

# Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

## DOMINICA | April 2024

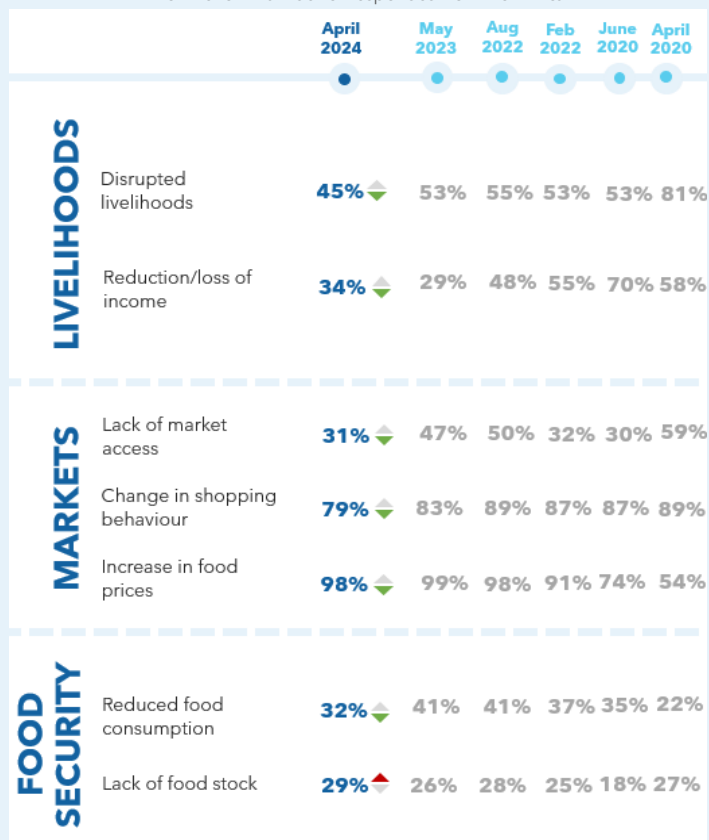
Climate change threatens food security and livelihoods in the Caribbean by disrupting food production, access, and availability. This increased climate variability, combined with high living costs, provides additional challenges for already vulnerable households, particularly those dependent on climate-sensitive 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 Dominica 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 Dominica surveys

\*Comparison with the February 2021 survey round is not included because of the low number of responses from Dominica.



**Apr 2024**

**223**

Respondents

72% Female | 28% Male

**May 2023**

**178**

Respondents

76% Female | 24% Male

**Aug 2022**

**167**

Respondents

73% Female | 27% Male

**Feb 2022**

**145**

Respondents

69% Female | 31% Male

**Feb 2021**

\*Not included because of the low number of responses from Dominica.

**Jun 2020**

**474**

Respondents

74% Female | 26% Male

**Apr 2020**

**545**

Respondents

75% Female | 25% Male



## Natural hazards

Dominica is exposed to 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 11 reported natural hazards in Dominica between 1980 - 2022, most of which were storms. Dominica is also vulnerable to flooding and landslides caused by heavy rains.

Tropical storms and hurricanes have caused the largest natural disaster-related damages in Dominica. Notably Hurricane Maria in 2017 caused damages equivalent to 226 percent of GDP. Storm events even of less severity still have the potential to cause widespread impacts potentially leading to loss of life, disruptions to livelihoods and displacement of people, as well as cause the destruction of homes, assets and critical infrastructure.



