Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

Impacts of COVID-19 and the Cost of Living Crisis

Regional Summary Report | August 2022

CARICOM CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY A Community for All

CDEMA CARIBBEAN DISASTER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY Resilient States · Safer Lives

WFP World Food Programme

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

Foreword | August 2022

There has been an alarming increase in food insecurity over the past six months. The Caribbean has been through a tumultuous two and a half years with the negative economic impact of the pandemic. Increased access to vaccines and reduced movement restrictions shifted the outlook for economic growth in the region. However, supply chain disruptions due to the onset of conflict in Ukraine have decelerated that positive economic development. Since the start of the pandemic the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), in collaboration with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), has tracked its impact on lives and livelihoods in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

The survey results have highlighted the critical nature of the food security situation in the Caribbean and have informed national and regional approaches to addressing this compound crisis. The fifth round of this survey aims to fill much needed information gaps on how the Caribbean population is being affected by the upheaval in global food and energy markets through soaring food and fuel prices, which are putting millions at risk of hunger in a region where inequality is prevalent.

The findings of the fifth round of the CARICOM Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods survey, which was administered in July and August 2022, reflects the situation of over 6,300 households across 22 countries and territories.

According to FAO's March Food Price Index, global food prices increased sharply since the onset of the Ukraine conflict on the back of a new all-time high in February 2022. This has affected local food prices and, therefore, people's access to food.

According to WFP estimates, that there are now 4.1 million people who are moderately or severely food insecure in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean, an astronomical 57% of the population. This is a significant shift from the past three rounds of surveys which showed a relatively stable level of food insecurity, albeit with increasing levels of severe food insecurity. These figures have more than doubled since the start of the pandemic. The food insecure population has increased by 1.4 million, equating to a 46% increase over the past six months alone.

This overall increase in food insecurity represents a great cause for concern, particularly with increases in severe levels of livelihood coping strategies which will continue to undermine food security for some time. This points to the need for significantly increased interventions to address the crisis in the short, medium and long term with a renewed focus on partnerships for creating more integrated and adaptive systems within the region. These efforts must be designed to both reduce the dependence on extra-regional sources for meeting basic needs and maintain a focus on the most vulnerable.

CARICOM and WFP acknowledge the partnership with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Union and USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), which has been critical in documenting the situation over time. Collaborative efforts between governments, regional institutions, UN agencies, international financial institutions, private sector and others remain essential to ensuring that governments and the people of the Caribbean are more resilient as the impacts of the pandemic endure.

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Inflation trends driving the current cost of living crisis are compounding the negative impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. People in the Caribbean are confronted with this next major crisis as they continue to face challenges to earn a living and meet their critical needs. CARICOM launched the Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey to gather data on people's livelihoods, access to markets and food security, and provide snapshots of these impacts over time. This report analyses data from the fifth round of data collection, which took place from 19 July to 12 August 2022, and compares findings with survey rounds conducted in April 2020, June 2020, February 2021 and February 2022. Implemented by the World Food Programme, the online survey was circulated via social media, media outlets, SMS and emails.

August 2022

6316 Respondents | 70 Female | 30% Male | 39 Average age | 4 Average household size

February 2022

6010 Respondents | 73 Female | 27% Male | 41 Average age | 4 Average household size

February 2021

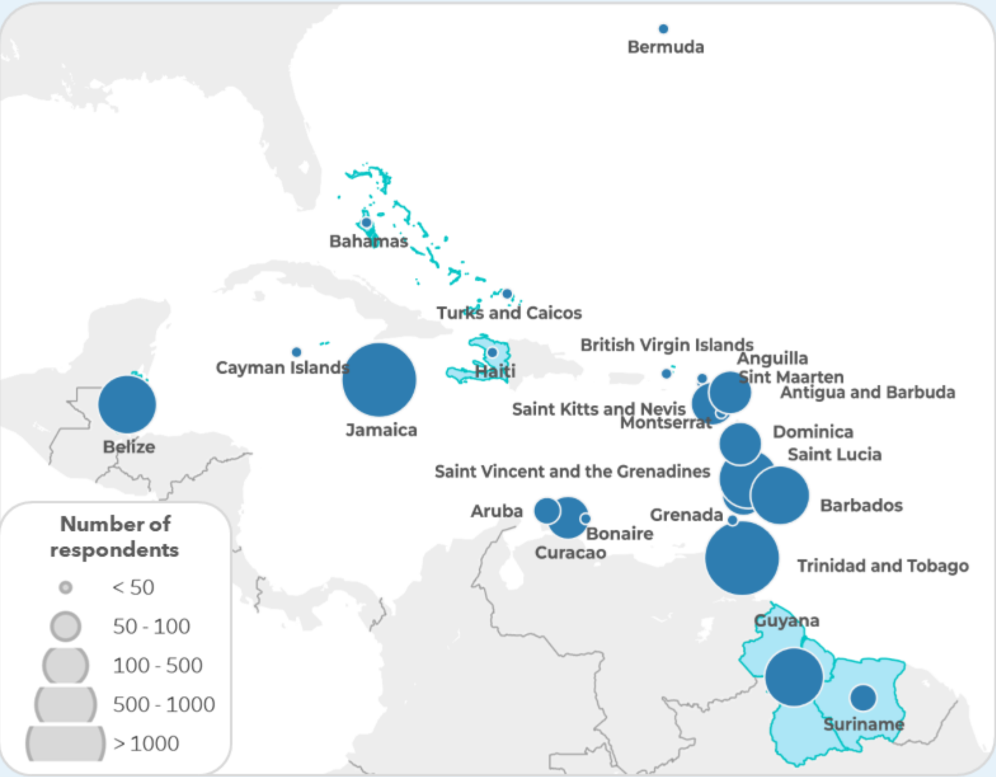
4186 Respondents | 69 Female | 31% Male | 43 Average age | 4 Average household size

June 2020

5707 Respondents | 69 Female | 31% Male | 40 Average age | 4 Average household size

April 2020

4501 Respondents | 71 Female | 29% Male | 41 Average age | 4 Average household size



CARICOM CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY A Community for All

CDEMA CARIBBEAN DISASTER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY *Resilient States · Safer Lives*

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

SUMMARY | August 2022

- Global food prices have increased sharply since the start of the Ukraine conflict, driving up local food prices. The increase in food prices has destabilised and impacted access, availability and utilisation of food. On average, food inflation in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean has risen by 10.2% across 20 countries as of March 2022. High energy prices are exacerbating the food price crisis.
- Based on the survey results, it is estimated that 4.1 million people out of 7.1 million (57%) in the English-speaking Caribbean are food insecure. This is a dramatic increase of 1.3 million since February 2022.
- Food consumption and diets have deteriorated, with 72% of respondents skipping meals/eating less, eating less preferred foods, or going an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey. Among the most impacted groups are Spanish-speakers (largely migrants) living in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Belize.
- More respondents than ever (97%) are reporting higher than usual food prices. Respondents also observed significant changes in the costs of gas (64%), other fuels (52%), transport (42%) and housing (40%).
- People are increasingly buying less healthy and diversified foods. Nearly a third of respondents reported having no food stocks at home.
- The COVID-19 pandemic, now coupled with the cost of living crisis, continues to impact people's livelihoods. More than half of respondents have faced job loss or reduced income in their households, with little change from February 2022. A similar number experienced disruption to their livelihoods in the two weeks prior to the survey, mainly due to the unaffordability of livelihood inputs.
- Respondents are compromising their future livelihoods by selling productive assets (43%) or spending savings (83%) to meet their food needs. Two-thirds of respondents predict at least moderate impacts to their livelihoods in the future.
- The survey inquired on people's main worries. For the first time in five surveys over two years, inability to meet food needs is the top concern (48%), followed by meeting essential needs (48%) and unemployment (36%). Compared to previous survey rounds, fear of illness and movement restrictions have shifted to more minor preoccupations.
- Half of respondents reported challenges accessing markets in the week prior to the survey, which also represents the greatest deterioration since April 2020. Lack of financial means continues to be overwhelmingly reported as the main reason for limited market access, cited by 91% of those unable to access markets.
- One in five respondents have received some form of government support. Cash transfers, income support and social security were most common and more widely reported compared to February 2022. However, very few (2%) were receiving assistance at the time of the survey.
- The new challenges unleashed by the cost of living crisis will mirror much of those encountered in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments can reinvigorate their current efforts and engage in new solutions to address the needs of those living in poverty and facing vulnerability.
- While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts of the compound crisis, the data is not representative, and the use of an online questionnaire limits inputs from people without internet connectivity.

SUMMARY | August 2022

All respondents

		Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	55% ▲	50%	51%	54%	74%
	Reduction/loss of income	54% ▼	57%	63%	69%	48%
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	50% ▲	42%	48%	48%	47%
MARKETS	Lack of market access	49% ▲	33%	30%	27%	38%
	Change in shopping behaviour	91% ▲	88%	84%	87%	84%
	Increase in food prices	97% ▲	93%	71%	78%	59%
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	42% ▲	35%	33%	32%	17%
	Lack of food stock	30% ▲	23%	17%	13%	3%

Respondents with well below average perceived income*

*This information was not collected in the April 2020 survey round.

		Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	69% ▲	68%	72%	73%
	Reduction/loss of income	73% ▼	82%	90%	88%
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	70% ▼	73%	81%	78%
MARKETS	Lack of market access	73% ▲	56%	59%	54%
	Change in shopping behaviour	93% ▼	95%	93%	93%
	Increase in food prices	98% ▲	97%	80%	85%
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	55% ▲	53%	56%	54%
	Lack of food stock	50% ▲	45%	40%	31%

SUMMARY | August 2022

Cross-country comparison

The overview is provided only for countries in the region that received over 100 responses during the August 2022 survey.
The arrows indicate a comparison with the February 2022 survey round.

		Regional average	Antigua and Barbuda*	Barbados	Belize*	Curaçao*	Dominica	Guyana	Jamaica	Saint Kitts and Nevis*	Saint Lucia	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Trinidad and Tobago
LIVELIHOODS	Disrupted livelihoods	55%	46%	39% ▲	61%	59%	55% ▲	68% ▲	55% ▲	41%	56% ▲	48% ▼	57% ▲
	Reduction/loss of income	54%	43%	49% ▲	62%	64%	48% ▲	51% ▲	52% ▼	48%	50% ▼	48% ▼	60% ▼
	Moderate to severe or severe future livelihoods impacts	50%	42%	47% ▲	47%	41%	57% ▲	45%	52% ▲	46%	57% ▲	49% ▲	55% ▲
MARKETS	Lack of market access	49%	36%	36% ▲	47%	58%	50% ▲	61% ▲	57% ▲	33%	46% ▲	48% ▲	49% ▲
	Change in shopping behaviour	91%	91%	88% ▲	90%	88%	89% ▲	92% ▼	91% ▲	83%	92% ▲	89% ▲	94% ▲
	Increase in food prices	97%	98%	87%** ▲	99%	98%	98% ▲	99% ▲	97% ▼	96%	99% ▲	99% ▲	99% ▲
FOOD SECURITY	Reduced food consumption	42%	32%	42% ▲	28%	47%	41% ▲	45% ▲	51% ▲	40%	44% ▲	45% ▲	43% ▲
	Lack of food stock	30%	27%	25% ▲	36%	25%	28% ▲	27% ▲	35% ▲	31%	33% ▲	36% ▲	26% ▲

*Comparison with the February 2022 survey round is not included because of the low number of responses during that round.
**Cost of living support measures were implemented in Barbados in July 2022 which could explain the lower percentage compared to other countries.

