

Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

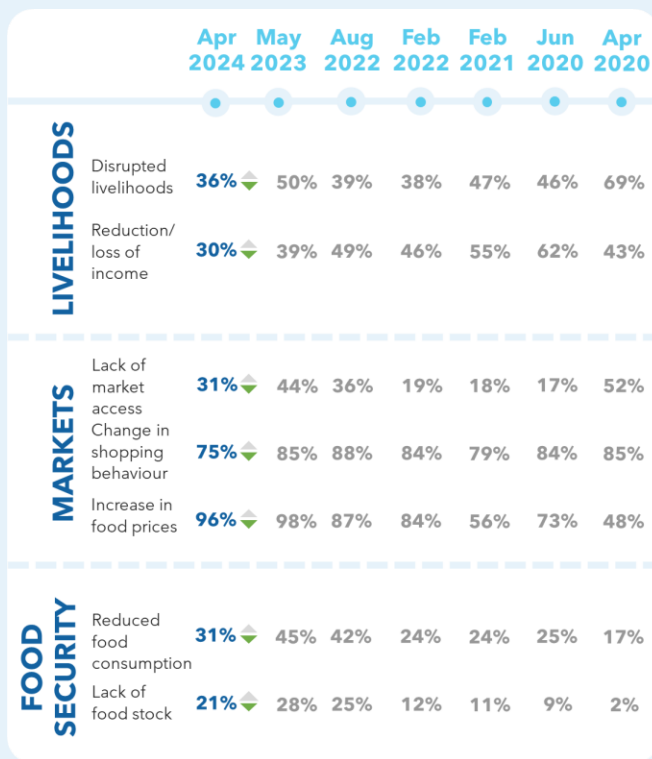
BARBADOS | April 2024

Climate change threatens food security and livelihoods in the Caribbean by disrupting food production, access, and availability. This increased climate variability, combined with high living costs, provides additional challenges for already vulnerable households, particularly those dependent on climate-sensitive livelihoods like farming and fishing, to cope with, and rebound from shocks.

The CARICOM Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey provides snapshots over time of people's livelihoods, access to markets and food security. The survey aims to inform the decision-making of governments and development partners in the region, building on the data collected in the previous six rounds, highlighting the state of food security and livelihoods amid the continued high cost of living and risks related to climate change.

This report analyses data for Barbados from the seventh round of data collection, which took place from 19 March to 24 April 2024. It compares findings with six previous survey rounds conducted between April 2020 and May 2023. National level findings may vary from regional trends, nuancing local context and challenges. While the survey contributes to a better overview of current state of food security and livelihoods, the data is not representative, and the use of an online questionnaire limits inputs from people without internet connectivity.

Main results from the Barbados surveys



Apr 2024

347

Respondents

71% | 29%
Female | Male

May 2023

1113

Respondents

75% | 25%
Female | Male

Aug 2022

562

Respondents

72% | 28%
Female | Male

Feb 2022

995

Respondents

72% | 28%
Female | Male

Feb 2021

1507

Respondents

74% | 26%
Female | Male

Jun 2020

1198

Respondents

71% | 29%
Female | Male

Apr 2020

537

Respondents

72% | 28%
Female | Male



Natural hazards

Barbados is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards that pose a significant threat for climate sensitive livelihood activities and people’s lives. The Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) shows that there were 12 reported natural hazards in Barbados between 1980 - 2023. Primarily storms (9 out of 12), followed by drought (1), flood (1) and earthquake (1).

Recorded events between 1980-2023 affected over 14,179 people in Barbados. Tropical storms accounted for all recorded disaster-related damages (USD 271 million). Tropical cyclone Emily in 1987 caused damages equivalent to USD 258 million alone. Databases like EM-DAT provide trends but likely underestimate the financial and human impacts that cascade across sectors. Hurricane Beryl caused significant damage to fisheries in 2024, among other impacts.