## Macro-Economic Dynamics

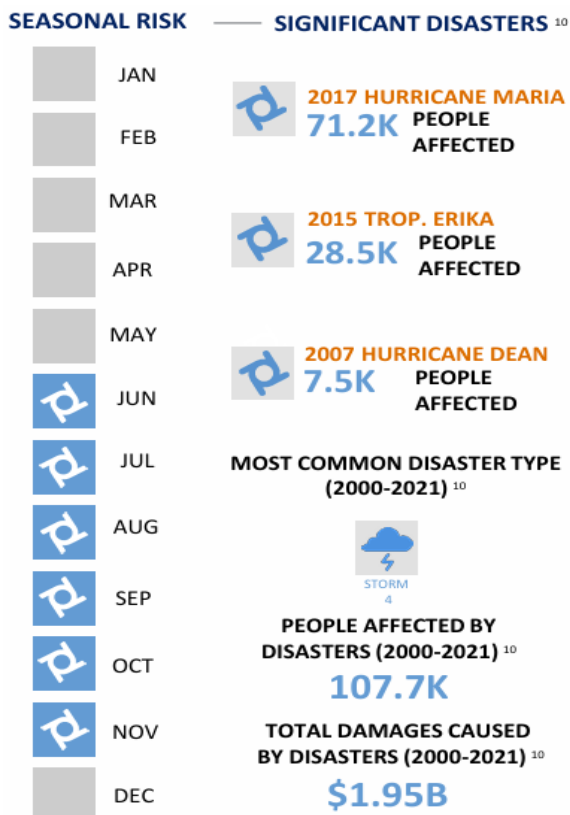
Dominica is heavily reliant on food imports, which account for 92 percent of total food trade (excluding fish; FAOSTAT, 2022). This reliance makes local food prices highly susceptible to changes in regional and global food markets.

According to FAO's Food Price Index, global food prices decreased by 12 percent in January 2024 compared to 2023, and by 29 percent since peaking in March 2022. Nevertheless, Dominica still faces high food inflation, with food prices increasing 10.4 percent in September 2023 compared to the previous year.

Survey respondents from Dominica continue to report significant price increases in food, gas, and electricity. Notable price increases are also observed across a wide variety of essential goods and services (see page 3).

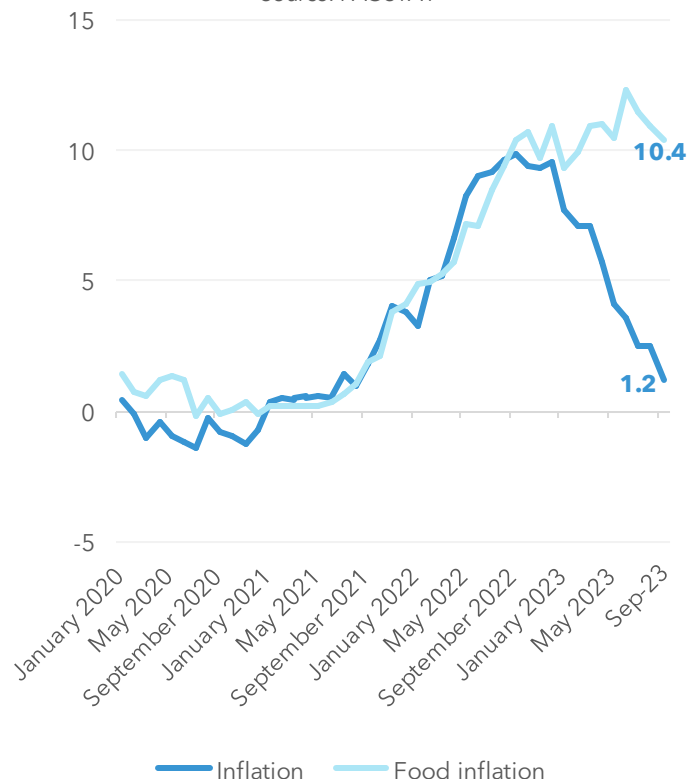
### Seasonal Risk and Recent Hazards in Dominica (2000-2021)

Source: OCHA - Dominica Country Profiles - EMDAT



### Inflation in Dominica (Jan 2020 - Dec 2022; %)

Point-to-point inflation rates.  
Source: FAOSTAT





## Markets

**Almost a third of respondents reported challenges accessing markets** in the month prior to the survey. While this is an improvement from the previous survey round (May 2023), it remains concerning that people still face obstacles to accessing markets.

Lack of money to spend continues to be overwhelmingly reported as the main reason for limited market access, cited by 88 percent of the respondents.

*"Over the past year I have made changes of switching to other cheaper brands of products to get by. Doing without certain products I am not able to afford and depleting the little savings to get snacks and other supplies for the children for school. The situation is frustrating..." -female, 35, Dominica*

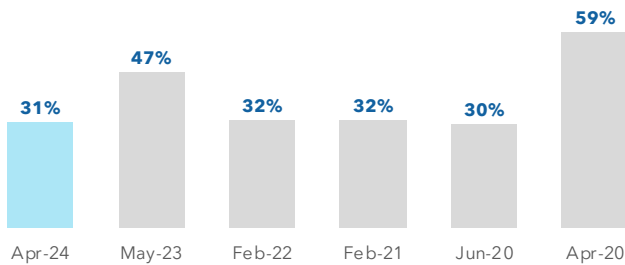
**Respondents continue to report increased prices in commodities, especially food.** Nearly three quarters (70 percent) of respondents reported a significant increase in food prices over the three months prior to the survey.

