

Situation Update



The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed 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 November 2022 was 13.8%² lower compared to the 15.4% recorded in October, the highest inflation rate since July 2011, and among the highest in the region. **Food inflation for key staples is at 16.2%** and CPI for fuel and lubricants at 30% in November 2022.³



Remittances has decreased by 15 percent in January-October 2022, compared to the same period in 2021 (NBKR).



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

Survey Highlights

- The December 2022 food security assessment found that **15%** of households, or more than 1 million people, were **acutely food insecure**, a decrease of 2 percentage points compared to October 2022. This could be explained, in part, by improved food consumption due to harvest in October.
- Prevalence of food insecurity was slightly **higher in rural areas** (16%) compared to urban areas (14%). Food insecurity was highest in **Talas, Jalal-Abad and Naryn** regions and more prevalent among **female-headed households**.
- About 1 in 10 households were consuming an inadequate diet (12%) and an additional **7%** had an acceptable food consumption but were employing severe coping strategies.
- 76%** of households were using some type of **asset depleting coping strategies** (relying on savings and money borrowing), with **15%** of them using **emergency coping strategies** (selling assets – last cattle, land or house – or asking for assistance).
- 9%** of households reported that their income had decreased since January 2022, with an average decrease of 40%.
- 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/>



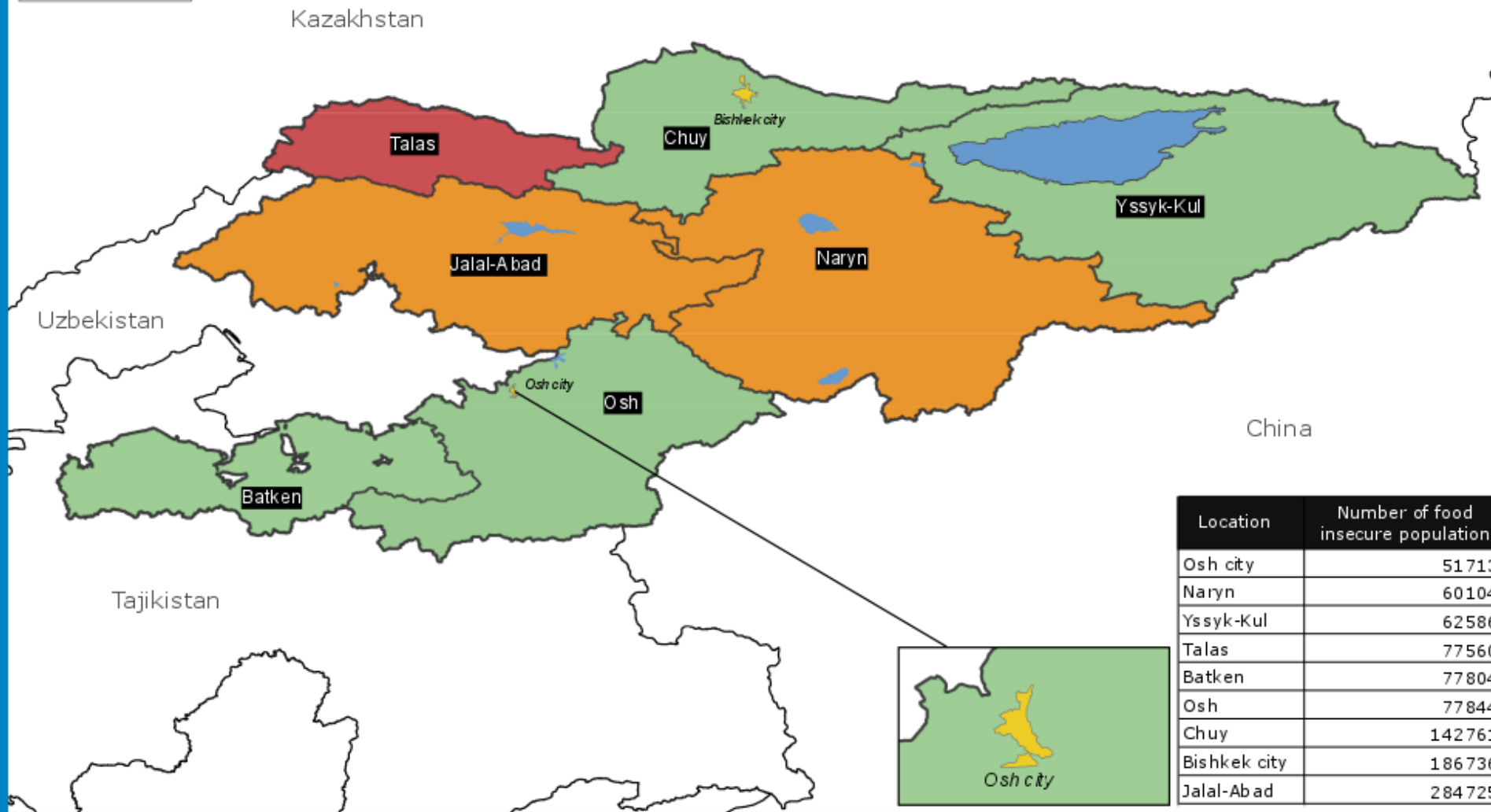
Figure 1. Map of food insecurity

Total food insecure **15%**

Rural **16%** Urban **14%**

Ethnic minority **11%** Ethnic majority **16%**

headed households: Male **14%** Female **21%**



Location	Number of food insecure population
Osh city	51 713
Naryn	60 104
Yssyk-Kul	62 586
Talas	77 560
Batken	77 804
Osh	77 844
Chuy	142 761
Bishkek city	186 736
Jalal-Abad	284 725

Due to higher population density, **Jalal-Abad region** and **Bishkek city** account for **46% of all food insecure population**

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Legend

Country boundaries

Province

Food Insecurity

- < 15%
- 15% - 20%
- 20% - 25%
- > 25%



Data sources: Boundaries: WFP
 Data: WFP; mVAM data collection

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory, city or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

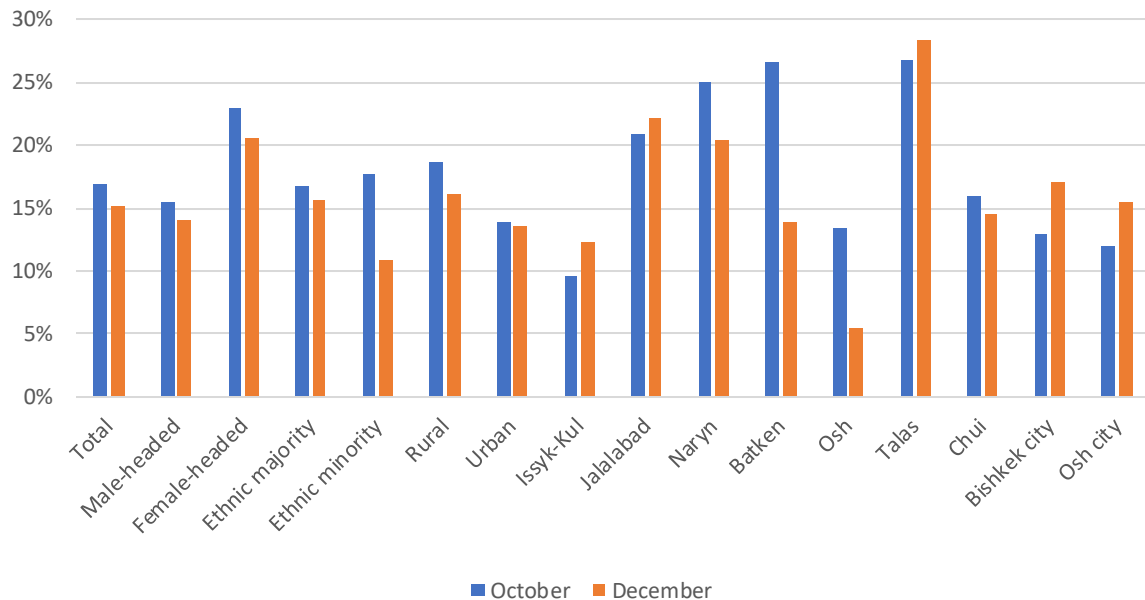
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Food Insecurity