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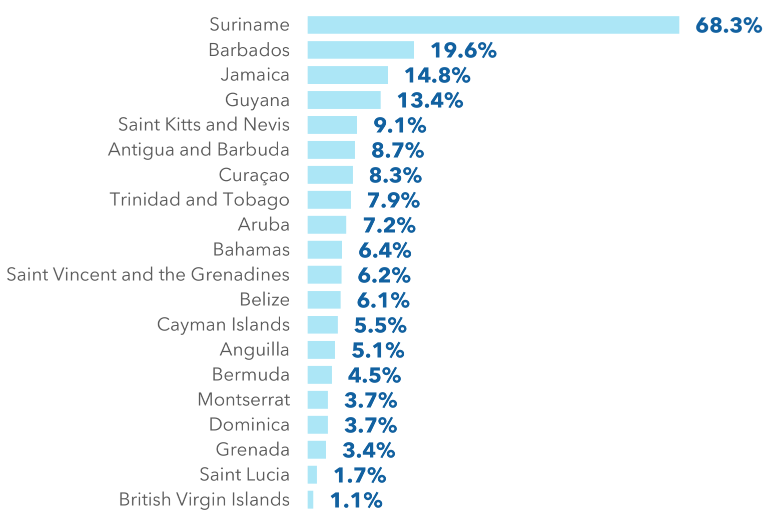
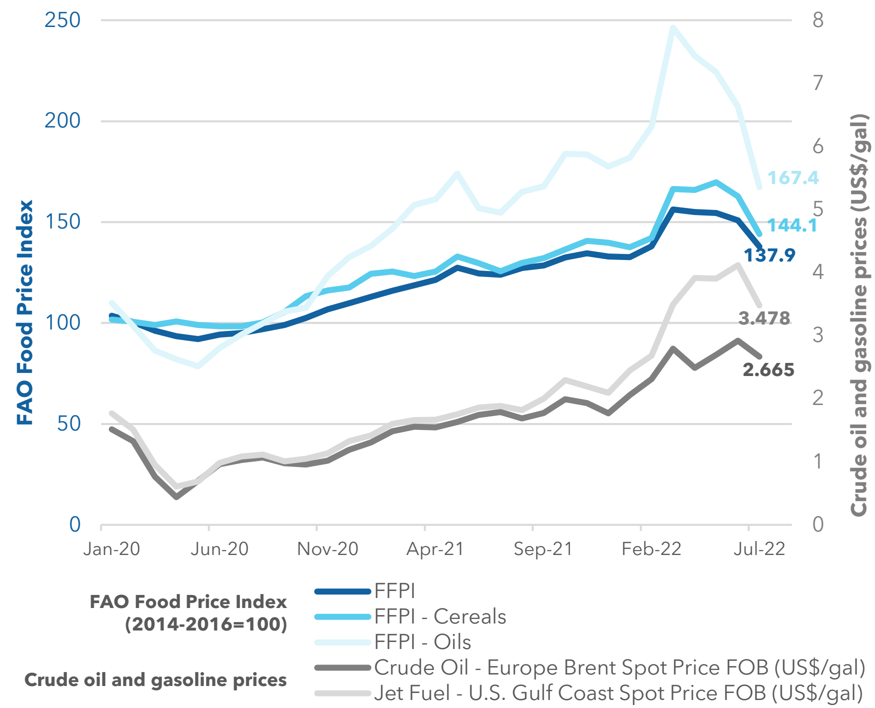
Context | Cost of living crisis

According to FAO's Food Price Index, global food prices have increased sharply since the onset of the conflict, reaching a new all-time high in February 2022, and taking another giant leap in March 2022. This has affected local food prices which has negatively impacted access to food. On average, food inflation in the English and Dutch speaking Caribbean has risen by 10.2% across 20 countries as of March 2022. Food price increases are particularly alarming in Suriname (68.3%), Barbados (19.6%), Jamaica (14.8%) and Guyana (13.4%), where essential purchases became unaffordable for many. As outlined in the latest World Bank Food Security Update (August 2022), Suriname also appeared among the top ten countries most affected by food inflation globally. Similarly, crude oil prices have steadily increased since 2020, surpassing levels of previous years. By driving up local inflation, spiralling costs of imported energy reduce purchasing power and poorer household's access to food.

Food inflation in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean
The inflation data refers to March 2022.
Source: FAOSTAT, Trading Economics





Source: FAO, US Energy Information Administration

Energy price dynamics affect food prices through various channels. Fuel is an important input for agricultural production and increasing fuel prices, thus, have an impact on produce prices. Similarly, as energy is necessary for food processing, high prices further add to the cost of households' diets. Higher fuel prices also imply increasing transport costs, which can further add to the upward pressure on the cost of importing food; or of local food that needs to be transported to consumer markets. The greatest majority of respondents from the Caribbean have all reported increases in food, oil, electricity, and other fuel prices.

Context | Cost of living crisis

Despite being overall net exporters of fuel, the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean relies heavily on imports for food and animals, machinery and electronics. The United States, China and Latin America remain the primary source markets for the importation of food, fuel and chemicals in the Caribbean. While during the pandemic access to markets and to food were challenged by restrictions, the socio-economic fallout from the pandemic makes it harder for people to now have purchasing power and forces many to resort to food related coping mechanisms. This has increased with the knock-on effects of the conflict in Ukraine.

Adjustments to government budgets are also expected under new fiscal realities and will also depend on future oil price developments, which means that financing for public services such as health, education or social protection may be at risk from cuts. A number of countries in the region, including Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, have already implemented targeted relief measures to support consumers and the most vulnerable households dealing with the consequences of the cost of living crisis.

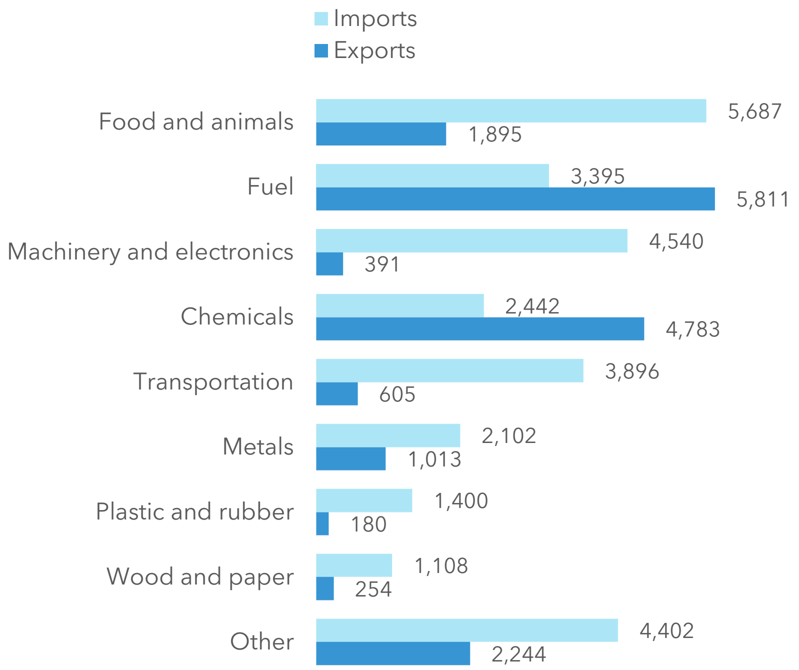
"Cost of living has gone up so items purchased had to change as well as trying to reduce electricity usage. This doesn't mean that money spent has reduced, it just means that more money isn't being spent so saving money feels impossible and it is an unbearable feeling." – Female, 36, Saint Lucia

"Reduced income through higher gas prices and lock downs forced me to close my trucking business. No access to loans or grants forced me to sell the truck. Had to change schooling for my daughter from prep to primary to reduce educational fees which also has gone up since the switch. My household survives from my wife's salary now, but all savings are gone." – Male, 38, Jamaica

"The constant weekly increases in the price of cooking gas, electricity, basic food items worries me very much." – Female, 73, Jamaica

Share of English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean commodity trade in million US$ (2021), by product group

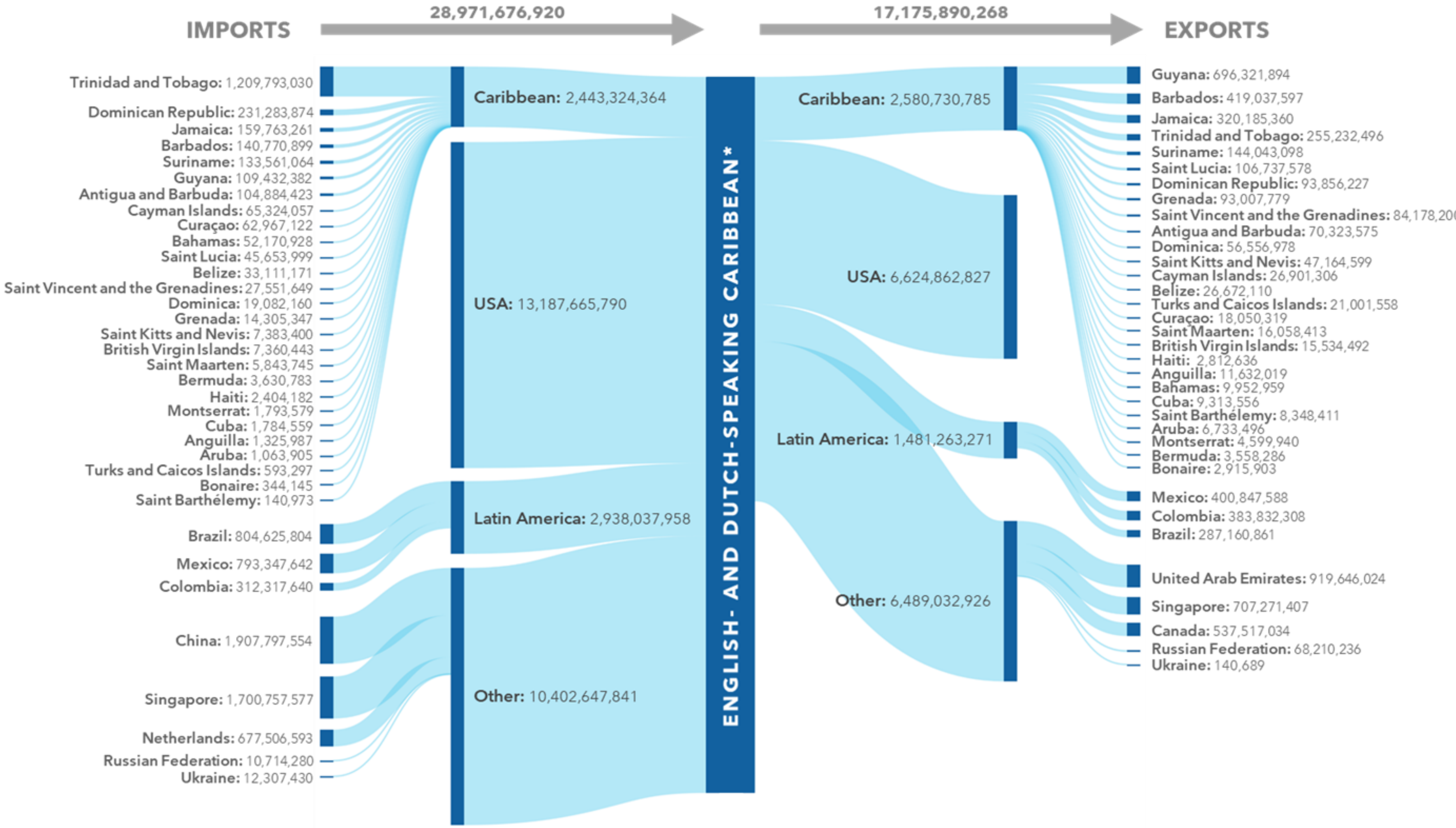
Source: UN Comtrade



Context | Cost of living crisis

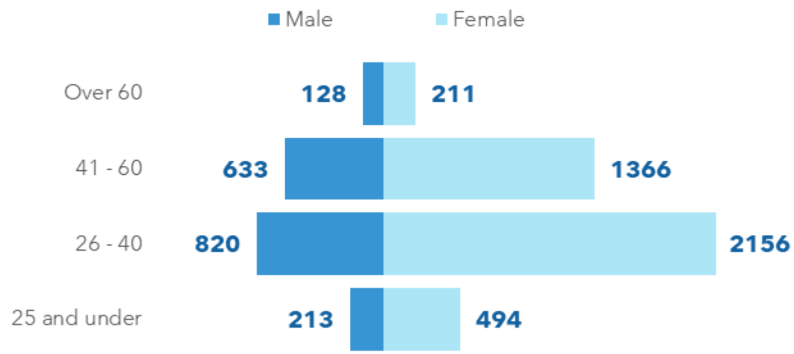
Import and export of all commodities in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean in 2021, based on US$ value