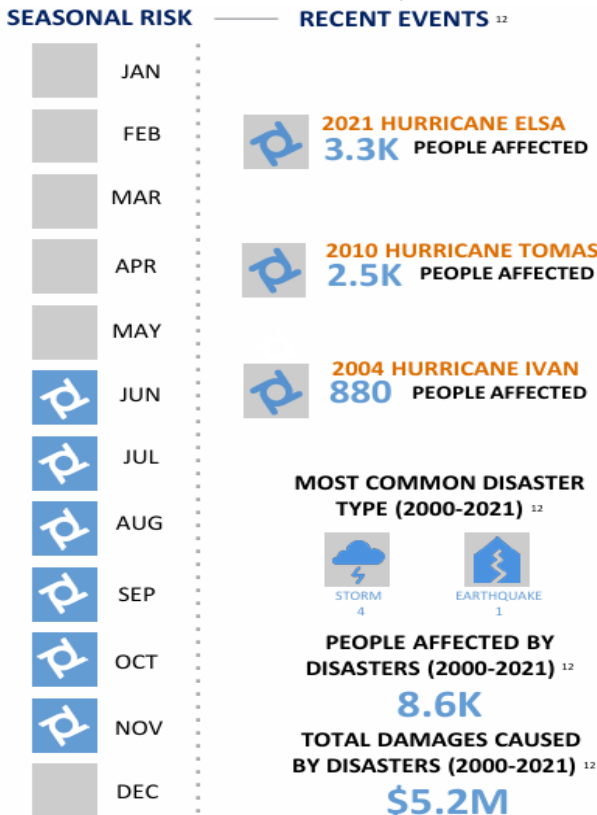
Macro-Economic Dynamics

Barbados local food prices are highly vulnerable to fluctuations in regional and global food markets. According to FAO’s Food Price Index, global food prices have decreased by 7.4 percent as of April 2024 from its corresponding value one year ago. Food inflation in Barbados reached an all-time high in December 2022. However, the latest available data for January 2024 food prices still increased by almost 9 percent compared to the same time in 2023, continuing to affect purchasing power of many.

Most survey respondents from Barbados continue to report significant price increases in food and housing with price increases also observed across a wide variety of goods and services (see page 3).

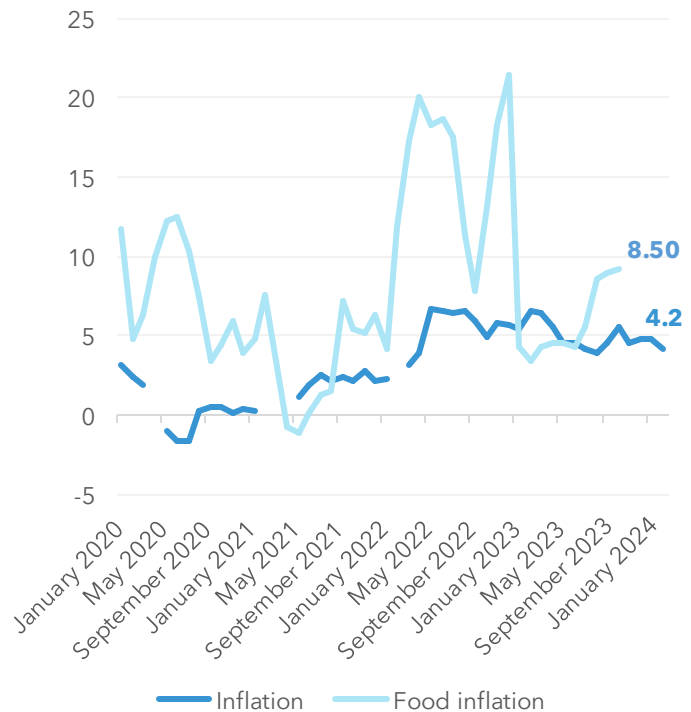
Seasonal Risk and Recent Hazards in Barbados (2000-2021)

Source: OCHA - Barbados Country Profiles - EMDAT



Inflation in Barbados (Jan 2020 - Feb 2024)

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, FAOSTAT and Trading Economics





Markets

Three (3) out of ten (10) respondents reported challenges accessing markets in the month prior to the survey, a slight decrease from the previous survey round. Lack of money to spend continues to be overwhelmingly reported as the main factor limiting market access, cited by 98 percent of those unable to access markets. A quarter of respondents have changed how they shop by increasingly buying cheaper and less preferred foods (67 percent) and purchasing smaller quantities than usual (60 percent).

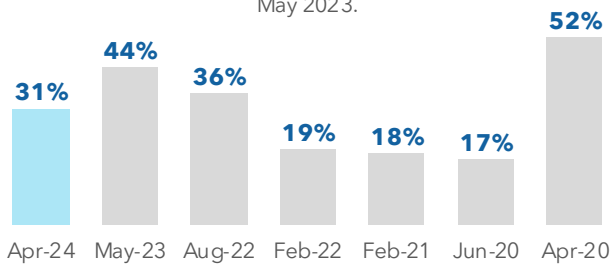
Respondents continue to report increased prices in commodities, especially food. Nearly all respondents (96 percent) reported an increase in food prices over the 3 months prior to the survey. Aside from food, the most significant price increases have been observed for housing (34 percent), electricity (33 percent) and gas (28 percent).

Lack of funds continue to be the overwhelming factor with nearly all (98%) respondents citing it as the main barrier to accessing markets. Respondents from the over 60 age group, and mixed families were more likely to cite transportation challenges. Overall, the limitations were largely similar by sex of respondents, sex of head of households, locality or households with disability.

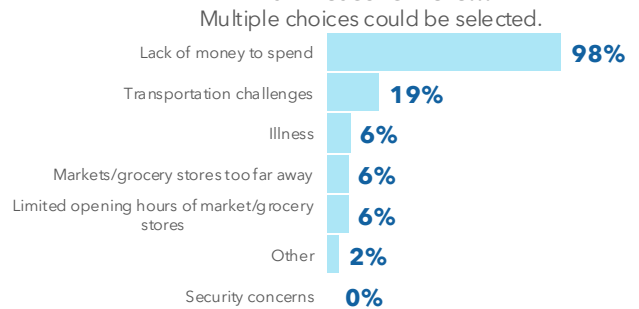
In order to adapt to these disruptions, three quarters of respondents from Barbados have changed how they shop. Sixty seven percent are purchasing cheaper or less preferred foods. Over half of the respondents (52 percent) are reporting going to different stores when compared with results from May 2023 (38 percent). Those relying on informal daily/casual labour are more likely to adapt and compromise their shopping behaviour when compared to those with more stable income sources.

