

Situation Update



The COVID-19 pandemic has reverted a decade of development gains in just two years. **Poverty** has sky-rocketed from 20.1% in 2019 to **33.3% in 2021**, with an additional 10% being at risk of falling in poverty. **Extreme poverty reached 6%** in 2021 from 0.5% in 2019.¹



According to the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic, headline inflation in October 2022 was 15.4%², similar to the 15.5% recorded in September, the highest inflation rate since July 2011, and among the highest in the region.



Food inflation for key staples is at 16% and CPI for fuel and lubricants at 33% in October 2022.³



Remittances has decreased by 13 percent in January-September 2022, compared to the same period in 2021.



WFP has established a food security monitoring system, conducting bi-monthly household surveys to track food security trends.

Survey Highlights

- The October 2022 food security assessment found that **17%** of households or more than 1 mln of population were **acute food insecure**, a decrease of 4% compared to August 2022. This could be explained by improved food consumption due to harvest in September/October. Yet, an additional **54%** of the population remains only **marginally food secure**.
- Prevalence of food insecurity was **higher in rural areas** (19%) compared to urban areas (14%). Food insecurity is higher in **Batken, Talas and Naryn** regions and more prevalent in **female-headed households**.
- Around one sixth of all household had **insufficient food consumption** levels (**15%**) and an additional **7%** had an acceptable food consumption but was employing severe coping strategies.
- **80%** of households were using some **asset depleting coping strategies** (relying on savings and money borrowing), with **15%** of them using **emergencies coping strategies** (selling assets – last cattle, land or house – or asking for assistance).
- **8%** of households reported that their income had decreased since January 2022, with an average decrease of 37%.
- For both food and non-food items, the **key hindering factor** to their purchase was the **economic accessibility** (lack of money) and **affordability** (high food prices).

1 National Statistical Committee, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/uroven-bednosti-v-kyrgyzskoj-respublike/>