*This data includes all imports and exports to/from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands, using the latest data available. All values are in USD.
Source: Comtrade

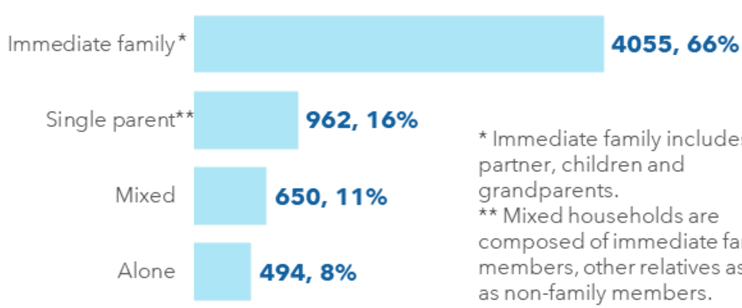


RESPONDENTS | Demographics

Age and sex



Household composition

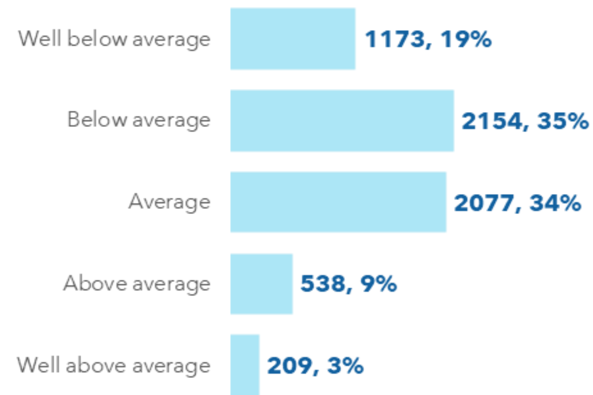


* Immediate family includes partner, children and grandparents.
** Mixed households are composed of immediate family members, other relatives as well as non-family members.

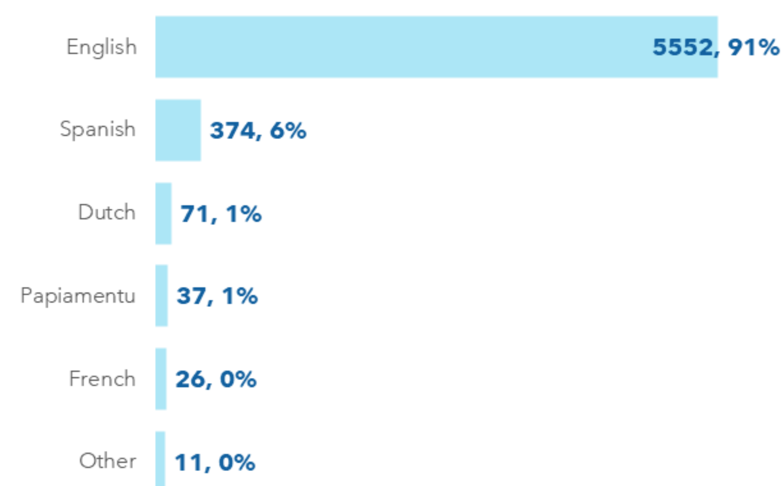
Urban/rural location

Perceived income levels

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



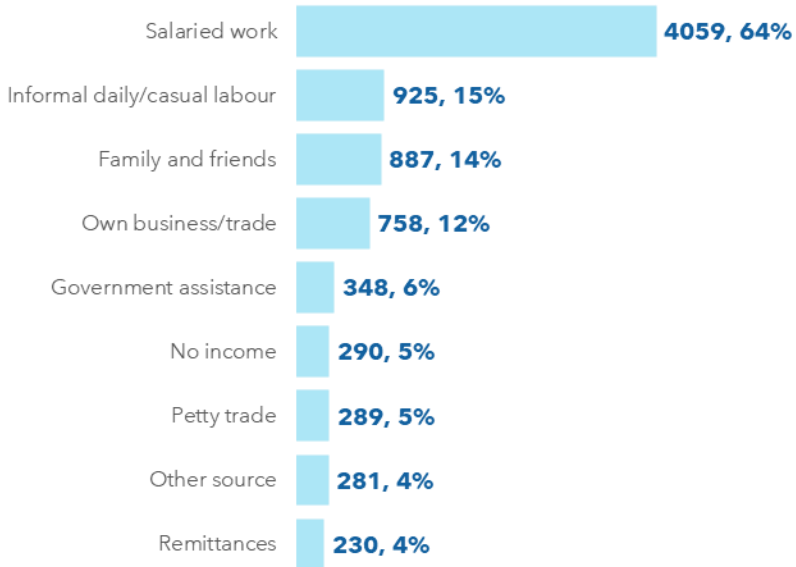
Language



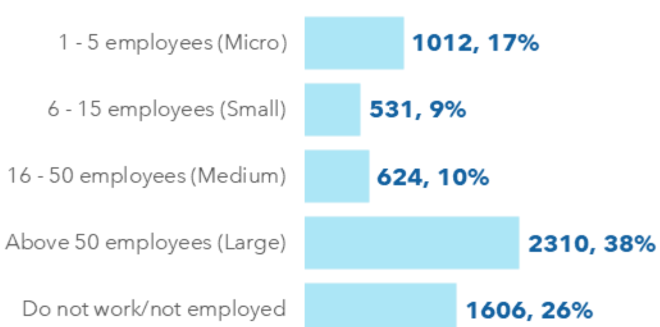
RESPONDENTS | Demographics

Main income sources

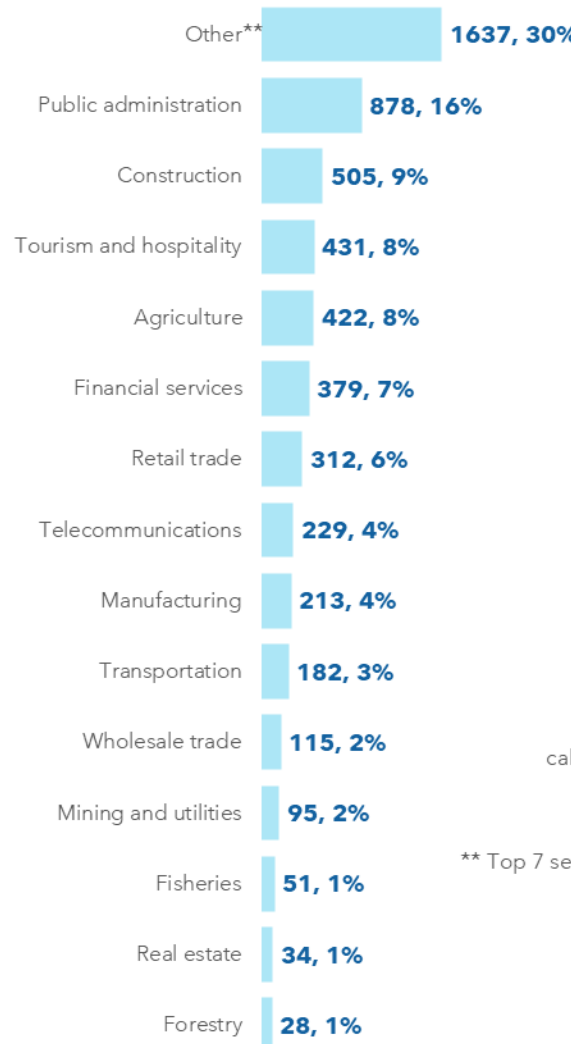
Respondents were asked to indicate the main source(s) of income in their household. Multiple options could be selected.



Size of employment business or organisation



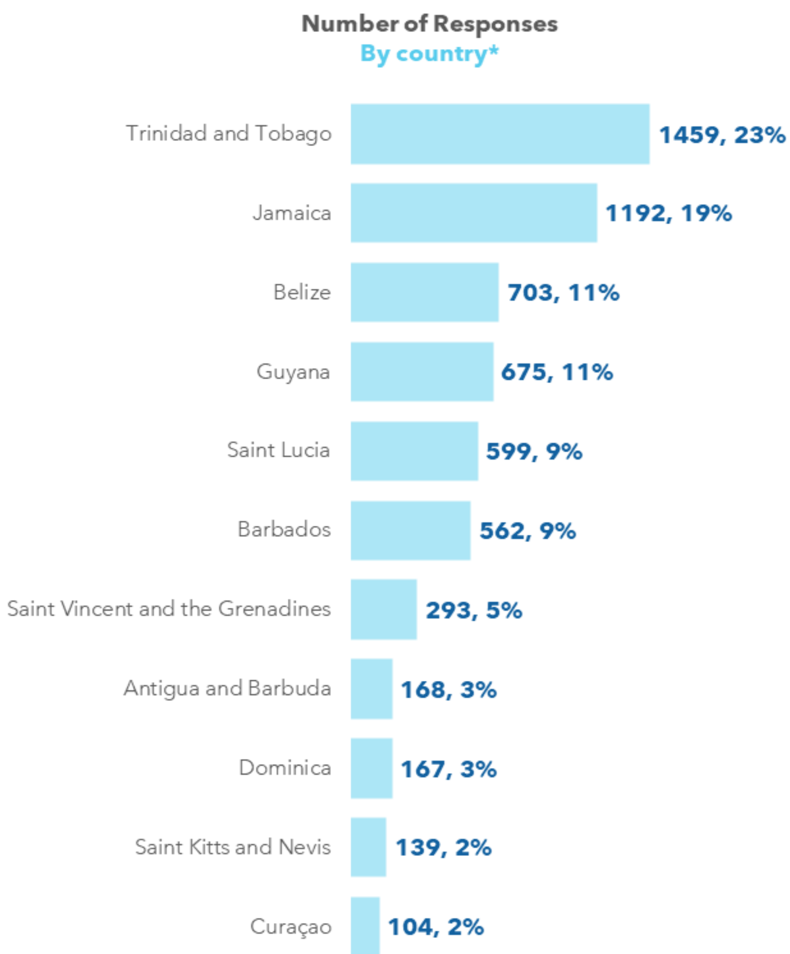
Main income sector*



* The percentages were calculated for the respondents that indicated having an income.

** Top 7 sectors chosen under "Other":
Education, teaching
Health, medicine
Security, enforcement
Government, ministry
Pension, retired
Cleaning
Legal, law

RESPONDENTS | Demographics



* Countries with less than 100 responses:
Aruba, Suriname, Grenada, Sint Maarten, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Bonaire, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos, Montserrat, Haiti

LIVELIHOODS | Disruptions to livelihoods

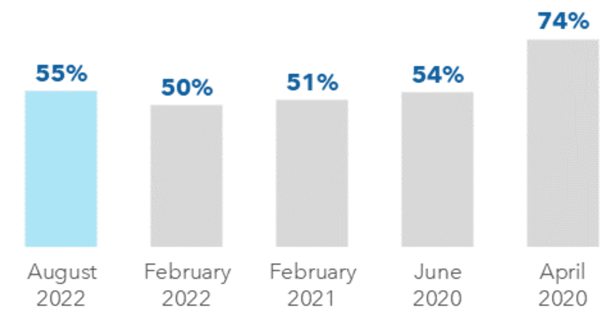
▶ Impacts to livelihoods remain widespread, with over half of respondents reporting disruptions mainly due to the unaffordable livelihood inputs.