Respondents unable to access markets in the 30 days prior to the survey

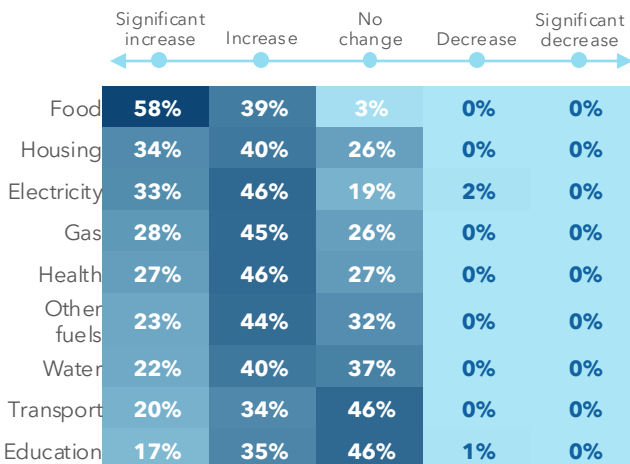
Recall period was changed from 7 to 30 days in May 2023.



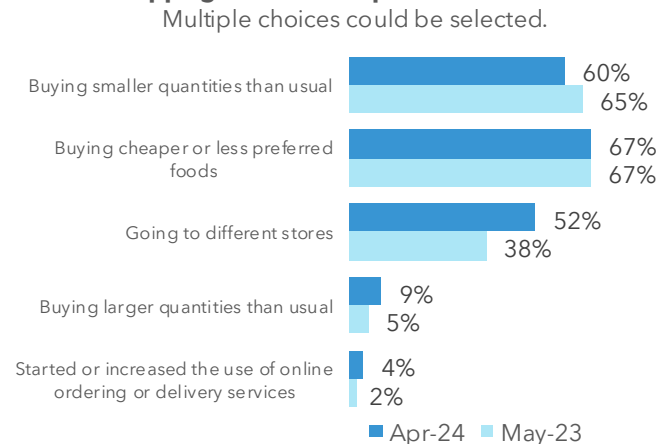
For those that faced a time when they could not access markets in the past 30 days, the main reasons were...



Respondents reporting a change in the costs of the commodities in the 3 months prior to the survey



Respondents who reported a change in their shopping habits in the past 3 months are...





Livelihoods

A third of respondents faced disruptions to their livelihoods in the 30 days prior to the survey.

Unaffordability of livelihood inputs remains the main driver, cited by 61 percent of those affected by disruptions. Respondents relying on remittances most frequently reported on livelihood disruptions, followed by those with no income and petty traders. Respondents involved in agriculture report high costs of inputs, especially for animal feed, labour, tools and water.

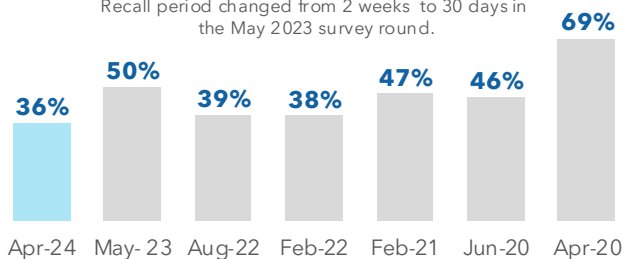
Three out of ten respondents experienced job loss or reduced salaries in their households in the 6 months prior to the survey. The proportion of those having to resort to secondary or alternative sources of income has remained relatively consistent since August 2022, suggesting the continuation of economic hardship and people turning to new ways of earning a living.

Nearly half of respondents experienced job loss or reduced salaries in their households in the six months prior to the survey, which is a 14 percent reduction to what was reported in May 2023.

There were some marked differences in household income changes between perceived income levels of the respondents. Households from “below” and “well below average” income levels were also more likely to suffer losses, whereby those from average level or above seem to have more capacity to resort to secondary income sources. Households with one or more member with a disability or chronic illness were also more likely to experience job loss and or having to resort to an alternative source of income. Other groups more susceptible to negative household income changes include those with no formal education, those with no income, or relying on remittances. There were no major differences between sex of the respondent or locality.

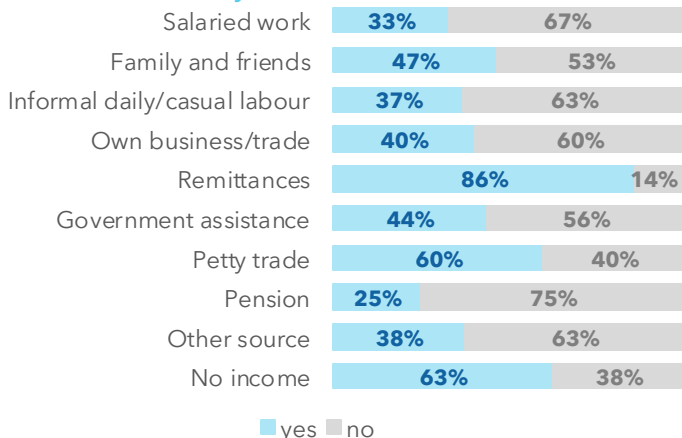
Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey

Recall period changed from 2 weeks to 30 days in the May 2023 survey round.