2 NBKR: <https://www.nbkr.kg/index.jsp?lang=ENG>

3 National Statistical Committee: <http://www.stat.kg/en/statistics/ceny-i-tarify/>



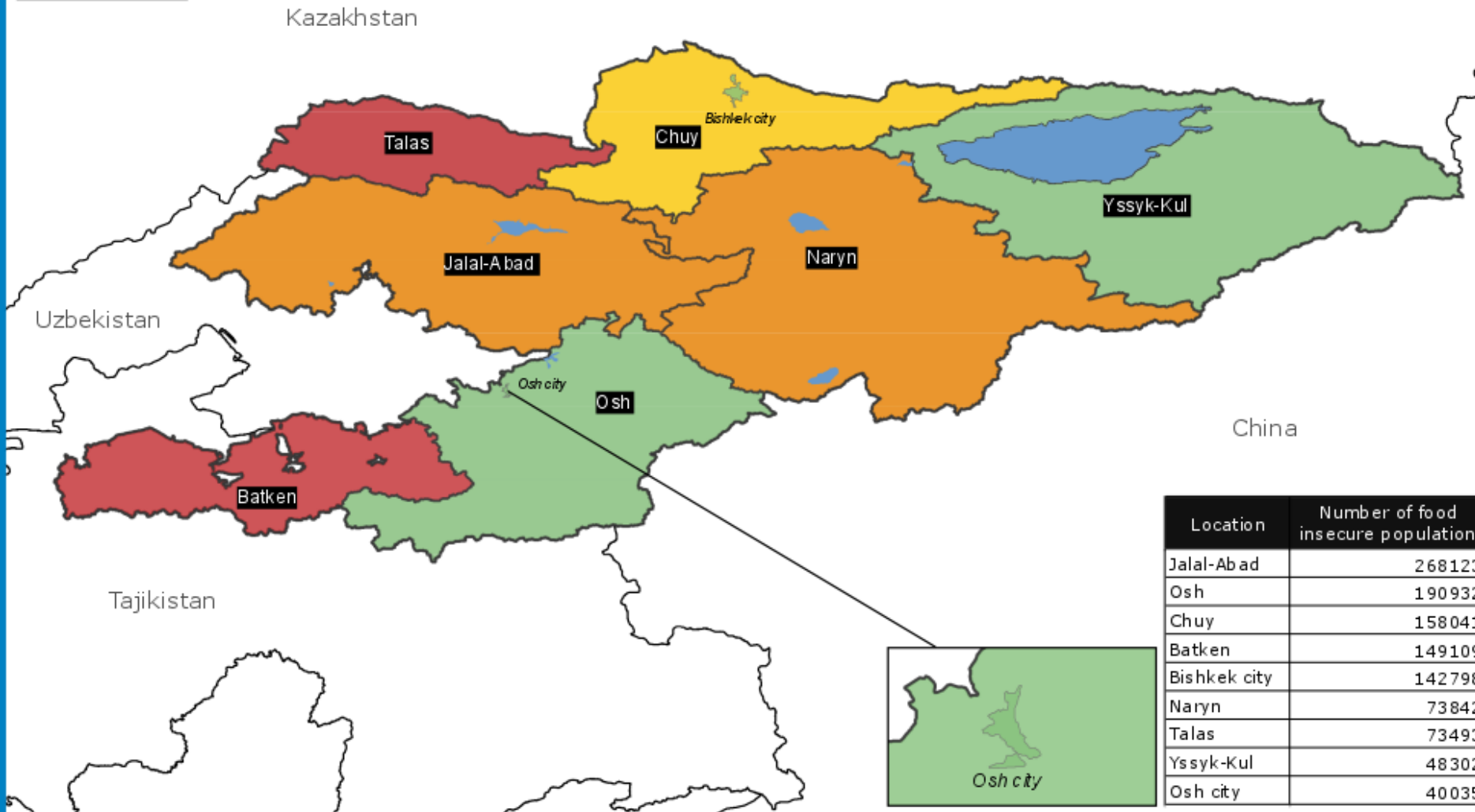
Figure 1. Map of food insecurity

Total **17%** food insecure

Rural **19%** Ethnic minority **18%**

Urban **14%** Ethnic majority **17%**

headed households: **16%** (male icon) **23%** (female icon)

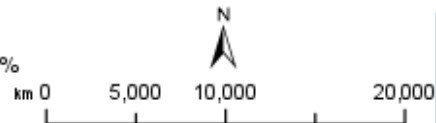


Due to higher population density, **Jalal-Abad** and **Osh** provinces account for **40%** of all food insecure population

Location	Number of food insecure population
Jalal-Abad	268123
Osh	190932
Chuy	158041
Batken	149109
Bishkek city	142798
Naryn	73842
Talas	73493
Yssyk-Kul	48302
Osh city	40035

Legend

- Country boundaries
- Province
- Food Insecurity:
 - < 15 %
 - 15% - 20%
 - 20% - 25%
 - > 25%



Data sources: Boundaries: WFP
Data: WFP, mVAM data collection
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Food Insecurity

- According to the October 2022 survey, **17%** of households were food insecure (14% moderately and 3% severely food insecure)⁵ compared to 21% in August. This is driven by a decrease in food insecurity in Osh city and Jalal-Adad. Yet, 54% of the population remain only marginally food secure.
- Compared to August, food insecurity increased significantly in Batken (+10%) in Talas (+9%) and in Naryn (+7%) regions, which now show the highest levels of food insecurity (Batken - **27%**, Talas - **27%** and Naryn - **25%**). Food insecurity was driven by insufficient food consumption, high dependency on assistance and use of negative coping strategies.
- Household characteristics strongly correlated with food insecurity include female-headed (23%); Having children under 5 & primary-school-aged children (6-11 years of age) and present of people with disabilities/ chronically ill members.