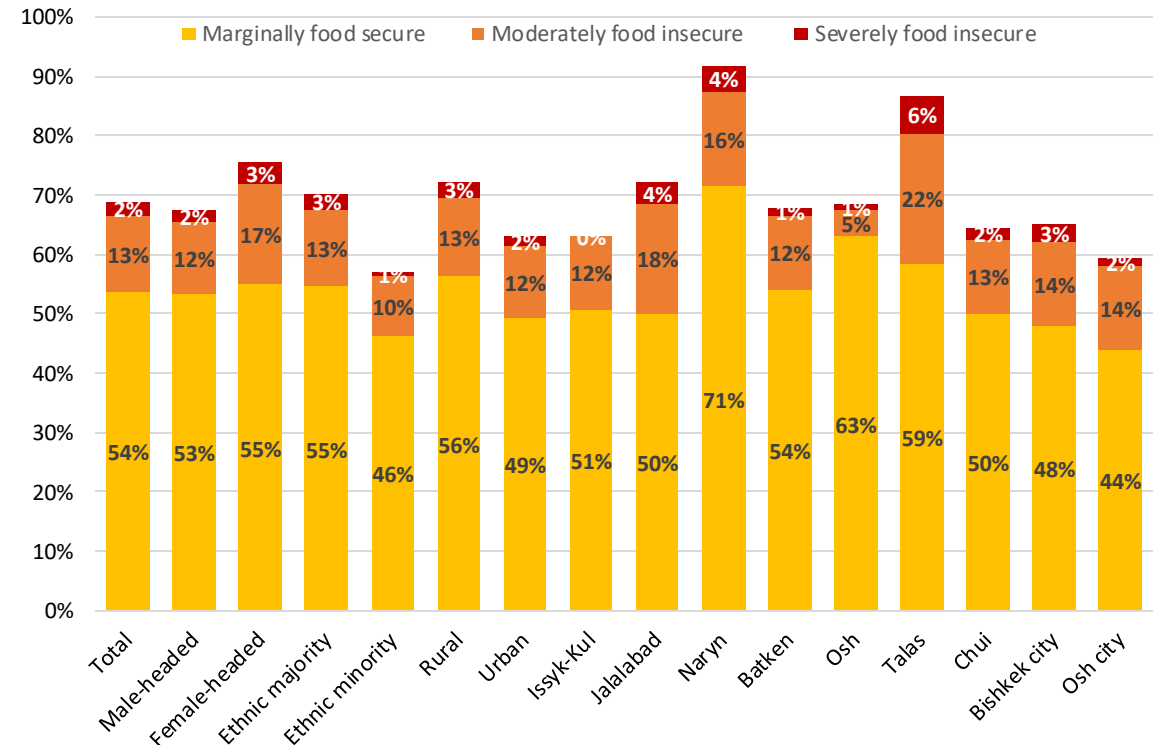
- According to the December 2022 survey, **15%** of households were food insecure (13% moderately and 2% severely food insecure)⁵ compared to 17% in October. The largest improvements in food insecurity were observed in Batken (-13%) and Osh regions (-8%). More than half of the population (54%) remains only marginally food secure.
- Talas (**28%**), Jalal-Abad (**22%**) and Naryn (**20%**) regions, show the highest levels of food insecurity. 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 (21%); having primary-school-aged children (6-11 years of age) and presence of people with disabilities/ chronically ill members.

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



⁵ The rCARI 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.