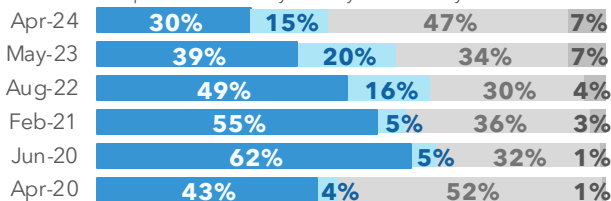
Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey

By main income sources



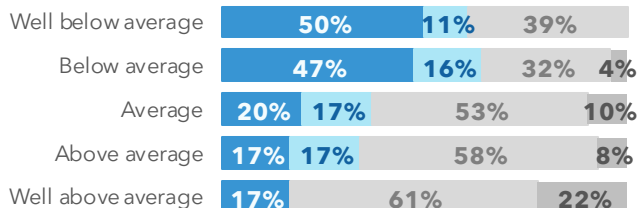
Has your household income changed in the 6 months prior to the survey?

Recall period changed from "since Covid-19" to "in the 6 months prior to the survey" in May 2023 survey round

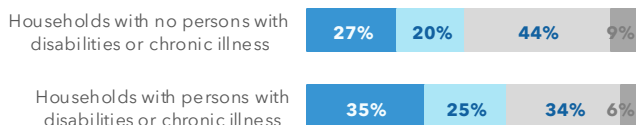


- Loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues
- Resorted to secondary/alternative source of income
- No change
- Increased employment or salaries/revenues

By perceived income level



By households with a disability or person with chronic illness





Coping Strategies

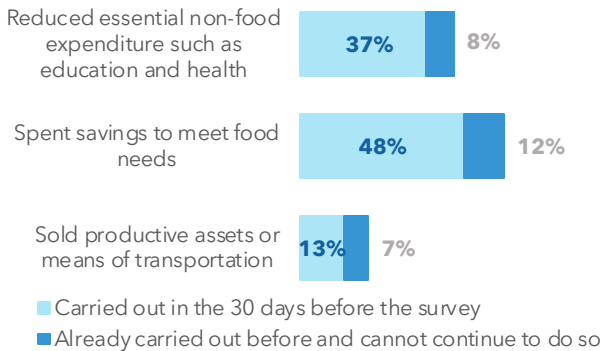
Respondents from Barbados are using potentially harmful coping strategies to address immediate needs. Respondents may be compromising their wellbeing or future livelihoods by selling productive assets (20 percent), spending savings (60 percent) or reducing expenditures on health and education (45 percent).

Respondents who rely on assistance and informal labour are more prone to divert to negative coping strategies to make ends meet when compared with those with regular income. Households with below and well below average income are also more frequently having to reduce non-essential expenditure and spending savings.

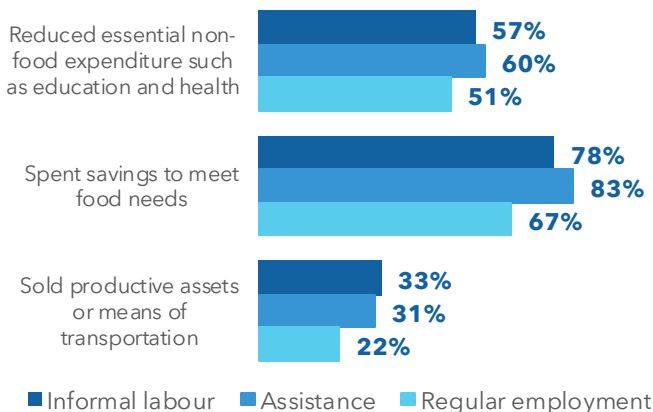
Overall, coping strategies deployed are largely similar when comparing between sex, sex of head of household, locality and income sources.

Households' coping strategies

Multiple choices could be selected.



By income source



Food consumption

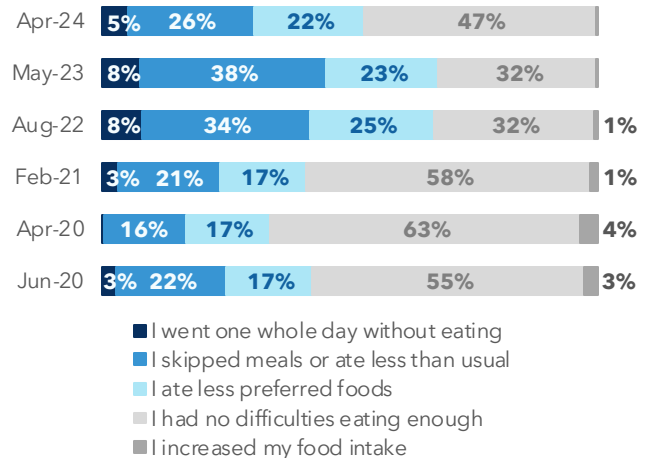
Over half of respondents are skipping meals, eating less preferred foods, or going an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey. Though these results are a marked improvement from May 2023 (68 percent) they are significantly higher than previous rounds.

