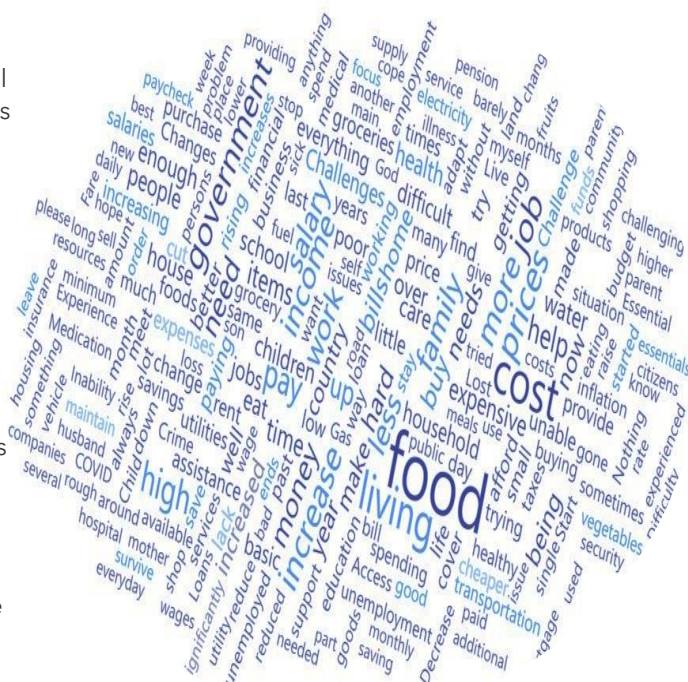
Unemployment, stagnant wages and a lack of job opportunities (regardless of educational level) were among the most noteworthy themes. Many described how the high cost of living coupled with limited/reduced disposable incomes was forcing them to supplement their income through additional jobs, businesses and “side hustles” to make ends meet. Other coping strategies included the substitution of healthier foods for cheaper alternatives and eating less meat and less food in general. Some strategies were more neutral or even positive, related to more careful management of finances, eating more home-cooked meals and starting home gardens.

Developmental/infrastructural challenges (e.g. roads), climate-related issues (e.g. extended droughts, limited water supply and increasing temperatures) and crime and violence were also themes. Improved public policies and infrastructure, increased governmental assistance and the provision of more job opportunities (for low-income earners, farmers, university graduate and pensioners) and potential food subsidies to offset the rising cost of food within the region, were among the main recommendations provided by respondents. Other respondents (although in the minority) remained positive, resolute in their faith and “hopeful”, despite the varying issues. The word cloud and quotes highlighted in this section and throughout this report provide additional insights and further highlight the struggles and current coping mechanisms being utilized across the region.

Percentage of distribution of sentiments across open-ended survey responses*



Common themes on how respondents are adapting and coping



*Sentiments from rounds 1-5 were analysed using Google’s AI Unit Natural Language Processing and sentiments from round 7 were analysed using Microsoft Azure Machine Learning.

OTHER FINDINGS | Main worries

- ▶ The inability to cover essential needs continues to be the leading concern of respondents.

When queried about their worries, the most common concern was the inability to cover essential needs, cited by 46% of the respondents. This finding was consistent with the previous round. In fact, the top five concerns remained the same as a year ago, but with slightly different emphasis among them. After essential needs, the next four top concerns were illness (36%), unemployment/income loss (25%), and decreasing savings (34%). Out of the five most common worries, four can be directly linked to a financial nature.

Respondents in the below average income groups were more likely to worry about not being able to cover their essential needs. In contrast, the main worries of persons with well above average income was illness (42%), and those above average income were worried about decreased savings (42%).

The main worries among those over the age of 60 were illness (53%), decreased savings (39%) and violence/crime in the community (32%). Respondents aged 41-60 were most commonly concerned about illness (42%), the inability to cover essential needs (40%) and decreased savings (34%). In contrast, respondents 18 to 25 years old were less worried about illness (23%) and most widely concerned about the inability to cover essential needs (50%), unemployment/income loss (48%) and inability to cover food needs (39%).

