



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 September and October 2023.

HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION

In September 2023, **97%** of interviewed households in Vanuatu reported **acceptable** food consumption levels - an increase of 4% compared to May the same year.

Quality of diet and its **diversity** also improved with more households consuming sufficient quantity of proteins and other essential foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and pulses.

In the past **seven days**, the average Vanuatu household in September 2023 had consumed:

STAPLES	VEGETABLES	FATS	SUGARS
6.9 days up from 6.8	6.4 days up from 6.1	4.5 days unchanged 4.5	6.2 days up from 6.0
FRUITS	PROTEINS	DIARY	PULSES
4.1 days up from 3.6	5.9 days up from 5.1	2.9 days up from 2.8	5.0 days up from 4.2

Although the food consumption patterns point to an adequate intake in September, the mVAM data indicated high levels of extreme coping strategies adopted by households, particularly for those residing in **Penama** and **Malampaa** provinces (see next pages for more information).

Adoption of negative coping strategies, show that many household were **vulnerable** to food security and livelihoods shocks and disasters even before Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lola passed through the country's Northern provinces, damaging houses, livelihoods and crops.

TC Lola was the third severe tropical cyclone to pass through the country during 2023, following cyclones Judy and Kevin, impacted the island nation in March.

The food security of households in these two provinces would have deteriorated significantly in the aftermath of TC Lola without timely support by the Government and partners.

Sample Population at a glance :



Survey Respondents: 1,277 households



Urban Households: 15%
Rural Households: 85%



Male-headed households: 74%
Female-headed households: 26%

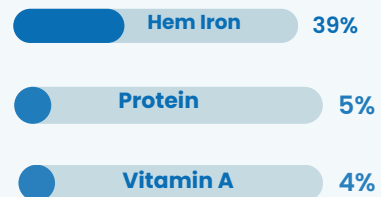


Households reporting having a member/s with disability: 13%

Level of education of the head of the household:

- Primary education: 35%
- Secondary education: 50%
- Tertiary education: 8%
- Vocational Training: 4%
- None: 4%

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



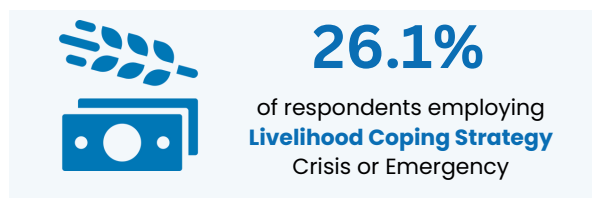
Insufficient intake of **Iron** was observed among **39%** of the interviewed households at national level, indicating a 14% decrease from the May 2023.

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.

The low intake of **protein** reported by **5%** of the respondents. Low nutrient uptake of food rich in **Vitamin A** was observed among **4%** of households, slightly lower - by 2%, compared to May 2023.

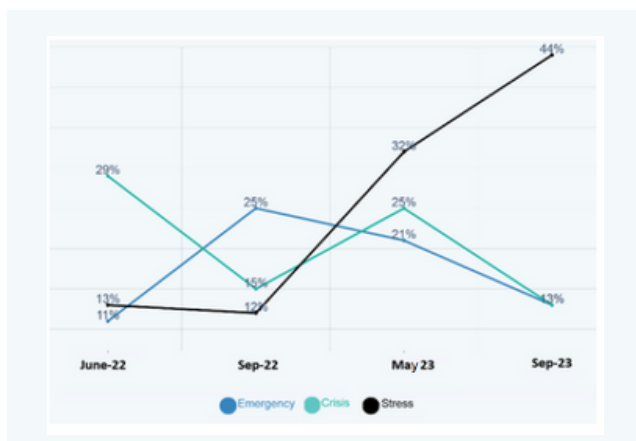
LIVELIHOOD-BASED COPING STRATEGIES (LCS)

Use of LCS highlights the mid- to long-term capacity of households to sustain livelihoods when negatively impacted by shocks or disasters. The LCS captures the strategies households have to engage in when insufficient resources are available (food, cash) to meet essential needs, such as adequate shelter, education services and health services.