Apart from food, most significant price increases have been observed for gas (45 percent), electricity (43 percent), and health (41 percent).

Respondents have adapted to how they shop, increasingly buying cheaper and less preferred foods (68 percent) and purchasing smaller quantities than usual (68 percent).

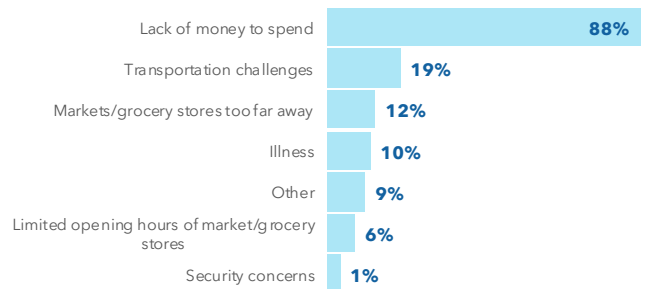
### Respondents unable to access markets in the 30 days prior to the survey

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

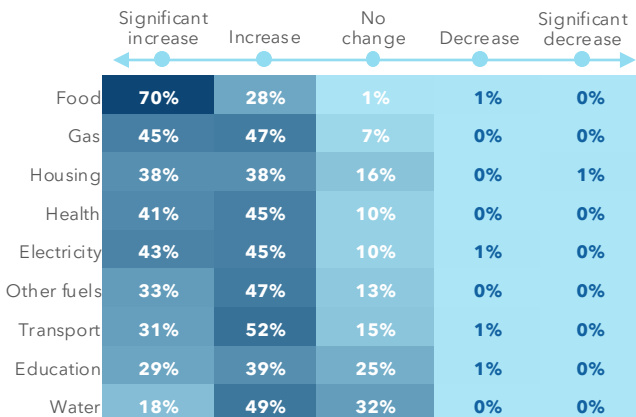


### For those that faced a time when they could not access markets in the past 30 days, the main reasons were...

Multiple choices could be selected.

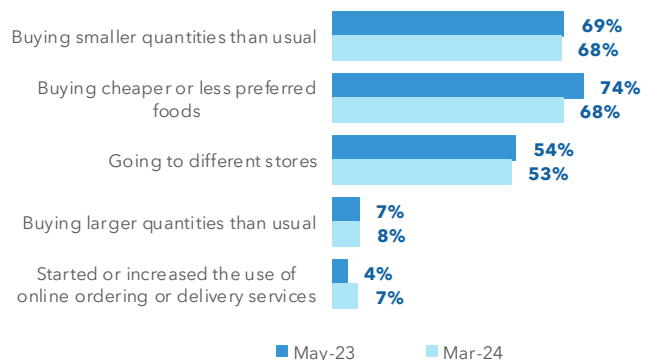


### Respondents reporting a change in the costs of the commodities in the 3 months prior to the survey



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

Multiple choices could be selected.





## Livelihoods

**Respondents continue to feel the impacts of recent shocks on their livelihoods in Dominica.** Forty-five percent of respondents faced disruptions to their livelihoods in the 30 days prior to the survey. As with the previous survey round, the unaffordability of livelihood inputs was the main driver, cited by 64 percent of those affected by disruptions.

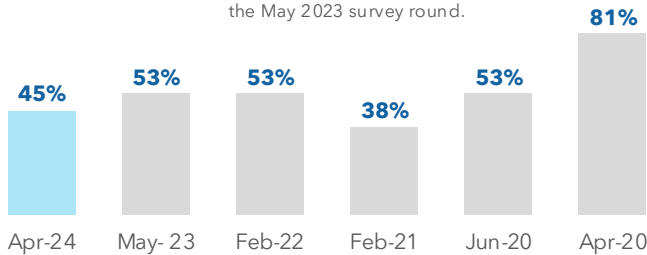
**A third of respondents experienced job loss or reduced salaries in their households** in the 6 months prior to the survey. The proportion of those having to resort to secondary or alternative sources of income has remained almost constant since May 2023, suggesting the continuation of economic hardship and people turning to new ways of earning a living.