Alarmingly, nearly a quarter of households that describe their income as well below average income reported going a whole day without eating.

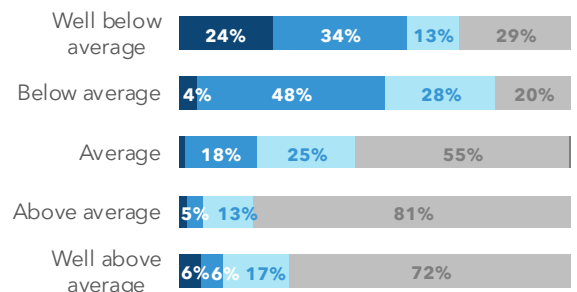
Overall, over half of households from well below or below average income are either having to skip meals, eat less than usual, or go a whole day without eating.

One fifth of respondents have no food stocks at home, while 36 percent reported having less than a week's worth of food supplies.

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



By perceived income level





Food Insecurity Prevalence

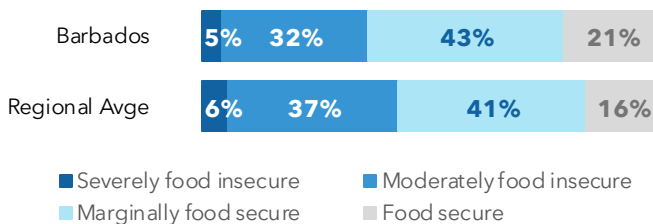
The rCARI, is an adapted version of the Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI). The CARI classifies individual households according to their level of food security. rCARI assesses two dimensions: (1) the current status of households' food consumption (based on food consumption 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). **For more information on the CARI, see WFP's [Technical Guidance Notes Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security \(CARI\)](#).*

Using the rCARI methodology to determine the levels of food insecurity, it is estimated that five percent of the Barbados population are severely food insecure, and 32 percent are moderately food insecure, slightly lower than the regional average.

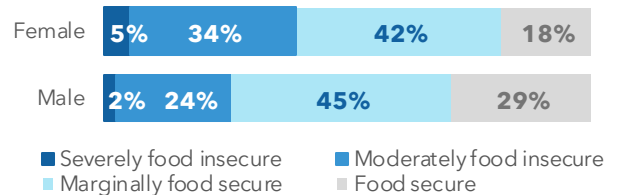
When comparing perceived income levels, households reporting much below average income makes up 44 percent of households who are severely food insecure. Severe or moderate food insecurity was also more prevalent amongst female respondents (39 percent compared to 26 percent of male respondents).

Overall, seven percent of all households with a disability/chronic illness suffer from severe food insecurity, and 40 percent suffer from moderate food insecurity. Households with a disability/chronic illness experience a higher prevalence rate of food insecurity when compared to households without disability or chronic illness. Out of households that suffer from severe food insecurity, 81 percent of households has one or more member with a disability or chronic illness.

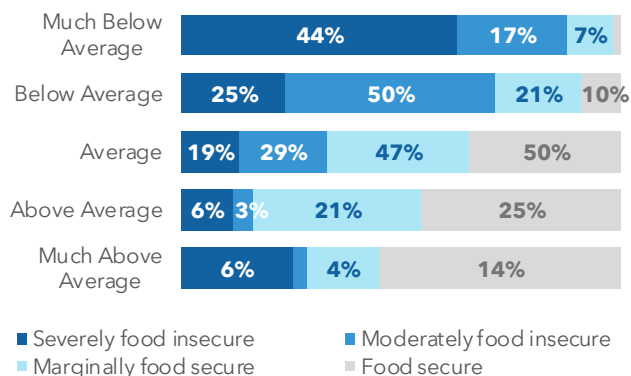
Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology April 2024



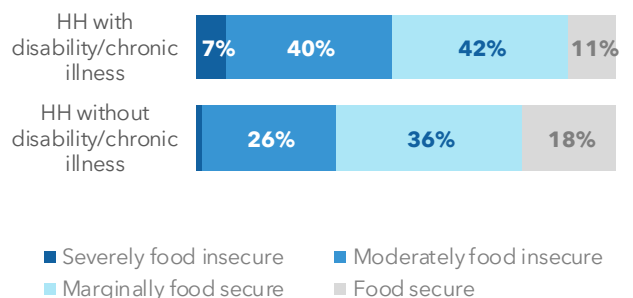
Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology by sex



Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology by income levels



Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology by households with/without disability or chronic illness





Food Insecurity Experience (FIES)

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), 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 behaviors and experiences associated with increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints.

Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) methodology, it is estimated that 48 percent of the respondents in Barbados are food insecure.