Ni-Vanuatu households were seen to employ negative coping strategies to maintain their consumption patterns and sustain livelihoods. **Twenty six percent** of interviewed households reported using emergency and crisis coping strategies - **20%** less than in May 2023.

Percentage of households resorting to coping strategies



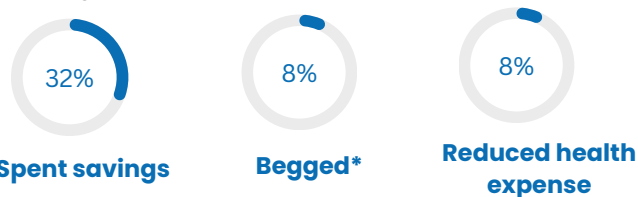
Stress strategies (borrowing money, spending savings, etc.) were used by **44%** of households, an increase of **12%** since May 2023. Prolonged dependencies on these strategies can result in increasing debts and erode the capacities of already stretched households to cope with future shocks.

Crisis strategies, in September, were adopted by less than 12% of households compared to May, and adopted by 13% of interviewed households. As a positive sign, this indicates a decrease in sale of productive assets to cope with the stresses.

Emergency strategies were used by 13% of respondents (8% lower than in May 2023), pointing to households resorting to selling-off major productive assets, increasing vulnerability to future shocks.

* In their response, the interviewees may also meant the support received through "Wantok" system

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



More than a third of households continue to rely on using personal savings to sustain livelihoods and meet essential needs. Respondents reported facing ongoing challenges as they continue to rely on personal savings and resorting to borrowing money for food.

The increase in food prices, highlighted by **41%** of the respondents, remained a major concern. Escalating costs of essential food items has caused a considerable strain on household budgets, prompting the use of crisis and severe coping strategies reported by over a **quarter** of households.

Another concern highlighted by many households was that of **food shortages**, particularly by respondents in Tafea and Malampa (26% and 14% of households respectively). Disruption of livelihoods, was reported as another primary concern, mainly in Torba (perhaps after experiencing the damages in livelihoods from TCs Judy and Kevin in March).

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 recent impacts of cyclone.



Twenty eight percent of respondents had received **remittances** within the last 30 days - 1% less compared to May 2023. The proportion of **female-headed households** receiving remittances was higher than those headed by males - 32% and 27% respectively. This additional income source may have been a contributor to households being able to hold onto productive assets and sustain access to markets for food and essential non-food items.

The survey also highlighted a higher number of households with **reduced** or **no income** were located in rural areas (14%) than in urban centers (7%).

SUB-NATIONAL ANALYSIS

In September 2023, food consumption patterns in all provinces in Vanuatu acceptable levels, indicating improvement from the previous mVAM survey round in May this year. It's worth noting that borderline food consumption did not exceed **5%** in any province.

In September, the survey highlighted that across Vanuatu households consumed more **pulses** than in other Pacific countries - over 4.5 days a week. Despite being a country with a large proportion of cattle farmers, **dairy** products were consumed least, with the exception of **Shefa** province where respondents reported consuming dairy products at least 4 days in a 7 day period. This trend is consistent with the findings of the previous mVAM round, pointing to a potential **disparity** in access to dairy products across the country.

Port villa has the highest population earning their income from salaries. This may account for the slightly higher consumption of dairy products in **Shefa province** than other provinces. Cultural factors may also play a role, as dairy products may not be as prevalent in the diets of rural more traditional communities.