**Respondents whose main household income source was that of assistance from either the government of family and friends had the highest number of respondents stating that their ability to carry out livelihood activities were affected in the last 30 days before the survey.**

Income changes in the 6 months prior to the survey were most prevalent among respondents whose household income was below average or much below average. Half of respondents who were below or much below average reported job loss or reduced salaries/revenues. Twenty three percent of this income level reported that they had resorted to secondary/alternative sources of income.

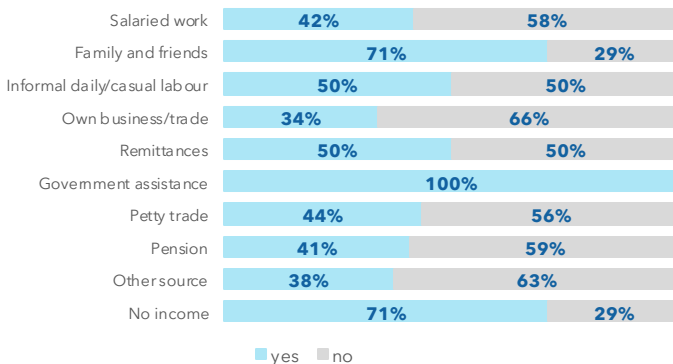
### Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey

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



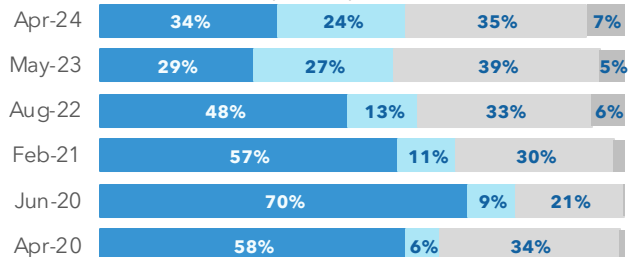
### Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey

#### By income sources



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

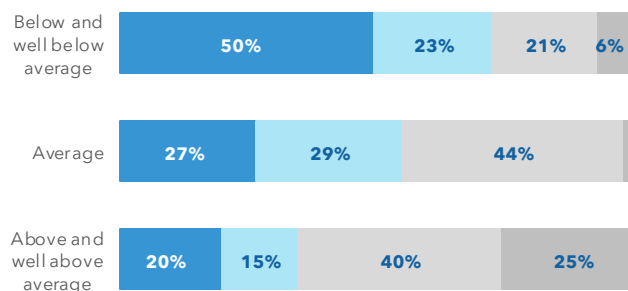
Recall period changed from "since Covid-19" to "in the 6 months prior to the survey" in May 2023 survey round



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

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

#### By perceived income level





## Coping Strategies

**Respondents are resorting to using various coping strategies to meet their immediate food needs.**

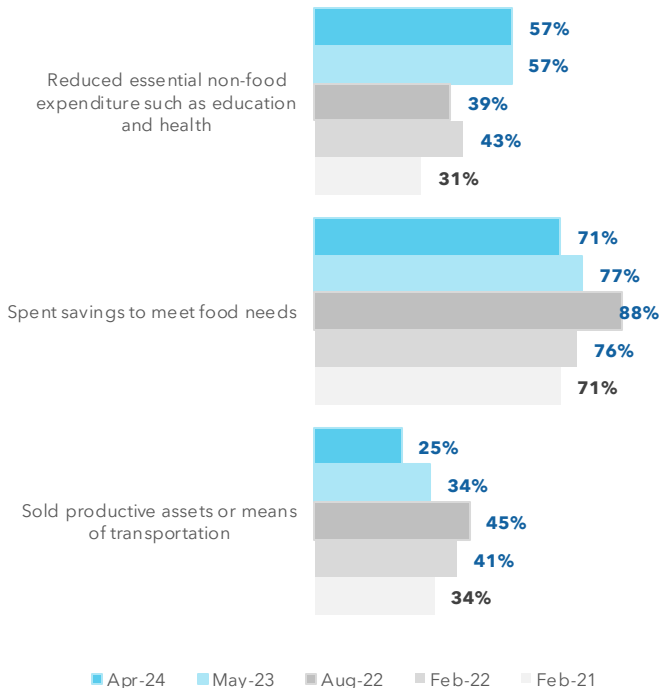
Nearly three quarters of the respondents (71 percent) had resorted to spending their savings to meet food needs and 57 percent, had reduced essential non-food expenditure such as education and health. Further, one in four respondents resorted to selling productive assets to meet immediate food needs.