Mixed households were most worried about unemployment/ income loss (42%). Single parent households in comparison were the most worried about the inability to cover food needs (40%), whereas single person households were most commonly worried about decreased savings (39%).

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".

| | Apr-24 | May-23 | Feb-22 | Feb-21 | Jun-20 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Inability to cover essential needs | 46% | 48% | 34% | 37% | 38% |
| Illness | 36% | 30% | 49% | 57% | 52% |
| Unemployment / Income loss | 35% | 33% | 37% | 44% | 53% |
| Decreasing savings | 34% | 31% | 16% | 14% | 17% |
| Inability to cover food needs | 31% | 35% | 31% | 32% | 32% |
| Inability to receive or repay loans | 14% | 14% | | | |
| Violence/crime in the community | 15% | 13% | 9% | 7% | 9% |
| Child/dependent care | 13% | 13% | 13% | 10% | 11% |
| Natural hazards | 13% | 11% | | | |
| Inadequate infrastructure | 8% | 7% | | | |
| Inadequate housing | 6% | 5% | | | |
| Disruption of public services (education, health) | 4% | 2% | 17% | 12% | 11% |
| Other worries | 2% | 1% | 30% | 30% | 0% |
| Violence/abuse in the household | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| No access to services due to migration status | 1% | 1% | 2% | 5% | 4% |

CONCLUSION

Tackling food insecurity and the factors driving it remains as high a priority as ever. While there are improvements from previous rounds, this survey shows that many people still struggle to put food on the table, pursue their livelihoods and manage the ever-present threat of natural hazards. It estimates that 43% of people are food insecure. This is lower than the peak of 57% in August 2022 but higher than every survey conducted during the pandemic.

Some people are still facing obstacles to pursuing their livelihoods and accessing markets to get what they need, driven by the costs of goods and people's lack of resources. A concerning number of people are using savings to buy food, resorting to secondary sources of income, eating less, substituting less preferred foods, buying smaller quantities, spending less on health and education and even selling assets. While the prevalence of these measures has declined somewhat from surveys conducted in 2022 and 2023, the trends remain worse compared to the start of the pandemic. An exception is metrics related to livelihoods, which have steadily improved. Despite a global decrease in food prices, people continue to grapple with high costs.

Key trends across four years

The implementation of seven rounds of this survey over four years provides a unique window into food security and livelihoods in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. While the surveys encompass diverse respondents from multiple countries, the overall picture reveals key trends since COVID-19 unfolded and upended lives, communities and economies.

First, levels of food insecurity have steadily declined over the last two years but remain higher compared to before and during the pandemic.

Second, respondents experiencing job loss or reduced income have declined significantly since June 2020, while those turning to secondary and alternative income sources have increased. This suggests that impacts on jobs and income are stabilizing but people are increasingly supplementing incomes and finding new ways to make ends meet. The need for additional income may also be linked to increases in costs for food, housing, fuel and utilities during this time.

Third, people have in the past and continue to make serious trade-offs by spending savings to meet food needs and reducing essential non-food expenditures, such as on health and education. These coping strategies may have long-term repercussions for livelihoods, well-being and resilience.

Fourth, far fewer people are receiving support than during the pandemic. This trend is logical given that governments put in place wide-reaching measures through social protection and similar avenues to cushion the impacts of the pandemic, which were intended as temporary. It suggests though a gap between continued needs and support measures, at least in terms of direct assistance.

Finally, the trends have been unambiguous that people with lower incomes fare much worse across the board on food security, livelihoods and access to markets.

Looking ahead

Tackling food insecurity requires a mix of measures to strengthen food systems, boost production and facilitate trade. Key entry points are highlighted in ongoing policy efforts and national and regional initiatives, such as the CARICOM drive to reduce extra-regional imports 25% by 2025. These include reducing barriers to agri-food trade, improving transportation and logistics for agri-food products, investing in research and climate-smart adaptation, tailoring agricultural insurance and finance instruments, enhancing digitalization of the agricultural sector, and promoting the consumption of local nutritious foods – an objective all the more crucial amid the high rate of non-communicable diseases.