Figure 2. Comparison of food insecurity (rCARI) between August and October 2022

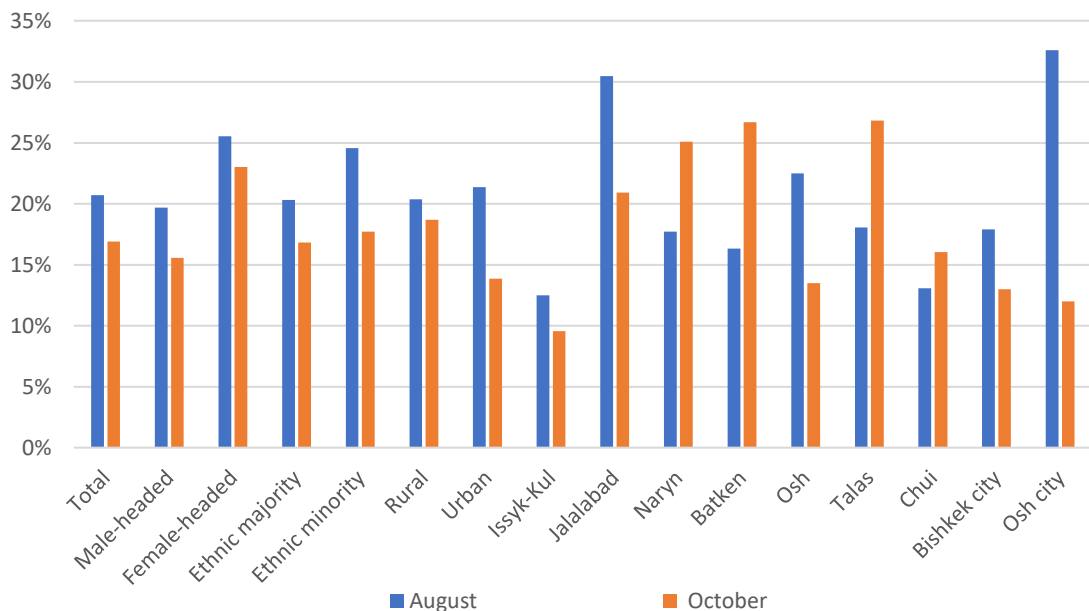
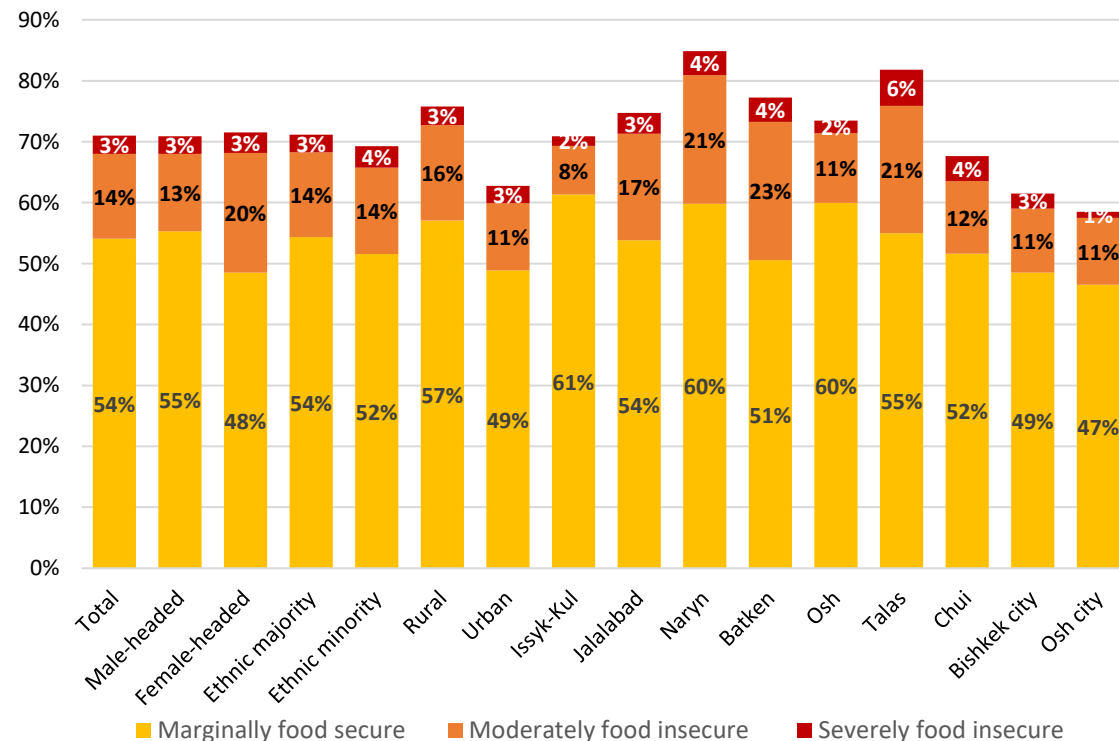


Figure 3. Food insecurity (rCARI) in August 2022 by status and geography (%)