Out of these, 19 percent are estimated to be severely and 29 percent moderately food insecure. The prevalence of severe and moderate food insecurity in Barbados is similar to the regional survey average.

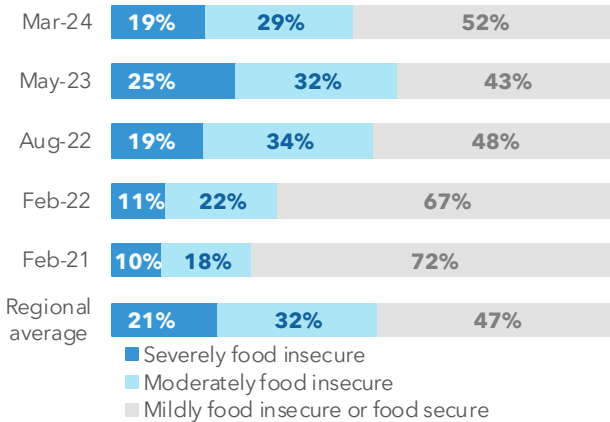
Nearly every eight out of ten respondents from Barbados who perceive themselves as having well below average household income experienced either severe or moderate level of food insecurity.

Out of these households, 45 percent experienced severe food insecurity, while 35 percent experienced moderate food insecurity.

The negative food experience most often reported by respondents in Barbados was "eating only a few kinds of food" (63 percent), followed by being "unable to eat healthy and nutritious food" (52 percent). Alarming, 23 percent of respondents went a whole day without eating in the 30 days prior to the survey. Respondents below the ages of 40 show a higher prevalence of negative food related experience while the poorest respondents appear to be the most affected across all individual negative food-related experiences.

Prevalence rates of food insecurity

Based on FIES methodology.

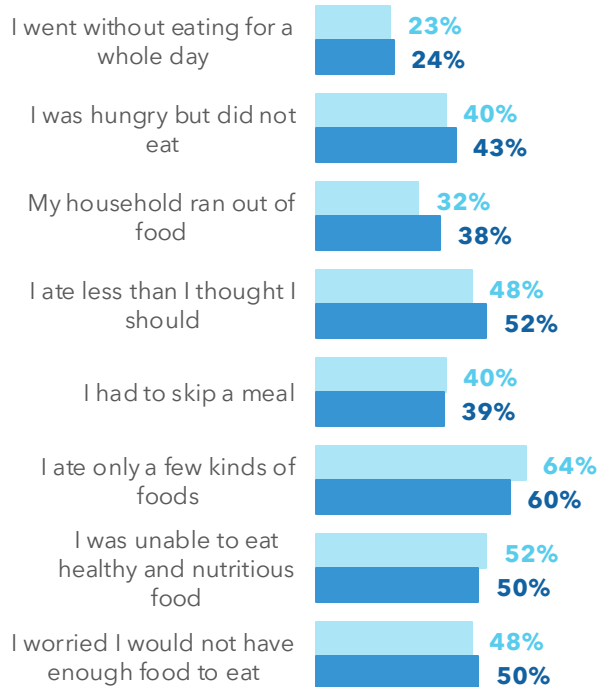


*For more information on the FIES, see FAO's [The Food Insecurity Experience Scale: Measuring food insecurity through people's experiences](#).

Was there a time in the past 30 days when you experienced the following?

Multiple choices could be selected.

By sex



Female Male

"The price of food and especially health food we are encouraged to eat. The prices hikes so much." - female, 34

"Make what can be made instead of store-bought and grow what can easily be grown." - female, 56

"Money was low and I had to eat less and foods that I normally would not eat" - male, 64



Resilience capacity

A range of natural hazards have affected nearly a third of respondents in Barbados over the 12 months prior to the survey. The main reported hazards were heatwave (24 percent) and drought (7 percent). Of respondents affected by natural hazards over the last year, 43 percent reported moderate, and 13 percent reported severe impacts on their livelihoods or income.

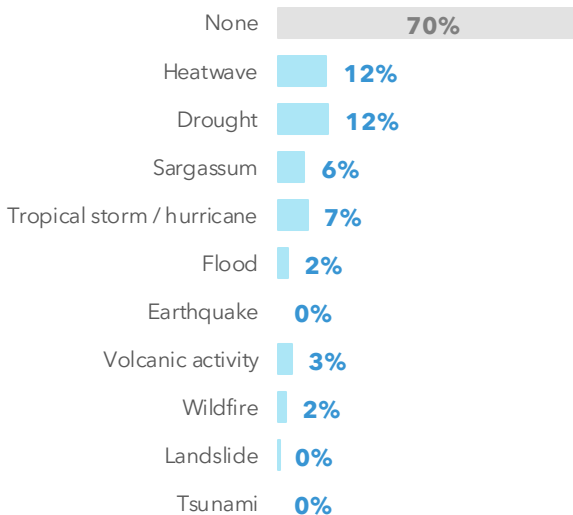
The Resilience Capacity Score (RCS) indicator was used to measure respondents' perception of their resilience to natural hazards. The method uses nine statements and respondents rate their level of agreement with each, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These generate a score that acts as a marker of overall subjective resilience.

