VANUATU
mVAM Bulletin

The data presented here was collected via the World Food Programme's mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) survey through telephone interviews conducted across 6 provinces using random-digit dialing between May and June 2023.

HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION

Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin hit the Vanuatu archipelago at the end of February and beginning of March 2023. The twin category 4 cyclones with damaging winds, heavy rains, flooding and storm surge caused significant damage and impacted livelihoods.

By June, following food ration distributions, the majority of households in Vanuatu were able to maintain basic consumption patterns (93%). A total of **14%** of respondents in the most affected Province of **Tafea** reported having a "poor" (2%) and "borderline" (12%) food consumption. The next highest province with "borderline" food intake and diversity was the remote Province of **Torba** with **10%** of households.

Overall, households in Vanuatu have been consuming sufficient quantity of **staples, proteins** and **fats**, and other food groups essential for a balanced diet, for instance **vegetables**, and **pulses**. Cyclone affected households in Tafea and Shefa had less fruits added in their diets, while the dairy products were consumed in limited quantity in all provinces, with the exception of Shefa where the capital is located, where respondents reported dairy intake 3.9 days in the past week.

Similarly, food intake of specific nutrient rich food by households was diverse in Vanuatu. Overall, low or no intakes of **hem iron** was reported by **36%** of the respondents in June. In **Tafea**, 10% of households reported not having iron-rich food groups for the last 7 days, while in Torba and Penama provinces, 13% and 8% of respondents respectively had not been consuming these food groups for the past week.

Hem Iron is a crucial macronutrient required for the prevention of anemia and is found in greater quantities in animal based proteins such as meat, poultry, shellfish and fish.

Sample Population at a glance :

Survey Respondents: 1,223 households

Urban Households: 12%
Rural Households: 88%

Male-headed households: 72%
Female-headed households: 28%

Households reporting having a member/s with disability: 13%

Level of education of the head of the household:
- Primary education: 35%
- Secondary education: 47%
- Tertiary education: 9%
- Vocational Training: 4%
- None: 3%

Percentage of interviewed households with low or no intake of nutrient rich food

Hem Iron — **36%**
Protein — **8%**
Vitamin A — **6%**
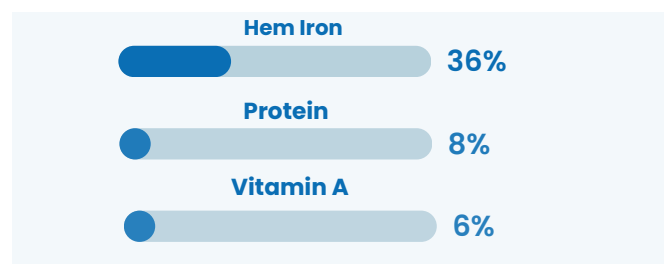
Insufficient intake of **protein** was observed among **8%** of the interviewed households at national level. The low intake of protein reported by 16% of households in Tafea and 11% in Torba respectively.

Low nutrient uptake of food reach in - **Vitamin A** seen among 6% of households, slightly higher - by 2%, compared to the last round of data collection in September 2022. In Tafea and Malampa 12% and 8% reported on insufficient intake of Vitamin A respectively.

LIVELIHOOD-BASED COPING STRATEGIES (LCS)

LCS identifies negative coping strategies adopted by households to meet essential needs. It classifies households according to the most severe coping strategies adopted, which highlights how households' mid to long-term capacity to sustain livelihoods and meet their essential needs is negatively impacted by shocks or disasters.

46.1%
of respondents employing
Livelihood Coping Strategy
Crisis or Emergency
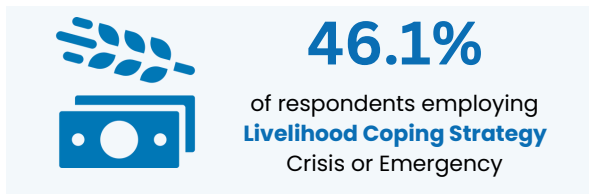
Vanuatu households were seen to employ negative coping strategies to sustain their livelihoods and consumption patterns. Severe forms of coping strategies were adopted by 46% of interviewed households, 6% higher compared to the previous two mVAM rounds in September and June 2022. **Over 50%** of respondents in **Palampa, Torba** and **Tafea** adopted the crisis and emergency strategies to meet the households essential needs and sustain livelihoods.

Percentage of households resorting to coping strategies

Stress strategies, such as borrowing money or spending savings in June 2023 showed a significant - 20% increase in comparison with September 2022. Prolonged use of this strategy may affect the ability of households to deal with future shocks negatively as it could result to the increased debts.

Crisis strategies used by 10% more households in June compared to September 2022. This indicates an increase of selling productive assets to cope with the stresses.

Emergency strategies similarly were used by over 21% of respondents pointing out to the situation, when households resorted to selling-off major productive assets, increasing the risk of susceptibility of capacities to the future shocks.

The **top three negative coping strategies** adopted by Vanuatu households in June 2023 were utilisation of personal savings, reducing health expenses and resorting to begging.

21%	18%	13%
Spent savings	**Reduced health expense**	**Begged***

In June 2023, households expressed ongoing challenges while recovering from the twin cyclones in Vanuatu. **One fifth** of households continue to rely on using **personal savings** to sustain essential needs. The other most pressing concern is the reduction of **health expenses**, with **18%** of surveyed households expressing this worry.

Negative coping strategies employed by households were driven by a number of factors. The increase in **food prices,** cited by **41%** of the respondents, remained a major concern. Escalating costs of essential food items caused a considerable strain on households budgets, prompting the use of crisis and severe strategies to cope with the situation.

Another notable concern highlighted by 7% of households was food shortages (6% more compared to September 2022), followed by the lack of medicine availability.

These factors combined suggest many households find it a challenge to meet essential food and non-food needs and remain vulnerable to potential shocks, while still recovering from the impacts of of the cyclone in the first quarter of the year.

1	**INCREASE OF FOOD PRICES**
2	**FOOD SHORTAGE**
3	**SHORTAGE IN MEDICINE**

Overall, **29% of respondents** in Vanuatu reported receiving **remittances** within the last 30 days - 13% higher compared to September 2022.

The survey confirms that remittances supported in maintaining consumption patterns by many households and greatly contributed in sustaining households productive assets - an important driver for recovery of households from the impacts of the recent tropical cyclones.

*In their response, the interviewees may also meant the support received through "wan-tok system"

Methodology:

This mVAM Bulletin reflects data collected in end May and June 2023 via remote data collection facilitated through telephone calls in participants preferred language, mainly Bislama. The telephone numbers were generated using random-digit dialing, yielding 1,223 households. The questionnaire contained questions on households, livelihoods, food consumption - nutritional quality, livelihood based coping strategies, multi-dimensional deprivation index, remittances, and debt. A final open ended question gives respondents the chance to share any additional concerns regarding disruptions about food security in their community. The Information collected through mobile interviews may be biased towards gender and households subscribed to the phone provider.

Other Resources: Vanuatu mVAM Dashboard

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