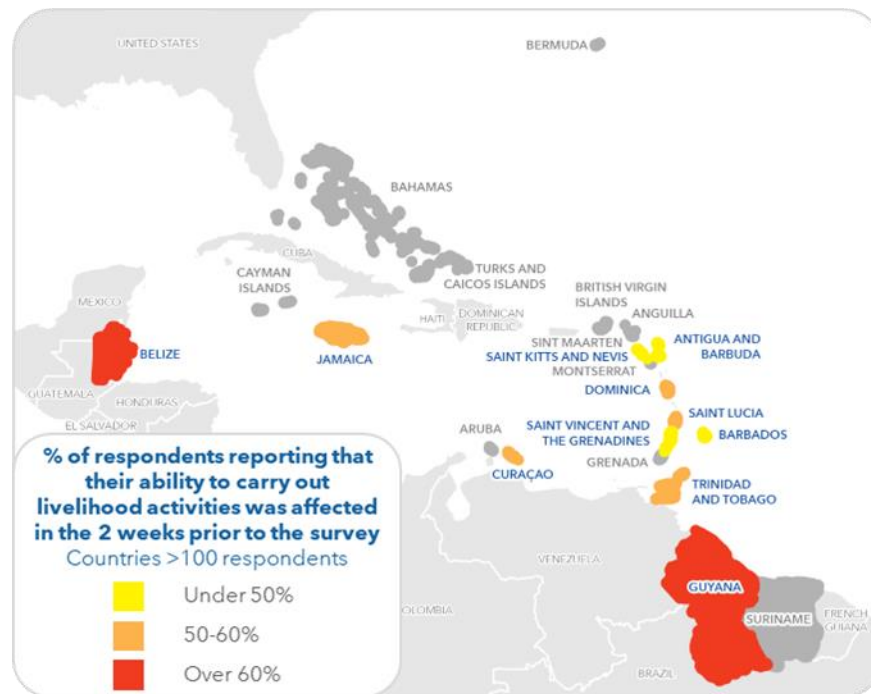
For over half of respondents, the ability to pursue their livelihood remained compromised in the two weeks prior to the survey. This proportion has increased slightly from February 2022 (50%). The main driver behind livelihood disruptions in the two weeks prior to the August 2022 survey was the unaffordability or inaccessibility of livelihood inputs (reported by 62% of those that experienced livelihood disruptions). This factor has grown steadily in importance with each survey round and is linked to wider trends related to supply chain disruptions and price rises in the Caribbean.

Most impacted by livelihood constraints were households with below (62%) and well below average income levels (69%), compared to the higher income households (36% and 42% for above and well above average income). Correspondingly, those relying on petty trade (68%), informal labour (63%) or assistance from family and friends (62%) were also more affected compared to respondents deriving their income from salaried work (51%), own business (48%) or remittances (48%). In addition, the Spanish-speaking respondents more frequently faced disruptions to their livelihoods (69%) than English speakers (53%). Less stark differences were also observed across age groups, household compositions, and income sectors. However, there were no significant differences in livelihood disruptions among sex or rural/urban location of respondents.

There were significant differences in livelihood disruptions across the region. Approximately two thirds of the respondents in Guyana (68%) and Belize (61%) reported disruptions to their livelihoods, compared to 39% in Barbados and 41% in Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 2 weeks prior to the survey





LIVELIHOODS | Impacts on income and future

▶ Over half of respondents have faced job loss or income reduction in their households, and half of them expect severe or moderate to severe future impacts on their livelihoods.

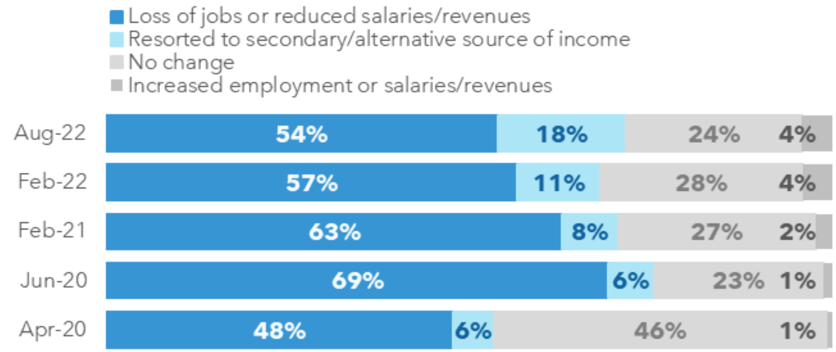
Impacts on income continue to be widespread, with 54% of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries in the last year. While this proportion has been declining since June 2020, the proportion of those having to resort to secondary or alternative source of income has been increasing, suggesting the continuation of economic hardship.

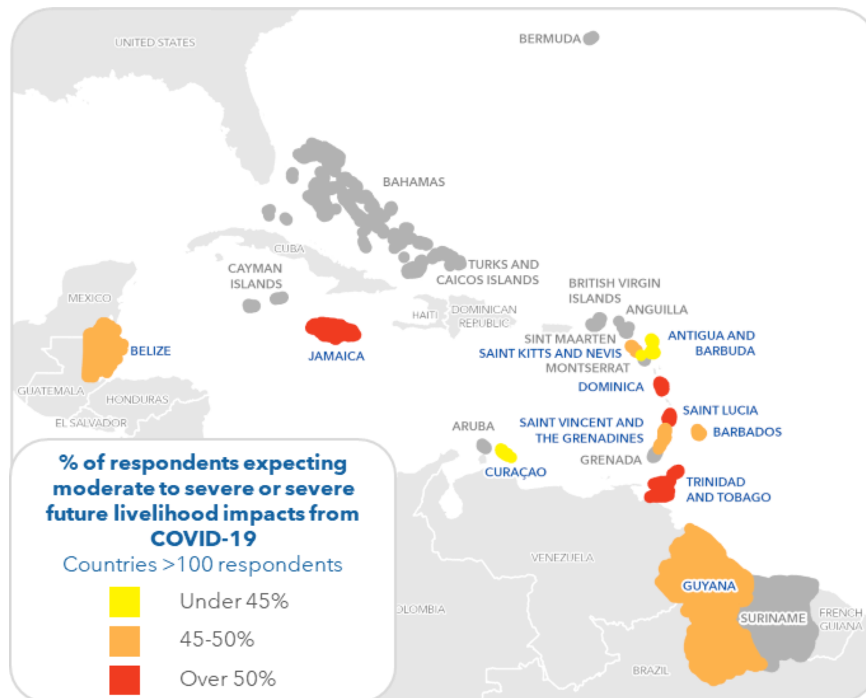
Most impacted by loss of jobs or reduced salaries were respondents with the lowest income levels (73%), those relying on informal labour (70%), those working in construction (67%) or agriculture (64%), Spanish speakers (76%) and younger respondents (63% for respondents younger than 26 years). Less significant differences were observed across sex, household compositions, and urban/rural location.

Major differences in income changes can be observed across the region. Approximately two thirds of the respondents in Curaçao (64%), Belize (62%) and Trinidad and Tobago (60%) reported loss or reduced salaries, compared to 43% in Antigua and Barbuda.

Respondents continue to expect that the COVID-19 pandemic will negatively impact their livelihoods in the future. Looking ahead, half of them anticipate "moderate to severe" or "severe" impacts to their livelihoods, which is slightly higher compared to prior survey rounds. Only 7% expect little or no impact. Differences in perspectives were the most significant across income levels with more than two thirds of those with well below average income expecting "severe" or "moderate to severe" impacts compared to a third of those with well above average income.

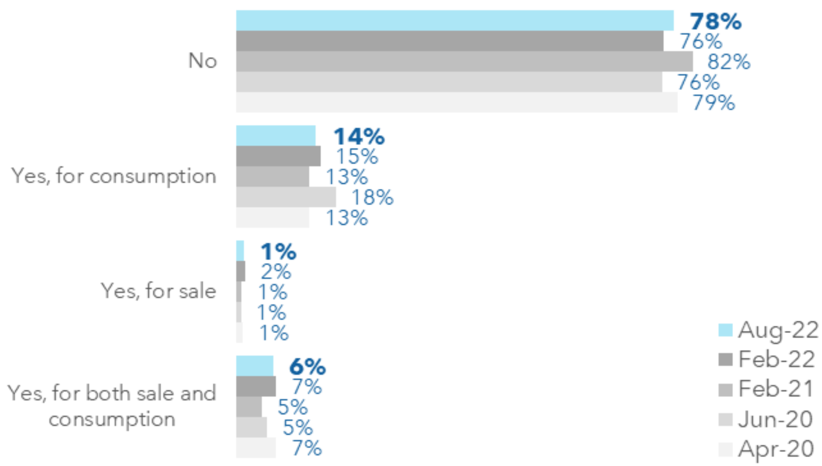
Has your household income changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?





LIVELIHOODS | Farming and fishing

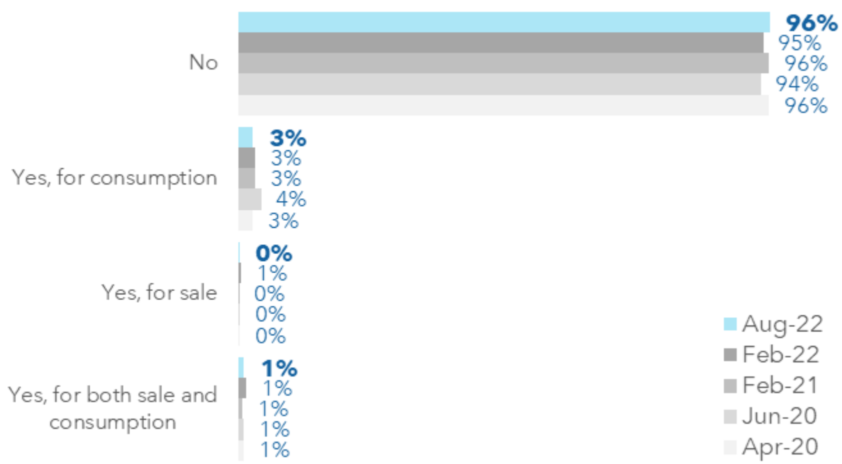
Is your households engaged in farming/livestock raising?



For those engaging in agriculture/ livestock raising, the activities are...
Multiple choices could be selected.

Farming/ livestock raising	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
Vegetables	69%	73%	74%	83%	74%
Banana/plantains	49%	48%	41%	46%	52%
Poultry	34%	31%	31%	22%	22%
Corn	18%	17%	14%	19%	16%
Small ruminants	16%	16%	13%	12%	16%
Other	11%	9%	12%	14%	17%
Rice	10%	12%	11%	9%	6%
Swine	8%	8%	9%	5%	6%
Large ruminants	6%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Pulses	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%

Is your households engaged in fishing/coastal activities?

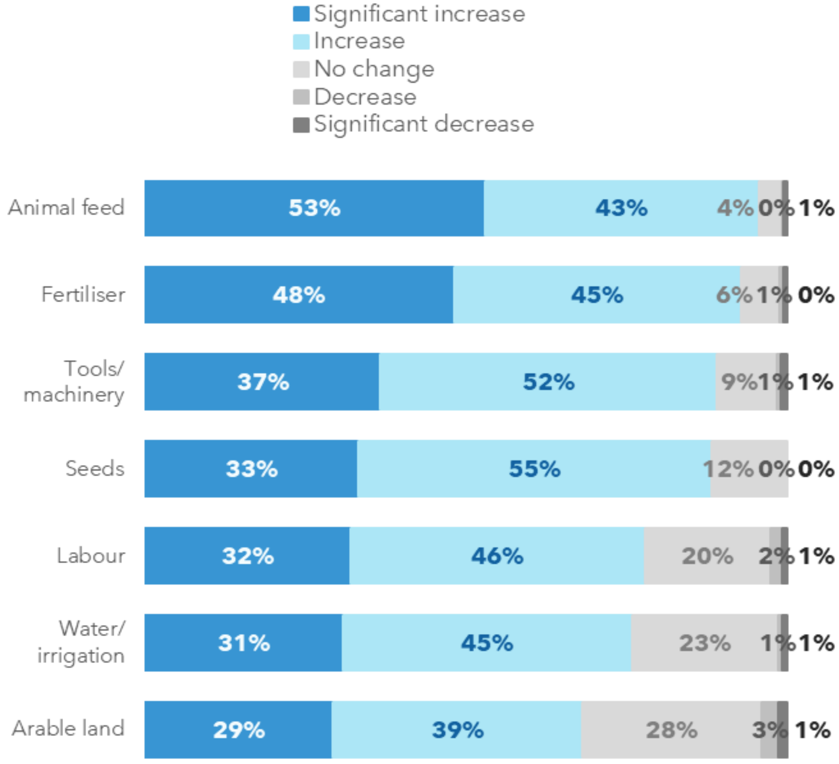


For those engaging in fishing/coastal activities, the activities are...
Multiple choices could be selected.