It is critical to protect people's access to food especially when shocks occur. This survey's analysis on resilience to natural hazards finds that many people feel they do not have access to finances to buffer impacts, do not feel they would receive support from institutions, and are not fully prepared if a disaster occurs. These findings highlight the importance of regional and national efforts to improve early warning systems, invest in preparedness, make social protection systems more shock-responsive, and expand anticipatory actions that target the most vulnerable so that they can take measures before hazards turn into disasters. With climate change predicted to result in more frequent severe hazards, these investments must be expanded. Another important entry point for food security is school feeding programmes, investments in which are documented globally to have exponential returns related to health/nutrition, education and agriculture sectors.

These interconnected issues require collaborative approaches coupled with much-needed tailored financing for SIDS. With both food security and financing high on the agenda in the Caribbean, and the Fourth Annual International Conference on Small Island Development States raising the global profile of SIDS, there is a window of opportunity to take existing efforts to the next level to promote sustainable food systems, climate change adaptation and resilience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to advocate for improved access to finance to promote sustainable and resilient agri-food systems, adaptive social protection and climate change adaptation measures that will enhance food security and livelihoods.

Strengthen the productive capacities of smallholder farmers and fishers through access to technologies, climate information services, promotion of climate-smart agriculture, access to institutional markets and other tailored measures.

Continue to develop programmes, policies and strategies that promote **greater involvement of youth and women in agriculture**, as well as **data and evidence generation** to inform evidence-based investments.

Invest in priorities identified in the CARICOM 25 by 25 initiative, including improving **transport and logistics for agri-food products**, enhancing access to tailored **agricultural insurance and finance** and promoting **digitalization** in the agricultural sector.

Expand initiatives to **increase demand for local foods** to encourage healthy diets and combat noncommunicable diseases and obesity, while supporting local and sustainable agricultural production

Expand and strengthen national school feeding programmes to reach more children with nutritious meals and support food systems through increased procurement of local nutritious products. Aim for **universal coverage of school meals programmes** given the high return on investment and substantial benefits for education outcomes, nutrition, human capital and the agricultural sector.

Develop regional real-time food security monitoring to enhance the production and accessibility of timely, accurate and comprehensive data on food security, livelihoods and risks that can inform policies and actions.

Continue to invest in **preparing social protection systems to respond to shocks** and expand efforts to promote **economic inclusion and resilience**, including through stronger linkages between **social protection and agriculture**.

Strengthen **multi-hazard early warning systems** to enhance hazard monitoring and early warning services to inform early actions when hazards unfold. **Expand anticipatory action measures**, especially those enabling vulnerable people to take necessary measures.

Reinforce institutional capacities to **translate disaster risk management policies into actionable measures** that protect and enable continued access to food and essential needs when disasters strike and strengthen resilience against hazards.

Promote risk-layered disaster risk financing to protect investments and assets and ensure that resources reach those who need them the most in a timely manner. Build on and expand recent and ongoing experiences **linking disaster risk financing to social protection** to enable rapid support to vulnerable persons when hazards strike.

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.

Warm gratitude towards Melissa Delph English and Annette Castillo for the Spanish translations; Greta Abuke and Elisaveta Gouretskaia for the French translations; Alejandra Moreno (University of Aruba), Rendell de Kort (University of Aruba), and Benjamin Visser (University of Curacao) and Eugene Hoogstad (University of Sint Maarten) for translation.

This report was prepared by WFP Esther Kabaire, Abigail Durand, Shameza David, Monique Campbell, Trisandhi Gosine, Amy Chong, Sarah Bailey and Regis Chapman, with support from Shaun Baugh of CARICOM.