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

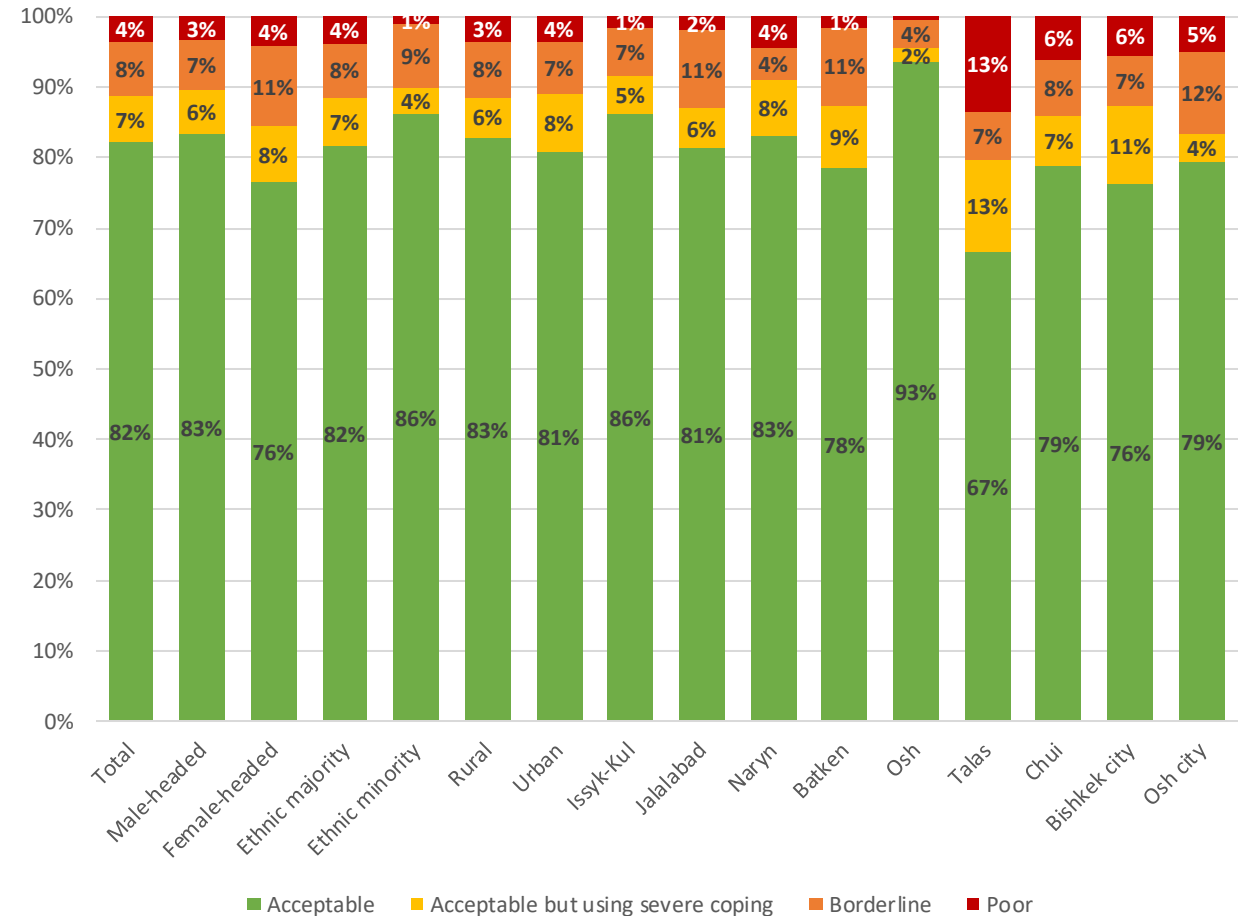




Food consumption

- Over a tenth of all household had insufficient food consumption levels (**12%** - a decrease of 3% compared to last month). This improvement could be because October is still the harvesting season for potatoes and other vegetables and fruits. Therefore, food is generally cheaper and households begin stocking for winter.
- An additional 7% had an acceptable food consumption but was employing severe coping strategies.⁶
- Talas region (**20%**), Osh city (**17%**), and Chui region (**14%**) were the three areas with the worst food consumption results.
- In the past 7 days, **37%** of all households felt worried of not having enough food, a decrease of 4% compared to the previous issue.
- Almost half of households (**43%**) had some difficulties eating enough food over the past 7 days: **33%** ate less expensive or less preferred food, **7%** skipped meals or ate less than usual and **3%** 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 (42%), including 20% doing so regularly⁷ or other strategies as shown in Figure 5.
- 76%** of households were using some asset depleting coping strategies: 31% of households used 'stress' coping strategies, 30% of them used 'crisis' coping strategies and 15% used 'emergency' coping strategies (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Food-based coping strategies