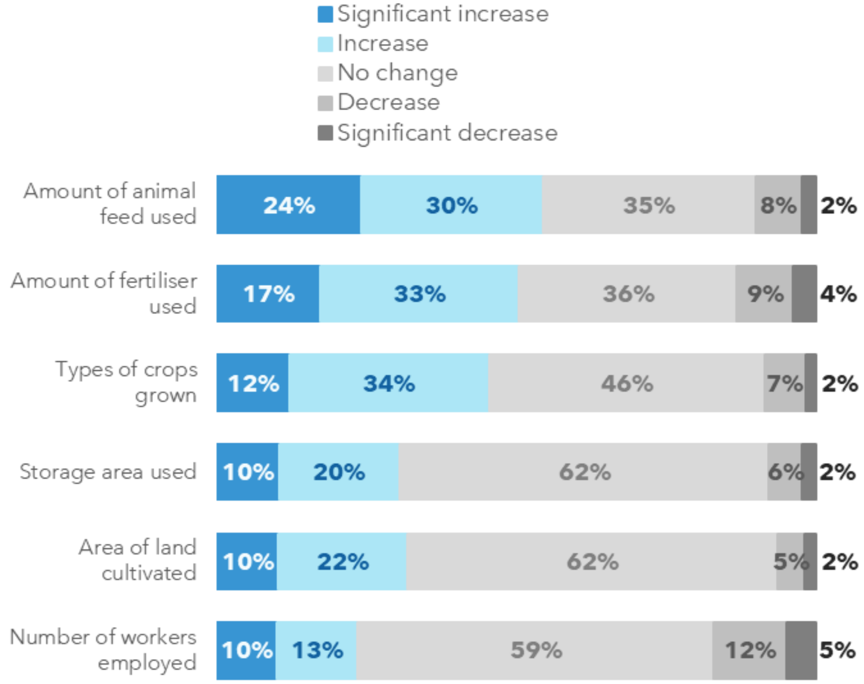
Fishing/ coastal activities	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20	Apr-20
Marine/coastal fisheries	34%	25%	37%	37%	48%
Small scale aquaculture	29%	31%	23%	22%	22%
Inland fisheries	24%	30%	20%	21%	20%
Other	10%	8%	16%	16%	14%
Mangrove/beach activities	9%	7%	9%	7%	4%
Fishing gear production	8%	8%	8%	6%	5%
Processing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

LIVELIHOODS | Farming

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
Percentages were calculated only for those respondents engaged in farming that responded to this question and did not select the "Not applicable" option.



Has any of the following aspects of farming/livestock raising changed for you in the last 6 months?
For those that engage in agriculture/livestock raising
Percentages were calculated only for those respondents engaged in farming that responded to this question and did not select the "Not applicable" option.

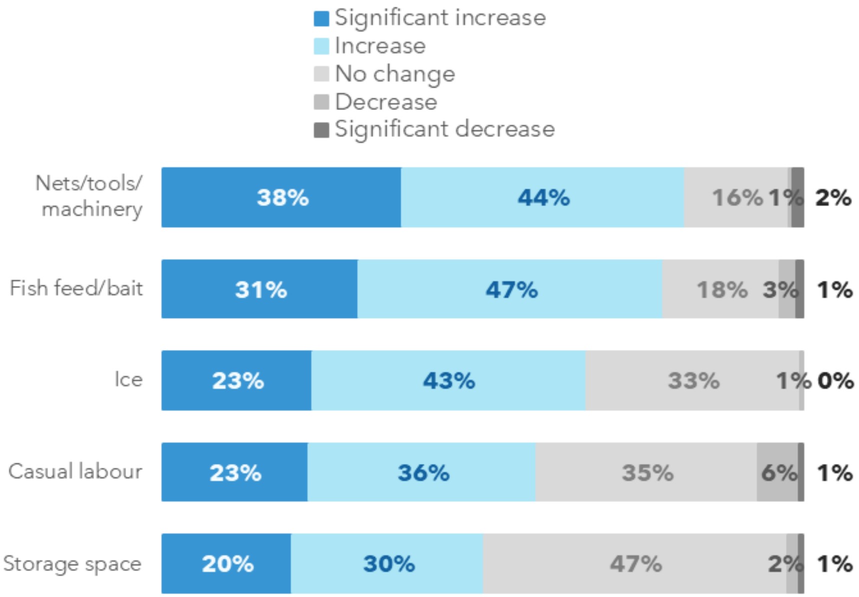


LIVELIHOODS | Fishing

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

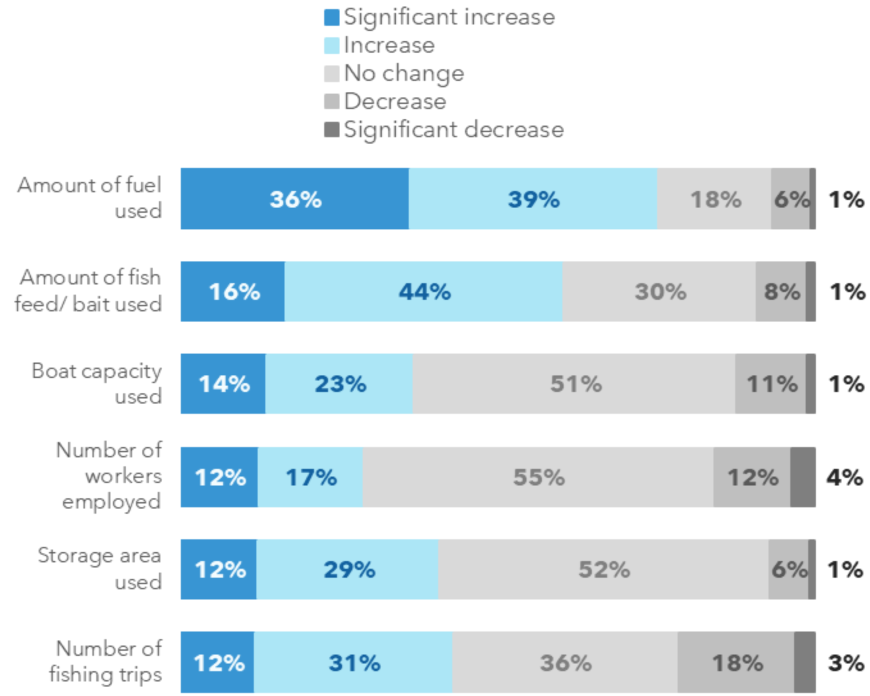
Percentages were calculated only for those respondents engaged in fishing that responded to this question and did not select the "Not applicable" option.



Has any of the following aspects of fishing/coastal activities changed for you in the last 6 months?

For those that engage in fishing/coastal activities

Percentages were calculated only for those respondents engaged in fishing that responded to this question and did not select the "Not applicable" option.



MARKETS | Access and shopping behaviour

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

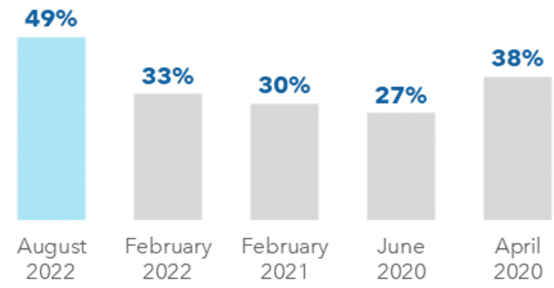
Over two years since the declaration of the pandemic, people's access to markets continues to be impacted in the Caribbean, with 49% of respondents stating that they were unable to access markets in the seven days prior to the August 2022 survey. People's access to markets has gotten worse as compared to April 2020 and is the highest recorded levels over the five rounds of surveys. As described in the next section in more detail, the challenges to accessing markets are clearly tied to financial means and income.

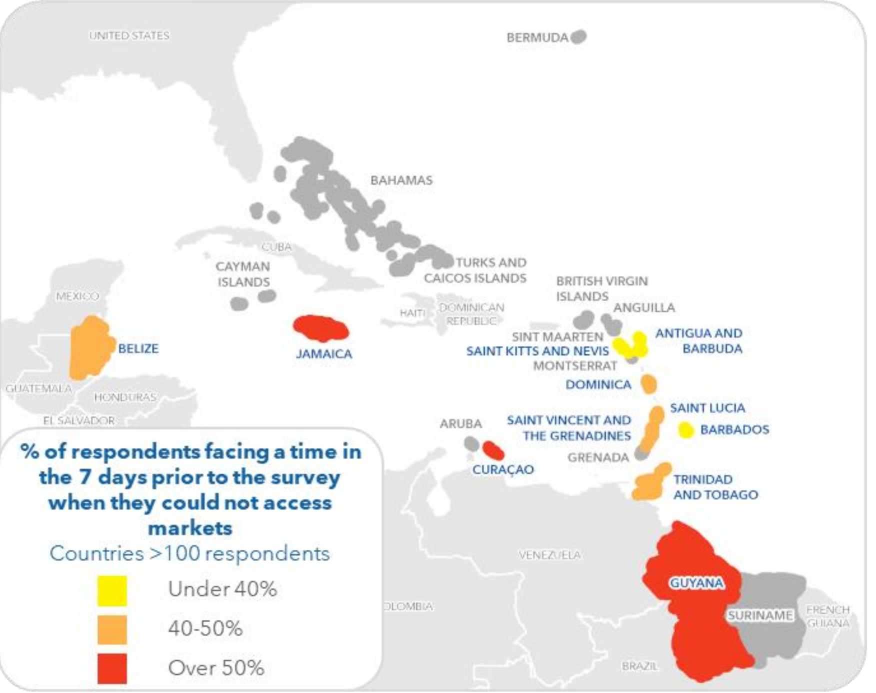
Clear differences in market access can be seen across age groups, household composition and income levels, sources and sectors. Between 52-56% of respondents under 40 years old reported a time when they couldn't access markets compared to 44% of those between 41 and 60 years and 30% of respondents over 60 years old. Mixed (57%) and single parent (58%) households also reported difficulties in accessing markets more frequently than others. These show an overall increase when compared to Feb 2020.

Lack of financial means continues to be overwhelmingly reported as the main reason for limited market access, cited by 91% of those who faced a time when they could not access markets in the week prior to the survey.

Respondents reporting changes to their shopping behaviour have increased to 91%. Buying cheaper or less preferred foods (64%) and buying smaller quantities than usual (54%).

Respondents unable to access markets in the 7 days prior to the survey





MARKETS | Prices

► Prices of food and non-food items are on the rise in the region.

The impact of increasing food prices are being observed across all demographics with 97% of respondents reporting an increase in the two weeks prior to the survey. This is the highest level reported across all survey rounds.

Most respondents across all countries (97%-99%) have identified an increase in food prices, while in Barbados 87% have highlighted an increase in food prices.

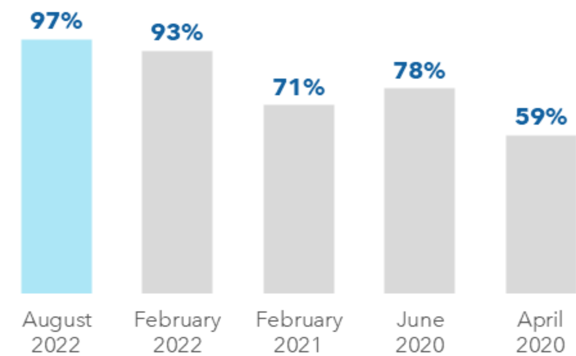
In the past six months 64% of respondents observed significant increases in gas prices and while 54% of respondents observed significant increase in other fuels. Knock-on effects of these changes in fuel prices are observed with 42%-43% of respondents reporting significant increases in the cost of electricity and transport. Significant increases in gas prices were noted by 78% of respondents in St. Lucia and 71% of respondents in Jamaica but only 52% of respondents in Trinidad and Tobago. Respondents from Dominica (78%) and St. Vincent and The Grenadines (65%) observed significant increases in the cost of electricity.