“Continued investment in our regional food systems as Small Island Developing States is critical if we are to transform the regional food security position into one that creates equitable wealth and economic prosperity.” Joseph Cox – Assistant Secretary General Economic Integration Innovation and Development CARICOM Secretariat

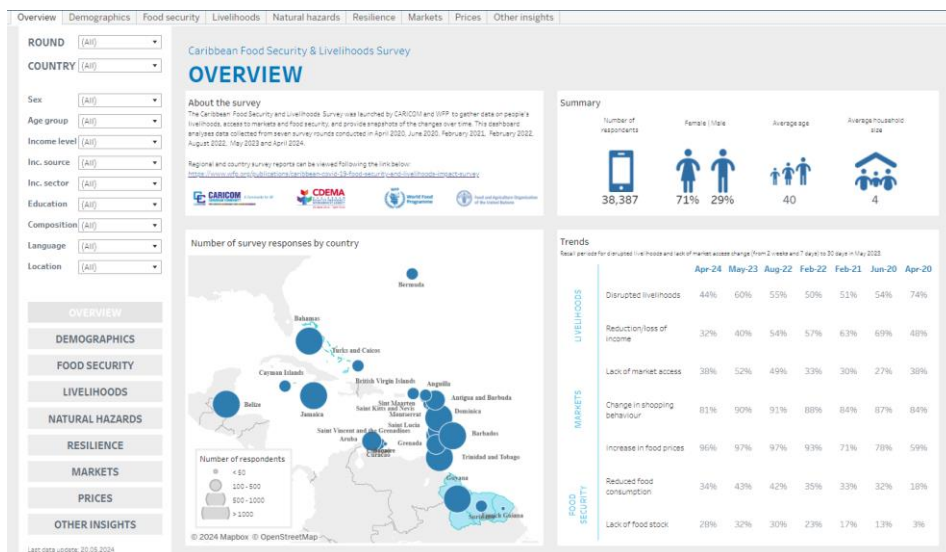
Additional insights

The report is supplemented with a dashboard which analyses data collected from all seven 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 & Livelihoods Survey dashboard online. It may take a second to load. Alternatively, follow this link:

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



Methodology

The seventh 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 19 March to 2 April 2024.

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 Microsoft Azure Machine Learning 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 three countries, with 21% of responses coming from Jamaica, followed by 17% from Trinidad and Tobago, and 15% from Guyana.

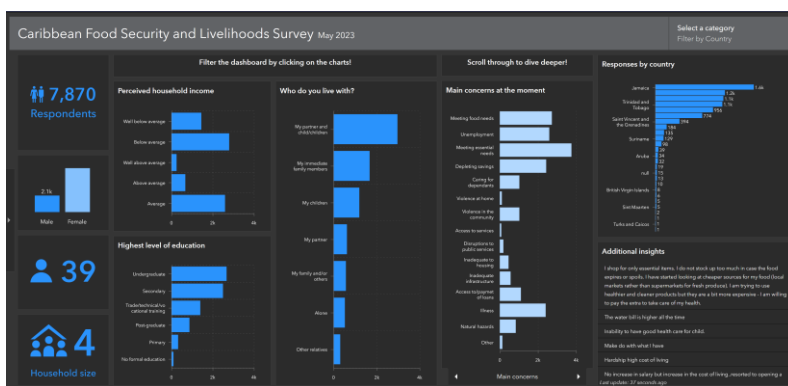
While this report refers to the results of previous survey rounds, the varying demographics of respondents limit comparability across survey rounds.

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)