Households reported an adequate intake of protein and vitamin A rich-foods during this survey round, however, consumption of iron remains

	Malampa	Penama	Sanma	Shefa	Tafea	Torba
STAPLES	6.9	6.8	6.9	6.9	6.7	6.6
VEGETABLES	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.6	6.1	5.7
SUGARS	5.9	6.0	6.3	6.6	5.7	5.3
PROTEINS	5.2	5.4	6.2	6.6	5.6	4.3
PULSES	5.6	5.0	5.0	4.7	5.1	4.6
FATS	3.7	3.8	5.0	5.3	3.8	3.2
FRUITS	4.6	4.2	4.8	4.2	2.4	4.0
DAIRY	2.4	2.5	2.7	3.8	1.7	3.5

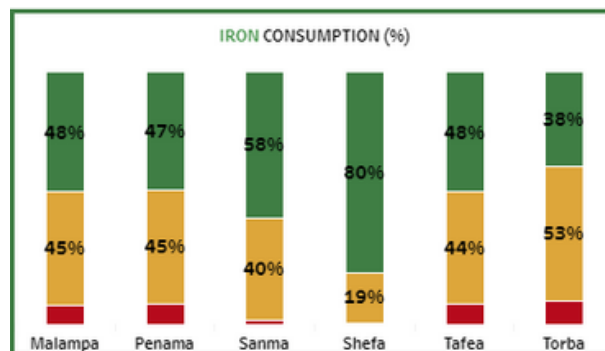
insufficient amongst households across all six provinces.

Overall, frequency and diversity of the main food groups remained acceptable in all provinces of Vanuatu, although households reported eating insufficient **iron-rich foods** such as fish, shellfish, legumes, lentils, etc. into their diet.

In both **Malampa** and **Penama**, approximately **8%** of households reported **not** having consumed **iron-rich** food groups within the past seven days; the highest proportion among all provinces. Respondents in these two provinces also reported an insufficient intake of **Vitamin A**: 8% and 12% respectively.

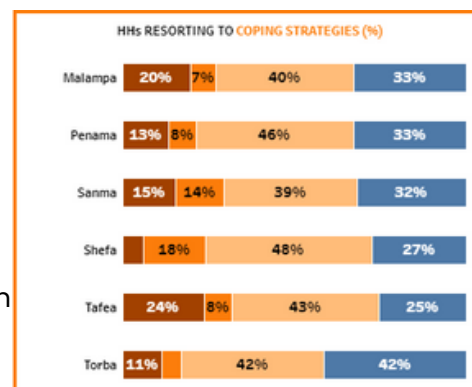
Shefa province demonstrated significantly higher iron intake compared the rest of the provinces, with over **80%** of households reporting to have consumed iron-rich foods daily for the last seven days.

In **Torba**, 53% of respondents consume iron between 1-6 days in a week, with another 9% not consuming iron-reach foods at all.



To sustain their livelihoods, essential needs and consumption patterns, households across Vanuatu reported employing diverse **coping strategies**.

Overall, the number of households resorting to crisis and emergency coping strategies decreased in September 2023



compared to May, when households were still recovering from the aftermath of TCs Judy and Kevin. The most extreme form of coping strategy - emergency - was used more by households in Tafea and Malampa provinces - 24% and 20% respectively. Shefa province reported 18% of respondents utilizing crisis coping strategies, followed by Sanma at 14% and Tafea and Penama at 8% respectively.

Households residing in the northern provinces of **Penama, Sanma, Malampa** and **Torba**, employed all coping strategies - emergency, crisis and stress - more frequently, suggesting that many households were vulnerable to shocks prior to TC Lola hitting the areas in October, following the completion of this survey round.

Methodology:

This mVAM Bulletin reflects data collected in September and October 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 1,277 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](#)



For more information, please contact:

Saidamon Bodamaev

saidamon.bodamaev@wfp.org
Head of Research, Assessment
and Monitoring (RAM)
Pacific Multi Country Office
World Food Programme

Mosese Qaloewai

mosese.qaloewai@wfp.org
Vulnerability Analysis and
Mapping (VAM) Officer
Pacific Multi Country Office
World Food Programme