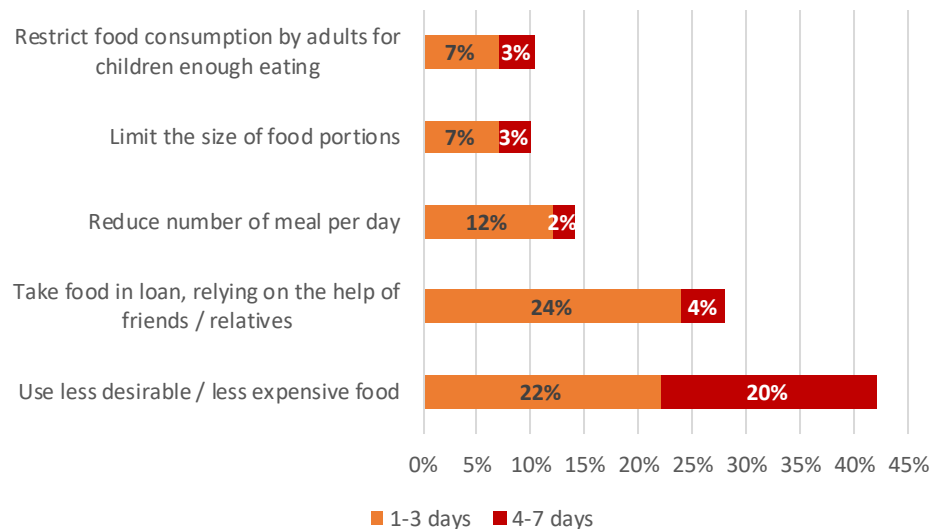
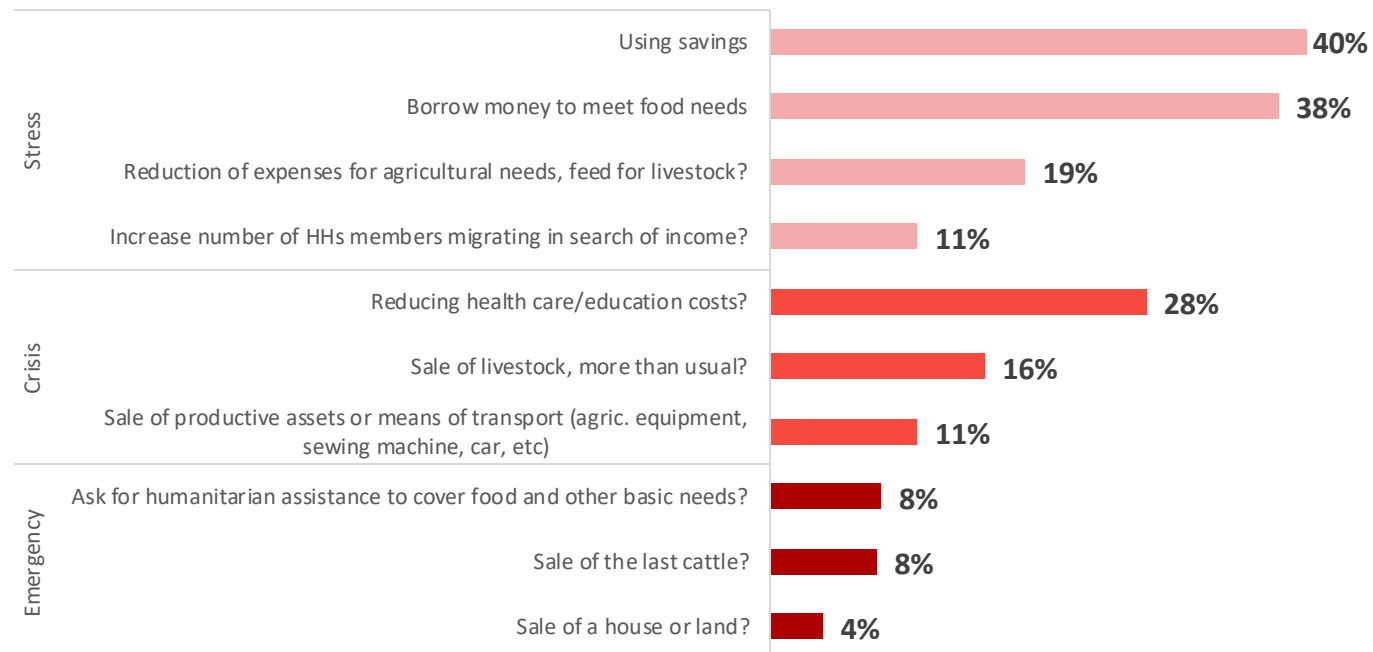