Based on the RCS, 24 percent of respondents have low capacity to cope with, recover from and adapt to natural hazards. Only 11 percent of respondents are highly resilient, while 65 percent of the respondents have medium resilience capacity.

Out of the nine resilience characteristics, respondents scored the worst on the financial (i.e. access to financial support) and transformative capacity (i.e. ability to change or adapt the household's primary income source if needed). On the other hand, respondents feel that they are better equipped with information capital by having access to early warning information to deal with natural disasters, and human capital, in that they learned lessons from past hardships.

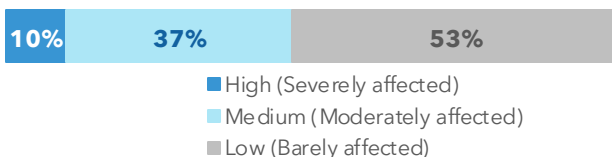
Natural hazards that affected respondents in the 12 months prior to the survey

Multiple choices could be selected.



Level of impact on livelihoods or income

For respondents that were affected by natural hazards in the 12 months prior to the survey



Overall resilience capacity

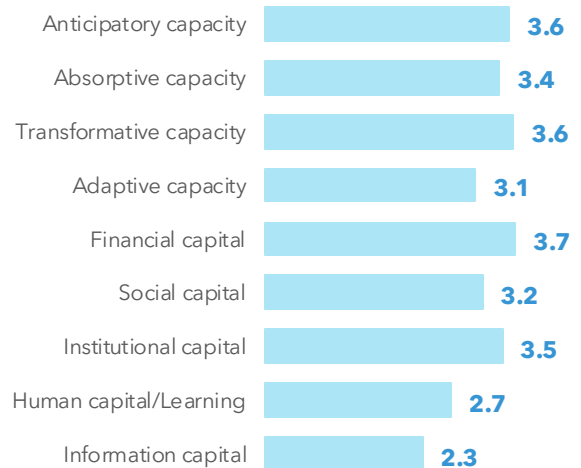
Resilience capacity score (RCS)



**The RCS is based on the Subjectively Evaluated Resilience Score (SERS) designed by L. Jones (2019) and WFP's Climate Resilience Capacity Score. For more information, see [Resilience Capacity Score](#) guidance.*

Average score for the nine resilience capacity characteristics

Scores range from 1 (high resilience capacity) to 5 (low resilience capacity). Higher score means lower resilience capacity.





Worries and sentiments

Inability to meet essential needs (41 percent) and illness (34 percent) are the top concerns among respondents in Barbados, followed by decreasing savings (33 percent) and unemployment/income loss (32 percent) and inability to cover food needs (27 percent).

Nine percent of respondents reported receiving assistance from the government in the year prior to the April 2024 survey. This is slightly lower than in May 2023 when 14 percent had stated that they had received support during the last 12 months.

Most respondents (84%) expressed negative or very negative sentiments. Respondents were given the space to provide more nuanced insights on how they are coping and adapting. Out of the 347 respondents in Barbados, 90 responded to the open-ended question.



Main differences

Differences in results among respondents were most pronounced when comparing income levels.

Based on regional survey findings, differences in results among respondents appear to be most pronounced when comparing income levels. Households that reported below or well below average incomes indicate the poorest results on all key metrics of well-being and are at risk of further falling behind economically. Younger respondents also appear to be experiencing greater challenges across most metrics.

While disaggregated findings should be treated with caution due to the number of respondents from the country, the findings appear in line with regional survey trends.

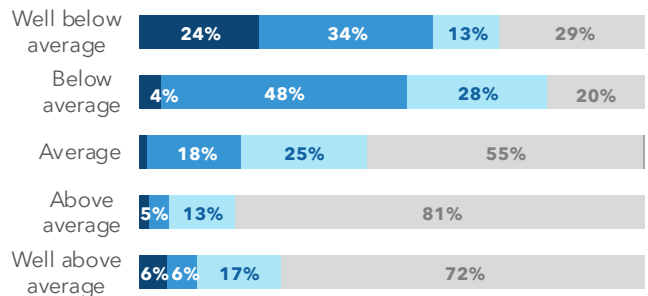
Main worries expressed by respondents

Multiple choices could be selected. Answer options were adjusted in May 2023, adding new options and removing Covid-19 related options that are now displayed as "Other worries".