Households relying on assistance as their main source of income had the highest prevalence of spending their savings to meet food needs and reducing essential non-food expenditure as a coping strategy.

Households with persons with disabilities or chronic illness reported slightly higher frequencies of having to spend savings to meet food needs, when compared with other households.

### Households' coping strategies

Multiple choices could be selected. New answer option added in May 2023- "already carried out and cannot continue to do so" in addition to "yes", both are interpreted as if the strategy has been carried out.



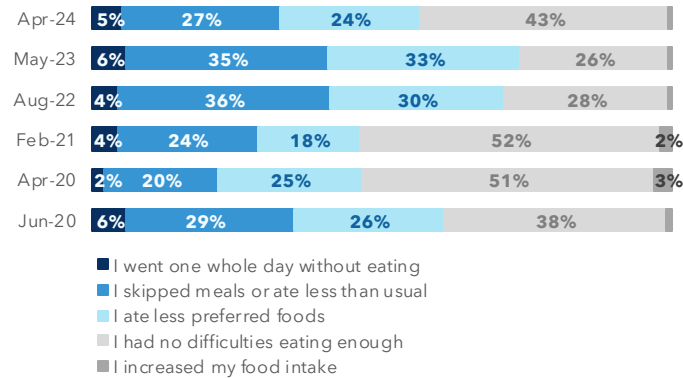
## Food consumption

**Food consumption and diets continue to be a concern**, with 27 percent of households skipping meals or eating less than usual, 24 percent eating less preferred foods and five percent going an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey.

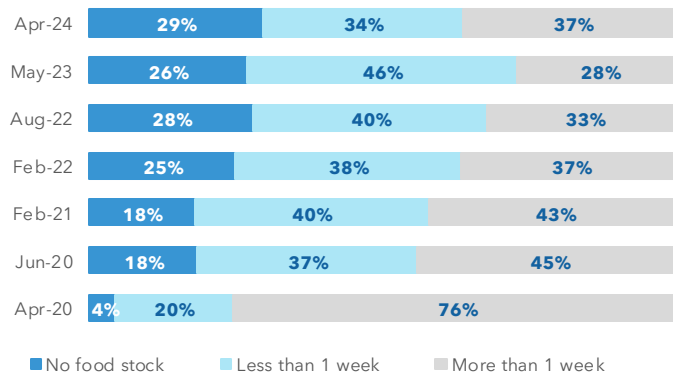
These findings represent a slight improvement in the food consumption of respondents compared to May 2023 and August 2022.

**29 percent of respondents reported that their household had no food stock at home**, while 34 percent reported having less than a week's worth of food stocks.

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



### Does your household have any food stock?





## Food Insecurity Prevalence

The rCARI, is an adapted remote 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)' (2015).

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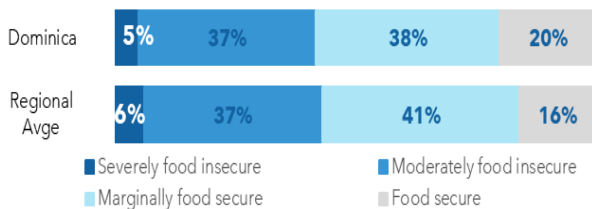
**It is estimated that 42 percent of the respondents in Dominica are food insecure.** Out of these, five percent are estimated to be severely and 37percent moderately food insecure. This was consistent with the regional average.

**Income is a key factor linked to food insecurity,** with households in the much below average (18 percent) and below average (four percent) income levels, with higher levels of severely food insecurity, compared to three, two and zero percent of households in the above average, average and well above average incomes, respectively.

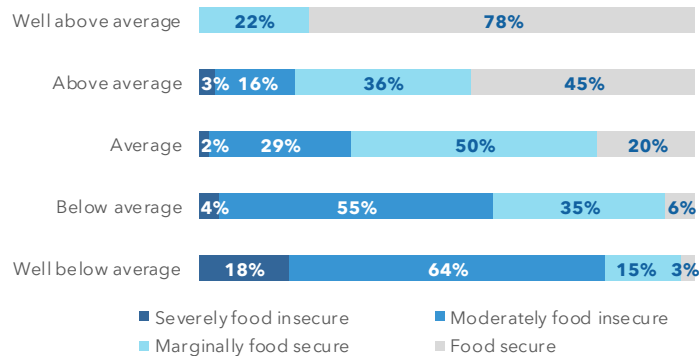
**A higher prevalence of food insecurity, was found among households with one or more members with a disability or suffering from chronic illness (47 percent),** when compared with those without (36 percent).