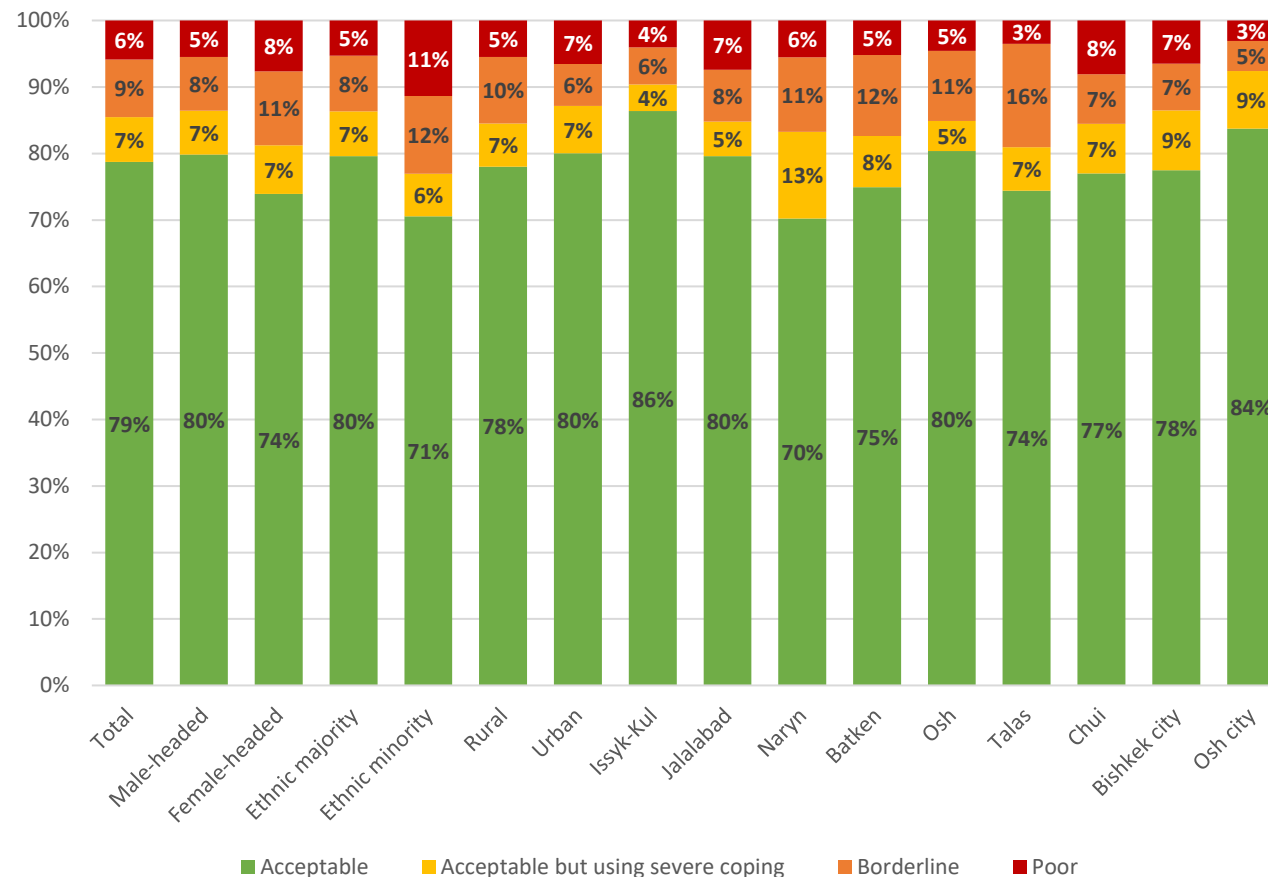
⁵ The CARI is a composite indicator which reflects both current status (food consumption) and coping capacity (economic vulnerability & livelihood coping). For more details, see: Technical Guidance for WFP Consolidated Approach For Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI), Third Edition, December 2021.



Food consumption

- **Around one sixth of all household had insufficient food consumption levels (15% - a decrease of 3% compared to last month).** This improvement could be because September/October is the harvesting season for potatoes and other vegetables and fruits. Therefore, food is generally cheaper, and people start stocking for winter.
- An additional 7% had an acceptable food consumption but was employing severe coping strategies.⁶
- Talas (19%), Batken (17%), and Naryn region (17%) were the three areas with the worst food consumption results.
- In the past 7 days, **41%** of all households felt worried of not having enough food, an increase of 2% compared to last month.
- Almost half of households (**46%**) had some difficulties eating enough food over the past 7 days: **35%** ate less expensive or less preferred food, **7%** skipped meals or ate less than usual and **4%** went at least one whole day and night without eating.