	Apr-24	May-23	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20
Inability to cover essential needs	41%	43%	26%	26%	28%
Illness	38%	28%	56%	67%	51%
Decreasing savings	33%	36%	19%	16%	20%
Unemployment / Income loss	32%	38%	34%	44%	55%
Inability to cover food needs	27%	32%	19%	20%	19%
Natural hazards	18%	13%			
Inability to receive or repay loans	15%	16%			
Child/dependent care	13%	14%	15%	14%	15%
Violence/crime in the community	10%	7%	5%	7%	7%
Inadequate infrastructure	8%	4%			
Inadequate housing	5%	6%			
Disruption of public services (education, health)	3%	2%	22%	16%	14%
No access to services due to migration status	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Other worries	2%	1%	45%	37%	0%
Violence/abuse in the household	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%

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

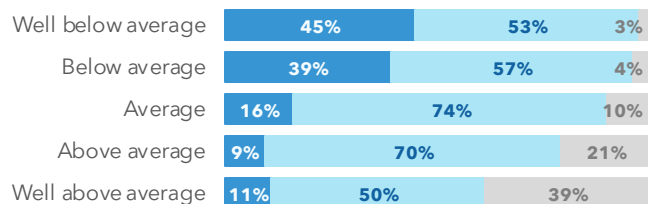
By perceived income level



- I went one whole day without eating
- I skipped meals or ate less than usual
- I ate less preferred foods
- I had no difficulties eating enough

Overall resilience capacity

By perceived income level



- Low RCS
- Medium RCS
- High RCS

Conclusion

Tackling food insecurity and the factors driving it remains as high a priority as ever. Despite some improvements, this survey shows that many people still struggle to put food on the table, pursue their livelihoods and manage the ever-present threat of natural hazards. A concerning number of people are using savings to buy food, resorting to secondary sources of income, eating less, substituting less preferred foods, buying smaller quantities, spending less on health and education and even selling assets. While the number of respondents per country limits disaggregating data at this level, the regional data trends are very clear that people with lower incomes are faring much worse across the board on food security, livelihoods and access to markets.

Tackling food insecurity requires a mix of measures to strengthen food systems, boost production and facilitate trade. Key entry points are highlighted in ongoing policy efforts and national and regional initiatives, such as the CARICOM drive to reduce extra-regional imports 25% by 2025. These include reducing barriers to agri-food trade, improving transportation and logistics for agri-food products, investing in research and climate-smart adaptation, tailoring agricultural insurance and finance instruments, enhancing digitalization of the agricultural sector, and promoting the consumption of local nutritious foods – an objective all the more crucial amid the high rate of non-communicable diseases.

It is critical to protect people's access to food especially when shocks occur, including measures to strengthen early warning systems, invest in preparedness, make social protection systems more shock-responsive, and expand anticipatory actions that target the most vulnerable so that they can take measures before hazards turn into disasters. With climate change predicted to result in more frequent severe hazards, these investments must be expanded. Another important entry point for food security is school feeding programmes, investments which are documented globally to have exponential returns related to health/nutrition, education and agriculture sectors.

These interconnected issues require collaborative approaches coupled with much-needed tailored financing for SIDS. With both food security and financing high on the agenda in the Caribbean, and the Fourth Annual International Conference on Small Island Development States raising the global profile of SIDS, there is a window of opportunity to take existing efforts to the next level to promote sustainable food systems, climate change adaptation and resilience.

Recommendations*

Strengthen the productive capacities of smallholder farmers and fishers through access to technologies, climate information services, promotion of climate-smart agriculture access to institutional markets and other tailored measures.

Continue to develop programmes, policies and strategies that promote **greater involvement of youth and women in agriculture**, as well as **data and evidence generation** to inform evidence-based investments.

Invest in priorities identified in the CARICOM 25 by 25 initiative, such as improving **transport and logistics for agri-food products**, enhancing access to tailored **agricultural insurance and finance** and promoting **digitalization** in the agricultural sector.

Expand initiatives to **increase demand for local foods** to encourage healthy diets and combat noncommunicable diseases and obesity, while supporting local and sustainable agricultural production

Expand and strengthen national school feeding programmes to reach more children with nutritious meals and support food systems through increased procurement of local nutritious products. Aim for universal coverage given the high return on investment.

Continue to invest in **preparing social protection systems to respond to shocks** and expand efforts to promote **economic inclusion and resilience**, including through stronger linkages between **social protection and agriculture**.

Strengthen **multi-hazard early warning systems** to enhance hazard monitoring and early warning services to inform early actions when hazards unfold. **Expand anticipatory action measures**, especially those enabling vulnerable people to take necessary measures.

Reinforce institutional capacities to **translate disaster risk management policies into actionable measures** that protect and enable continued access to food and essential needs when disasters strike and strengthen resilience against hazards.

Promote risk-layered disaster risk financing to protect investments and assets and ensure that resources reach those who need them the most in a timely manner. Build on and expand recent and ongoing experiences **linking disaster risk financing to social protection** to enable rapid support to vulnerable persons when hazards strike.

Continue to advocate for improved access to climate finance to promote sustainable and resilient agri-food systems, adaptive social protection and climate change adaptation measures that will enhance food security and livelihoods.

*Recommendations are adapted from regional survey report



INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD

The dashboard contains additional country-level data and analysis beyond the present report on the Food Security and Livelihoods Survey. It may take a second to load. Scan the QR code to access it or follow this link:

<https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/CaribbeanFoodSecurityLivelihoodsSurvey/Overview>

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REPORTS

The website contains links to all current and past regional and country reports on the Food Security and Livelihoods Survey. Scan the QR code to access it or follow this link:

<https://www.wfp.org/publications/caribbean-covid-19-food-security-and-livelihoods-impact-survey>