Female headed households showed a slightly higher prevalence of food insecurity (54 percent), when compared with their male counterparts (37 percent).

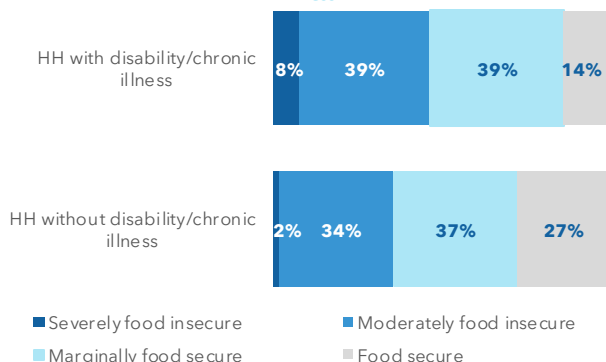
Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology - April 2024



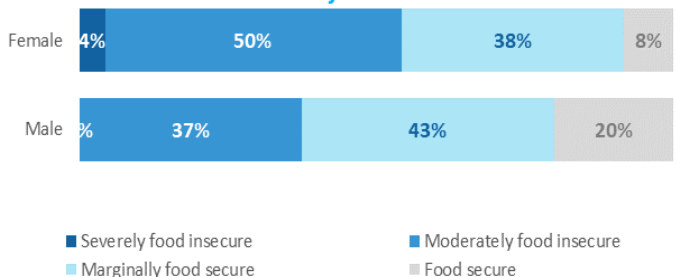
Prevalence rates of food insecurity based on the rCARI methodology By perceived income level



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



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





## Food Insecurity Experience (FIES)

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is an experience-based metric of food insecurity severity at the household or individual level, which is used for global food security monitoring and aligned with food security targets outlined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It relies on people's self-reported food-related behaviors and experiences associated with increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints. The FIES methodology asks people to identify if they faced different experiences related to food insecurity. The questions used to assess FIES focus on self-reported food-related behaviours and experiences during 30 days prior to the survey. They reflect increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints.

*\*For more information on the FIES, see FAO's 'The Food Insecurity Experience Scale: Measuring food insecurity through people's experiences' and FAO's 'Implementing the FIES in surveys'*

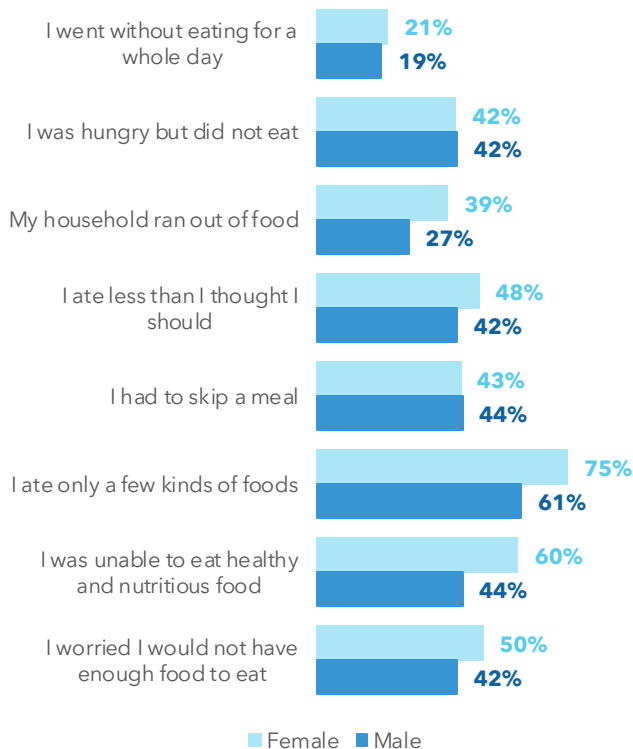
**Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) methodology, it is estimated that half of the respondents in Dominica are food insecure.** Out of these, 18 percent are estimated to be severely food insecure and 32 percent moderately food insecure.