Figure 4. Levels of food consumption by geography (% of HHs)



⁶ This estimate is based on the Food Consumption Score (FCS) indicator which measures dietary diversity and food frequency. A household food consumption score is calculated according to the types of foods consumed during the previous seven days, the frequencies with which they are consumed, and the relative nutritional weight of the different food groups.



Coping strategies and Support

- Households were using negative food-based coping strategies in the past 7 days, such as less desirable/less expensive food (47%), including 19% doing so regularly⁷ or other strategies as shown in Figure 5.
- 80%** of households were using some asset depleting coping strategies: 33% of households used 'stress' coping strategies, 32% of them used 'crisis' coping strategies and 15% used 'emergency' coping strategies (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Food-based coping strategies

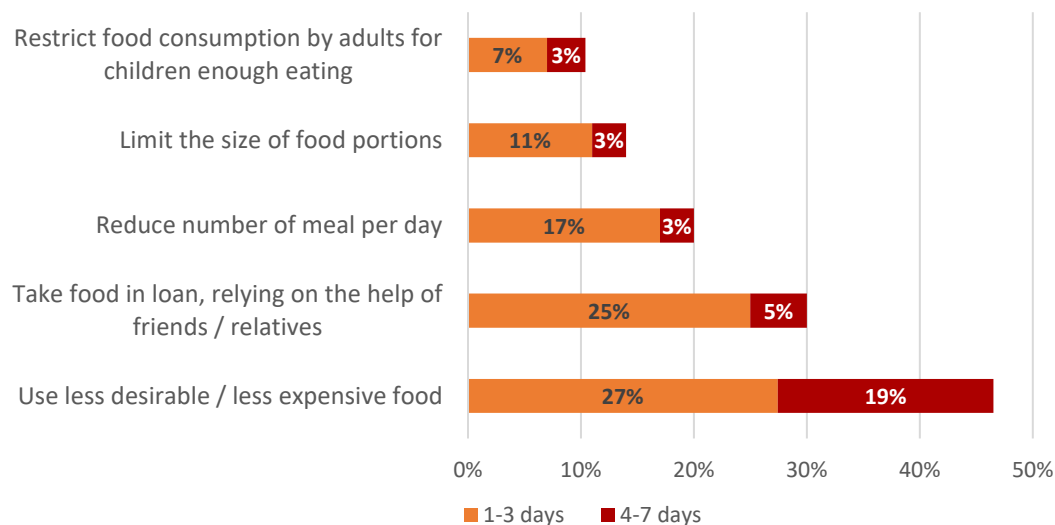
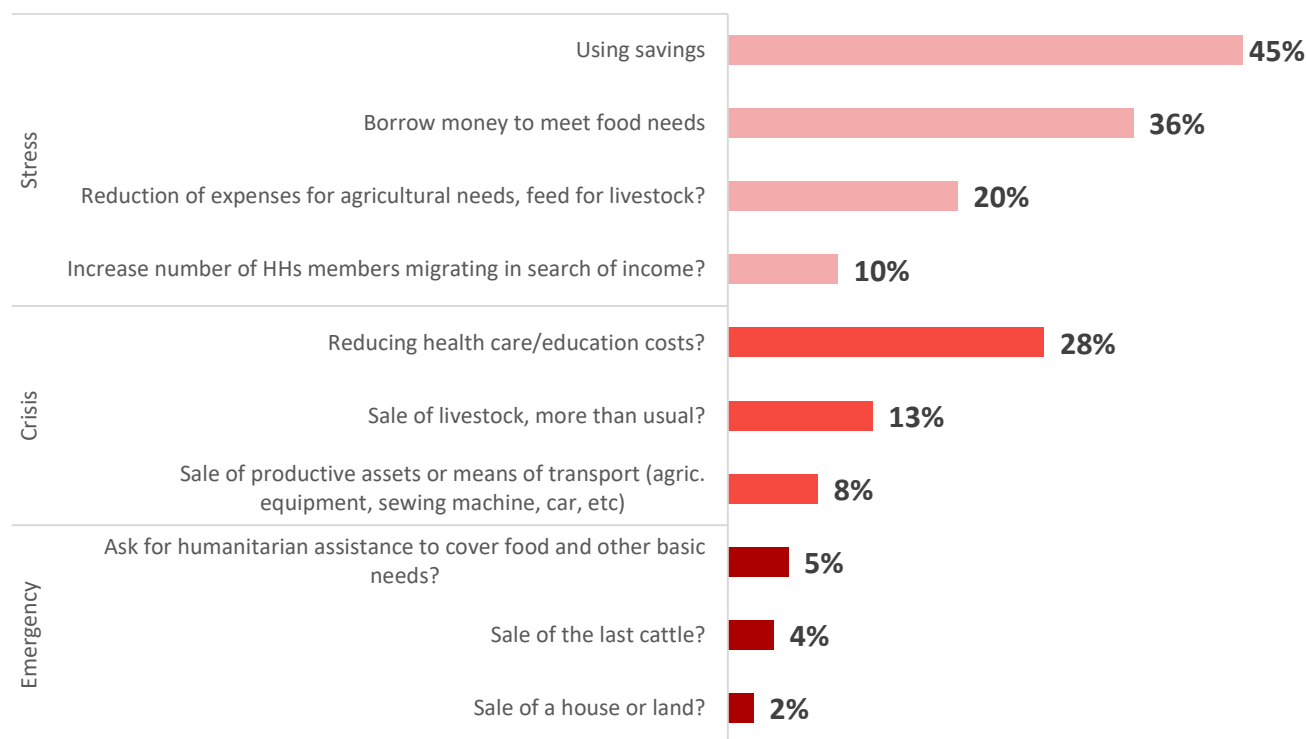