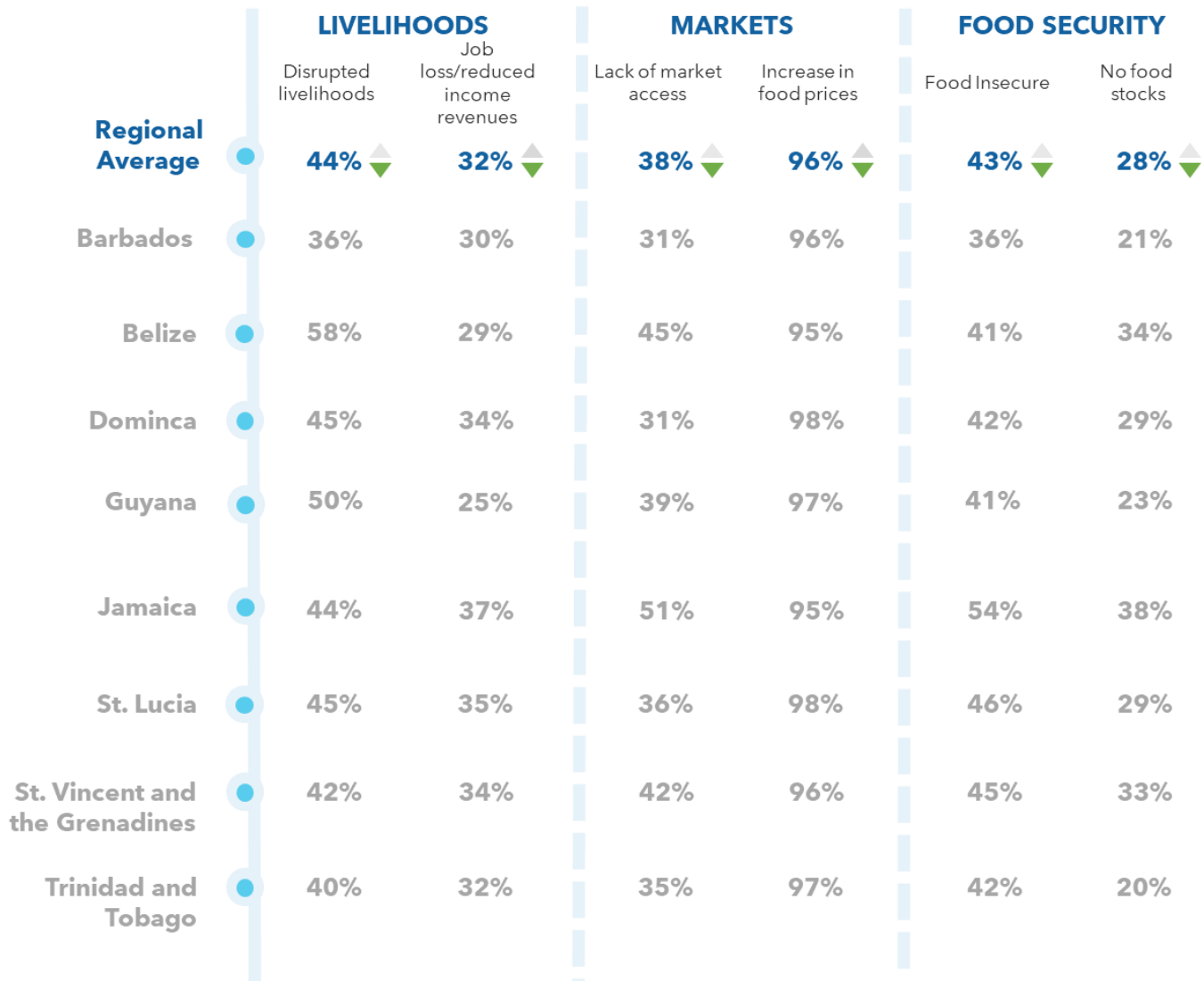
The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is an experience-based metric of food insecurity severity at the household or individual level, which is used for global food security monitoring and aligned with food security targets outlined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It relies on people's 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 April 2024 survey.



*Comparison of the May 2024 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 April 2024 survey.

| | Severely food insecure | Moderately food insecure | Marginally food secure | Food secure |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Regional Average | 6% | 37% | 41% | 16% |
| Barbados | 4% | 32% | 43% | 21% |
| Belize | 4% | 36% | 43% | 17% |
| Dominica | 5% | 37% | 38% | 20% |
| Guyana | 5% | 36% | 43% | 16% |
| Jamaica | 9% | 45% | 35% | 11% |
| Saint Lucia | 7% | 39% | 41% | 13% |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | 6% | 39% | 42% | 13% |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 5% | 37% | 42% | 16% |

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SCAN the QR code to see the Food Security & Livelihood Survey Report online. Alternatively, follow the link below:



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