The negative food experience most often reported by respondents in Dominica was "eating only a few kinds of food" (71 percent), followed by being "unable to eat healthy and nutritious food" (56 percent) and "worrying that they would not have enough food to eat" (48 percent). Alarmingly, almost a quarter (21 percent) of respondents went a whole day without eating in the 30 days prior to the survey. Women were more likely to be have a negative food experience than men.

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

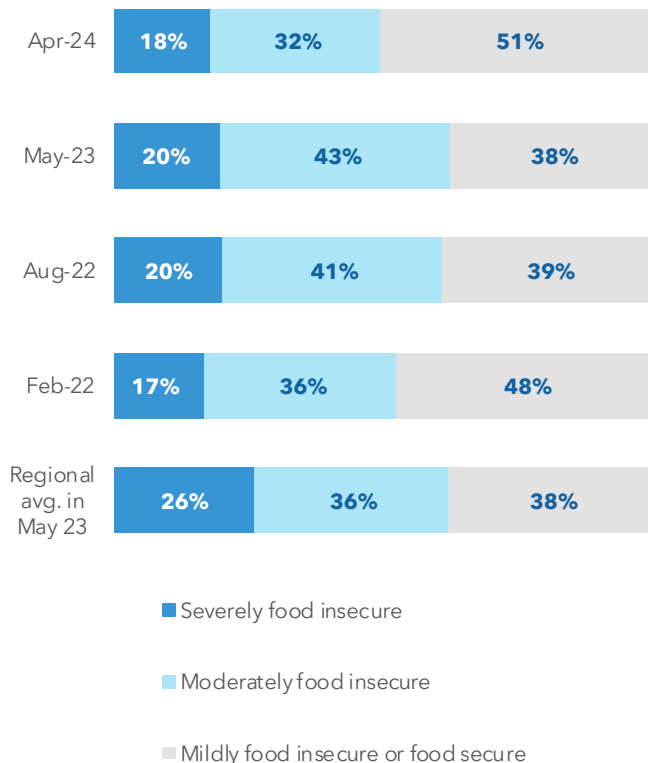
Multiple choices could be selected.

By sex



### Prevalence rates of food insecurity

Based on FIES methodology.





## Resilience capacity

**Natural hazards have affected nearly a third of respondents in Dominica over the 12 months prior to the survey.** The main reported hazards were heatwave (14 percent) and drought (5 percent). Of respondents affected by natural hazards over the last year, 51 percent reported moderate, and 13 percent reported severe impacts on their livelihoods or income.

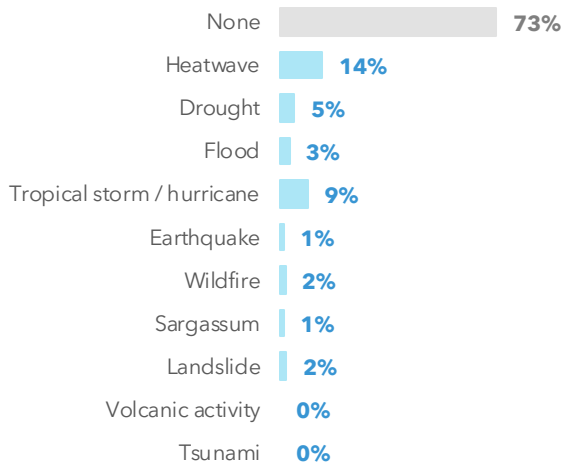
**The Resilience Capacity Score (RCS) indicator was used to measure respondents' perception of their resilience to natural hazards.** The method uses nine statements and respondents rate their level of agreement with each, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These generate a score that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

**Based on the RCS, 23 percent of respondents have low capacity to cope with, recover from and adapt to natural hazards.** Only 12 percent of respondents are highly resilient, while 65 percent of respondents have medium resilience capacity. Women and below or well below average income groups appear to have the lowest overall resilience capacity.

**Out of the nine resilience characteristics, respondents scored the worst on the financial capital (i.e., access to financial support) and institutional capital (i.e., support from government or other institutions).** On the other hand, respondents feel that they are better equipped with information capital by having access to early warning information for natural disasters, and human capital where they learned lessons from past hardships.