Figure 6. Livelihood-based coping strategy use (% HHS)



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 **9%** of households reported that their income had decreased since January 2022, with an average decrease of 40%.
- Income losses were particularly concentrated within households living in Osh city (18%) and in Naryn (12%) and Chui (10%) regions.
- 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.

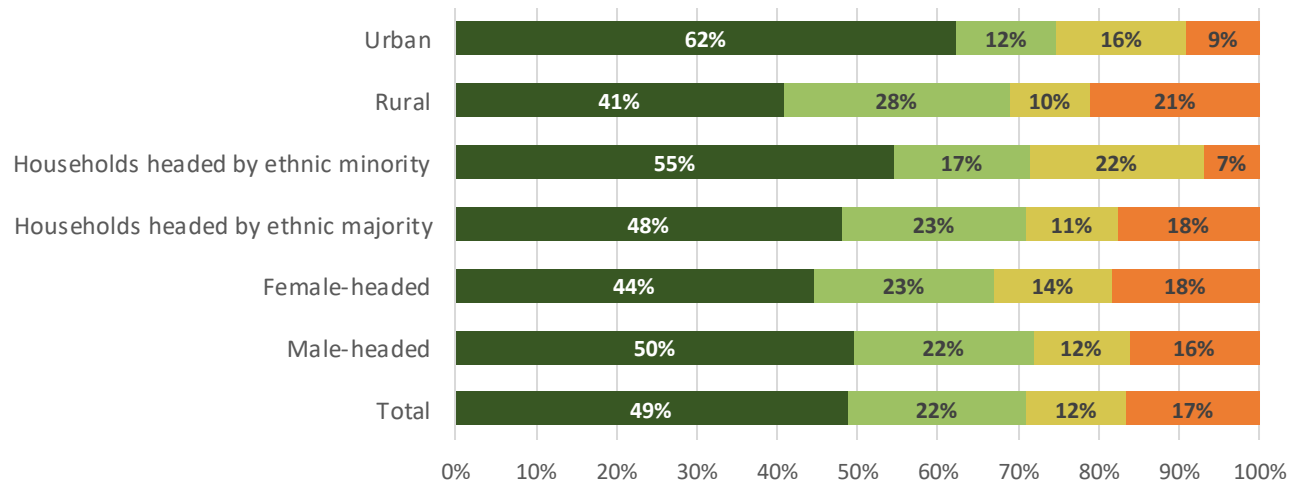
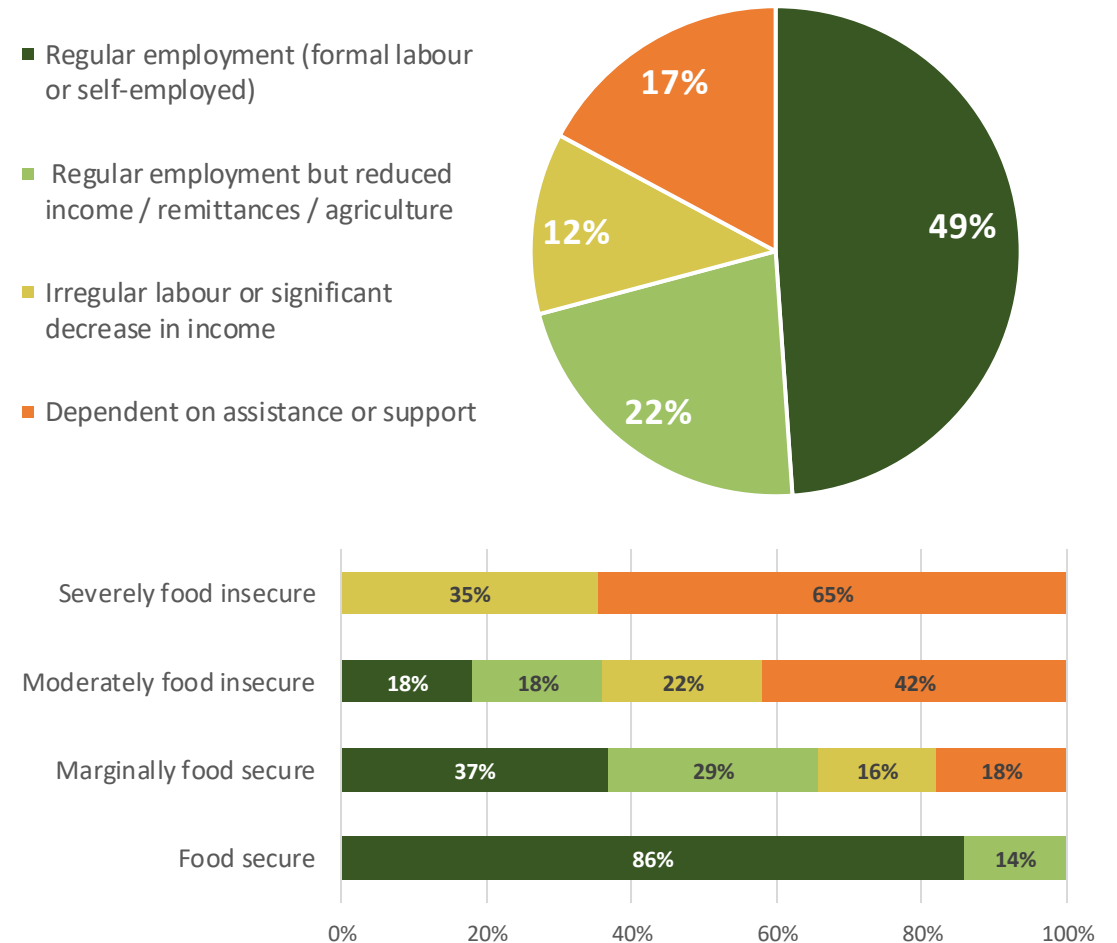
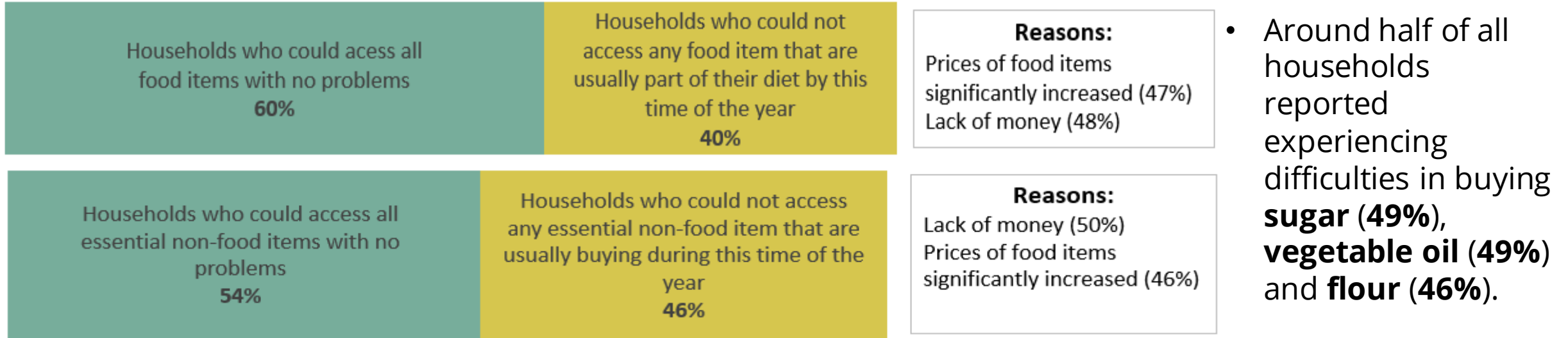


Figure 7. Sources of income (% HHs) and in relation to food security and demographic characteristics





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 December 2022 food security survey was conducted between 25 November - 02 December 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% (8,407 calls) mainly due refuse to participate (27%) out of service phones (26%), and no answer (22%), 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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