"Been hard all year round. Plus the increase in food prices daily is scary" - Female, 33, Trinidad and Tobago

"Food prices are too high! Transportation and general cost of living has increased." - Female, 41, Trinidad and Tobago

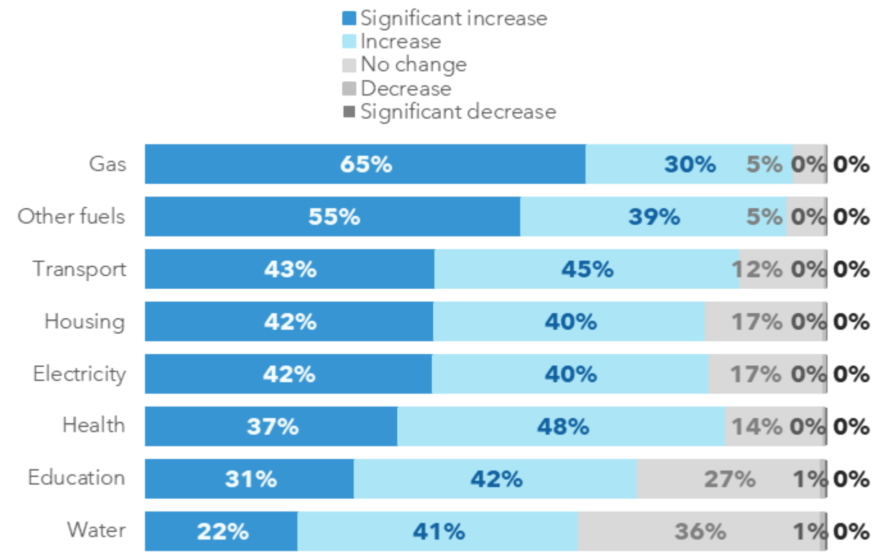
"I have been affected in so many ways the food prices sky high taxi fear gone up salary not increasing and poor people are suffering more and more" - Female, 38, Trinidad and Tobago

Respondents who reported an increase in FOOD PRICES over the 2 weeks prior to the survey



Have you observed any change in the COSTS of the following commodities/services in the past 6 months?

Percentages were calculated for those respondents that responded to this question and did not select the "Not applicable" option.



FOOD SECURITY | Food consumption

▶ Respondents in the Caribbean showed the worst food consumption pattern since April 2020. The further deterioration of food consumption patterns has led to greater food insecurity and will affect Caribbean people's nutrition.

Food consumption and diets further deteriorated due to the effects of the cost of living crisis, with an increase to 6% going an entire day without eating, 36% of respondents skipping meals or eating less than usual and 32% eating less preferred foods in the week leading up to the survey. These findings represent a deterioration in the food consumption of respondents compared to all previous survey rounds since April 2020. These behaviours indicate that households are adopting relatively severe rationing strategies to maintain their food security.

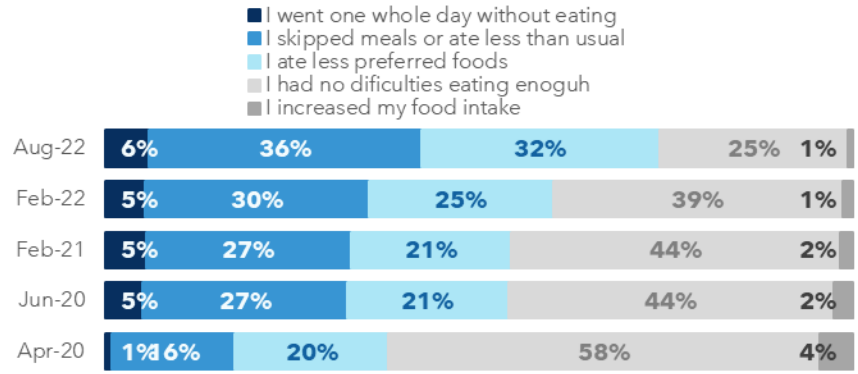
"I have to cut back on all the food I bought and rethink how to attend school" - Female, 27, Jamaica

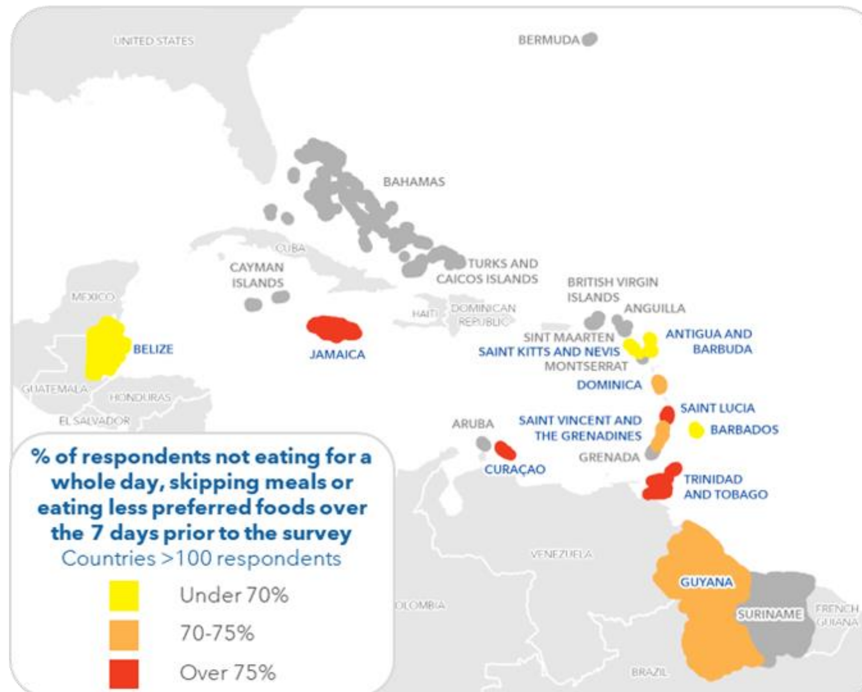
"Have to cut down on driving, food, among other expenses, as car and bill payments are hard now" - Male, 34, Jamaica

"My kids did not receive enough nutrients due to food cost. I know they are not fed properly but we had to adapt to eating less because we cannot afford it..." - Female, 37, Guyana

"After the place where I was working shut down, I've been unable to keep the diet I had previously, which would've helped me gain weight and improve my overall health. I am now on limited rations and cannot afford to do so. I've lost weight and I worry I may fall ill again like I was previously. We had to cut back on food a lot due to the prices."
- Female, 22, Barbados

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





FOOD SECURITY | Coping strategies

▶ An increasing proportion of people is prone to adopt negative coping strategies to meet their immediate food needs, compromising other priorities.

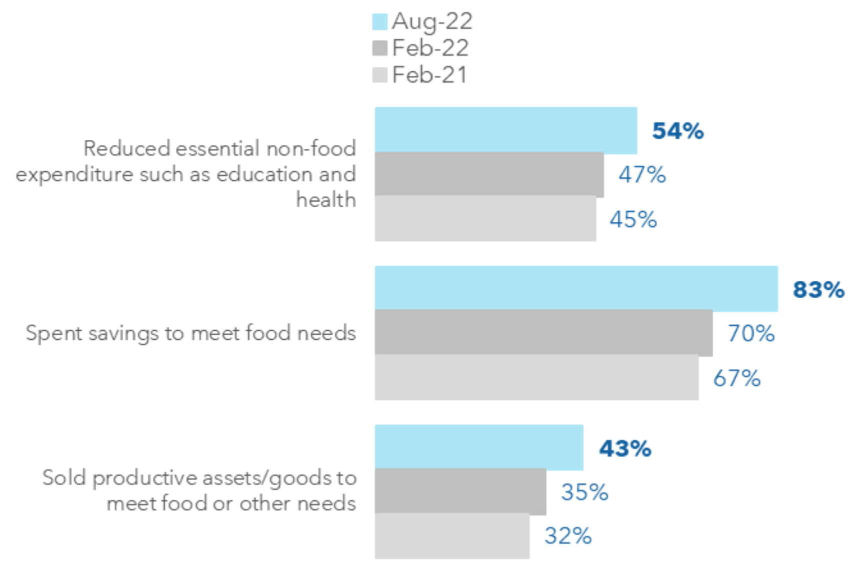
Survey respondents were asked whether in the 30 days prior to the survey they had reduced essential non-food expenditures, spent savings or sold productive assets to meet their food needs.

In just six months, a significant increase has been observed on all three negative strategies to meet food needs. Eight out of ten respondents (83%) indicated that they spent savings to meet their immediate food needs. More than half of respondents (54%) reported to have reduced essential non-food expenditures, such as education and health. Nearly half of respondents (43%) resorted to selling productive assets or goods. All three of these measures may compromise people's future well-being, resources and resilience. For instance, the sale of productive assets is likely to affect the sustainability of a household's livelihoods and may therefore translate into reduced physical and/or economic access to food and essential needs in the medium to long term.

"I lost my job a year ago, been struggling to make ends meet. I have fallen into debt as I can't pay my loans and survive at the same time. Food stuff barely last a week so we have to go a few days picking on stuff." - Male, 32, Jamaica

"Honestly the food crisis has been more effective than the COVID 19 and the minimum wage of just merely $60,147 when rent alone is 30,000" - Female, 32, Guyana

Households' coping strategies in the 30 days prior to the survey
Multiple choices could be selected.



"Not able to purchase enough food stuff for week nor able to purchase clothing etc" - Female, 43, Guyana

"Raise in food price. Eating less preferred food." - Male, 50, Belize

"With the increase of prices had to stop buying extra food stuff and just purchase basic needs." - Male, 24, Guyana

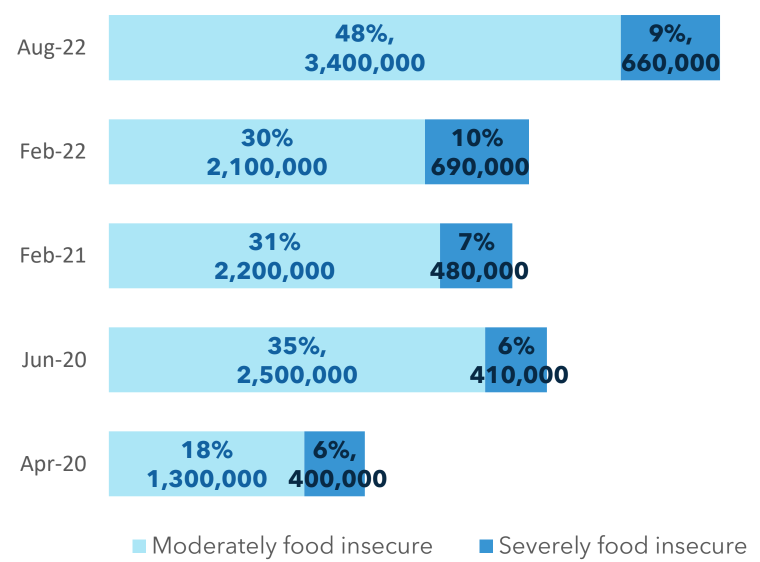
FOOD SECURITY | Food security estimates

► Over 4 M people are estimated to be food insecure in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean: an increase of 1.3 M since February 2022 and the highest number since April 2020.

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 compositive 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 31 for more information on the CARI methodology).

The levels of food insecurity have worryingly spiked over the past six months, with the overall number of food insecure people increasing from 2.7 M in February 2022 to 4.1 M in August 2022. The estimated number of moderately and severely food insecure people now represents 57% of the population in the English and Dutch speaking Caribbean. Food security findings in other sections of this report reflect a deterioration linked to food consumption patterns, economic vulnerability (including food prices, income changes and sources), market stability and livelihood disruptions. Notably, the number of moderately food insecure people has recorded the highest increase since April 2020. The number of severely food insecure people in the Caribbean in August 2022 (9%) is relatively stable compared to February 2022.

Estimated number of food insecure by survey round



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

The trends are confirmed by analysis that is based on a different methodology, the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), which assesses how food insecurity is experienced in a household (see next page for findings). The FIES was introduced in the third survey round in February 2021 (see page 31 for methodology).