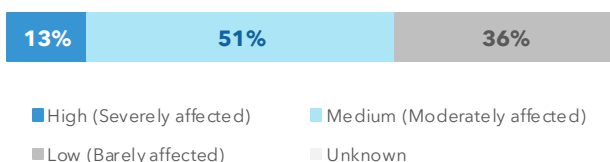
### Natural hazards that affected respondents in the 12 months prior to the survey

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



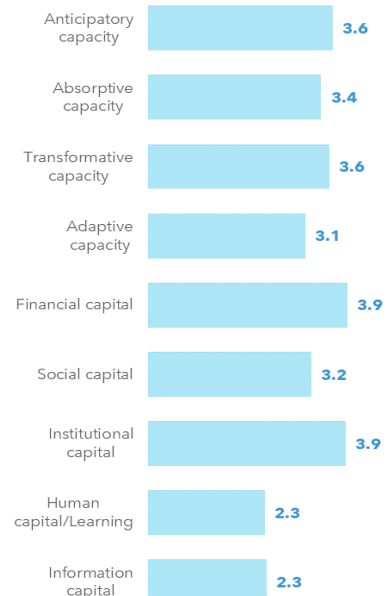
### Overall resilience capacity



■ Low RCS ■ Medium RCS ■ High RCS

#### 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 (45 percent), unemployment and income loss (43 percent) and decreased savings (41%) are the top concerns among respondents in Dominica**, followed by illness (35 percent) and inability to cover food needs (31 percent).

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

**Over three quarters of respondents expressed negative or very negative sentiments.** Respondents were given the space to provide additional insights. Out of the 223 respondents, 79 responded to the open-ended question.



## Main differences

**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. Correspondingly, those relying on informal labour or assistance also appeared to perform worse.

While disaggregated findings should be treated with caution due to the number of respondents from Dominica, the findings appear in line with regional survey trends. The results suggest that women may be facing greater challenges compared to men. Younger respondents also appear to be experiencing greater challenges across the majority of metrics.

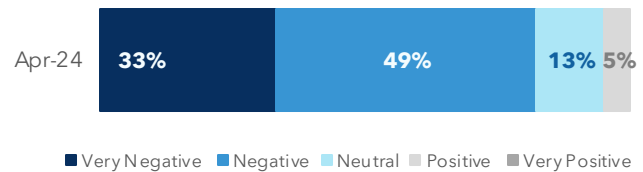
### Main worries expressed by respondents

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	45%	49%	37%	31%	37%
Illness	35%	23%	52%	58%	47%
Unemployment / Income loss	43%	27%	43%	39%	53%
Decreasing savings	41%	52%	20%	22%	23%
Inability to cover food needs	31%	31%	25%	22%	35%
Inability to receive or repay loans	18%	21%			
Violence/crime in the community	4%	3%	6%	5%	4%
Child/dependent care	14%	10%	11%	11%	15%
Natural hazards	25%	22%			
Inadequate infrastructure	4%	3%			
Inadequate housing	2%	5%			
Disruption of public services (education, health)	4%	1%	14%	9%	15%
Other worries	1%	2%	33%	25%	0%
Violence/abuse in the household	0%	0%	1%	5%	1%
No access to services due to migration status	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%

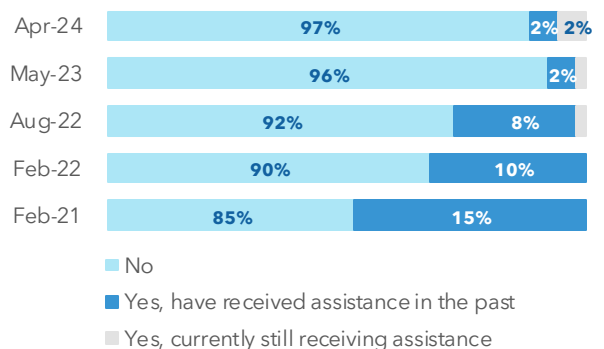
### Distribution of sentiments across open-ended survey responses

Low response numbers in this category may affect results.



### Have you received any assistance from the government in 12 months prior to the survey?

Recall period changed in May 2023 from "in response to Covid-19" to "in the last 12 months".





## 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>

#### **CARICOM**

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Website: [www.caricom.org](http://www.caricom.org)

#### **World Food Programme**

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Website: [www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean](http://www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean)

Email: [wfp.caribbean@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.caribbean@wfp.org)



#### **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>