Figure 6. Livelihood-based coping strategy use (% HHs)



The use of negative coping strategies has direct negative consequences to the nutritional, health and productivity status, which are difficult to reverse in the future, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and vulnerability.

⁷ "Regularly" defined as using the food-based coping strategy at least 4 times in the past 7 days.



Income Sources and Economic Situation

- Only **8%** of households reported that their income had decreased since January 2022, with an average decrease of 37%.
- Income losses were particularly concentrated within households living in Talas region (14%), Osh city (14%) and in Chui region (12%).
- Food insecure households heavily rely on assistance or support. This can imply that assistance is rightly channeled, reaching the most vulnerable, but not enough to enable graduation from food insecurity. More needs to be done to promote active labour market policies to facilitate access of the most vulnerable to regular employment.

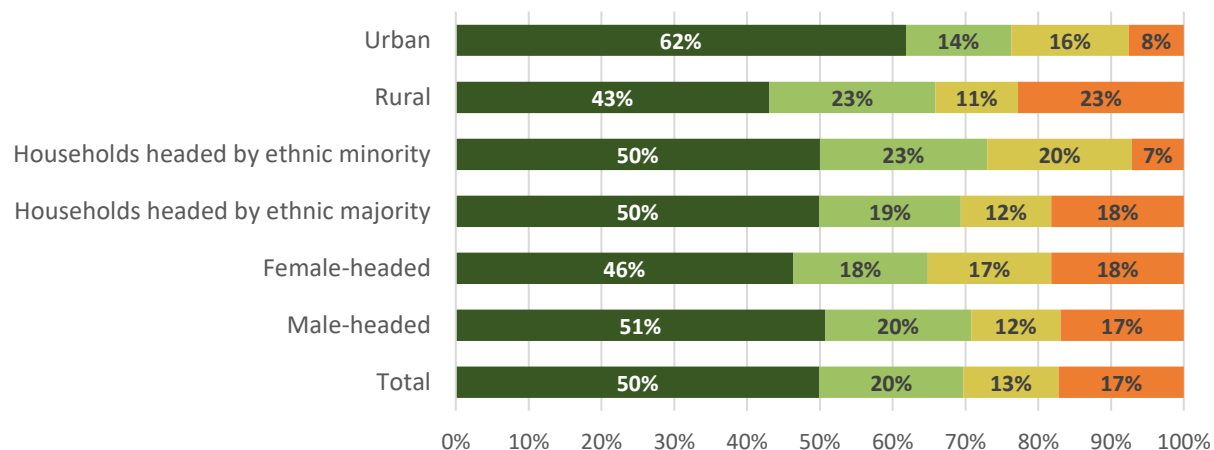
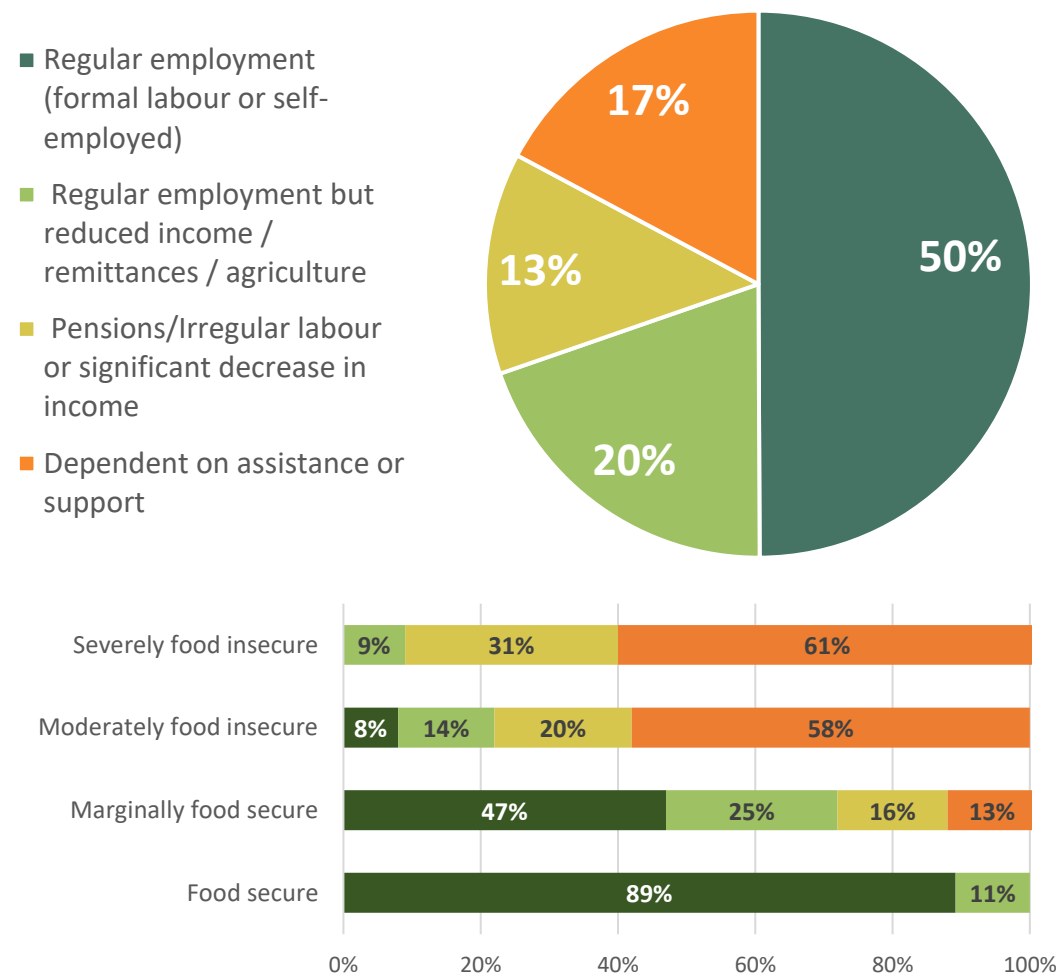


Figure 7. Sources of income (% HHs) and in relation to food security and demographic characteristics





Access to Market



- These are three commodities for which the country heavily relies on import to satisfy the internal demand. The main reason was the **high price** of the commodity (**89%**).
- For both food and non-food items, physical access to the market and availability in stores were not an issue.



Methodology



- The October 2022 food security survey was conducted between 18-31 October and covered 9 stratas: all 7 provinces and 2 large cities (Bishkek and Osh).
- A two-stage cluster sampling was applied to select 1) communities/data collection sites in each strata and 2) households in each data collection site.
 - Confidence interval = 95%
 - Margin of Error = 7%
 - Estimated prevalence = 50%
- A minimum sample of 200 households were interviewed in each strata, resulting in a total sample of 1,800 households.
- The survey used a phone-based (CATI) methodology. Response rate: 21% (8,775 calls) mainly due out of service phones (28%), refuse to participate (26%) and no answer (21%), which may have affected impartiality to some extent.
- The results were weighted to account for population size and share of rural/urban population.



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