FOOD SECURITY | Food insecurity experience

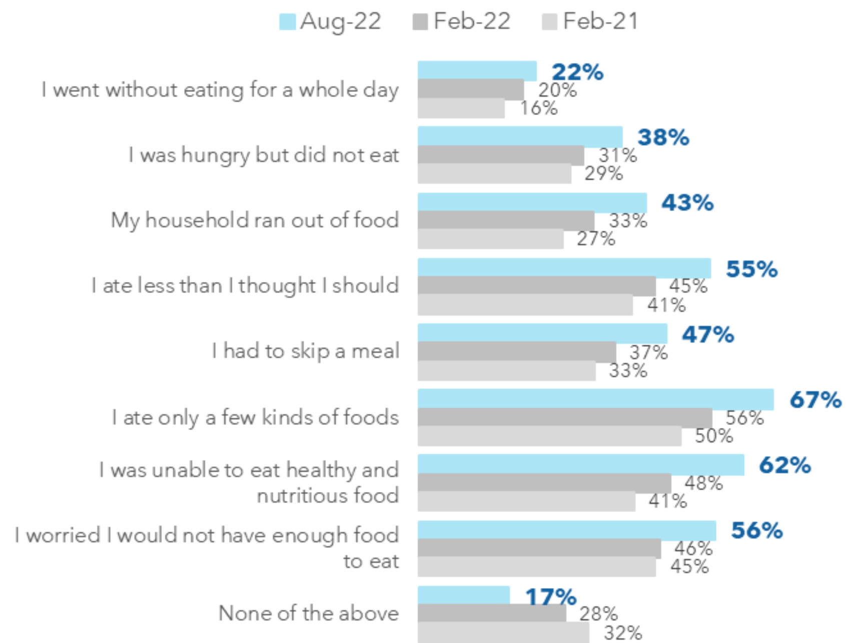
► Self-reported food related behaviours indicate increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints.

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was used to provide a picture of food insecurity experienced by respondents during the 30 days preceding the survey. The FIES, which is an indicator used for the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero hunger (SDG 2), is a metric of severity of food insecurity at the household or individual level. It relies on people's self-reported food-related behaviours and experiences associated with increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints.

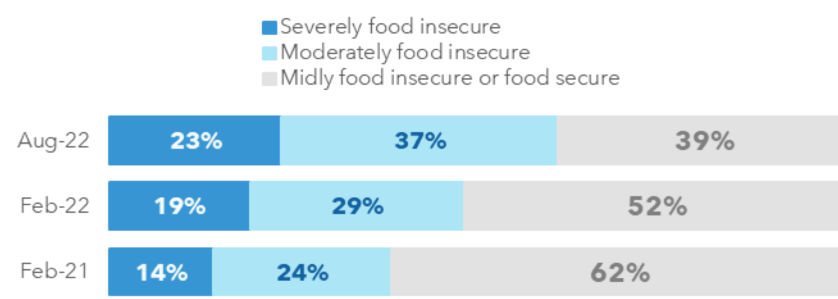
Using the FIES methodology and survey data to calculate food insecurity prevalence rates, it is estimated that 60% of respondents are either moderately (37%) or severely (23%) food insecure across the surveyed countries in the English-speaking Caribbean. When compared to the February 2022 survey round, the prevalence of severe and moderate food insecurity based on this indicator increased significantly as was also the case compared to February 2021.

The behaviour most experienced by respondents in August 2022 is eating only a few kinds of foods, followed by being unable to eat healthy and nutritious food. All of the most severe behaviours, including being hungry but not eating, going without eating for a whole day and running out of food, increased when compared to February 2022.

Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?
Multiple choices could be selected.



Prevalence rates of food insecurity
Based on FIES methodology.



WIDER IMPACTS | Main worries and sentiments

▶ Worries about the inability to cover food and other essential needs are rapidly growing among the respondents in the Caribbean.

In light of the cost of living crisis, the inability to cover food and other essential needs has superseded the fear of illness and unemployment as the main worries when compared with results from February 2022. Representing a notable shift compared to the past rounds, nearly half of respondents (48%) expressed concerns over their inability to cover their food and other essential needs. These worries were followed by unemployment (36%) and fear of illness (30%).

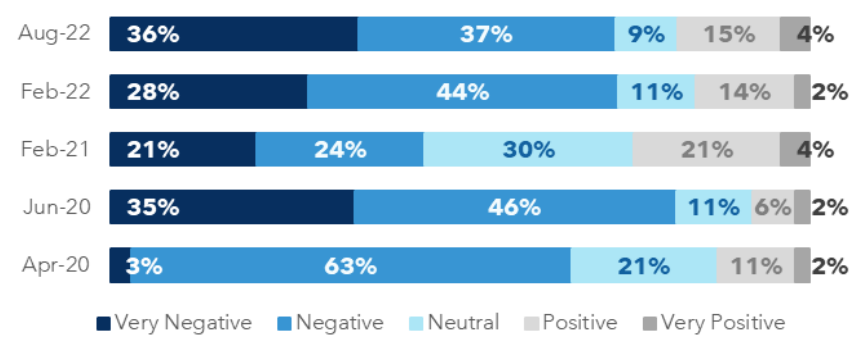
While both sexes cited inability to cover food and other essential needs as their main worries, a slightly higher percentage of female respondents cited these worries (50-51%) compared to male respondents (43%). Differences can be also observed across age groups, with respondents under 40 years old worrying more about inability to cover food and other essential needs (50-53%) and about unemployment (40-47%). In contrast, those over 60 years old worry more about the illness (43%) and having to resort to savings (34%). Spanish speakers more frequently worried about their inability to cover their food needs (67%) compared to English-speaking respondents (47%).

Over two thirds of respondents (73%) are expressing negative or very negative sentiments. This extent of very negative sentiments is overall similar to February 2022, with more severe 'very negative' sentiments and fewer 'negative' ones. The changes in sentiments might be aligned to less pandemic-related fears from respondents as some of the preoccupations shifted from illness and isolation to inability to cover food and other essential needs.

Main worries expressed by respondents
Multiple choices could be selected.

	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20
Inability to cover food needs	48%	31%	32%	31%
Inability to cover essential needs	48%	34%	37%	38%
Unemployment	36%	37%	44%	53%
Fear of illness	30%	49%	57%	52%
Having to resort to savings	24%	16%	14%	17%
Child(ren)/dependents care	15%	13%	10%	11%
Social isolation	10%	22%	21%	16%
Disruptions to education	8%	17%	12%	11%
Movement restrictions	4%	9%	12%	9%
Unable to access services	2%	2%	5%	4%
Violence in the household	1%	1%	1%	1%
Violence in the community	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other worries	0%	0%	0%	0%

Distribution of senitiments across open-ended survey responses (English speaking respondents)



WIDER IMPACTS | Unpaid care and assistance

▶ Respondents continue to spend more time on domestic work and childcare and less on shopping.

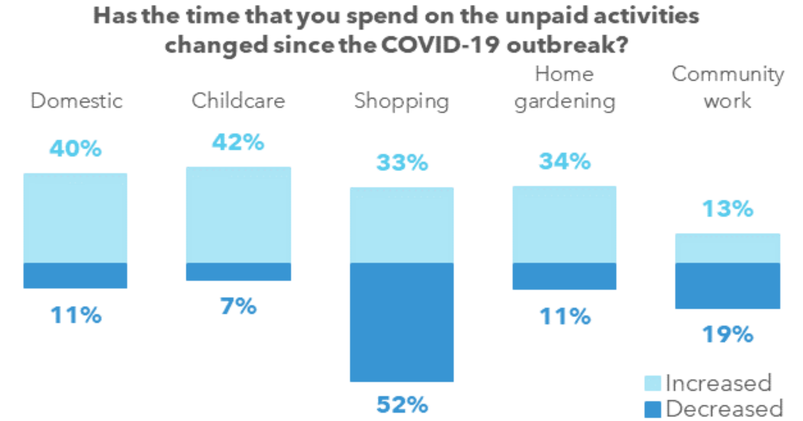
Respondents continue to decrease their shopping activity and increase domestic work and childcare. However, shopping has also increased for 33% of respondents when compared with 24% in February 2022.

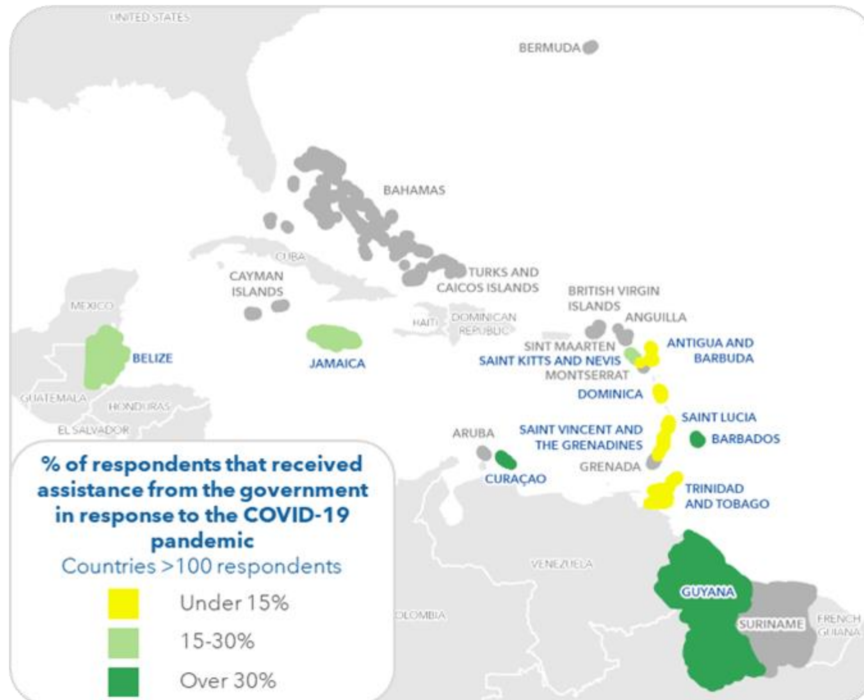
Changes in the time spent on unpaid activities differ across households with different income levels. While almost all income groups decreased their shopping activity (47-56%), those with the well above average income (42%) also substantially increased their shopping activities. At the same time, the well below average income respondents spent more time on childcare, while those with the well above average income increased their time spent on community work.

The changes were relatively consistent across sexes, although a slightly higher percentage of women cited a decrease in shopping (54%) when compared to men (46%). No major differences were observed across household compositions, spoken language and locality.

Over one in five respondents received some form of assistance from the government in response to the impacts of COVID-19, which is consistent with the findings from the February 2022 survey. The most common form of assistance was cash and income support (reported by 42% of respondents). This was followed by social security and voucher support, reported equally by 14% of respondents.

Households with well below (24%) and below average (22%) income levels more widely reported to have received assistance when compared to the wealthier income groups.





CONCLUSION

The food security and livelihoods of people in the Caribbean have undergone significant changes in the past two years. This survey shows that while the effects of COVID-19 had a profound impact on how people in the Caribbean meet their most pressing needs and earn a living, its impact has been significantly aggravated by the cost of living crisis. Most countries in the Caribbean have still not recovered from the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving them ill-equipped to cope with yet another crisis. Incomes are still depressed, labour markets are still struggling to recover, and the prices of food, fuel and fertilizers are at record levels. Governments' limited fiscal space and further indebtedness continues to impact their abilities to fully address the compound crisis and its impacts.

The cost of living crisis is undermining food security globally and regionally. The Caribbean relies heavily on food imports for both domestic consumption and to supply the tourism industry. The steadily growing price of livelihood inputs is the main reason causing disruptions to people's livelihoods, and the impact on incomes and well being remains pervasive. The resources that people have are not going as far with increasing food, fuel, and fertilizer prices.

The snapshot provided by this fifth survey shows that the impacts on people's lives are significantly worsening. The number of food insecure people has increased significantly over the past six months. More people are buying less healthy or fewer kinds of food, eating less than they should, drawing on savings and reducing other critical expenditures on health and education to get by. The inability to cover food and other essential needs grows as a critical concern as people experience first-hand the effects of increasing prices. While the number of severely food insecure people is stable, the number of moderately food insecure and the overall number of food insecure people has increased to 4.1 million, the highest since April 2020.

The significant reduction of COVID-19 related restrictions brings cause for optimism on economic recovery, as shown by the slightly reduced number of persons who reported losing their job or having a reduced income. However, the picture in August 2022 is an extremely worrying one for the future, as a greater proportion of respondents resorted to secondary/alternative sources of income, which will affect their future livelihoods. These impacts are hitting hardest those who can least afford it, in particular on families with the lowest incomes. Spanish-speakers in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Belize are still faring worse than others. As highlighted in previous rounds of this survey, unpaid time spent on childcare and domestic work are still greater than before the pandemic, and these activities often are disproportionately shouldered by women.

While some governments in the region are implementing targeted relief measures to support consumers and the most vulnerable households dealing with the consequences of the cost of living crisis, the situation points to greater needs to buffer economies. Social protection has played a critical role in response to the limiting the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19. While many of the measures deployed have ended, people's incomes and lives are once again being challenged by the cost of living crisis. Continued investments into people's resilience by governments and development partners in the Caribbean will allow the most vulnerable people to cope with these recurrent economic shocks.

The new challenges unleashed by the cost of living crisis will mirror much of those encountered in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments can reinvigorate their current efforts and engage in new solutions to address the needs of those living in poverty and facing vulnerability. Social protection, agricultural support and financial inclusion can offer sustainable solutions to curb the impacts of the cost of living crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The impact of the cost of living crisis will further compound the impacts of COVID-19 for states and territories within CARICOM, exposing them to higher vulnerability and food insecurity. Financing and political will can play key roles to prioritise solutions to support impacted people, however the increasing indebtedness linked with reduced revenues and increased expenditures over the past two years pose significant challenges for the region. With the cost of living crisis further impacting global food, fuel and fertilizer prices, governments are called to take urgent action to prevent a further deepening of a more pervasive and lasting level of poverty, increasing levels of inequality, and food insecurity. Efforts must include the strengthening of social protection, regional and national food systems, supply chains, and accelerating capacities and investments for better data to further mitigate impacts of these shocks through more informed, and as a result improved targeting for programming and interventions.

Strengthen social protection and expand coverage through both temporary and long term programmes. With a growing number of people experiencing food insecurity, increasingly unable to meet basic needs and employing livelihoods strategies that are undermining their future, there is an urgent need to expand social protection to provide immediate relief to the most vulnerable populations not currently covered. This should aim to both meet urgent needs and prevent further deterioration, while at the same time facilitate linkages to longer term support mechanisms aimed at strengthening livelihoods and economic recovery at the household level.

Strengthen food systems and expand initiatives to boost local/ regional food production, transformation and consumption. Boosting export revenues is more crucial than ever to Caribbean countries, as well as encouraging healthy diets while supporting local and sustainable agricultural production. Productive and resilient agri-food systems will ensure long term food security and reduce the risks that the most vulnerable are exposed to through recurrent shocks. Efforts must balance large initiatives with ensuring the most marginal are not further left behind and should combine national and regional perspectives.

Invest in data for better social protection programmes. Nationally representative data is a key instrument to fight the root causes of food insecurity. Targeted and efficient support requires the knowledge base about those most in need. Data can support to quantify those in need, and ensure assistance targets the most vulnerable who can benefit most and enable tailored solutions to strengthen national social protection mechanisms. Targeted assistance has more beneficial poverty mitigation effects than blanket subsidies, which might distort market and trade dynamics and worsen the longer-term economic stability.

Build and strengthen price and market monitoring systems to inform policy interventions. Understanding the domestic price situation is key to implement market intervention schemes and understand how, when, and to what degree the essential needs of the most vulnerable are affected. Market monitoring can also lead to greater competition and bring benefits to consumers.

Enhance regional coordination mechanisms for emergency preparedness and response and shock proof delivery of assistance. Paired with natural disasters, other shocks such as those experienced by COVID-19 pandemic and now the cost of living crisis have a strong impact to hamper economic progress in many Caribbean countries. A coherence approach between government and non-government stakeholders in coordinating response mechanisms through digitalised approaches and supply chain management should facilitate efficiency during the response and promote resilience in the recovery phase.

METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fifth 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 July to 12 August 2022. 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 performed builds on earlier collaboration with Joseph Xu from Google's AI unit using Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP, a branch of AI analyses and interprets human languages, which provided sentiment analysis to determine the distribution of very negative to very positive responses. To moderate the non-representative nature of the data, the analysis team further refined the classifications presented by the algorithm.

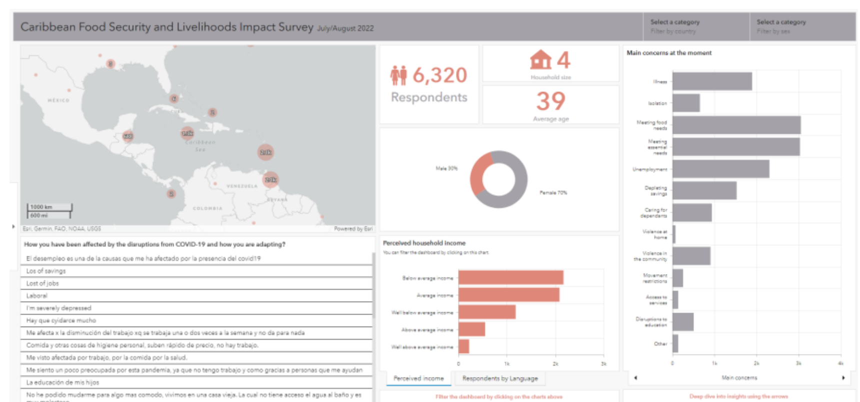
WFP expresses warm appreciation to UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana for circulation of the survey. Appreciations also to Alejandra Moreno (University of Aruba), Rendell de Kort (University of Aruba), Benjamin Visser (University of Curacao) and Eugene Hoogstad (University of Sint Maarten) for translation and outreach support in the Dutch-speaking islands.

While the survey contributes to a better overview of impacts, the data is not representative, and the use of a web-based questionnaire limits inputs from those without connectivity. Responses were over-represented from two countries, with 23% of responses coming from Trinidad and Tobago and another 19% from Jamaica. While this report refers to the results of previous survey rounds, the varying demographics of respondents limit comparability across survey rounds.

This report was prepared by WFP Caribbean – Camilla Spallino, Irina Bird Reddiar, Trisandhi Gosine, Amy Chong, Sarah Bailey and Regis Chapman.

Survey form

Dashboard for Smartphones

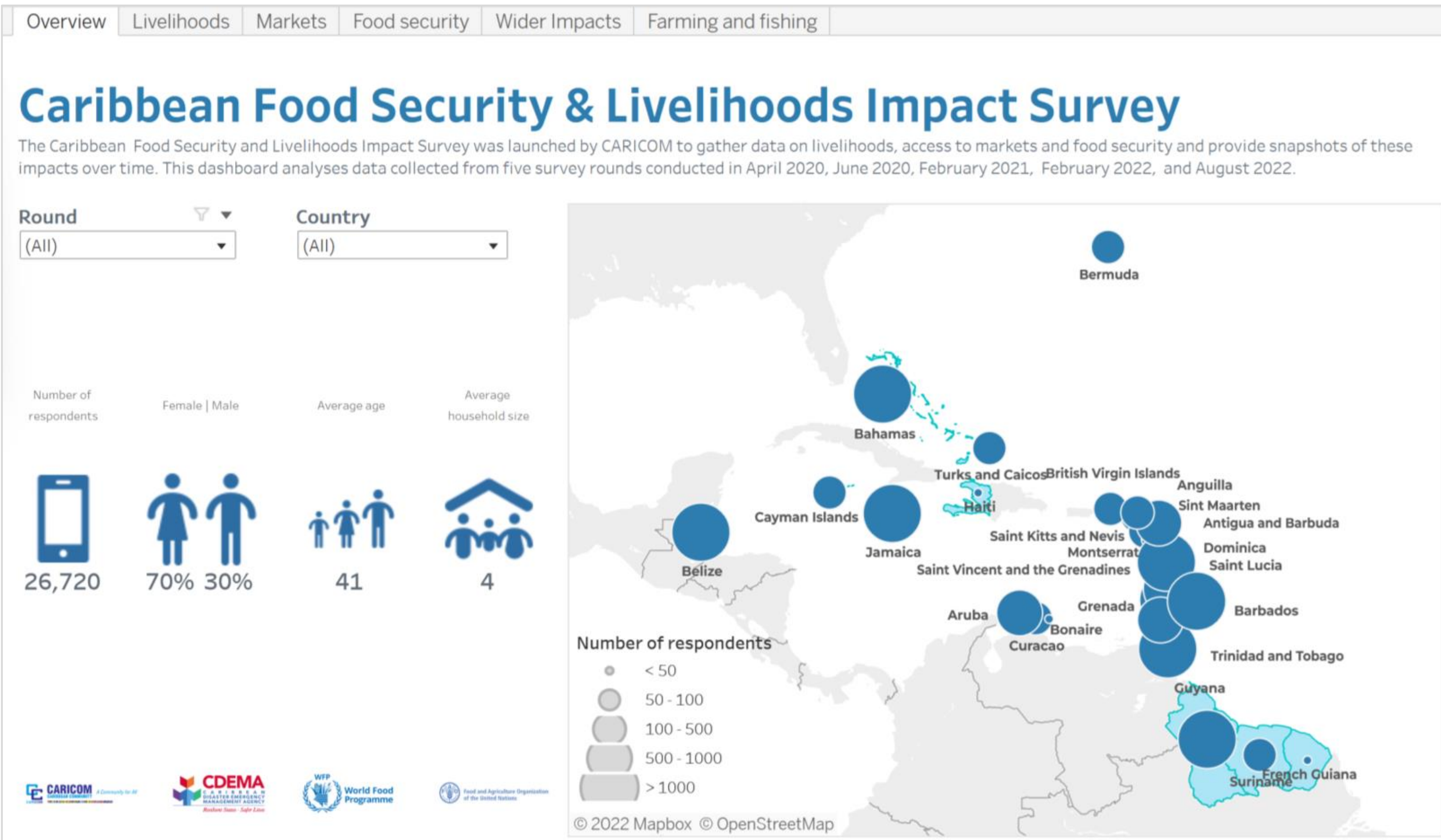


Dashboard for PCs/Laptops

METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A feature introduced in the fourth survey round is the development of a Tableau dashboard which analyses data collected from five rounds of the Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Survey conducted in April 2020 (Round 1), June 2020 (Round 2), February 2021 (Round 3), February 2022 (Round 4) and August 2022 (Round 5). 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/t/Public/views/CaribbeanFoodSecurityLivelihoodsImpactSurvey/Overview



CALCULATION OF FOOD INSECURITY ESTIMATES

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 standardised 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 since the COVID-19 outbreak?" and "What are your household's main income sources over the past year?". 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.

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 CARI, see WFP's 'Technical Guidance Notes Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI)' (2015).

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"

ANNEX: Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)

Cross-country comparison

The overview is provided only for countries in the region that received over 100 responses during the August 2022 survey.
The arrows indicate a comparison with the February 2022 survey round.

	Regional average	Antigua and Barbuda*	Barbados	Belize*	Curaçao*	Dominica	Guyana	Jamaica	Saint Kitts and Nevis*	Saint Lucia	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Trinidad and Tobago
Severely food insecure	23%	12%	19%	15%	26%	20%	27%	30%	21%	22%	26%	24%
Moderately food insecure	37%	42%	34%	36%	26%	41%	39%	38%	31%	39%	40%	40%

*Comparison with the February 2022 survey round is not included because of the low number of responses during that round.
Number of response to the FIES question in the August 2022 survey round: Antigua and Barbuda (168), Barbados (562), Belize (703), Curacao (104), Dominica (166), Guyana (674), Jamaica (1192), Saint Kitts and Nevis (139), Saint Lucia (599), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (293), Trinidad and Tobago (responses from English-speakers,1331).

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Website: https://www.caricom.org

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